



# Migration in West and North Africa and across the Mediterranean

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*Trends, risks, development and governance*

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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in the meeting of operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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# Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: Objectives



## DATA

Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies



## ADVERSE DRIVERS

Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin



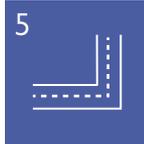
## INFORMATION

Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration



## LEGAL IDENTITY

Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation



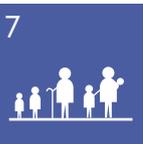
## REGULAR PATHWAYS

Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration



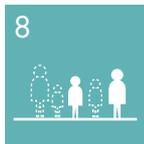
## DECENT WORK

Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work



## VULNERABILITIES

Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration



## MISSING MIGRANTS

Save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants



## SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS

Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants



## TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration



## BORDER MANAGEMENT

Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner



## MIGRATION PROCEDURES

Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral



## DETENTION

Use migration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives



## CONSULAR PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

Enhance consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle



## BASIC SERVICES

Provide access to basic services for migrants



## INCLUSION AND SOCIAL COHESION

Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion



## ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION

Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration



## SKILLS RECOGNITION

Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences



## MIGRANT AND DIASPORA CONTRIBUTIONS

Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries



## REMITTANCES AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants



## RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration



## SOCIAL PROTECTION

Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits



## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration

# ABBREVIATIONS

3S Initiative	Initiative on Sustainability, Stability and Security
4Mi	Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AVRR	assisted voluntary return and reintegration
CMR	Central Mediterranean Route
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
DGBE	General Directorate of Burkinabe Living Abroad (Burkina Faso)
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
EBCGA	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMR	Eastern Mediterranean Route
EU+	European Union member States plus Norway and Switzerland
FAISE	Fonds d'Appui à l'Investissement des Sénégalais de l'Extérieur
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMP	flow monitoring point
FMR	Flow Monitoring Register
FMS	Flow Monitoring Survey
GDELT	Global Database on Events Language and Tone
GDP	gross domestic product
GMDAC	Global Migration Data Analysis Centre
GNA	Government of National Accord
GWP	Gallup World Poll
HIS	health information system
IDP	internally displaced person
ILO	International Labour Organization

ABBREVIATIONS

IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LCGN	Libyan Coast Guard and Navy
MHub	Mixed Migration Hub
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (Italy)
MMC	Mixed Migration Centre
MOAS	Migrant Offshore Aid Station
MRCC	Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre
MRR	Maritime Rescue Region
MSNA	multisectoral needs assessment
NGO	non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PFI	Push Factor Index
POC	Person of Concern
SAR	search and rescue
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UASC	unaccompanied and separated children
UMC	unaccompanied migrant children
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya
VoT	victim of trafficking
WFP	World Food Programme
WMR	Western Mediterranean Route

# PREFACE

Timely, reliable, disaggregated data and contextual information related to people on the move are imperative for well-informed, well-managed and humane policymaking on migration. A nuanced understanding of migration realities is especially important in contexts such as North and West Africa and the Central Mediterranean, where migration movements result from a combination of different and complex factors.

This edited volume provides a uniquely comprehensive and diverse picture of migration in North and West Africa and the Central Mediterranean, compiling a wealth of evidence from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and academia. With a view to inform targeted protection and preventative measures, safe alternatives and effective policy approaches, it sets out to enhance understanding of what contributes to migrants' resilience and development in countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as how policies and programmes interact with and affect such realities. While there are still missing pieces in the picture presented, due to persistent data gaps and challenges, the volume is a testament to the remarkable progress made in recent years to improve evidence on migration in these regions, and its use for programming and policy. This would not have been possible without the generous support of the United Kingdom Department for International Development, and its focus on the need to invest in the production of research and evidence.

This publication is being released at a time of great uncertainty in terms of migration and socioeconomic dynamics around the world. In the face of border closings and other COVID-19-related responses, migration flows and patterns are changing or coming to a halt altogether. Many migrants in these regions – be they labour migrants, asylum seekers or refugees – are being disproportionately affected by the pandemic in a variety of ways, including in terms of health, employment, shelter and discrimination. Initial findings suggest that COVID-19 exacerbates pre-existing vulnerabilities.

Now maybe more than ever, therefore, is it essential to have a clear understanding of such risks and vulnerabilities, as well as of the resilience that migrants and their communities hold. If these migrants are supported, this can help them overcome the challenges they are faced with. This edited volume represents a timely step in that direction.

**Frank Laczko**

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Berlin

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## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Recognize migrants' agency:** Migrants from West and North Africa adopt flexible mobility-based strategies to contribute to their own and their communities' resilience and development. They also contribute to national development. They mostly move within their countries, regions and continent, and for job-, family- and study-related reasons. Migrants' contributions to development are receiving increasing policy recognition in their countries and regions of origin. This needs to be better recognized in policies of countries and regions of destination, as well as in policy dialogues between African and European countries.
- 2. Address inequalities in migration:** Migrants adapt their mobility-based strategies to changing policies, labour market opportunities, border controls and risks. However, their ability to do so and to contribute to economic, social and environmental resilience and to national development depends on their socioeconomic characteristics and migration status. Evidence on such inequalities needs to be improved, and corrective measures – such as more equal access to regular migration pathways – need to be mainstreamed in bilateral and multilateral agreements on migration.
- 3. Understand linkages between migrants' profiles and circumstances, and exposure to risks and their ability to cope with them:** Migrants' socioeconomic profiles and legal status influence their degree of vulnerability to risks in countries of transit and destination. Overall vulnerability to risks appears to have been exacerbated by increasingly selective migration policies adopted in Europe. Evidence on the relationship between migration, vulnerability and risks needs to be improved and used to inform effective protection and assistance programmes, as well as national and transnational policies.
- 4. Ensure the basic rights of migrants irrespective of their legal status:** Irregular entry or stay is frequent along the Central Mediterranean Route. Migrants in irregular situation breach the law of their transit or destination countries, but they are not criminals. Excessive penalization of irregular migration too often amounts to denying migrants their basic rights. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which the vast majority of States in North and West Africa have endorsed, is about rights that apply to all migrants, irrespective of their legal status. Implementing principles contained in the Global Compact should become a priority on policy agendas.
- 5. Recognize the complexity of migrant smuggling:** Migrants who do not have access to regular migration opportunities often employ smugglers to overcome migration barriers. By doing so, they may often expose themselves to abuse and exploitation. Meanwhile, smuggling can also be a long-standing livelihood strategy for communities in key countries of transit, and a service provided to migrants. Policies to counter

smuggling and irregular migration need to acknowledge this complexity to be ultimately effective and minimize adverse consequences on migrants and economically fragile communities in transit countries. In addition, migrant smuggling and human trafficking should not be conflated, and should be addressed differently.

6. **Deconstruct misconceptions and fears about African migration:** According to some polls in North and West Africa, close to one third of adults would have a desire to migrate permanently out of their countries. Hasty extrapolation seems to suggest that many tens of millions of people would migrate if they could. Such a conclusion serves only to fuel the fear of invasion in European media and political spheres. Facts, however, tell just the opposite: over a lifetime, a small share of individuals actually migrate, of which those destined for Europe are a minority. One has to conclude that intentions to migrate measured by polls are in no way predictors of acts or facts.
7. **Support policies informed by evidence and monitor their impact:** Evidence on migration trends within, between and from West and North Africa is improving, but is still insufficient. This hinders the adoption of comprehensive and effective policies and programmes. In addition, more evidence and data are needed on how national and transnational policies shape migration trends, the risks to which migrants are exposed, and their ability to contribute to transnational resilience and development. National and regional efforts to improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of data are needed. Importantly, the perspectives of migrants and their home communities need to be regularly included in the production of evidence.
8. **Produce and analyse administrative data to inform opinions and governments:** The lack of reliable and accessible data on migration and migrants makes the way free for all kinds of misjudgements that are detrimental to sound governance and social cohesion. The mass of information public administrations in North and West Africa routinely collect must be processed in order to build statistical knowledge on migrant flows and stocks, and their economic and social dimensions at local and national levels.

# INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Philippe Fargues

In the years 2014–2016, when arrivals of undocumented migrants and refugees arriving by sea to Europe surged to unprecedented numbers, a map of the north-west quarter of Africa made an appearance in European media. The map showed several lines, or arrows, spanning the Gulf of Guinea to the Mediterranean Sea some 4,000 km to the north. It sketched the land routes travelled by migrants and refugees from all corners of Africa to reach the Mediterranean Sea, from where they would embark to Europe. Two main routes were distinguished according to destination in Europe: the “Western Mediterranean Route” (WMR) for Spain and the “Central Mediterranean Route” (CMR) for Italy or Malta.

The map is a schematic representation of a small part of a multifaceted reality, however. It should not be misinterpreted. The lines string together separate segments used since time immemorial by traders, shepherds or clerks travelling back and forth in Africa. Many migrants nowadays use these same roads to move between African countries, from south to north in search of employment in oil-rich Libya or Algeria, or from north to south to work in the coastal plantations of Côte d’Ivoire or Ghana. Those who go all the way to the Mediterranean Sea awaiting passage to Europe are a minority. On the other side, the steady rise in African migration to Europe in recent years, which is an established reality, has little to do with the migratory flows by land across West and North Africa. Just as with most long-distance migrants in the world, it is by air and with a visa that the majority of African migrants to Europe reach their destination.

The magnitude of population movements along the CMR, the high prevalence of irregular migrant status on this route, the role of criminal networks and the tragic fate of many migrants travelling one of the world’s deadliest migratory routes have drawn much attention from governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the media. Indeed, linking sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa and Europe, the CMR connects one of the poorest parts of the world to one of the wealthiest, a fact that makes it a potentially very busy migratory road. The vast, empty and almost control-free areas it crosses in the desert and at sea favour irregular movement and smugglers’ activities, which can put migrants’ lives at risk. Political chaos and the failures of the rule of law in several sections of the journey leave free rein to traffickers subjecting migrants to extortion, exploitation and even death.

Against this backdrop, lumping together smugglers who challenge security and undocumented migrants who breach administrative rules, governments often present combating the former and stopping the latter as one and the same objective, in Africa as well as in Europe. All States are concerned about disorderly border crossing and

<sup>1</sup> Terminology used in the whole volume reflects the IOM “Glossary on migration” (IOM 2019) except as otherwise stated.

irregular migration challenging their sovereignty. When Algeria sends back tens of thousands of migrants with an irregular status to its border with the Niger, it does it for the same reasons that European Union member States every year return 150,000–200,000 third country nationals following orders to leave. The difference lies in the way migrants in irregular situation are sent back – returned by plane after an agreement is found with their countries of origin or left stranded in the desert – more than in States' affirmation of their sovereignty.

There is an important asymmetry regarding governments' strategies on migration, however. All North and West African States are anxious about the European Union half-shutting the door to their own migrants. At the negotiating table, the European Union puts the prospect of pathways for regular migration and development aid as bargaining chips in exchange for tightened border control in Africa – more precisely, preventing the exit of migrants with no visas (in contradiction with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 13(2): “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own”) – and the readmission by African States of returnees caught in irregular situation in Europe. However, measures taken by States to stiffen controls along land and sea migratory routes are believed to have ambivalent effects on irregular migration – to reduce the number of migrants but at the same time increase the risks migrants are exposed to as they take more dangerous roads to bypass obstacles.

This volume focuses on West and North Africa, and mostly covers the period 2018–2019. Its four sections deal with four of the most salient features of migration along the CMR. Section I – Key migration trends – tackles its highly volatile nature. Migration routes, trends and flows change very quickly in response to contextual and political factors in Africa and Europe. In an effort to compensate for the scarcity of official statistics, IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and the Mixed Migration Centre's Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi) have put in place instruments to monitor migratory movements. Section II – Migration and risks – addresses situations of vulnerability migrants face in countries on the CMR and the various threats, from environment to conflict, that prompt them to move. Section III – Migration and development – explores the generally positive contribution of migrants to development and resilience in their countries of origin, and the particular situation of migrants in transit with irregular status. Section IV – Migration governance, and policy and programming responses – examines migration policies in West and North Africa, how they are influenced by national and international processes, and by changing public perceptions of migration and emerging evidence; and discusses some of their effects.

The first section of the volume reviews the evidence in countries along the CMR. What do we know about migration and the profile and situation of migrants? From what sources? With what gaps? And how do we improve our understanding of processes at play? These are critical questions for policymaking on migration, as well as for academic research and media reporting on the topic. Statistical data are expected to possess a few basic qualities. First, they must be collected and made available to the public. Being linked to extremely sensitive social, economic and political issues, migration is a matter of bitter controversies and often prejudices, so empirical evidence is critical to set the record straight. Data must be reliable and accurately reflect the complexity of a phenomenon that changes fast over time and varies greatly from place to place. Moreover, information must be delivered in real time, at the moment events occur, if it is meant to be useful for guiding and monitoring action.

The most elementary question is about the size of the migrant population. The global migration data set of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) provides estimates of international migrant stocks at several dates up until 2019 for all countries of the world. Aggregating the West and North African countries which are the main focus of this volume shows a region of 633.2 million inhabitants (mid-2019) with 10.4 million immigrants and 21.8 million emigrants. The bottom line is that North and West Africa is not the huge pool of emigration that European politicians and media often describe. Indeed, narrowing the scope reveals a contrast between North Africa, a mostly migrant-sending region polarized by Europe, and West Africa, characterized by the predominantly intraregional circulation of migrants. Looking at individual countries, Libya and Côte d'Ivoire emerge as two net migrant receivers, and Morocco, Tunisia, Mali and Burkina Faso as major senders.

Looking for information about migrants' individual characteristics, origins and destinations, and their reasons for moving, one has to search national data sets. In most countries along the CMR, national statistical offices have achieved significant progress in collecting and publishing data on migration. National population censuses, often completed by post-census household surveys, are the main sources of data about born-abroad and/or foreign-born residents (immigrant stock) and former members of the household currently living abroad (emigrant stock). The most recent round of population censuses (early 2010s) has produced a wealth of information about migratory

levels (which may at times significantly differ from UN DESA estimates), trends and patterns. Yet, useful as it may be, such information is not fully adapted to policymaking requirements. Population censuses reflect the situation at the time they are conducted, which is usually once every 10 years. Census data can help identifying structural issues but not monitoring policy responses.

In countries with highly developed statistical systems, the continuous flow of data collected and processed by a variety of public services provides the information necessary for monitoring and evaluating policies. Until now, however, none of the countries along the CMR have built a web of administrative sources capable of responding to all the needs of informed policymaking on migration and related issues. Big data generated by cell phones and social media – which African citizens increasingly use – are another untapped but promising source, though they still present some methodological issues to extract what relates to migration in the mass of information they contain, and pose privacy and ethical issues.

In brief, none of the existing sources – United Nations global migration data sets and national population censuses – provide a full picture of the migratory flows between countries along the CMR, and most temporary as well as irregular migration escapes these sources. Counting people on the move, whatever their status and final destination, in order to understand their situation and address their needs, is the challenge that IOM and the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) have taken up. IOM's DTM operates in difficult contexts, such as conflict-torn Libya or trans-Saharan roads, in which the usual tools of statistical observation are inefficient. It collects data on stocks and flows of internally displaced persons (IDPs), returned IDPs, international inward and outward migrants, and return migrants. In addition to quantifying stocks and flows of migrants and mobile populations, including IDPs, DTM carries out ad hoc surveys on specific mobility-related issues. Being a mechanism of continuous record, DTM is primarily based on interviews or focus group discussions with key informants, and it also includes interviews of migrants in person.

MMC's 4Mi collects data through individual interviews conducted at urban migration hubs and border crossing points with migrants and, whenever possible, with smugglers. Interviews with migrants focus on the reasons for migration, migratory routes, protection risks and the economics of the journey. Interviews with smugglers focus on their links to other State and non-State actors and the way they operate. For lack of sampling frames, both DTM and 4Mi are based on non-random selections of periods and places where interviews are conducted, and respondents or monitors who provide information on migrant flows. DTM and 4Mi's methodologies are not bias-free, but they have the invaluable merit of providing a continuous flow of detailed information that no other mechanism produces. A large part of this volume is based on DTM and 4Mi's original findings, and several chapters are written by staff in the field.

Before the launching of DTM and 4Mi, there was a sense that migration along the CMR was highly volatile. While structural economic factors in origin and destination countries explain mid- and long-term migration trends, it is widely agreed that contextual and political factors in North and West Africa, as well as further away in Europe, can cause sudden and radical changes in the routes and the composition of migrant flows. However, it was not until DTM and 4Mi implemented mechanisms of large-scale data collection at borders and nodal crossroads within each country that a detailed picture of mobility emerged.

Recording mobile and settled migrants inside Libya, DTM data reveal that, despite the civil war that started in 2014, the country remains a destination for hundreds of thousands of migrant workers, in much larger numbers than migrants in transit, waiting for passage to Europe. Data on migrants' living and working conditions, capacity to remit, access to health care and other services, as well as exposure to risks, show a clear divide between the relative safety of long-term settled migrants and the critical precariousness of short-term transit migrants.

Other sources of data – including records by the Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre and the European Border and Coast Guard (Frontex), and IOM's Missing Migrants project and surveys among migrants who arrived by sea in Italy – provide information about migratory movements across the Mediterranean Sea. They show that places of embarkation, routes and the timing of journeys constantly adapt to bypassing obstacles that would bring the migrants back to the Libyan shore.

A recurrent finding of the many surveys carried out in both West and North Africa is that current migrants are mostly moving for reasons of employment, family or study, but rarely for fleeing conflict, political insecurity and persecution. The exact opposite picture emerges from interviews among migrants irregularly arrived in Europe by

sea, the majority of whom declare that they moved in order to flee life-threatening circumstances in their homelands or in transit countries, particularly Libya. This discrepancy epitomizes the complexity of cross-Mediterranean migration and the limitations of the distinction between “forced” and “economic” migrants: for lack of humanitarian visas, persons in need of international protection who want to lodge asylum claims in Europe have no choice but to embark on dangerous sea crossings to reach their destinations; at the same time, migrants who may have originally left their countries primarily to seek employment elsewhere may suffer human rights violations in transit or first destination countries which may compel them to cross the Mediterranean to seek protection.

Being able to anticipate, if not forecast, migration would be a breakthrough in the management of the phenomenon. Global polls that now cover large parts of Africa provide information on how many individuals desire to emigrate from their countries, how many have concrete plans to do so and what their preferred destinations would be. However, a comparison with flows shows us that only a minority of them end up actually migrating to Europe. Policies, socioeconomic characteristics and changing opportunities have an impact on the realization of migration plans. Aspiring migrants from Africa are still less likely than others to migrate to their preferred international migration destinations. This also shows that polls about aspirations to migrate cannot serve to anticipate or forecast migration. Regarding refugee movements, several databases on the state of governance in countries of origin, media reports on conflict and other sources of displacement, and asylum statistics can be combined in a “push factor” index that may help anticipate large movements of population.

The second section of the volume is on risks attached to migration. Moving across borders to settle far from home is always a risky endeavour. At the same time, it is often a response to insecurity and risks at home, whether these are of an economic or political nature. One salient feature of the CMR seems to be a combination of negative factors, with many migrants leaving behind high risks of destitution in origin countries and facing high risks of aggravated vulnerability at different steps of the journey, including at destination. Traveling is risky, in and of itself. Travellers stuck in places of transit for lack of documents to continue their journeys have to make a livelihood or find themselves moneyless, far from solidarity networks. Many fall prey to criminal networks subjecting them to various forms of exploitation, from forced labour to enrolment in the sex business, from robbery to extorting money from their families at home, and from physical mistreatment to ultimately disappearance and death. Moreover, staying with no permit of residence and working with no work permit, many migrants are exposed to severe sanctions by the authorities, including arrest with no access to justice, arbitrary detention and deportation.

DTM and 4Mi surveys show that not all migrants are equally vulnerable. Male respondents report being exposed to risks such as unpaid or forced work more often than women, while women appear more exposed to risks of threats of sexual violence and being obliged to an arranged marriage; children are on average more exposed than adults to the specific types of risks covered by these surveys, and illiterate migrants more than educated ones. The duration of the journeys and means of transportation are other critical factors of risk. Above all, falling in the wrong smugglers’ hands is a major cause of tragic outcomes, though equating smuggling with organized crime is oversimplifying a phenomenon that is also related to the state of a society. If some local, ordinary people in transit countries earn livelihoods out of smuggling migrants, it is in part because the context in which they live favours this kind of trade. Indeed – due to political unrest, the lack of rule of law and the weakening of State control – entire territories spanning the Sahel and Libya have left aside the benefits of human and economic development.

The third section of the volume is on development. How do outward and inward migration contribute to economic and human development and strengthen resilience to economic and environmental hazards in countries of origin and destination? Reciprocally, how does development in these countries impact migratory flows at entry and exit? These general questions are of specific relevance in countries along the CMR.

What applies to regular migration does not necessarily work the same way in the case of migrants in irregular situation, a common category in North Africa. In particular, to what extent do transit migrants contribute to development in the countries where they are temporarily living (through their work) and in their countries of origin (through remittances)? These migrants often live on the margins of society, hiding from State administration and working in informal, unrecorded and underpaid jobs. In some cases, they complement local workers by taking low-skilled, low-paid occupations that natives no longer accept. In other cases, they compete with them by doing the same jobs for lower wages. Such factors can hinder their ability to earn a sufficient income to remit money to their families left behind.

Nevertheless, case studies in Senegal demonstrate that migration – regardless of the status – is an important strategy to diversify revenues and support households and communities of origin. This can also be true in the case of migrants returning to their communities of origin. In the Niger, a country that has witnessed the arrival of tens of thousands of migrants forcibly returned from Algeria, training programmes have been established with the support of IOM to teach transit migrants how to develop a microbusiness once they return to their communities of origin. The challenge is turning a “failed” migration experience into a successful reintegration back home.

An additional salient feature of the West and North African regions is their extreme exposure to hazards linked to climate change. Heat, drought and desertification are looming threats in these regions. Large territories are fated to sooner or later become uninhabitable. Multilateral initiatives such as the Sustainability, Stability and Security (3S) programme, bringing together 14 African countries, address this by sharing resources for tackling the causes and consequences of land degradation. Yet, there might come a point beyond which adaptation and resilience will become increasingly hard and may affect migration flows. At present, international refugee law does not recognize environmental threats as reasons for seeking international protection – although other instruments exist, such as human rights or environmental law. Getting prepared for incoming changes due to global warming calls for rethinking the category of refugee and extending international protection to entire groups of population forced to cross borders just to survive.

Recently, countries of destination have mainstreamed migration-related objectives in their allocation of development aid to countries of origin and transit. The “European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa” (EUTF for Africa) sets four objectives: creating employment opportunities, strengthening resilience of communities, improving migration management, and improving governance and conflict prevention. EUTF’s objectives are all commendable, but addressing irregular migration needs to be accompanied by opening pathways for regular migration. Indeed, migration brings origin countries money, knowledge and business networks that are necessary ingredients for development. Therefore, containing migration amounts to putting up obstacles to development.

The fourth section of the volume is on governance and programming. Countries along the CMR are senders and receivers of international migrants in almost equal numbers. They all have policies on emigration and diaspora, and policies on immigration and inclusion. These policies have a common purpose of determining who belongs, and at what level, to the framework of rights and duties that defines citizenship and how to engage with citizens abroad. How does one keep inside citizens who left, and how does one include non-citizens who entered? How do areas of free movement of persons redefine the sense of belonging beyond the community of citizens? What role do public opinion and perceptions play in the way governments address these sensitive issues?

Diaspora policies, which first appeared in the Maghreb countries, then in Member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), follow a common pattern. They all started from a will to foster the contribution of expatriate nationals and possibly second-generation migrants to the development of their countries of origin. States established institutions, sometimes at ministry level, to strengthen the link between diasporas and their homelands. A first policy line consisted of taking fiscal and monetary measures to attract remittances through official banking channels, and favour direct investment by expatriates. Cultural policies aiming to revive the sense of belonging to their, or their parents’, homeland followed. Lastly, most countries implemented mechanisms to allow expatriates political participation from abroad, in particular through external voting facilities. The recognition of emigrants as members of their countries of origin is a general trend in countries along the CMR.

Immigration and inclusion policies are characterized by a discrepancy between States’ marked commitment to international tools on migrants’ rights and the limited level of migrants’ inclusion in national frameworks of rights and duties. On one side, all but two African States considered in this volume (Côte d’Ivoire and Tunisia) have ratified the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990), and all but two (Algeria and Libya) in 2018 adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. On the other side, in sharp contrast with the adherence to international tools of migrants’ inclusion, all North and West African States have nationality laws that place blood bonds above territorial bonds, and none of them have policies for the full inclusion of immigrants. Societies can be more inclusive than States, however. In Africa, like everywhere in the world, public opinion, prejudices and discriminatory attitudes towards immigrants

coexist with tolerance and openness. In particular, successful immigrants who create employment for nationals are regarded with more sympathy than migrants in irregular situations.

Irregular migration has become a ubiquitous issue in African policies on migration. Sanctioning migrants with irregular status by arrest, detention and deportation is the rule; amnesty and regularization are exceptions. African and European Governments now share a common vision of irregular migration as a crime, and they effectively cooperate to contain undocumented migrants and deport those apprehended in irregular situation. A spiral is triggered by which smugglers' strategies to get around States' controls put the safety of migrants at increasing risk. Aiming to break the vicious circle of tightened controls and increased risks, civil associations and international organizations carry out awareness-raising campaigns to alert would-be migrants to the dangers of irregular migration. Moreover, data collected by IOM and MMC convey to the world's leaders and opinion makers evidence about the risks on the roads of migration from Africa to Europe.

At the time of completing this volume (July 2020), it has become obvious that the COVID-19 pandemic will have considerable repercussions on international migration and migrant individuals globally. What these could specifically be in African countries along the CMR is unknown. One after the other, States are closing their borders and putting strict restrictions on the mobility of people. As migration flows are put to a halt, many migrants risk falling into irregular situation in the foreign countries where they found themselves stuck when borders shut. Their situation as non-citizens may rapidly deteriorate. As regards health in the first instance, while the pandemic has not yet reached a large scale in countries along the CMR, it may soon do so, and migrants will suffer from poorer-than-average access to health care. Moreover, the global economic disaster triggered by the pandemic has already destroyed many tens of millions of jobs, and joblessness spreads everywhere. On top of this, the collapse of oil prices could well sound the end of the oil-and-gas-dependent wealth that attracted migrant workers in Libya and Algeria. Finally, the recession of the world's economy may hit non-citizens even harder than citizens, and annihilate migrants' capacities to earn an income and remit money to their communities at home. COVID-19 may halt movements, at least for a while, on the CMR, with devastating consequences at all steps.

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# COVID-19 and migration in West and North Africa and across the Mediterranean

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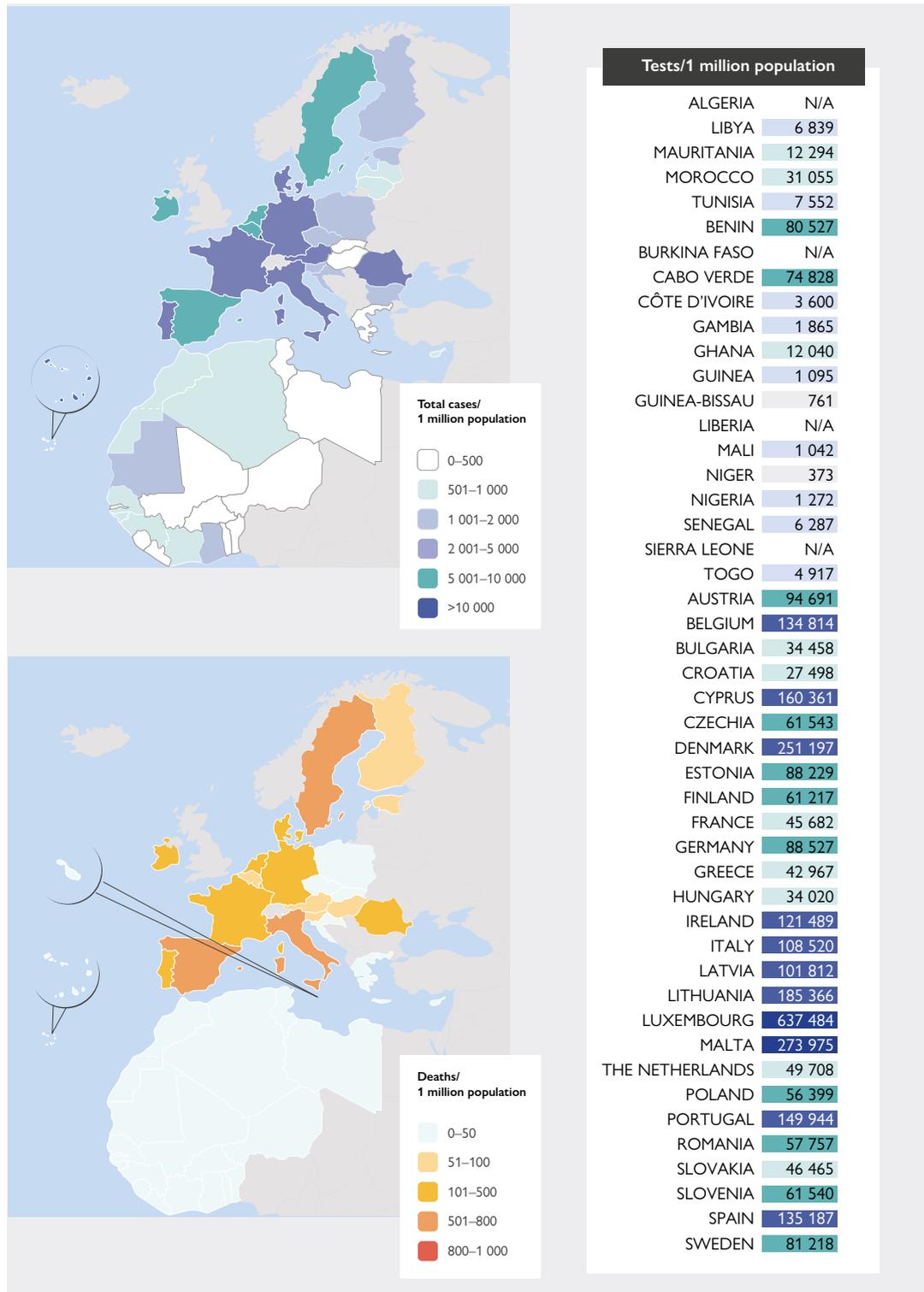
In just a few months, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed the global migration and mobility landscape, and added a layer of complexity to migration in West and North Africa and across the Mediterranean. This rapidly spreading health crisis (Figure 1) has led to the implementation of mobility restrictions and border closures, as well as to the suspension of social and economic activities in most countries around the world, including in West and North Africa and Europe. While at the time of writing (end of July 2020) some governments were beginning to gradually lift these measures, public, research and policy attention was increasingly turning to the socioeconomic and political effects that these may have in the medium and longer term. As the crisis is still unfolding, these effects remain difficult to predict. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) foresees that the pandemic will lead to the worst global recession of the past century, and that the gross domestic product of sub-Saharan Africa will fall by 3.2 per cent in 2020 (IMF, 2020). Others have pointed to the longer-term consequences that the pandemic may have for domestic politics, international relations and trust in governments (Perthes, 2020), including in Africa (Devermont, 2020).

While broader trends and characteristics identified in the four sections of this volume are likely to persist, the COVID-19 pandemic and measures adopted to contain its spread are likely to significantly impact migration in West and North Africa and across the Mediterranean, in terms of migration and mobility trends (Section 1 of this volume), risks (Section 2 of this volume), development-related aspects (Section 3 of this volume) and governance (Section 4 of this volume). This chapter explores possible impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on these various aspects, based on data collected by IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and by the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) in West and North Africa, as well as preliminary analyses and forecasts by other organizations and experts.

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<sup>1</sup> IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre.

**Figure 1.** COVID-19 infection rates, deaths and testing in West and North Africa and Europe



Source: Worldometers, 2020.<sup>2</sup>

Note: Last updated: 27 July 2020. These maps are for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

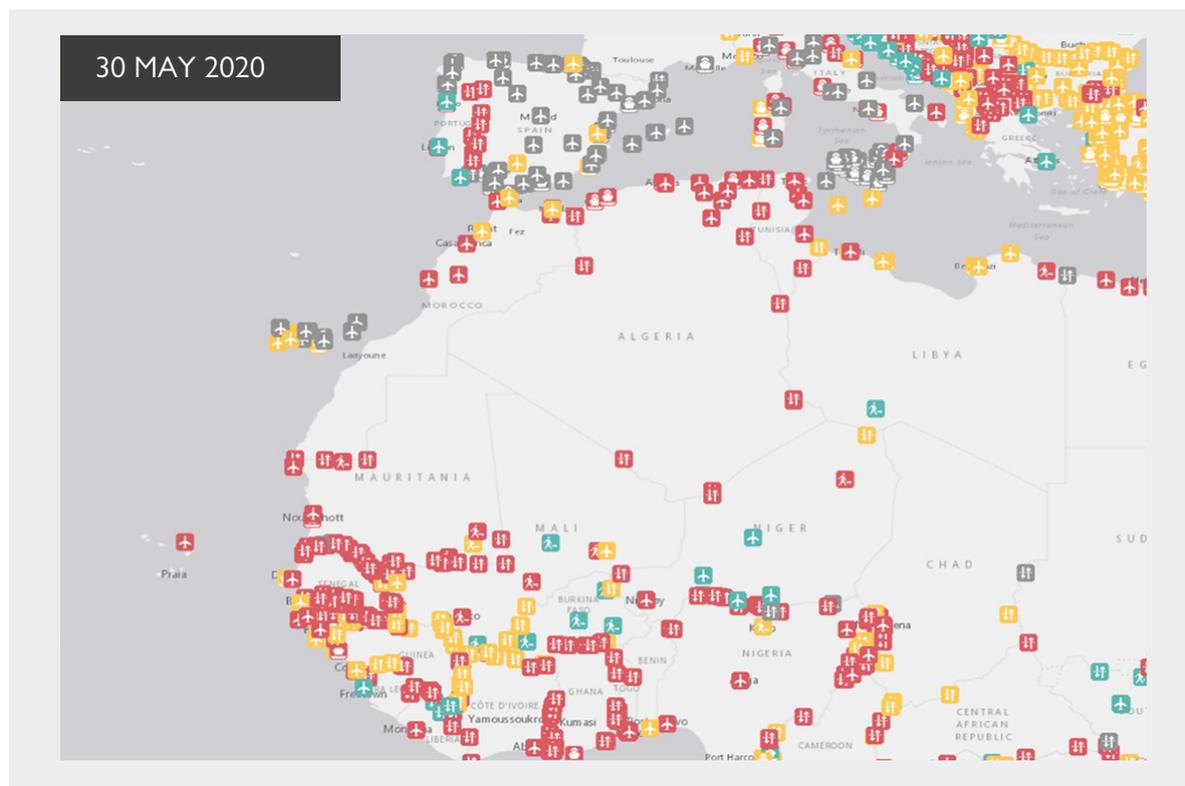
<sup>2</sup> Available at [www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries](http://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries). Worldometers data are based on a variety of sources, including official websites of Ministries of Health and of other government Institutions, government authorities' social media accounts, daily reports released by local authorities and press briefings. However, due to data availability issues, data presented here need to be considered indicative.

# 1. COVID-19 and migration trends<sup>3</sup>

The outbreak of COVID-19 has led States in West and North Africa and in Europe to introduce travel and mobility restrictions, ranging from tightened border controls and restrictions to internal mobility and border closures (Figure 2). At the same time, transportation services have been disrupted. This has had a significant impact on migration trends and patterns (see IOM, 2020a; Milan and Cunnoosamy, 2020).

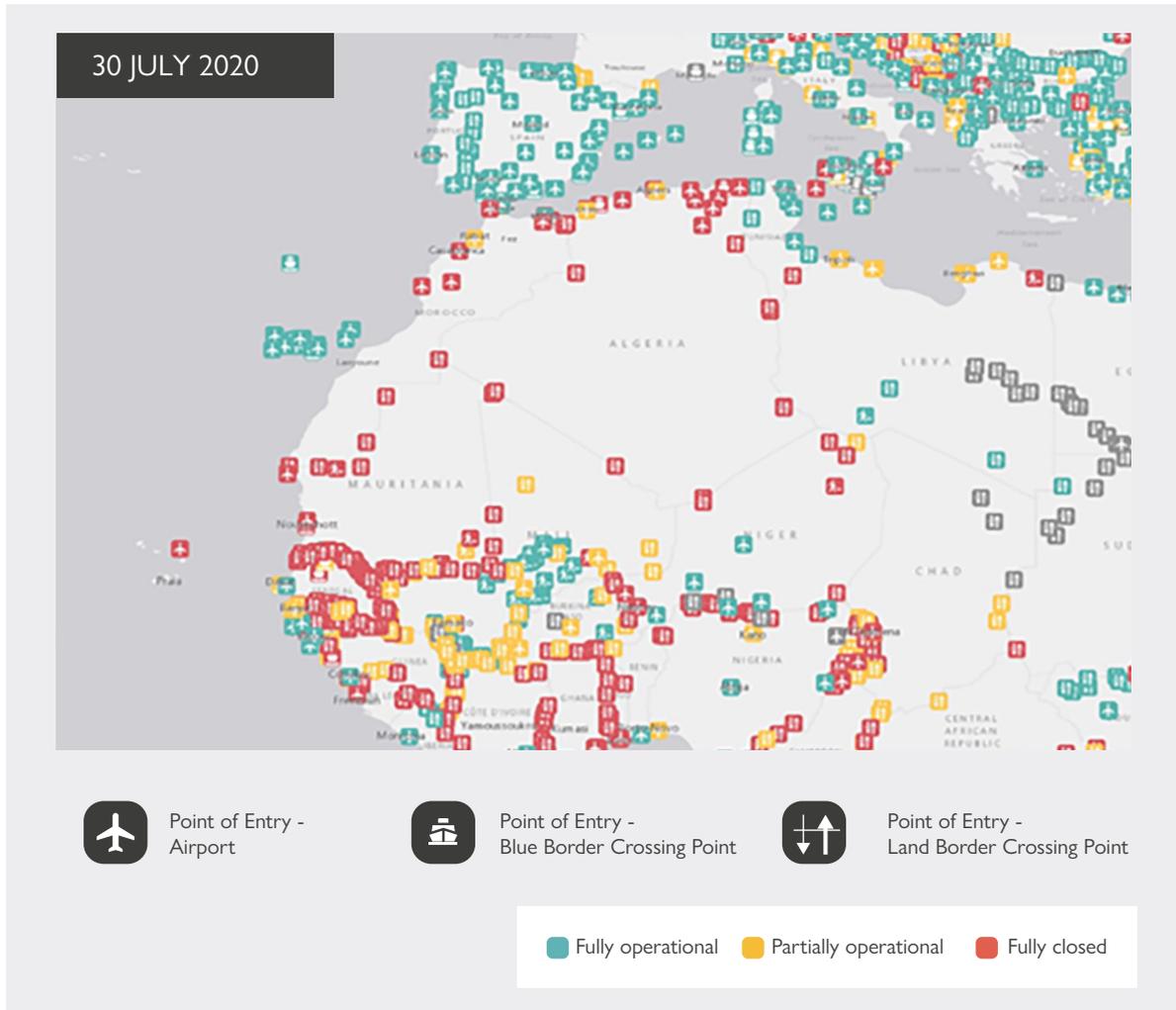
In the months following the introduction of mobility restrictions starting in March 2020, overall flows in West and North Africa and from these regions to Europe appear to have decreased. While movements are difficult to monitor due to the fast-evolving situation, data collected by the Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR) of IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) show a decrease of flows registered through key transit points in West and Central Africa between March and May 2020.<sup>4</sup> Between February and March 2020, the decrease was 14 per cent; between March and April, it was 40 per cent; between January and May, flows had decreased by 39 per cent. However, starting from May, flows increased again, by 65 per cent during the first month and by 29 per cent from May to June. According to FMR data, internal flows appeared to have increased more rapidly (by 153% between April and May, and by 33 per cent between May and June) than cross-border movements, which increased by 28 per cent the first months and by 25 per cent the last month, in line with persistent closures of international borders and progressive lifting of restrictions on internal mobility (IOM, 2020f, 2020g).

**Figure 2.** Situation of Points of Entry (PoEs) along the Central Mediterranean Route – 30 May and 30 July 2020



<sup>3</sup> The authors are grateful to the DTM team for comments and suggestions on this section.

<sup>4</sup> Due to mobility restrictions and the spread of the pandemic, DTM has put on hold FMRs in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Senegal. Data presented here refer only to Chad, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria. For further information on DTM’s methodology and the generalizability of findings, see Fargues, Chapter 2 of this volume.



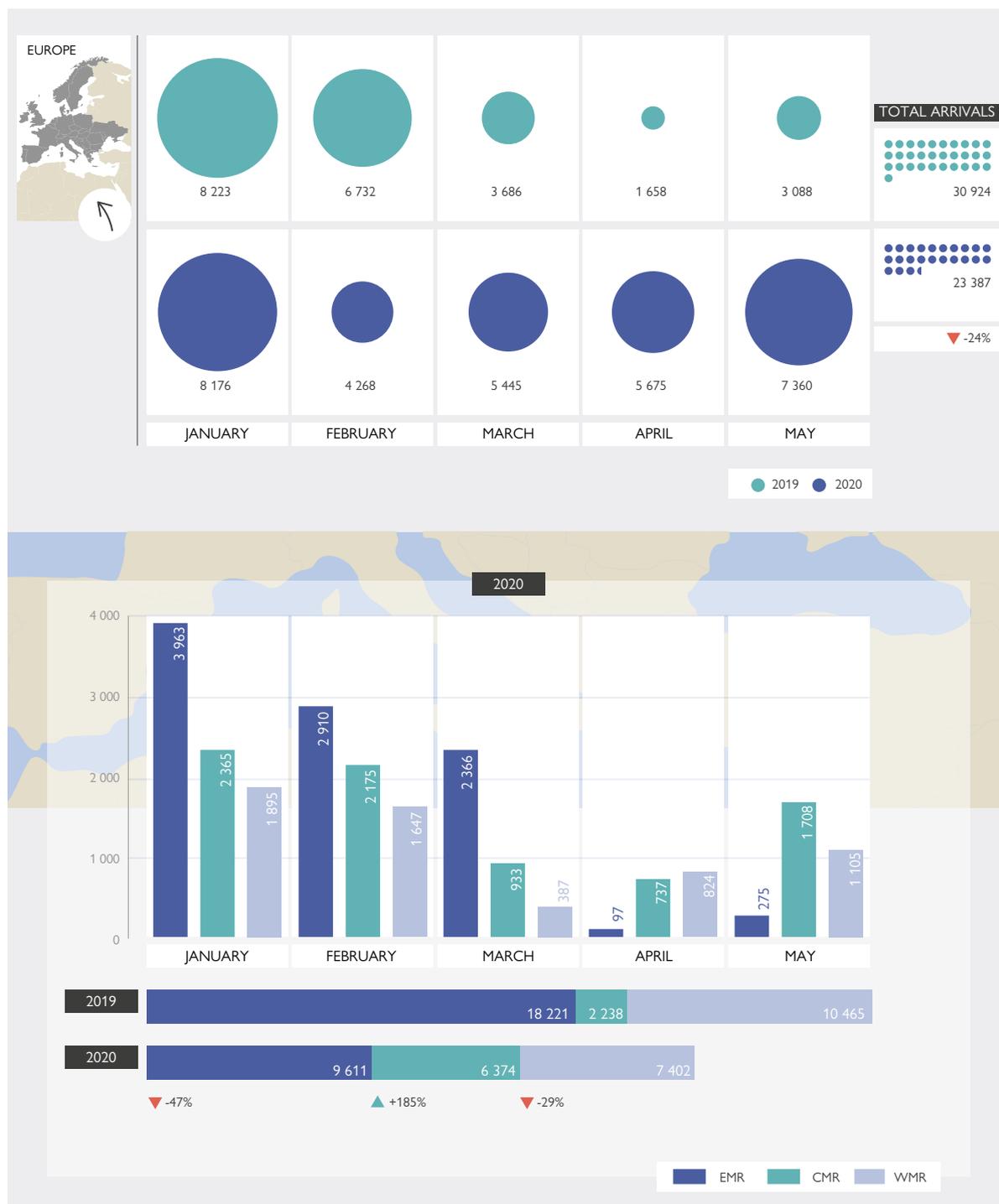
Source: Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), IOM, 2020.

Note: These maps are for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

During the first six months of 2020, estimated overall irregular arrivals to Europe appeared to have decreased by 25 per cent compared with the same period in 2019, when irregular arrivals were already much lower than in previous years. Arrivals of migrants travelling along the Eastern Mediterranean Route (EMR) and the Western Mediterranean Route (WMR) appeared to have decreased by 48 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively. However, arrivals on the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) increased in the first six months of 2020 compared with the same time period in 2019, when numbers were very low compared with previous years. According to DTM data, arrivals to Italy increased by 150 per cent and arrivals to Malta increased by 33 per cent. In fact, arrivals to Italy and Malta were lower than in 2019 only in March, but started increasing again in April (see Figure 3). Registered arrivals in Europe along the EMR and the WMR started increasing again in May 2020, as well; however, increases on the EMR have been slower (IOM, 2020h; Frontex, 2020). Such differences are likely to result from a combination of factors, including variations in COVID-19-related mobility restrictions, increased violence in the Sahel region and stricter patrolling at the Greek border. While this edited volume focuses primarily on international migration and mobility, internal flows have also been affected by mobility restrictions and lockdowns.

Migrant stocks in countries in West and North Africa and Europe may have remained relatively stable during the past months, also due to travel restrictions and related difficulties for migrants to return to their countries of origin.

**Figure 3.** Arrivals to Europe by sea, 2019 and 2020



Source: IOM, 2020.

As a result of mobility restrictions within countries and across borders, migrants who were unable to move further or to return to their countries of origin have become stranded. In West and Central Africa, DTM counted 50,000 stranded migrants at international borders and in quarantine and transit centres as of the end of June 2020 (IOM, 2020g). In some cases, governmental forced-return operations (for example, of Libya and Algeria) have left migrants stranded in the desert (IOM, 2020; see also Black, Chapter 12 of this volume). Restrictions affected persons moving within and beyond West and North Africa, including labour migrants, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, international students, traders and visitors. Further measures to respond to the pandemic, such as lockdowns

and restrictions to social and economic activities, are also affecting migrants' current and future ability to move, in particular by limiting their access to work opportunities and other resources that may allow them to finance onward mobility. The vast majority of migrants interviewed by MMC in West and North Africa report that the pandemic has impacted their ability to continue the journey (MMC, 2020b).

Border closures and increased mobility restrictions can be assumed to have had an impact on irregular migration patterns. Routes may have become more remote and hazardous, particularly across the Sahara Desert, where travel conditions are precarious and access to health facilities lacking. While migration across the Mediterranean Sea continued, key countries of arrival, such as Italy and Malta, declared their ports unsafe for disembarkation. Approximately 500 migrants remained stranded on boats off the Maltese coast for weeks, when they were allowed to disembark due to deteriorating health conditions. Other migrants arriving to Italy had to spend quarantine periods on boats rented by the national authorities. Meanwhile, interception at sea and disembarkation in Libya and Tunisia continued. Disembarkation in Libya, in particular, increased by 60 per cent in the first five months of 2020 compared with the same period in 2019, despite growing political unrest in the country and IOM's call to end the return of migrants to Libya (IOM, 2020e). On 29 July, three migrants were shot dead by Libyan authorities as they were trying to escape while being disembarked in Khums.<sup>5</sup> In June 2020, 1,496 migrants were disembarked in Libya, compared with 1,333 in June 2019 (IOM, 2020b). Non-governmental organizations search and rescue operations were suspended from April until the beginning of June 2020.

The Central Mediterranean remains the deadliest maritime crossing in the world: the number of registered fatalities – which had decreased in April and May compared with the same period in 2019, in line with a decreased number of arrivals – grew again in the first weeks of June, reaching 98, compared with 27 fatalities registered on the CMR in the same period in 2019. The mortality rate has, however, decreased from 4.17 per cent in the first six months of 2019 to 1.48 per cent in the first six months of 2020 on the CMR. Meanwhile, the mortality rate of all Mediterranean crossings decreased from 1.07 per cent in the first six months of 2019 to 0.81 per cent in the first six months of 2020.<sup>6</sup> However, increased difficulties in collecting data on migrant fatalities in 2020 may lead to an underestimation of these tragedies (IOM, 2020a).

Refugee resettlement operations carried out by IOM, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other partners were put on hold from May to mid-June due to mobility restrictions, except for emergency cases. Within the European Union, relocation operations were also mostly suspended, with the exception of relocations of migrants disembarked in Malta, and of unaccompanied migrants from the Greek Aegean Islands.

Some countries – such as France, Spain and Germany – have delayed or reduced forced return operations, partially in line with the call of the United Nations Network on Migration (2020) to suspend them during the pandemic, whereas others, such as Libya and Algeria, have continued to carry them out, including by returning migrants to the desert. Other countries have granted visa extensions and temporary amnesties to migrant workers. Spontaneous return and assisted voluntary return operations, including of stranded migrants or migrants particularly affected by the pandemic, have also been hindered by mobility restrictions, but increasingly resumed since May 2020.

## 2. COVID-19, migration and risks

Travel and social restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic have had multiple impacts on the lives and journeys of migrants. Impacts may vary widely, depending on migrants' legal status and socioeconomic characteristics. As was the case during previous crises (see IOM, 2011), migrants with regular status, better employment and housing conditions, skills recognized in countries of destination, better language skills, better access to information and supporting social networks are likely to be less exposed to the short- and long-term negative effects of the pandemic, such as health risks, livelihood crises, unemployment, worsening labour conditions and stigmatization. This is true

<sup>5</sup> See [www.iom.int/news/iom-deplores-killing-two-migrants-returned-sea-libya](https://www.iom.int/news/iom-deplores-killing-two-migrants-returned-sea-libya).

<sup>6</sup> All data used for these calculations, including notes on data issues, are available for download from [missingmigrants.iom.int/downloads](https://missingmigrants.iom.int/downloads). For the calculation of mortality rates in the context of migration journeys, see Dearden et al., 2020.

both for migrants in transit and in countries of destination. Migrants living in camps and camp-like settings, reception centres and dormitories face greater risks, as they are less able to adopt protection measures against the virus and often lack access to adequate health care.

According to data collected by the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi) of the MMC (2020a, 2020b),<sup>7</sup> 57 per cent of migrants and refugees interviewed from 6 to 20 May in North Africa and 47 per cent of respondents in West Africa reported having suffered losses of income due to the pandemic. From 21 May to 8 June, these percentages had decreased to, respectively, 49 and 40 per cent of respondents in West and North Africa. This has affected their ability to afford basic goods, continue their journeys and send remittances back home. High percentages of respondents also said that they experienced reduced access to work opportunities (approximately 60 and 65%, respectively), higher stress levels (approximately 55 and 50%, respectively) and a reduced availability of basic goods (approximately 55 and 25%, respectively). In Libya, assessments of the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic on vulnerable populations on the move conducted by DTM Libya corroborate these findings, with rising unemployment being identified as one of the major risk factors that increase vulnerability of migrants to harm and create negative humanitarian consequences (IOM, 2020j). In 95 per cent of assessed locations, migrants who rely on daily labour opportunities were reported to have been negatively affected due to COVID-19-induced slowdown in economic activities, while rising levels of food insecurity among migrants were also observed as a result. Apart from the economic slowdown in Libya, mobility restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the pandemic further contributed to decreasing migrants' access to livelihood opportunities by limiting their mobility. In West and North Africa and in Europe, such losses of income, together with school closures, may worsen migrants' general living conditions and increase the exposure of vulnerable migrants and their families to age- and gender-specific risks, such as child labour and child marriages. Stigmatization and discrimination from national institutions and local communities also appear to have increased, worldwide and in these regions (IOM, 2020c).

The ability to respect safety measures and access health care in case of need is essential during a pandemic. However, according to MMC data (2020a), between 6 and 20 May, less than 50 and 40 per cent of respondents in West and North Africa, respectively, reported that they were able to respect the 1.5 m distancing rule. During the weeks in which lockdown measures were implemented, only a minority of respondents in West Africa reported that they were able to stay at home to protect themselves. In the period from 21 May to 8 June, the number of people reporting staying at home had fallen from 54 per cent during the period from 6 to 20 May, to 36 per cent in North Africa, and from 8 per cent to 4 per cent in West Africa. Access to health care remains challenging in these regions, based on available evidence. Less than 25 and 55 per cent of respondents in West and North Africa, respectively, believed that they could have access to health care in case of need. Lack of money and information, discrimination against foreigners and fear of being reported in case of irregular status are the main barriers to accessing health services, based on MMC data. Migrants living in poor housing conditions, such as camps and camp-like settings, are particularly exposed to overcrowding, inadequate sanitation, poor nutrition and limited access to health-care facilities. This also heightens their risk of contracting and spreading the virus: according to IOM preliminary evidence (2020d), reports of confirmed cases in these environments are on the rise.

Furthermore, most migrants and refugees interviewed by MMC (2020b) reported needing extra assistance, particularly in terms of cash (as indicated by approximately 85 per cent of respondents in the two regions between 21 May and 8 June) but also of food, water and shelter, and of protective equipment (sanitizers, masks and gloves). However, at the beginning of June, less than 30 per cent of respondents reported having received the extra assistance they needed.

Measures adopted to contain the COVID-19 pandemic had and will most probably continue having an impact on migrant smuggling. In the short term, irregular migration movements – including those facilitated by smugglers – may have decreased due to mobility restrictions. However, available evidence indicates that, while migrant smuggling by air has nearly stopped during the pandemic, migrant smuggling by land and sea continues (EMSC, 2020). Some cases of “reverse smuggling” from countries of destination or transit to countries of origin have also been reported.<sup>8</sup> People's need to move is likely to continue feeding the demand for smuggling services, and smuggling operations will probably

<sup>7</sup> Respondents interviewed by 4Mi between 6 April and 8 June included 1,886 in North Africa and 1,129 in West Africa. For more information on the methodology of 4Mi and the generalizability of findings, see Fargues, Chapter 2 of this volume, and the following link: [www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/4mi\\_fa/](http://www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/4mi_fa/).

<sup>8</sup> See <https://elpais.com/espana/2020-04-23/mas-de-5000-euros-por-escapar-de-espana-en-patera.html> (in Spanish).

continue to adapt to changing obstacles and circumstances. However, smuggling conditions are predicted to worsen in line with increased border control measures and travel restrictions; more remote and dangerous routes are likely to be chosen and prices, as well as the risk of exploitation, can be expected to increase (Sanchez and Achilli, 2020).

### 3. COVID-19, migration and development

Travel restrictions, lockdowns and quarantine measures have had a significant impact on economic activities in all countries. They have also led to a global recession, which is likely to generate higher unemployment and exacerbate poverty globally. Previous economic crises have shown that migrant workers are more exposed than native-born workers to short- and long-term consequences of downturns, such as unemployment and wage declines (World Bank, 2020). Clearly, migrants with different characteristics will be affected differently. Migrants who have arrived more recently, or those with irregular status, worse employment conditions and limited access to information or support networks are more likely to face income declines and a deterioration of their living conditions. Also, the COVID-19 pandemic has so far particularly affected sectors with a high concentration of migrant workers, such as the tourism and hospitality industry. Furthermore, social safety measures adopted by governments to mitigate the impact of job losses often do not include migrants and returnees, particularly if they had been working in the informal sector. Migrants whose work permits will expire risk losing their residence status and being returned to their countries of origin. At the same time, current travel restrictions are hindering migrants to return home temporarily to reduce their living expenses. In this sense, COVID-19 may act as “an amplifier of existing inequalities” (Crawley, 2020).

Migrants significantly contribute to the resilience of their household and community members living in other countries, through financial and non-financial remittances. In times of crisis, remittances often act as an insurance mechanism, allowing households to compensate losses of income due to economic or other shocks. They therefore tend to be countercyclical and to increase with downturns in recipient countries (Frankel, 2009). However, as the current crisis is likely to be more severe than previous ones, and to simultaneously affect countries of origin, transit and destination, migrants will likely find it harder to send remittances. Approximately 35 per cent of migrants interviewed in West and North Africa between 21 May and 8 June reported such difficulties (MMC, 2020b). This is particularly worrying given that remittances could help households to cope with the effects of the pandemic, such as income losses in countries of origin and health services costs. Lower remittance transfers are also likely to negatively impact livelihoods and health and education outcomes in countries of origin. In addition, the pandemic appears to have exacerbated existing difficulties with regard to remittance transfers, as office closures have made it difficult to send money in person. As was the case during previous crises, transfer costs and foreign exchange rates may also increase (Bisong et al., 2020). While some have greeted this as an opportunity to promote digital transfer services, others have pointed to the lack of bank accounts or mobile Internet access experienced by a relatively high share of receiving households in Africa, and at access challenges related to an irregular migration status (Kalantaryan and McMahon, 2020). Households that are likely to be more impacted by falling remittances are those already experiencing socioeconomic vulnerability, and lower access to financial and digital infrastructure (ibid.).

Migrants also contribute to development in countries of origin, transit and destination (see Quartey, Addoquaye Tagoe and Boatemaa Setrana, Chapter 21 of this volume). During the economic downturn that followed the 2007–2008 financial crisis, remittances proved to be more resilient than initially foreseen. They also appeared to be more resilient than official development assistance and foreign direct investment (Gagnon, 2020). However, the World Bank estimates that – as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequent job losses and wage reductions – remittance flows to sub-Saharan Africa could fall by 23 per cent and remittances to the Middle East and North Africa region by about 20 per cent (World Bank, 2020). More pessimistic estimates underline the fact that these projections are based on falls per worker, whereas overall remittance flows are also likely to be affected by lower migrant numbers due to reduced regular migration opportunities and jobs (Clemens, 2020). At the same time, the relative importance of remittance flows as a source of external financing for West and North African countries is not only already quite high, but also likely to increase. This is because official development assistance and foreign direct

investment can be expected to decline due to several factors, including travel restrictions, investment slowdowns, trade and tourism disruptions and changed priorities for donor countries (World Bank, 2020). Diaspora engagement policies are therefore likely to gain additional relevance.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the dependence of economies in countries of destination on migrant workers, including from West and North Africa. As border closures and lockdown measures were implemented, some European countries, in particular, were faced with the need to adopt measures to facilitate migrants' access to the labour market and their contribution to essential economic sectors, such as health, agriculture and the food industries (IOM, 2020a). While migrant labour needs may decrease in the short term due to the economic downturn, they are likely to increase again in line with longer-term demographic and labour market trends.

## 4. COVID-19 and migration governance

Starting from mid-March, States in West and North Africa have implemented border closures and travel restrictions. At first, such measures were mainly adopted at the national level, but later gained a more transnational and multilateral dimension, with a higher involvement of continental and regional organizations, such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union, as well as international and United Nations agencies, including IOM.

As recalled by the African Union in April (African Union, 2020) and by the United Nations in June 2020 (United Nations, 2020), finding a balance between the need to restrict movements across countries and the importance of preserving regional agreements and continental agendas on free movement (Schöfberger, Chapter 30 of this volume) – as well as international conventions, regulations and guidelines relevant for people on the move – has been challenging. However, preserving international laws and conventions remains of utmost importance. These include in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the International Health Regulations and the Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster. Equally challenging has been to balance health safety measures with measures intended to preserve formal and informal livelihoods and economies, which in these regions rely heavily on cross-border movements and trade (Bouët and Laborde, 2020).

ECOWAS Member States initially implemented national measures, ranging from travel restrictions to border closures (see Figure 2). However, multilateral regional measures were adopted in the following months: on 18 June 2020, Member States agreed on a gradual reopening of borders by the end of July, and to resume the free movement of goods and people. This would involve in the first instance facilitating internal transport within Member States, then opening land and air borders between them, and finally opening borders to countries with low and controlled levels of COVID-19 contamination (ECOWAS, 2020). In North Africa, as well, States initially implemented travel restrictions and border closures; while regional free movement policies of the Arab Maghreb Union have not yet been implemented in the region, some countries have started negotiating bilateral border openings. In the European Union, travel restrictions and border closures were first adopted at the national level, including a temporary suspension of the Schengen Agreement, followed soon after by a more coordinated closure of the European Union external border. Whereas most member States had reopened their borders for intra-European Union travels by 15 June, borders remain closed with most extra-European Union States. The Commission then recommended a common approach to the gradual reopening of the European Union external borders to 15 countries – including Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia – from 1 July.

In the longer term, combining national approaches with transnational and multilateral approaches on migration may become more challenging. COVID-19 and migration are transnational in nature, and related opportunities and challenges simultaneously affect multiple countries and regions, requiring transnational approaches. However, diversified impacts of the pandemic on national societies and economies may lead to wider divergencies in migration-related priorities for States within regions, and further hinder the identification of shared approaches on migration that are currently being negotiated at the level of the African Union, ECOWAS, Arab Maghreb Union and European Union. In this way, it may reinforce current trends towards tightening border controls.

The impact of COVID-19-related measures on migrants, as described in the previous sections, has relevant policy implications, as it reveals the consequences of longer-term dynamics and structural trends. The pandemic has impacted and will continue impacting migrants' journeys, the risks they are exposed to, and their ability to contribute to resilience and development. As a matter of fact, travel restrictions and border controls have disproportionately affected migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, among other vulnerable groups (Sanchez and Achilli, 2020). Longer-term socioeconomic consequences of the crisis are also expected to affect them more strongly (ILO, 2020). The pandemic has also brought to light the cost of poor socioeconomic integration of migrants in countries of destination and transit: this includes often inadequate access to health care and social security services (Gagnon, 2020). As illustrated above, less than 25 and 55 per cent of respondents in West and North Africa, respectively, believed that they could have access to health care (MMC, 2020b). Access to health care has also been a long-standing challenge for undocumented migrants in Europe.

The pandemic has also revealed the need for better inclusion of international labour standards and the needs and rights of migrant workers in bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks, involving countries of origin and destination of migrants, as well as the need for social dialogue and full involvement of employers' and workers' organizations in the development of COVID-19 responses (ILO, 2020).

In recent months, it has appeared clear that limited availability of comprehensive, timely and disaggregated data can hinder the identification of targeted policy and programmatic measures – for example, with regard to consular assistance to nationals abroad.

The current crisis has raised awareness of the fact that risks and missed opportunities of policies penalizing migrants affect not only migrants themselves, but also societies at large. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that, while unequal access to health care (Milan and Cunnoosamy, 2020), bad housing conditions and crowded workplaces may affect some more severely, they also imply risks for all. Labour market access barriers for migrants and poor employment conditions, such as inadequate recognition of skills and lack of social assistance, stifle migrants' economic contributions in countries of transit and destination, and limit their ability to support their communities in countries of origin. While countries such as Italy and Portugal have adopted temporary regularization measures for migrants with irregular status, more comprehensive and longer-term policy measures are needed. Such measures would also contribute to support migrants as transnational resilience and development actors. Ultimately, the current crisis shows that migrants' rights are for the benefit of all.

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# KEY MIGRATION TRENDS



Truck packed with migrants heading to Libya  
crosses Agadez, Niger. © IOM 2016/Amanda  
NERO

## Key Migration Trends

### Introduction

West and North Africa comprise in total 10.4 million immigrants and 21.8 million emigrants, representing respectively 1.6 per cent and 3.4 per cent of their 633.2 million inhabitants in 2019, according to United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs estimates.<sup>1</sup> This overall level of international migration is relatively low (inward) or moderate (outward) compared with a world ratio of migrants to population estimated at 3.5 per cent. Being an average, however, it hides important variations between the two regions and between countries within each region.<sup>2</sup>

In North Africa, the three central Maghreb countries – Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia – are mostly migrant senders, and their emigrants, representing between 4.5 and 8.6 per cent of their populations, are mainly destined for Europe. Foreign migrants on their territory, many of them coming from West Africa as long-term settlers, are in small numbers. Libya displays the opposite pattern. Despite the political chaos and civil war, it remains a destination for hundreds of thousands of migrants employed locally. Its own nationals continue to have a low propensity to migrate abroad, despite intense internal displacement. In all these countries, a relatively small share of migrants aims to transit to Europe, contrary to popular prejudices.

West African countries are at the same time origin and destination countries of mostly intraregional and often temporary migration. Returning nationals represent a high proportion of inward migration every year and most countries have a low migratory balance. Burkina Faso and Mali emerge as key emigration countries, and Côte d'Ivoire as a major destination country. Since its independence six decades ago, Côte d'Ivoire has continuously been a magnet for migrants originating in the entire West African region and beyond, except during the years of political and civil turmoil in the early 2000s.

This section looks at key migration trends within, between and from West and North Africa.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). North Africa includes Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Sudan and Tunisia; and West Africa includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria, Saint Helena, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that these are estimates of international migrant stocks, based on national census statistics, which in the case of countries in this region can be several years old. These figures cannot reflect the dynamics of cross-country migration and undocumented and short-term migratory movements.

The main reasons for migrating, as recorded among migrants interviewed in North and West Africa – whether in destination, transit or origin countries – are job-seeking, family and study. Fleeing conflict, political insecurity and persecution, and searching international protection, do not emerge as frequent causes. By contrast, the need for protection is the most common motive declared by African migrants who arrived irregularly in Europe after having crossed the Mediterranean Sea. The discrepancy between reasons given in North and West Africa and in Europe may be a sign that asylum seekers have no choice but to travel clandestinely to countries where they can lodge claims. It also underscores the prevalence of mixed migration along these routes, and how migration reasons and plans may change during the journey due to conditions faced in countries along the route. Although migrants' initial motivations to leave their countries of origin may have been of a different nature, facing violence and abuse in transit or first destination countries may lead them to cross the Mediterranean to seek protection in Europe.

Despite progress in the last decade, there is an acute deficit of statistics and empirical evidence on migration and related issues in West and North Africa. This limits the possibility of reaching a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the migration dynamics at play and to inform effective policymaking. In the 10 chapters of this section, authors draw from the available evidence – produced as part of the programme Safety, Support and Solutions on the Central Mediterranean Route, funded by the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and beyond – to describe migration patterns and trends in North and West Africa and across the Mediterranean.

Population censuses of the 2010s are the main source of solid knowledge on both immigration and emigration in countries that have included specific questions on absent members of households. Censuses provide total numbers, but they capture only the most basic individual characteristics of migrants, at best. Moreover, they provide a minimal description of migrant stocks at the date of the census, but very little on flows and nothing on trends. Administrative routines, which are potentially the richest source of data on migrant flows and migrants' conditions, are not regularly collected or processed (Fargues, Chapter 1 of this volume).

In this context, the continuous flow of first-hand data collected on the ground by IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and the Mixed Migration Centre's (MMC's) Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi) bring a crucial contribution to the quantitative knowledge of mobility, displacement and migration in North and West Africa, and on the route. They also provide unique insights on topics such as migrants' protection deficits, vulnerable groups, irregular migration and smuggling practices, among others. DTM's and 4Mi's publications and open access databases allow users to follow changes in real time and thereby to potentially monitor the effects of policies on migration and migrants. Next steps should consist of addressing sources of potential bias and increasing efforts to integrate operational and statistical data (Fargues, Chapter 2 of this volume).

Over the past few years, social media and other non-traditional data sources have emerged as potential complementary sources of information on migration-related patterns and trends. Freely available data from the Facebook advertising platform, for instance, allow to distribute Facebook users by countries of origin and residence, and estimate the immigrant stock in African countries at 10.5 million, of whom 5 million originated in other African countries (Rampazzo and Weber, Chapter 3 of this volume).

During 2016–2019, major shifts have been observed in the volume and itineraries of migration flows across the Mediterranean. Sea routes of irregular migration from Africa to Europe change fast, in response to risks, obstacles and opportunities. Risks and obstacles (such as arrest, detention and deportation) are present in Africa before the crossing, at sea (including border guard patrols in Libyan waters and shipwreck) and after the crossing upon disembarkation in Europe. Opportunities include weather conditions and smugglers' anticipation that rescue will take place. Migrants and smugglers constantly adapt to policies adopted by the European Union and African countries to bypass obstacles. While the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) had become the most active from April 2016 (due to the effective closure of the Eastern Mediterranean Route following the European Union–Turkey statement) until the end of 2017, the years 2018–2019 were marked by a shift from the CMR leading to Italy and Malta to the Western Mediterranean Route (WMR) to Spain, and ultimately a reactivation of the Eastern Mediterranean Route (EMR) towards Greece in 2019 (Fedorova and Shupert, Chapter 4 of this volume).

Despite the civil war that has afflicted the country since 2014, Libya still attracts large numbers of migrant workers. Indeed, most of the approximately 650,000 migrants present in the country at mid-2019 according to DTM intended to stay in the country, and only a few intended to reach Europe. They travelled to Libya for job opportunities offered by its labour markets, attracted by the relatively high salaries and the prospects of sending remittances back to their families. This applies in particular to those originating in four of Libya's neighbouring countries – Egypt, the Sudan, the Niger and Chad – representing 62 per cent of Libya's total immigrant stock. Moreover, DTM evidence suggests that the longer migrants stay in Libya, the better their conditions in terms of employment and ability to send remittances to their home countries. Yet, independently of length of stay, migrants generally report poor access to health and other services, and a deficit of protection against risks related to the conflict in Libya, aggravated by their irregular status (Teppert, Cottone and Rossi, Chapter 5 of this volume).

Irregular migrant status and informal employment are typical in countries along the CMR. All States have adopted laws to penalize migrants in irregular situation, migrant smuggling and human trafficking, although not all of them have implemented these laws in the same way. As of 2018, migrants' forced returns from Algeria to the Niger have gained momentum, following Algeria's increased enforcement of Law 08-11 of 2008 regulating the entry, stay and circulation of foreign nationals. While some of these migrants are from the Niger, others come from other parts of Africa and find themselves temporarily in the Niger on their way back to their countries. Meanwhile, numbers of migrants entering the Niger en route to Europe decreased as a result of the Niger's enforcement of Law 2015-36 punishing migrant smuggling and trafficking of migrants. Considerable shifts have since taken place in the direction, size and composition of migrant flows to, through and from the Niger (Yuen, Chapter 6 of this volume).

Aspiring migrants from Africa are still less likely than other migrants to migrate to their preferred international migration destinations. Of those who have a desire to migrate, very few make concrete plans to do so, and very few of those planning to migrate to Europe are likely to do so. Migrants from North Africa are generally more likely to realize their migration plans than migrants from West Africa, and migrants' socioeconomic characteristics, migration policies and changing opportunities have an impact on aspiring migrants' will and possibilities to translate their migration plans into reality (Schöfberger, Acostamiedo, Borgnäs and Rango, Chapter 7 of this volume).

Big data may also offer a solution to the emerging demand by governments to be able to anticipate future migration trends. Migration to seek international protection is the most volatile, and if it were possible to anticipate such flows, receiving States and local communities could better prepare responses to emergencies. The Push Factor Index (PFI) is an innovative tool developed by the European Asylum Support Office for monitoring situations conducive to forced migration in countries with poor or no statistics on the topic. This is built by combining a global database of printed and electronic media reports on conflict and other sources of displacement in origin countries with administrative data on asylum in destination countries. A high correlation was found between push events in Libya and asylum applications in Italy before the closure of the sea route between the two countries in 2018–2019. However, further applications of the PFI are recommended to assess the robustness of this methodology and its applicability to a variety of contexts (Melachrinou, Carammia and Wilkin, Chapter 8 of this volume).

Mobility is and has historically been at the core of the economic, social and cultural practices in the Sahara and the Sahel. Shepherds, livestock farmers and traders are on the move today as in the past. Transhumance is a traditional activity involving the use of larger spaces to offset land aridity and climatic hazards. The large territories it has covered from time immemorial in West Africa now span several sovereign States. Looking at long-standing transhumance movements within Mauritania and across its borders, it appears these have much in common and also overlap with more recent migratory movements within the region, for instance to Mali and Senegal, and beyond it, such as to other States in Africa, the Gulf States and Europe (Lungarotti and Godde, Chapter 9 of this volume). Conflicts that may erupt between transhumant shepherds and sedentary farmers have therefore become a contentious issue in modern West African States. To address these tensions and regulate pastoralism, shepherds' associations of West and Central Africa and IOM have established a Transhumance Tracking Tool (Jusselme, Chapter 10 of this volume).



DATA

## 1.

# Migration measurement along the Central Mediterranean Route: sources of data

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**Abstract:** This chapter inventories the state of knowledge on international migration from, to and through each of the 12 countries of the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR), with a focus on the last two decades. What national statistics tell us about numbers and profiles of international migrants in West Africa and the Maghreb, whether they are bound for Europe or not, is its core question. Migration data in North and West Africa primarily come from population censuses. Censuses provide a relatively detailed picture of immigrant and, in some cases, emigrant stocks, but little or nothing on migrant flows. Moreover, they hardly contain any information about the legal status of migrants, their working and living conditions, strategies, needs and vulnerabilities. Key findings emerge from this review: Maghreb countries are mainly migrant senders, with Europe as an overwhelming destination. Libya, which remains a destination and transit country, is an exception. By contrast, West African States are at the same time migrant senders and receivers, with a salient pattern of intraregional circular migration. Côte d'Ivoire stands out as a magnet for labour migrants originating from the whole of West Africa and beyond. Key recommendations include efforts to further develop administrative sources of data, which are the only means to continuously monitor migratory movements as well as migrants' characteristics, and the continuation of operational data collection systems, such as the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi), to inform about the circulation of people and their lived situations.

## 1.1. Introduction

This volume covers international migration in North and West Africa and across the Mediterranean Sea. Migrants who reach Europe by regular means are covered by administrative records of European States and their relatively efficient system of public statistics. With the development of search and rescue operations at high sea and tightened control of the Italian and Maltese shores, flows of irregular trans-Mediterranean migration are also relatively well known in terms of size and composition, except for those who do not reach Europe because they were returned to Africa or died at sea. But what do we know about the much larger numbers of international migrants, bound for Europe or not, in West Africa and the Maghreb? This is what this chapter is about.

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The chapter is organized as follows: Section 1.2 briefly reviews the challenges of migration measurement in North and West African countries; sections 1.3 and 1.4 describe the state of knowledge on migration in the 2000s and 2010s, respectively, in North and West African countries, excluding the results of the DTM and the 4Mi, which are the topic of Chapter 2. The chapter's conclusion proposes directions for using existing data and suggestions for improving data collection systems.

## 1.2. Migration as a challenge to statistics

While the United Nations has recommended universal definitions for international migration<sup>2</sup> and an international migrant,<sup>3</sup> States may have their own visions and adapt the United Nations definitions accordingly. As a general rule, border crossing, followed by a certain duration of stay, defines migration, while several variables may be used to define a migrant: country of birth in the first instance, but also country of citizenship, country of last residence and duration of stay. Other important elements are the motivation for leaving one's country to differentiate voluntary and forced migrants (or refugees), and the status regarding entry and stay, which can be regular or irregular.

Due to its nature, migration poses a challenge to data collection and analysis. The classical problems national statistical offices and other administrations face include the following, all of them highly relevant in West and North African contexts:

- Distinguishing between migrants and travellers: Duration of stay may not be known at entry; moreover, transit migrants are conceptually difficult to define and therefore to count.
- Observing and counting emigrants, who by definition are not physically present in their countries of origin: Three imperfect solutions can be available: using consular records of migrants' origin countries; using immigration statistics of migrants' destination countries; or asking questions in population censuses or surveys about (former) members of the household who currently reside abroad.
- Estimating irregular migration: Because migrants in irregular situation tend to go under-recorded in administrative systems, estimating their numbers and characteristics is difficult.
- Estimating circular, seasonal and temporary migrants whom systems of data collection (such as censuses and administrative records) are likely to miss.
- Following up on migrants: Because migrants move from one country to another, statistics on migrants are produced from data collected by uncoordinated administrations of different States.

Sources of migration data in West and North Africa can include population censuses (which are conducted every 10 years and therefore miss temporary migration that takes place between two consecutive censuses), ad hoc surveys and border statistics.

Migration as well as interest in the topic are not new in West and North Africa. The two regions have traditionally been sources and destinations of significant migratory movements. Moreover, from time immemorial, trans-Saharan migration has linked the Sahel and the Maghreb with each other. The attention such movements have gained in recent decades – when Libya became successively a key destination for migrant workers then a hub for mostly irregular trans-Mediterranean migration from Africa to Europe – is in several regards the continuation of a long history.

Academic research on migration in Africa is not new either. It counts several important contributions to its credit. Yet there is still a deficit of quantitative knowledge. The classical tools on which such knowledge draws – population censuses of each country, which provide data on inward migration; population censuses of destinations countries, the aggregation of which provides data on outward migration; a variety of administrative routines; and ad hoc surveys – have delivered very little on migration levels, trends and patterns in Africa.

<sup>2</sup> The United Nations defines the "international migrant stock [as] the number of people living in a country or area other than that in which they were born" (UN DESA, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> The United Nations defines an international migrant "as any person who changes his or her country of usual residence. A person's country of usual residence is that in which the person ... normally spends the daily period of rest" (UN DESA, 1998).

This chapter presents a succinct review of migration facts and data in countries along African routes to the Mediterranean in the 2000s and 2010s. A contrast emerges between increasingly available statistical data in certain countries (especially Morocco and Tunisia) and persisting deficits of knowledge in others (such as Libya and Côte d'Ivoire). A number of factors explain these differences, pertaining to the countries themselves (statistical systems and political visions of migration) but also to their migrants' destination countries, the only ones where direct observation of emigration is possible. In addition to national data, which are of varying quantity and quality, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) databases offer estimates on a set of standardized indexes for all countries, including an origin–destination matrix of migrant stocks, but sources and methodologies are not equally reliable in all countries.

**Table 1.1.** Migrant stocks in countries along African routes to the Mediterranean – Most recent international and national statistics

Country	Population mid-2019 (thousands)	Inward		Outward	
		Country's data	UN DESA estimates 2019	Country's data	UN DESA estimates 2019
Algeria	43 053	95 000 (2008)	249 075	961 850 (2012)	1 944 784
Burkina Faso	20 321	689 055 (2006)	718 338	n/a	1 581 083
Côte d'Ivoire	25 717	5 490 222 (2014)	2 549 141	n/a	1 114 003
Gambia	2 348	110 705 (2013)	215 406	n/a	118 483
Guinea	12 771	162 114 (2014)	120 642	n/a	530 963
Libya	6 777	187 372 (2012)	818 216	n/a	180 586
Mali	19 658	313 354 (2009)	468 230	n/a	1 264 700
Mauritania	4 526	704 334 (2013)	172 987	47 149 (2013)	128 506
Morocco	36 472	84 001 (2017)	98 574	3 371 979 (2012)	3 136 069
Niger	23 311	123 886 (2012)	294 161	186 000 (2011)	401 653
Senegal	16 296	244 953 (2013)	275 239	n/a	642 654
Tunisia	11 695	n/a	57 455	1 098 200 (2009)	813 213

Sources: Country's data: national statistical offices (see footnotes); UN DESA estimates: UN DESA, 2019.

Looking at country data (Table 1.1), Maghreb countries appear as mainly migrant senders (with the exception of Libya) and West African countries as both significant migrant senders and receivers (of predominantly return migrants, as we shall see below). Côte d'Ivoire distinguishes itself by an exceptionally high number of immigrants, representing around one fourth of its resident population. Table 1.1 also shows remarkable differences between national data and international estimates. On the one hand, discrepancies between inward migrant stocks as counted by States and UN DESA estimates can differ significantly. On the other hand, a majority of States do not provide official statistics on outward migrants, for the reason that these migrants are not physically present in their countries of origin. UN DESA instead provides statistics for every country, though the basis on which the dominant pattern of Africa-to-Africa migrant stocks is estimated is not described. Sections III and IV below will address successively Maghreb then West African countries.

## 1.3. State of knowledge on migration in the Maghreb

### 1.3.1. Morocco

In 2012, Morocco counted 3,371,979 emigrants according to the country's consular records, and 2,615,637 according to a compilation of destination countries' statistics, representing respectively 10.2 per cent or 7.9 per cent of the country's total population.<sup>4</sup> UN DESA provides an estimate of 3,136,069 for 2019. Consular records show a steady increase in migrant stocks originating from Morocco in the two decades 1993–2012, at an average annual rate of 9.9 per cent, compared with a population growth rate of 2.2 per cent in Morocco (Migration Policy Centre, 2013a). Most Moroccans abroad live in Europe (90.6%), mainly in France (35.4%), Spain (19.9%) and Italy (14.4%). Irregular migration, though much less frequent than regular migration, is a recurrent pattern: between 1981 and 2012, about 445,000 Moroccans were regularized in Belgium, France, Italy and Spain; and from 2008 to 2017, on average 34,227 Moroccans were found each year to be illegally present in the 28 States of the European Union (Eurostat).

Moroccan migrants in Europe have on average a lower than intermediate level of education (59.3%), especially in Italy (76.6%) and Spain (78.6%), and they are employed as low-skilled workers (27% as plant and machine operators, assemblers or elementary occupations; 13% as craft and related trades workers; and 13% as service, shop and market sales workers). In sharp contrast, 51.7 per cent of Moroccan migrants in Northern America have a university education. A national survey in 2019 of 15,076 households in Morocco provides an up-to-date description of Moroccan expatriates (defined as Moroccan nationals 15 years old and over, former members of the household) (Kingdom of Morocco, 2019). It's a predominantly male population (68.3%). Mean age at first emigration was 25.3 years. The proportion unmarried at first emigration was 72.7 per cent, compared with 33.6 per cent at the time of the survey, which means that most marriages were concluded after emigration. At the time of the survey, 33.6 per cent of the migrants had a university level education; the survey does not provide the proportion at the time of first emigration. The main reasons for emigrating were jobseeking (53.7%) and study (24.8%). Migrants are mostly in Europe (86.4%); 64% are employed (males 76%, females 38%); 42.3 per cent remit money, most of them to their fathers and mothers (69.9%); only 3.9% invest in Morocco.<sup>5</sup>

Is Morocco becoming a new destination country, as we often hear? Numbers are not conclusive. In 2012, 77,798 foreign nationals representing a very low 0.2 per cent of Morocco's total population had residence permits. Many were French (29.2%) or Algerians (13.4%), including spouses of Moroccan citizens. To these numbers, one must add uncounted sub-Saharan migrants with irregular status. Unauthorized flows would have culminated in the period 2000–2009, with 136,603 foreign nationals apprehended at Moroccan borders, then decreased to reach small numbers (2,877 in 2009).<sup>6</sup> The Government launched two amnesties, in 2013–2014 and 2017–2018, which regularized around 50,000 sub-Saharan undocumented migrants, representing 85 per cent of all applicants (Morocco World News, Interior Ministry, 2018). Based on the above, one can reasonably assume that there are around 60,000–70,000 sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco. According to the population census of 2014 (unlikely to include migrants in irregular situation), there were 84,001 foreign residents in the country, most of them urban (95.2%); with a male majority (56.5%); 41.6 per cent originating from Africa and 40 per cent from Europe; 47.7 per cent of the households with at least one foreigner have mixed nationalities (Kingdom of Morocco, Haut Commissariat au Plan, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Moroccan consular records and destination countries' statistics (such as population censuses, population registers and register of foreigners), compiled by Migration Policy Centre (2013a).

<sup>5</sup> More than 20 specialized migration studies ([www.hcp.ma/Etudes\\_r161.html](http://www.hcp.ma/Etudes_r161.html)) and surveys ([www.hcp.ma/Enquetes-socio-demographiques\\_r29.html](http://www.hcp.ma/Enquetes-socio-demographiques_r29.html)) have been released by Morocco's Haut-Commissariat au Plan.

<sup>6</sup> Migration Policy Centre (2013a).

### 1.3.2. Algeria

Unlike Morocco, Algeria has very limited statistical resources on migration, both inward and outward. In the early 2010s, aggregating data from destination countries made it possible to estimate emigrants from Algeria at close to 1 million (961,850 in 2012), representing a relatively low 2.6 per cent of the country's total population. UN DESA provides a much higher estimate for 2019: 1,944,784 emigrants, representing 4.5 per cent of Algeria's population. The overwhelming majority of Algerian emigrants (91.2% or 877,398) were residing in the European Union, mainly in France (75.0% of the total). Only Tunisia was a destination in Africa for Algerian migrants (1.0% of the total).<sup>7</sup> Emigration had risen in this period, with annual flows towards France more than doubling between 1994 and 2007 (from 10,911 to 24,041), and numbers of apprehended migrants in irregular situation in the European Union 28 jumped from 335 in 2005 to 19,335 in 2010 and 23,770 in 2016, whether this trend reflects increased irregular migration or tightened control of migrants.

Algerian migrants in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries have an intermediate occupational profile (31% have an employment as technicians or professionals; 24% as craft and related trade workers, or as service and market sale workers; and 14% in elementary occupations). The educational level of Algerians in France substantially increased between 1999 and 2008, with the proportion of individuals with a tertiary education growing from 15.2 per cent to 17.3 per cent and the proportion with secondary education from 28.1 to 37.2 per cent (*ibid.*).

According to the population census of 2008, Algeria was host to 95,000 foreign residents, most of them (80.4%) originating from other Arab countries, and only 10.0 per cent from non-Arab African countries.<sup>8</sup> Migrants from European countries represented 7 per cent of the total. Other data show a different picture, however. From 2001 to 2012, the number of work permits grew from 1,107 to 50,760, mainly delivered to Chinese (41.0%), Egyptians (11.0%) and Turks in the construction and oil sectors. Moreover, Algeria seems to host large numbers of unrecorded sub-Saharan migrants with irregular status working in agriculture, construction and tourism (Bensaad, 2008).

### 1.3.3. Tunisia

Tunisia is a major country of emigration. On the eve of the Jasmine Revolution, Tunisian consulates recorded 1,098,200 Tunisians abroad (2009), representing 10.6 per cent of the country's population. Moreover, their number had been rising at an annual rate of 6.2 per cent, compared with a national population growth rate of 1.1 per cent in the preceding decade. In 2009, 83.0 per cent of Tunisian émigrés lived in Europe, mainly in France (54.5%), Italy (13.9%) and Germany (7.8%). Arab countries came next (14.5%), with the largest share from Libya (7.9%).<sup>9</sup>

Destination countries' statistics provide smaller numbers: 414,077 Tunisians were recorded as residing in the European Union 28 in 2012, and unknown numbers in Libya and other Arab countries. Indeed, second- and third-generation migrants who can claim Tunisian citizenship are included in consular records, but not in migration statistics of destination countries. In the first years of the revolution, outward flows from Tunisia doubled, from 26,085 annual migrants on average in 2005–2010 to 50,391 in 2011–2012. The educational profile of Tunisian migrants also changed, with the proportion of university-educated new migrants rising from 14.1 per cent in 2005–2006 to 22.9 per cent in 2009–2010.

The population census of 2014 provides data on flows of Tunisian emigrants – on their numbers: 66,000 in the five years preceding the census; their destinations: 41.8 per cent to France, 16.1 per cent to Libya, 13.1 per cent to Italy, 7.8 per cent to the Gulf States; on their sex distribution: males represent 83.3 per cent of the total; and their reasons for leaving Tunisia: 73.4 per cent for work, 14.2 per cent for study (two thirds of them children accompanying their parents and one third university students) (*Statistiques Tunisie*, 2016). It is worth noting that irregular migration from Tunisia has always been significant (Bel Haj Zekri, 2008). It increased temporarily with the revolution, as judged by the number of Tunisian nationals found to be illegally present in the European Union 28 rising from 13,895 in 2009 to 24,290 in 2011, then falling to 11,763 in 2016 and 15,920 in 2017 (Eurostat).

<sup>7</sup> Data compiled from statistical offices of the destination countries, Migration Policy Centre (2013b).

<sup>8</sup> Algerian population census (1998 and 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Tunisian consular records for 2004 and 2009 and destination countries' statistics around 2012 compiled by Migration Policy Centre (2013c).

Tunisia is not primarily a migrant receiving country. The population census of 2004 recorded only 35,192 foreign nationals, representing 0.4 per cent of the total population. Sixty per cent of them originated in another Arab country, 27.5 per cent in Europe and 8.6 per cent in non-Arab African countries. As in Algeria, however, sub-Saharan migrants are believed to be in greater numbers, due to irregular migration (Fargues, 2009). Unknown but possibly high numbers of Libyans fleeing chaos in their country would also be living in Tunisia. Publications of the most recent population census (2014) do not provide data on immigration except for Tunisian return migrants: 29,293 in the five preceding years, with 50 per cent returning from France and Italy, 5 per cent from Libya, and 5.3 per cent from Saudi Arabia; 57.3 per cent of returnees were males and 70 per cent had a secondary or higher education (Statistiques Tunisie, 2016).

### 1.3.4. Libya

Little solid national data characterize knowledge on migration in Libya. UN DESA figures continue to place the country as an important destination for migrant workers and a hub for transit migration (inward migrant stock estimated at 818,216 in 2019), while the only available survey conducted a year after the uprisings counted a much smaller number (187,372 in 2012).<sup>10</sup> The year 2011 was certainly a turning point in the history of migration in Libya. Before the removal of Col. Gaddafi, the oil-producing country was a major labour market for migrants originating from Africa and the Arab countries. It was also a country of transit for undocumented migrants on their way to Europe, to such an extent that controlling exits by the Mediterranean was a bargaining chip in Libya's inconsistent relationship with Europe (Hamood, 2006; Fargues, 2013). It is believed that the number of migrants was high, though unknown. A commonly given figure was 600,000 migrant workers with regular status plus between 750,000 and 1.2 million foreign workers in irregular situation (Human Rights Watch, 2006). On the eve of the uprisings, in the absence of any statistical foundation, IOM estimated the total migrant stock in Libya at 2.5 million. During the 2011 crisis, 768,372 foreign migrants fled violence in Libya. Even if we allow the unrealistic hypothesis that these migrants represent all foreign nationals living in Libya before the crisis, Libya can already be defined as a main country of immigration, close to the largest European receiving States in terms of immigrants' share of the total population, at 12 per cent.<sup>11</sup>

The overthrow of the regime and the ensuing political chaos opened a new era in Libya. On one side, the country for the first time experienced a significant emigration of its own citizens, in particular towards Libya's neighbours in North and sub-Saharan Africa (their numbers are unknown). On the other side, Libya has continued to attract international migrants as a destination, but also increasingly as a transit country on the Mediterranean route. The only post-uprisings source of data is a 2012 survey providing, inter alia, the population by nationalities: 5,363,369 Libyans and 187,372 non-Libyans; distributed by sex: males, 138,305, females, 59,067; by group of nationalities: Arabs 152,749, Africans 28,282, Asians 4,903, Americans 59; and by region in Libya.<sup>12</sup> While no one knows the real numbers, due to disorganized and disrupted administrative systems of data collection, UN DESA estimates migrant stocks at 818,216 in 2019. Beyond numbers, political instability has deeply affected the security of migrants in Libya, where reports on their risk of suffering hunger, disease, violence, abuse, exploitation and ultimately death are many.

<sup>10</sup> Libya, Demographic Survey 2012 [Arabic], available at [http://bsc.ly/?P=5&sec\\_id=17&dep\\_id=6#18](http://bsc.ly/?P=5&sec_id=17&dep_id=6#18) (accessed 10 July 2020).

<sup>11</sup> International Organization for Migration, "Humanitarian Emergency Response to the Libyan Crisis," December 5, 2011 ([http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&cPath=41\\_7&products\\_id=750](http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=41_7&products_id=750) [May 2012]).

<sup>12</sup> Libya, Demographic Survey 2012 [Arabic], available at [http://bsc.ly/?P=5&sec\\_id=17&dep\\_id=6#18](http://bsc.ly/?P=5&sec_id=17&dep_id=6#18) (accessed 10 July 2020).

## 1.4. State of knowledge on migration in West Africa

### 1.4.1. Côte d'Ivoire

“Land belongs to who cultivates it”.<sup>13</sup> This slogan launched by President Houphouët-Boigny in 1963 was going to make Côte d'Ivoire a magnet for many hundreds of thousands of West African farmers, in continuation of a decades-old movement of populations from the Sahel to the coastal regions of West Africa in relation with the development of export agriculture and commerce. The country attracted rural families from the neighbouring States of Upper Volta (currently Burkina Faso), Mali and Guinea, and beyond, from the whole region. Migrant farmers were instrumental in developing the strong agricultural sector, notably coffee and cocoa exports, that made the fortune of Côte d'Ivoire in the three decades following its independence in 1960.<sup>14</sup> Table 1.2 shows the remarkably high though slightly declining proportion of foreign nationals, who still represent close to one fourth the population of the country.

Apart from immigrants' outstanding demographic weight, published data of the 2014 census do not provide much information about their origins and profiles. The proportion of foreign nationals who were born in Côte d'Ivoire (second-generation) has steadily increased, from 30.0 per cent in 1975 to 59.0 per cent in 2014, and the proportion of males has reached an almost “normal” level, going from 59 per cent to 55 per cent in the same period (Table 1.2). These are signs that long-term immigration followed by settlement is still a pattern in Côte d'Ivoire. However, the discrepancy between the fast increase in the proportion born in the country and the hardly perceptible decrease in the proportion of foreign nationals is a sign that long-term immigration does not open the door to citizenship as widely as it did in the past. Political events of the early 2000s were linked with nationhood claims, but they do not seem to have stopped immigration as much as full integration of migrants in the citizenry. Based on that, in 2019, close to 9 out of 10 immigrants in the country would come from its five bordering countries: 53.7 per cent from Burkina Faso, 20.5 per cent from Mali, 6.5 per cent from Guinea, 4.4 per cent from Ghana and 1.1 per cent from Liberia.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 1.2.** Côte d'Ivoire, a leading receiver of international migrants – Numbers of foreign nationals at census years

Census year	Total population	Non-Ivorian residents			
		Number	% of all residents	% born in Côte d'Ivoire	% males
1975	6 709 600	1 474 469	22.0%	30.0%	59.3%
1988	10 815 694	3 039 037	28.1%	42.7%	55.8%
1998	15 366 672	4 000 047	26.0%	47.0%	55.2%
2014	22 671 331	5 490 222	24.2%	59.0%	54.9%

Source: INS, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> The slogan is quoted by many. See, for example, Otch-Akpa (1995).

<sup>14</sup> Literature on migration to Côte d'Ivoire in the three decades following independence is abundant. See for example, Fargues (1982, 1986); and Chauveau, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> UN DESA estimates for inward migrant stocks in Côte d'Ivoire are as follows: 1990: 1,816,426; 1995: 2,076,394; 2000: 2,163,644; 2005: 2,265,090; 2010: 2,366,537; 2015: 2,467,984; 2019: 2,549,141 (UN DESA, 2019). These numbers do not correspond to census data on foreign nationals, but possibly to born-abroad individuals.

Côte d'Ivoire is not only a destination but also an origin for migrants. The emigrant stock, estimated at 173,103 around 1980 (2% of the country's population), would have jumped to 1,172,151 around 2010, then slightly decreased to an estimated 1,020,416 in 2013 (6% of the population).<sup>16</sup> A large majority of them are believed to be return migrants or second-generation migrants fleeing the crisis. They were destined for Burkina Faso (50.1% of all outward migrant stock in 2019, according to UN DESA), Mali (16.9%), Ghana (6.5%), Benin (3.1%), and Liberia (1.8%), a country where tens of thousands of Ivorians found shelter. In smaller numbers, Ivorian migrants to the West would mainly live in France (8.9%), but also the United States (2.8%) and Italy (2.7%) (UN DESA, 2019).

### 1.4.2. Burkina Faso

In 1974–1975, Burkina Faso (at that time Upper Volta) was the first-ever West African country to conduct a migration survey (Coulibaly et al., 1974). Migration was part of the subsistence strategy as well as the culture of its inhabitants. Emigration from Burkina Faso was never discontinued since then, with Côte d'Ivoire as a main destination. Burkina Faso does not produce statistics on its own emigration, but UN DESA provides an estimated emigrant stock of 1,581,083 in 2019, representing 7.8 per cent of the country's population.

The most recent population census dates back to 2006 (INSD, 2020). Two detailed tables contain data on return migration of nationals. Table 4.1 (ibid.) provides the distribution of the resident population by place of birth: 613,662 individuals (4.4% of the country's total population) were born abroad, including 80.8 per cent born in Côte d'Ivoire, 6.5 per cent in Mali and 4.8 per cent in Ghana. A large (but unknown) number of these were probably second-generation nationals. Table 4.4 (ibid.) provides the distribution of the 689,055 return migrants (nationals whose previous residence was abroad, representing 4.9% of the total population) by reasons for returning to Burkina Faso: voluntary return, 59.1 per cent; sociopolitical crisis (in Côte d'Ivoire), 23.3 per cent; and study, 3.6 per cent.

The national labour survey of 2015 provides the number of foreign nationals, 64,905, representing 0.4 per cent of the country's population, and their distribution by origin: 87.5 per cent were coming from West African countries, the largest share being nationals of Côte d'Ivoire, at 19.9 per cent (INSD, 2015).

### 1.4.3. Mali

Mali has a centuries-old history of long-distance mobility. Unknown but surely large numbers of people across sub-Saharan Africa could claim a degree or another of Malian descent. In 2005, the *Délégation Générale des Maliens de l'Extérieur* (General Delegation for Malian Expatriates) estimated an unverifiable 3,761,730 the number of Malians residing abroad, 3,631,385 of them in Africa (Traoré, 2010). The delegation's website provides on its front page a higher estimate of "4 million Malians living abroad" in January 2017 (Bamuk News, 2017). First-generation migrants from Mali are thought to be in smaller numbers. UN DESA estimates Mali's emigrant stock at 1,264,700 in 2019, representing 6.4 per cent of the country's population. The immigrant stock is estimated by the same source at 468,230 (2.4% of the population), 90 per cent of them originating from other sub-Saharan countries.

The population census of 2009 is to date Mali's only source of solid data on migration. Born-abroad residents were 313,354, residents entered in the last five years numbered 164,504, and emigrants in the last five years 107,316 (Republic of Mali, Institut National de la Statistique, 2012). Foreign nationals comprised 0.8 per cent of the total population, mainly coming from three neighbouring countries: Burkina Faso (20.1%), Côte d'Ivoire (16.9%) and Guinea (14.9%). The vast majority of immigrants (81%) are returning nationals. They are mostly active (only 1.5% unemployed, 57.3% employed and 41.1% inactive, mainly women); have low levels of education on average (58.6% have no school education; and 20.8%, 8.5% and 12.0% respectively have primary, intermediate and secondary or tertiary levels of education). Malians returning from the Americas, Europe and Oceania are more educated, with respectively 27.0 per cent, 21.2 per cent and 21.0 per cent having a secondary or university level of education.

The permanent household survey of 2011 provides additional details about return migrants to Mali, representing according to the survey 12.2 per cent of the resident population 15 years old and over. Three quarters (74.2%) of return migrants are males, with a mean age of 44 years; 78.4 per cent are illiterate (compared with 62.1%

<sup>16</sup> OECD/Centre Ivoirien de Recherches Economiques et Sociales (2017). UN DESA provides a much lower estimate of 551,569 for 2019.

among non-migrants); 86.1 per cent are married (compared with 58.7% among non-migrants); they have a rate of unemployment of 15.2 per cent (38.0% among non-migrants); they are mostly employed in agriculture (61.6%, compared with 34.0% among non-migrants), as well as in informal non-agricultural activities (20.7%). Microdata analysis shows that return migrants from African countries have significantly lower incomes than non-migrants and return migrants from Europe have labour incomes equal to non-migrants. Return migrants in agriculture have lower labour productivity than non-migrants (Bouare et al., 2015; EMOP, 2019).

How many emigrants does Mali count? The 2009 census migration report does not provide their absolute number, but a few relative distributions: by reason for emigration (work comes first: 87.2%); destination (72.9% go to Africa, including 31.9% to Côte d'Ivoire, 19.8% to Europe); and sex (males: 90.9%). Migrant students represent a significant proportion of migrants to Northern America (41.5%), Asia (14.5%), Oceania (14.3%), and Europe (5.6%) (Republic of Mali, Institut National de la Statistique, 2012).

#### 1.4.4. Senegal<sup>17</sup>

Senegal is neither a destination nor an origin country of very large migratory movements – immigrants represent 1.7 per cent of its population and emigrants 3.9 per cent – but it has relatively rich statistics on the topic.

Immigration into Senegal is for a large part return migration of Senegalese from abroad. The most recent population census (2013) provided the number of immigrants still in the country among those arrived during the last 10 years: 153,465; in the last 5 years: 113,376; and in the last year: 30,538. The total number of immigrants was 244,953, including 46.8 per cent foreign nationals from Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) countries, and 45.6 per cent Senegalese return migrants. A majority of immigrants (57.0%) lived in Dakar.

Emigration was estimated by the last three population censuses, showing a slight decline over the last three decades, with numbers of recent emigrants (departed from Senegal in the last five years) representing 1.9 per cent of the total population in 1992, 1.6 per cent in 2002 and 1.2 per cent in 2013. A UN DESA estimate of 2019 (642,654 outmigrants, representing 3.9% of the population) would suggest a recent surge in emigration. Among the 164,901 emigrants of the five years preceding the census, 30.3 per cent were originating from Dakar and 13.8 per cent from Matam; were mostly males (82.9%); were destined either for Europe (44.5%), notably France (17.6%) and Italy (13.8%), for West Africa (27.5%, with Mauritania coming first) or the rest of Africa (18.4%). Reasons for migration as declared by respondents were mainly work (73.4%) and study or training (12.2%). At departure, emigrants had on average a low levels of education (45.5% illiterate, 18.3% with a primary level, 19.4% a complementary or secondary level, and 10.7% a university education); 80.9 per cent were employed and 16.2 per cent were students.

Border statistics of Senegal provide numbers of entries and exits showing, for example, that the overall resulting balance for the second semester of 2018 was positive (+102,472), but negative for Senegalese nationals (-13,385) and positive for nationals of the other ECOWAS countries (+99,140) (Ministère de l'économie du plan et de la coopération (Senegal), 2019).

In addition to national statistics, several academic surveys provide valuable knowledge on Senegalese migration. In particular, the MAFE survey found that three quarters of the Senegalese migrating to France, Italy or Spain intended to stay more than 10 years (permanently?) at destination, and that the choice of a country of destination in Europe was determined by the presence of migrants' family members or friends at destination more often than by work reasons (Beauchemin et al., 2014).

#### 1.4.5. Mauritania

Mauritania has a tradition of intense circular mobility of shepherds and traders, but not of permanent international migration. Its population census of 2013 provides numbers to delineate the country's profile (Islamic Republic of Mauritania, ONS, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> Tall et al. (2011) and Sakho et al. (2011).

The international migrant stock in the country adds up to 704,334 (only 172,987 according to UN DESA), representing a remarkably high 18.2 per cent of the country's 3.873 million resident population at the time of the census. The immigrant population is gender balanced, with 387,043 males and 317,921 females. The vast majority (622,717, or 88.4% of the total) are Mauritanian return migrants, either born abroad or natives with a previous experience of emigration. Among the 81,859, foreign immigrants (2.1% of the total population), refugees from Mali comprise the largest group (48,673). A majority of immigrants are illiterate (54.9%) or have attended only Quranic school (17.5%); 60.1% are active, out of whom 48.0 per cent as independent workers; they originate from Mali (60.0%), Senegal (20.0%), Guinea (2.8%) and several other African countries (ibid.).

Outward migrant stock as captured by the census is relatively small, with 47,179 mostly male (41,333) individuals representing 1.2 per cent of Mauritania's population. Half of them (47.7%) emigrated from the country at 20–34 years of age. Motives for departing were jobseeking (37.3%), occupation-related causes (29.5%), studies (14.0%) or family reunification (12.6%). Their level of education was overwhelmingly low (69.5% illiterate or below primary), though a significant 6.4 per cent were university graduates. The majority (74.0%) was destined for African countries and 17.1 per cent for Europe (ibid.).

#### 1.4.6. The Niger<sup>18</sup>

The Niger, which has for centuries been at the crossroads of major East–West Tuareg salt caravan routes, is now crossed by North–South flows from sub-Saharan Africa to the Maghreb and the Mediterranean. International immigrant and emigrant stocks – mostly migratory exchanges with other sub-Saharan countries – would represent respectively 1.3 per cent and 1.7 per cent of its resident population in 2019 (UN DESA estimates).

The population census of 2012 provides some information about the immigrant stocks. It counted 123,886 foreign nationals, a slight majority of whom were women (63,264, compared with 60,622 men); and 484,300 return migrants, mostly from Nigeria, except in Agadze, where 41.5 per cent of the returnees came from Libya. Returnees were overwhelmingly farmers (84.2%), and foreign nationals had a broader spectrum of occupations, including agriculture (39.9%), commerce (30.9%) and crafts (22.0%) (Republic of the Niger, 2012).

A year before the census, a national migration survey estimated the Niger's emigration at 1.1 per cent of the country's population, destined for Nigeria (37.8%), other West African countries (30.5%) and Libya (12.6%).<sup>19</sup>

#### 1.4.7. Guinea

The population census of 2013 counted 162,114 born-abroad individuals (1.4% of the country's population), of which 126,805 were second-generation Guinean nationals (78.2% of all inward migrants) and 33,509 foreign nationals. Immigrants were born in Côte d'Ivoire (25.5%), Sierra Leone (22.7%), Mali (9.7%) and Europe (1.4%). Immigrants are generally more educated than non-migrants. The proportions who never attended school is 47.2 per cent among the former, compared with 66.5 per cent among the latter; with a primary education 13.3 per cent (compared with 10.5%); with a secondary education 25.2 per cent (compared with 17.4%); and with a university level 14.2 per cent (compared with 5.5%). Immigrants are also wealthier than non-migrants, with proportions of "very poor" and "very rich" individuals reaching respectively 5.3 per cent and 48.9 per cent among migrants (compared with 17.4% and 22.2% among non-migrants).<sup>20</sup>

The census report also provides the distribution of emigrants from the country according to a few variables (absolute numbers are not available): in particular, the country of destination, with Côte d'Ivoire coming first, and the reason for migrating, with work (56.2%) coming before studies (15.6%) and family and marriage (13.5%). UN DESA estimates Guinea's emigrant stock at 530,963 in 2019, representing 4.2 per cent of the country's population.

<sup>18</sup> Issaka Maga, H. (2011).

<sup>19</sup> Enquête Nationale sur la Migration (2011). Available at [www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/other/workshop/2016/docs/presentations/SessionIV\\_Niger.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/other/workshop/2016/docs/presentations/SessionIV_Niger.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Republic of Guinea (2017). "Very poor" and "very rich" (Table 3.14, p. 48) are defined respectively as the first and fifth quintiles of the distribution of the population by standard of living.

### 1.4.8. The Gambia

The Gambia is a country of relatively intense international migration, with immigrant and emigrant stocks estimated by UN DESA at respectively 9.2 per cent and 5.0 per cent of the population in 2019. The census of 2013 is the only national source on migration in the Gambia (Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013). It enumerated 110,705 individuals with previous residence abroad, representing 5.9 per cent of the total population. The main countries of previous residence were Senegal (49.2%), Guinea (20.6%) and Guinea-Bissau (4.9%). Non-Africans comprised a low 5.0 per cent of all immigrants. The reasons for migrating to the Gambia were marriage and family (44.9%), the search for employment (29.6%), study (4.6%), and civil conflict (2.1%). National sources do not provide data on emigration.

## 1.5. Concluding remarks

Knowledge on migration comes primarily from population censuses. Most countries along the CMR have used censuses to produce relatively detailed data on their immigrants, and some of them on their emigrants. No country, however, collects the administrative data that would make it possible to update census data and fully understand migratory processes.

A contrast emerges between North Africa, the emigration of which is primarily polarized by Europe, and West Africa, where international migration is mostly destined for bordering countries and a genuine dimension of regional integration, between permanent migration in the case of North Africa, and a significant pattern of two-way migration with return to the origin country in the case of West Africa.

In both regions, the reasons for migrating are jobseeking, marriage, following the family and study. According to national sources, political motives and the search for international protection do not emerge as meaningful causes of international migration, but this is possibly because censuses and surveys conducted by States are not well adapted to capture such causes.

Limiting oneself to national sources, knowledge on migration flows and the routes of migration would almost be inexistent. Moreover, conventional tools of data collection do not provide information about migrants' lived situations, their strategies, their needs, and their vulnerability, among others. These are topics that two new tools aim to document: IOM's DTM and the 4Mi, presented in Chapter 2 of this volume (Fargues).

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## 2.

# Focus on operational data: the International Organization for Migration's Displacement Tracking Matrix, and the Mixed Migration Centre's Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative

Philippe Fargues<sup>1</sup>



DATA

**Abstract:** *This chapter aims to answer the questions: (a) Why do we need to measure migration? and (b) What should we expect from good data on migration? It analyses two data collection tools in detail: IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi). First, it describes and compares both tools. Both have made available to the public considerable information on mobility in countries where there was little or no previous knowledge about the topic. It thereafter focuses on DTM and combines different series of data. Two sorts of combinations are tested: data of the same nature obtained at different dates, and data of different nature obtained at the same date. It concludes by giving recommendations on how to further DTM's data collection efforts.*

## 2.1. Introduction

What should we expect from good data on migration – in general and, in particular, in West and North Africa? At the most elementary level, in order to measure the contribution of migration to the size and growth of a population, one needs data on the size of migrant stocks and flows, possibly by origin and destination. Then – considering that migration is selective, so that migrants do not fully resemble non-migrants in either origin or destination populations, and that different migrant groups do not resemble each other – one seeks to assess if and how migration transforms the makeup of societies, the one migrants leave and the one they join, whether in transit or permanently. For this, data on migrants' individual characteristics, compared with those of non-migrants, are necessary. Finally, because migration is an exceptional experience,<sup>2</sup> one must understand how it affects the lives of individuals – of the migrant in the first instance, but also of those left behind and those in the communities of destination. Investigating this matter requires data on migrants' experience at several steps of the process (pre-departure, journey and post-arrival) covering a variety of domains, from economic conditions to legal status, social conditions, human rights and physical security, among others.

Data collection pursues several goals: registering individuals for administrative purposes; informing public policies and other forms of collective action, as well as the public debate; and conducting academic research (Fargues, 2018), among others. This chapter will focus on the last two goals and will focus in particular on operational data, such

<sup>1</sup> European University Institute.

<sup>2</sup> International migrants represent only 3.5 per cent of human beings globally.

as those collected through IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and the Mixed Migration Centre's (MMC's) Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi), since much of the evidence presented in this volume is based on these tools. The chapter aims to provide a key to reading and interpreting such evidence, and discuss how operational data can complement national statistics in West and North Africa.

## 2.2. Displacement Tracking Matrix and Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative

DTM was initially conceptualized in Iraq in 2004 to conduct needs assessment and monitoring in the context of internal displacement. It has since evolved into a system to track population mobility in different contexts, within or across countries, and has been implemented in the context of mixed migration across the Mediterranean. MMC's 4Mi has been active since 2014 and has monitored mixed migration flows in various world regions, along major migration hubs. These tools have in a few years made available to the public considerable information on mobility in countries where there was little or no previous knowledge about the topic. Moreover, while classical sources (censuses, household surveys and administrative systems) hardly record migrants with an irregular status, DTM and 4Mi record people regardless of their legal status and therefore are well suited to observe irregular migration.

DTM has released a continuous flow of often monthly publications, including various series, such as in the case of Libya: Displacement Event Tracking Report; IDP And Returnee Key Findings Report; Detention Centre Profile Generator; Rapid Migrant Assessments; Rapid Assessment Reports; Alert Snapshots; Return Intention Survey; Dashboards; and several other occasional titles.<sup>3</sup>

Data produced by DTM and 4Mi are in essence operational. They are originally collected and processed to inform regular programming and action by IOM and other partners among migrants in the field (Bonfiglio, Leigh and Zakoska-Todorovska, Chapter 39 of this volume). At the same time, these data can inform other interested parties, such as academia and the media, although this should be seen as an opportune by-product, not a core objective. The question is how to use these location-specific data to draw a greater picture of migration along the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR).

DTM collects data on stocks and flows. This deserves to be noted, since most migration data from traditional sources are primarily on stocks, while information on flows is patchier. It provides records and reports mainly on four categories of people on the move: internally displaced persons (IDPs), returned IDPs, return migrants, and (international) inward and outward migrants, among other mobile populations, through its four standard components:

- (a) Mobility tracking, to quantify stocks of displaced (or migrant) populations;
- (b) Flow monitoring, to quantify population flows through specific locations;
- (c) Registration, to collect census-like data in a location; and
- (d) Surveys, to collect information on specific issues.<sup>4</sup>

Several chapters in this volume are based on data collected through the flow monitoring and survey components. The former provides information not only on the volume of movements through specific location, but also on people's basic characteristics (sex and nationality), intended destination and means of transportation. Flow Monitoring Surveys provide much more detailed, individual-level data – including on respondents' socioeconomic profiles, journey experiences, future intentions and expectations – and can include specific thematic modules, for instance on experiences of abuse and exploitation, which can serve to inform programmatic responses by IOM and other actors.

4Mi collects data through individual interviews. It "aims to offer a regular, standardized, quantitative and potentially globalized, system of collecting primary data on mixed migration flows".<sup>5</sup> Its objectives are to inform policy debate

<sup>3</sup> See the "Report" section at [migration.iom.int](https://migration.iom.int).

<sup>4</sup> More information is available at <https://dtm.iom.int/about>.

<sup>5</sup> Mixed Migration Centre, 4Mi in-depth insights on mixed migration dynamics, available at [www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/](http://www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/).

and programmatic responses, identify protection gaps and establish deeper knowledge. Data are collected by “monitors”, who are generally themselves migrants or refugees, through structured interviews with people on the move in urban migration hubs and at border crossing points.<sup>6</sup>

Monitors apply a snowball technique to build a non-random, purposive sample. The sample comprises a large majority (over 90%) of migrants, with a particular focus on those with protection concerns, but also a few smugglers when possible (MMC, 2018). Data collected among migrants include migrants’ profiles and reasons for migration, routes, protection risks at origin and along routes, economy of the journey, and intended destination. Data collected among smugglers include their incentives, their links to other State and non-State actors, and their modus operandi.

While DTM and 4Mi methodological documents partially indicate the limitations of the data,<sup>7</sup> a review of the limitations of these tools would be helpful to correctly interpret the figures presented in this volume, and to use them appropriately for policy and programming purposes. It is worth noting that some of the limitations observed are an inherent feature of the operational focus of DTM or MMC activities, such as time constraints imposed by operational data needs, which necessitate a key informant-driven methodological approach, as opposed to fully comprehensive data collection exercises involving the population concerned. Likewise, the required geographic coverage may not allow enough time for a headcount approach.

An overall characteristic of both DTM and 4MI data is their selectivity, which challenges the common requirement of representativeness. DTM and 4MI data collection systems are indeed based on three successive selections, none of them random:

- (a) First, a selection of places: The entire territory of a country cannot be covered, only parts of it. Transit hubs, points with a high concentration of displaced people, areas especially affected by causes of displacement, busy border-crossings and such are selected because their situation is of particular concern to IOM or MMC. In most cases, these places do not represent the whole country.<sup>8</sup> Extrapolating non-representative observations made in non-randomly selected contexts is a complex exercise that requires a precise assessment of biases. Otherwise, because DTM and 4Mi may operate in areas with particularly acute problems, extrapolating general situations from local findings entails a risk of overstating problems.
- (b) Second, a selection of periods: A place is under observation as long as it is a strategic waypoint for mobility. When flows slacken, DTM and 4Mi shift to other places. Different places mean different contexts. Is it possible to measure trends putting together observations made in different places, without controlling for contextual factors? In addition, displacement is recorded at specific moments in the week (working days and hours) while mobility, which can be continuous, may fluctuate according to time. Does the mobility that is missed resemble that which is observed?
- (c) Third, a selection of respondents/monitors: Because the entire population under study (displaced people, returnees and migrants) cannot be interviewed due to the often difficult circumstances in which IOM and MMC operate, in the best-case scenario, a selection of individuals in the population, and/or external informants, is interviewed. Interviewed individuals are not randomly sampled in the migrant population (because no sampling list exists, or for other reasons) and there is no statistical way to assess their representativity. Interviewed informants can hold various positions, such as representatives from municipality offices, members of civil society organizations, police or custom officers, staff of bus stations, truck drivers, community leaders or migrants, for example. Informants’ subjectivity may distort realities, and there is no rigorous way to assess if and how their position is conducive to biases, although IOM attempts to provide basic information on the credibility of informants.<sup>9</sup> For instance, a DTM report on Libya informs the reader that 52 per cent of data collected was rated by its authors as “very credible”, 33 per cent as “mostly credible”, and 14 per cent as “somewhat credible”.

<sup>6</sup> Who “people on the move” are exactly is not a straightforward notion (unless interviews take place in a means of transportation). What is the duration beyond which a stopover in the journey becomes a stay?

<sup>7</sup> “Data collected represents the situation at specific points of transit at certain times, and provides only a partial view of the volume and characteristics of population flows transiting through the Flow Monitoring Points. This tool does not intend to provide a total number of all transiting populations, but rather to estimate volume and characteristics of population flows transiting through an observed point” (IOM, 2017). “4Mi data is not representative of national or international migration flows. It therefore cannot be used to provide estimates of the volume and characteristics of the overall migrant population... 4Mi data is also self-reported and MMC has no means to verify, for example, reported incidents” ([www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/4mi\\_faq](http://www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/4mi_faq)).

<sup>8</sup> Oversampling regions where migrants concentrate is also a common technique in migration surveys, out of concern for limiting the size, and the cost, of a survey.

<sup>9</sup> Burkina Dashboard 29 August 2019: “All data included in this report are based on estimates. IOM does not guarantee nor comment on the relevance, exactness, reliability, quality or comprehensiveness of data contained in this report.”

Ratings were based on the consistency of information provided by different informants, and on whether it is “in line with general perceptions” (IOM, 2019a).<sup>10</sup>

Keeping the above limitations in mind, the wealth of information DTM and 4Mi provides on population flows and the profiles of people on the move, their experience and their needs, is a significant breakthrough in contexts where timely and regularly produced evidence on migration flows and profiles is sorely lacking. The open question is whether and how the gap between statistical and operational data in countries on the CMR can be bridged to provide a more comprehensive picture of migratory trends on the route. A starting point would be exploring the possibility of combining different operational data sets, which is the subject of the next section.

## 2.3. Combining data series: examples based on DTM data

DTM reports contain detailed descriptive statistics that are mostly univariate or bivariate distributions of counted or estimated individuals. Do these data lend themselves to constructing classical indicators of migration? Is it possible to combine different series of data? The examples below examine two sorts of combination: data of the same nature obtained at different dates, and data of different natures obtained at the same date.

### 2.3.1. Example 1: Net migration estimated by changes in migrant stocks in Libya

DTM provides estimates of migrant stocks in Libya at each round distributed according to basic characteristics, such as the place of stay in Libya or the country of origin. In case of complete enumeration, changes in migrant stocks from one round to the next would measure the migratory balance or net migration between the corresponding dates. Tables 2.1a and 2.1b provide such changes during an interval of around one year (from round 21 to round 26).

**Table 2.1a.** Estimated numbers of international migrants in Libya by region at DTM rounds

Mantika (Region)	Migrant stock		Change
	August 2018	July 2019	
Tripoli	148 460	133 323	- 15 137
Ejdabia	68 798	70 227	+ 1 429
Murzuq	43 534	65 429	+ 21 895
Misrata	77 635	58 191	- 19 444
Sebha	38 815	48 650	+ 9 835
Almargeb	30 220	19 840	- 10 380
Aljfara	29 976	17 426	- 12 550
Other	231 738	242 058	+ 10 320
<b>Total</b>	<b>669 176</b>	<b>655 144</b>	<b>- 14 032</b>

Sources: IOM, 2018 (available at <https://dtm.iom.int/> data extracted on Dec 20, 2019). DTM Round 21 Data Summaries for Publication, and IOM (2019) DTM Round 26 Data Summaries for Publication.

<sup>10</sup> Another report on Libya explains: “At field level, DTM is working with its enumerators towards strengthening triangulation mechanisms through an increased number of sources at different administrative levels” (IOM, 2019b).

**Table 2.1b.** Estimated numbers of international migrants in Libya by citizenship at DTM rounds

Country	Migrant stock		Change
	August 18	July 2019	
Niger	130 087	128 661	- 1 426
Egypt	96 963	101 219	+ 4 256
Chad	91 904	98 325	+ 6 421
Sudan	80 491	77 842	- 2 649
Nigeria	64 980	58 372	- 6 608
Ghana	46 726	37 995	- 8 731
Mali	36 152	30 303	- 5 849
Bangladesh	23 126	24 947	+ 1 821
Syrian Arab Republic	10 260	18 190	+ 7 930
Somalia	17 858	140 83	- 3 775
Tunisia	5 784	7 411	+ 1 627
Morocco	7 147	6 693	- 454
Guinea	3820	6 540	+ 2 720
Ethiopia	7 429	6 425	- 1 004
Eritrea	7 185	6 005	- 1 180
Senegal	6 533	5 655	- 878
Burkina Faso	6 380	5 524	- 856
Palestinian Territories	1 853	5 070	+ 3 217
Côte d'Ivoire	4 310	2 816	- 1494
Cameroon	2 659	2 396	- 263
Algeria	2 228	2 146	- 82
Pakistan	19 09	1 654	- 255
Zambia	1 600	1 505	- 95
Other	11 792	5 367	- 6 425
<b>Total</b>	<b>669 176</b>	<b>655 144</b>	<b>- 14 032</b>

Sources: IOM (2018) DTM Round 21 Data Summaries for Publication and IOM (2019) DTM Round 26 Data Summaries for Publication.

The picture that emerges seems very plausible (though not verifiable). As a whole, Libya would have had a net loss of international migrants from August 2018 to July 2019. There are marked contrasts from regions with net entries (Murzuq and Sebha in particular) to regions with net exits (Misrata, Tripoli, Aljfar and others). Contrasts are also noticeable between migrants' countries of origin, from nationalities with a negative net migration (Nigeria, Ghana and Mali, among others) to nationalities with a positive net migration (the Syrian Arab Republic, Egypt, Chad and Tunisia, among others). If these trends were real, one should look for determinants in the varying economic and political conditions in Libya itself (Table 2.1a) and in the origin countries of its migrants (Table 2.1b). However, it may also be that the methodology of data collection has created statistical artefacts linked, for example, to changing points under observation.

### 2.3.2. Example 2: Deriving flows from time series of stocks: The case of internally displaced persons, returnees and migrant individuals in Libya

The successive rounds of DTM from January 2016 (round 1) to June 2019 (round 26) provide summaries of cumulative numbers of returnees, IDPs present and migrants present (this last series was discontinued as of March 2018), as counted or estimated in localities under DTM observation in Libya. Put together, these numbers provide monthly time series of stocks (Table 2.2). Subtracting one stock from the following, one theoretically obtains the change (balance of flows) in the corresponding period (Figure 2.1).

**Table 2.2.** Numbers of internally displaced persons, returnees, and migrant individuals in Libya, DTM Libya – Round 1 (January 2016) to Round 26 (July 2019)

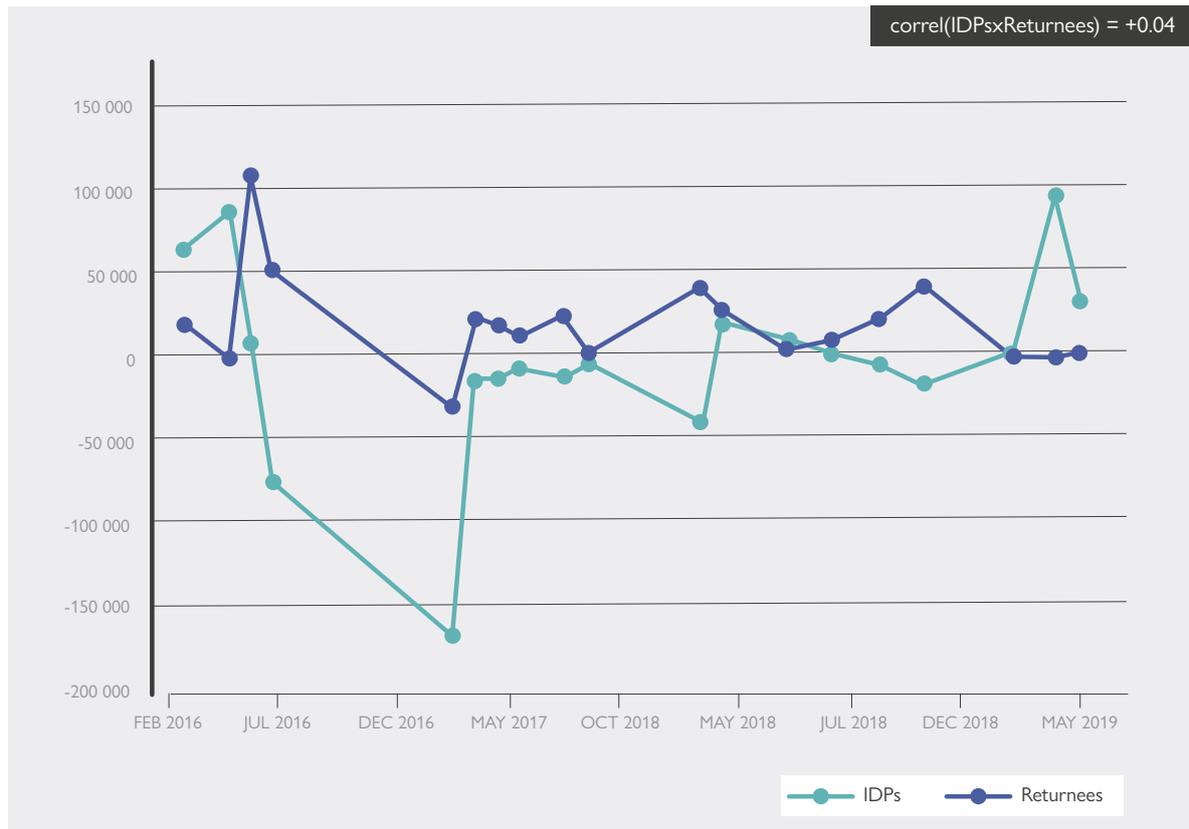
Round	Date	IDPs	Returnees	Migrant individuals		
				In Baladiya	In detention centres in Baladiya	Crossing Baladiya
1	Jan. 2016	268 943	130 637	114 770	4 686	30 459
2	Mar. 2016	331 622	150 362	142 370	5 194	60 260
3	May 2016	417 123	149 160	234 669	8 716	204 806
4	June 2016	425 250	258 025	264 014	6 831	277 046
5	July 2016	348 372	310 265	276 957	4 405	309 402
6	Sep. 2016	-a	-	-	-	-
7	Dec. 2016	-	-	-	-	-
8	Feb. 2017	-	-	-	-	-
9	Mar. 2017	256 615	227 866	351 382	-	-
10	Apr. 2017	240 188	249 298	393 652	-	-
11	May 2017	226 164	267 002	390 198	-	-
12	June 2017	217 022	278 559	400 445	-	-
13	Aug. 2017	204 458	301 988	416 556	-	-
14	Sep. 2017	199 091	304 305	421 844	-	-
15	Nov. 2017	-	-	-	-	-
16	Feb. 2018	-	-	-	-	-
17	Feb. 2018	165 478	341 534	704 142	-	-
18	Mar. 2018	184 612	368 583	-	-	-
19	Apr. 2018	-	-	-	-	-
20	June 2018	192 513	372 741	-	-	-
21	Aug. 2018	193 581	382 222	-	-	-
22	Oct. 2018	187 423	403 978	-	-	-
23	Dec. 2018	170 490	445 845	-	-	-
24	Apr. 2019	172 541	445 476	-	-	-
25	June 2019	268 629	444 760	-	-	-
<b>26</b>	<b>July 2019</b>	<b>301 407</b>	<b>447 025</b>			

Source: Libya rounds 1 to 26 of DTM.

Note: a "-" signifies missing data.

The numbers of IDPs are expected to increase and the numbers of returnees to decrease in the moments when the security situation worsens, and conversely IDPs to decrease and returnees to increase in moments of lull. A negative correlation should link the two series. This is not the case. Is it because the two phenomena have different temporalities (one reacting later than the other to sudden changes in terms of security)? How do fluctuations in the two series match the timeline of events in the Libyan civil war? Is it instead because the nature of data provided on stocks does not make it possible to deduct flows? To decide this question, one needs all the technical details on how aggregated numbers were constructed.

**Figure 2.1.** Changes in numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees in Libya, from one DTM round to the next, January 2016–July 2019



Source: Author's calculations based on data reported in Table 2.2.

### 2.3.3. Example 3: Incoming and outgoing flows in the Niger, 2017–2019

Borders are strategic places for observing flows of international migrants. Yet, border statistics are usually of poor quality and not usable to properly count migrants. Would data collected at DTM flow monitoring points (FMPs) be a good proxy? In the Niger, DTM provides monthly numbers of incoming and outgoing migrants at key transit locations since January 2017 (Table 2.3). Combining the two series, one can obtain the balance of population movements at FMPs (Figure 2.2).

Over the two and a half years of observation, numbers of incoming, outgoing and total migrants reached, respectively, 289,274, 267,786 and 557,060. These are modest numbers for a country with 22.5 million inhabitants, corresponding to annual rates of immigration and emigration of respectively 0.51 per cent and 0.48 per cent. The resulting migratory balance is negligible: a monthly average of +716 individuals (+21,488 in 2.5 years), corresponds to an average annual rate of 0.04 per cent. In brief, not many foreign nationals cross the land borders of the Niger, and almost everyone who enters will leave sooner or later.

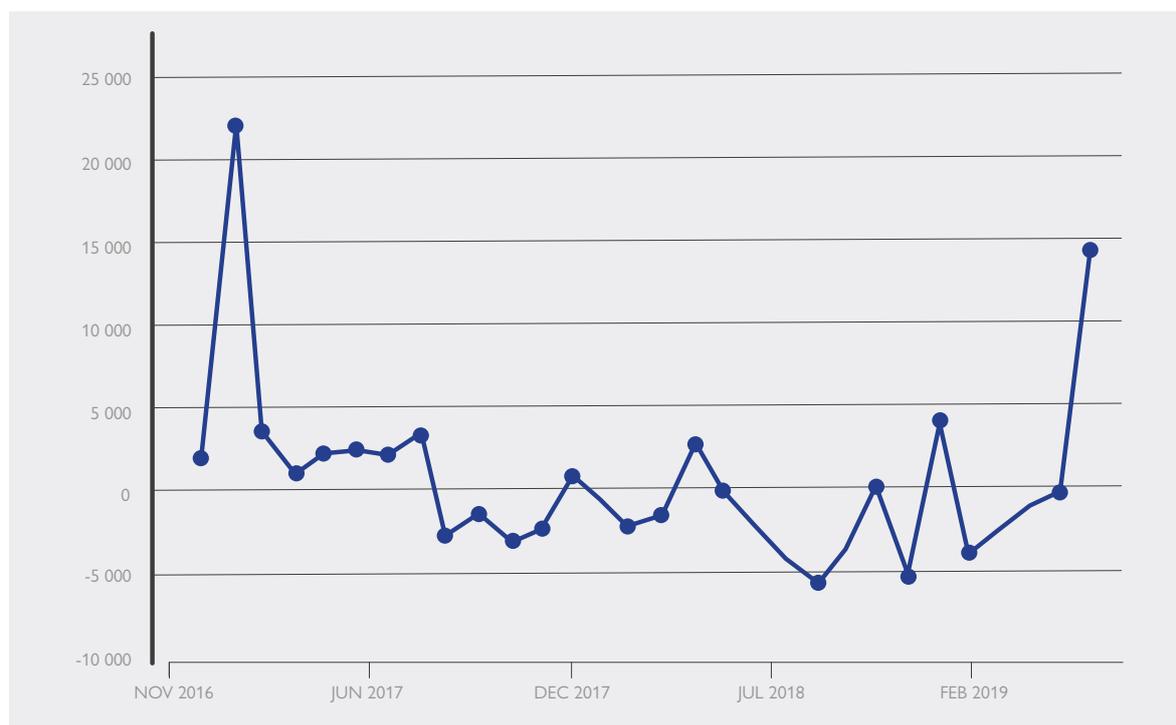
Of course, actual rates should be higher, since not all international migrants pass through DTM's FMPs. But if entries and exits were to increase proportionally, adding FMPs would not affect the balance, which is close to zero. Interestingly, the extension of DTM coverage by the addition of four FMPs in August and September 2018 significantly increased the counted numbers of entering and exiting individuals (Table 2.3) without affecting the balance of entries and exits (Figure 2.2). Fluctuations of the balance are significant, however. It would be interesting to verify if the two peaks observed in February 2017 and June 2019 correspond to surges in numbers of readmissions from Algeria in application of the migration agreement passed in 2014 between the two countries.

**Table 2.3.** Monthly numbers of incoming and outgoing migrants in the Niger, January 2017–June 2019

Month	Incoming	Outgoing	Month	Incoming	Outgoing
Jan. 2017	8 424	6 524	Apr. 2018	4 758	6 056
Feb. 2017	27 239	6 329	May 2018	9 471	6 770
Mar. 2017	8 416	4 802	June 2018	2 224	2 093
Apr. 2017	6 549	5 442	July 2018	4 848	6 632
May 2017	9 411	7 142	Aug. 2018	5 319	9 187
June 2017	6 725	4 387	Sep. 2018	12 118	17 127
July 2017	6 058	3 954	Oct. 2018	10 379	13 728
Aug. 2017	12 082	8 754	Nov. 2018	16 661	16 412
Sep. 2017	2 541	4 972	Dec. 2018	11 374	16 119
Oct. 2017	3 592	4 863	Jan. 2019	24 808	21 124
Nov. 2017	2 669	5 440	Feb. 2019	10 067	13 478
Dec. 2017	4 600	6 821	Mar. 2019	10 025	12 417
Jan. 2018	4 151	3 085	Apr. 2019	19 456	20 507
Feb. 2018	3 464	3 901	May 2019	22 567	22 493
Mar. 2018	3 834	5 656	June 2019	15 444	1 571

Source: DTM Population Flow Monitoring – Dashboards #01 to #24.

**Figure 2.2.** The Niger: Monthly balance inflows–outflows at flow monitoring points, January 2017–June 2019



Source: Table 2.3.

### 2.3.4. Example 4: Mixed flows or mixed motivations?

A majority (93%) of migrants and refugees interviewed by 4Mi in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger cited economic reasons as their main motivation for departure, as compared with a low 15 per cent citing violence and insecurity (MMC, 2019). Yet, at the same interviews, 42 per cent of the respondents declared they had the intention to apply for asylum once at destination. Is it that migrants have received information before departure information about asylum being the most efficient channel for obtaining a permit of stay? Or is it that the same person is simultaneously in search of economic opportunities and protection, and puts forward one or the other reason according to the context?

## 2.4. Conclusions: bridging the gap between operational and statistical data

Operational data provided by mechanisms such as DTM and 4Mi have been crucial to enhancing understanding of migration dynamics and migrant characteristics in West and North Africa, given the limited availability of migration data from national sources in these regions. Further strengthening data collection and dissemination on outward and inward international migration (including return migrants) would help understanding of the dynamics playing out at regional levels. Using common templates for publications based on operational data collected in different locations and at different points in time would also facilitate comparison and (under certain conditions) aggregation, which would allow the building of such “regional pictures”.

A large part of the data is obtained through interviews with informants. Numbers provided by informants may, or may not, result from actual counting of the migrants. They may, or may not, reflect subjective views as much as well-informed estimates. Reports based on operational data should systematically make clear what the sources of data are – be these effective counting by IOM or MMC staff or indirect information. A critical review of potential biases

of informants would be helpful to adequately interpret and use the data. In addition, it would be helpful to always include an explanation of how samples of interviewees were constructed, and strive for operational data to get as close as possible to random.

### 2.4.1. Opening operational data to the local statistical environment

Neither DTM nor 4Mi operates in a statistical vacuum. All the States along the CMR have statistical offices with an increasing interest in measuring migration and related phenomena. Population censuses of the 2020 round will all contain, for the time, a set of questions about internal and international migration, including country of birth, country of nationality and year or period of arrival – although, at the time of writing this chapter, census operations in many countries were stalled or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic (UN DESA, 2017). Other questions are on the agenda of a number of statistical offices in the world, as well as post-census surveys. Operational data collection activities by IOM, MMC and other partners should support national data collection systems and be integrated into data capacity-building efforts at the national and regional levels as far as possible.

Administrative data offer another, often untapped, source of potential knowledge on mobility, migration and the conditions of mobile people. DTM and 4Mi should reflect on methodologies adapted to these kind of sources in countries where they operate.

### 2.4.2. Favouring the emergence of balanced views

Not all migrants are equally vulnerable, including along the CMR. Many migrants are safe and successful, and their success is precisely why migrants continue to travel this route. Only a comprehensive account of migrants' situations in CMR countries, including employment opportunities in Libya and elsewhere, makes it possible to comprehend negative developments in terms of risk – that is, probability – with positive developments as another possible outcome.

Collecting data on all categories of migrants in the framework of DTM and 4Mi would help build a nuanced image of migration, and identify what leads to risks and destitution, and what results in success. The overall goal of the production of knowledge on migration in countries along this route is to support efforts by countries and humanitarian and development partners involved to achieve safer and more orderly migration. It is also to incite States, starting with European Union member States, to expand legal migration channels. For this, reaching an accurate and balanced picture of migration on the CMR is necessary. Documenting both the risks and factors that may exacerbate those, and the developmental benefits of migration, is necessary to incite States to increase regular migration opportunities while providing assistance and protection to migrants in vulnerable situations.

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DATA

# 3.

## Facebook advertising data in Africa

Francesco Rampazzo,<sup>1</sup> Ingmar Weber<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** This chapter presents a descriptive analysis of migration-related data from Facebook’s Advertising Platform for the African continent. It provides an estimate of the raw number of migrants in Africa, and a disaggregation by country of origin and by sex. According to the data, the total number of “migrants” – Facebook users who “live abroad” in Africa, regardless of the country of origin – is 10.4 million. Analysis hints at the potential value of the data, while also illustrating challenges for any cross-national work, due to the strong heterogeneity of Facebook use. Digital trace data offer an opportunity for migration studies in low- and middle-income country contexts, and can be used to complement rather than replace traditional data sources.

### 3.1. Introduction

Migration is difficult to estimate due to lack of data and different measurement approaches across countries (Willekens, 1994). Migration is expected to be the main driver of population change in the current century (Bijak, 2010). Demographers are aware of the measurement challenges and for decades have been working on methodologies that aim to harmonize multiple data sources across countries (Willekens, 1994, 2019). More recently, researchers have started to study whether new types of data (such as mobile phone data, satellite imagery or social media data) might address some of the challenges (Blumenstock, 2012; Spyrtatos et al., 2018; Tatem, 2017; Zagheni et al., 2017), despite the fact that using digital traces as a source of migration data has its own set of issues (Laczko and Rango, 2014). In this short piece, we present some descriptive analysis on migration-related data from Facebook’s Advertising Platform for the African continent.

Contrary to common narratives in Europe, much of the African migration happens within Africa (Bakewell and de Haas, 2007; Castles et al., 2013; Flahaux and de Haas, 2016). The other main destinations of African migration flows are Europe, the Gulf countries, and the United States (Bakewell and de Haas, 2007). The main data sources of migration in Africa are censuses and surveys. However, these data lack (a) accuracy, (b) disaggregation by characteristics of the migrants, and (c) timeliness (Schoumaker et al., 2013). Beauchemin (2018) led a survey project called “Migration between Africa and Europe” (MAFE), which included nine countries, three in Africa and six in Europe,

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with the goal of designing surveys that could deepen the understanding of migration within Africa and to Europe. Data from this project have been used to estimate the emigration rate from Senegal (Willekens et al., 2017). However, this project was limited to a small group of countries.

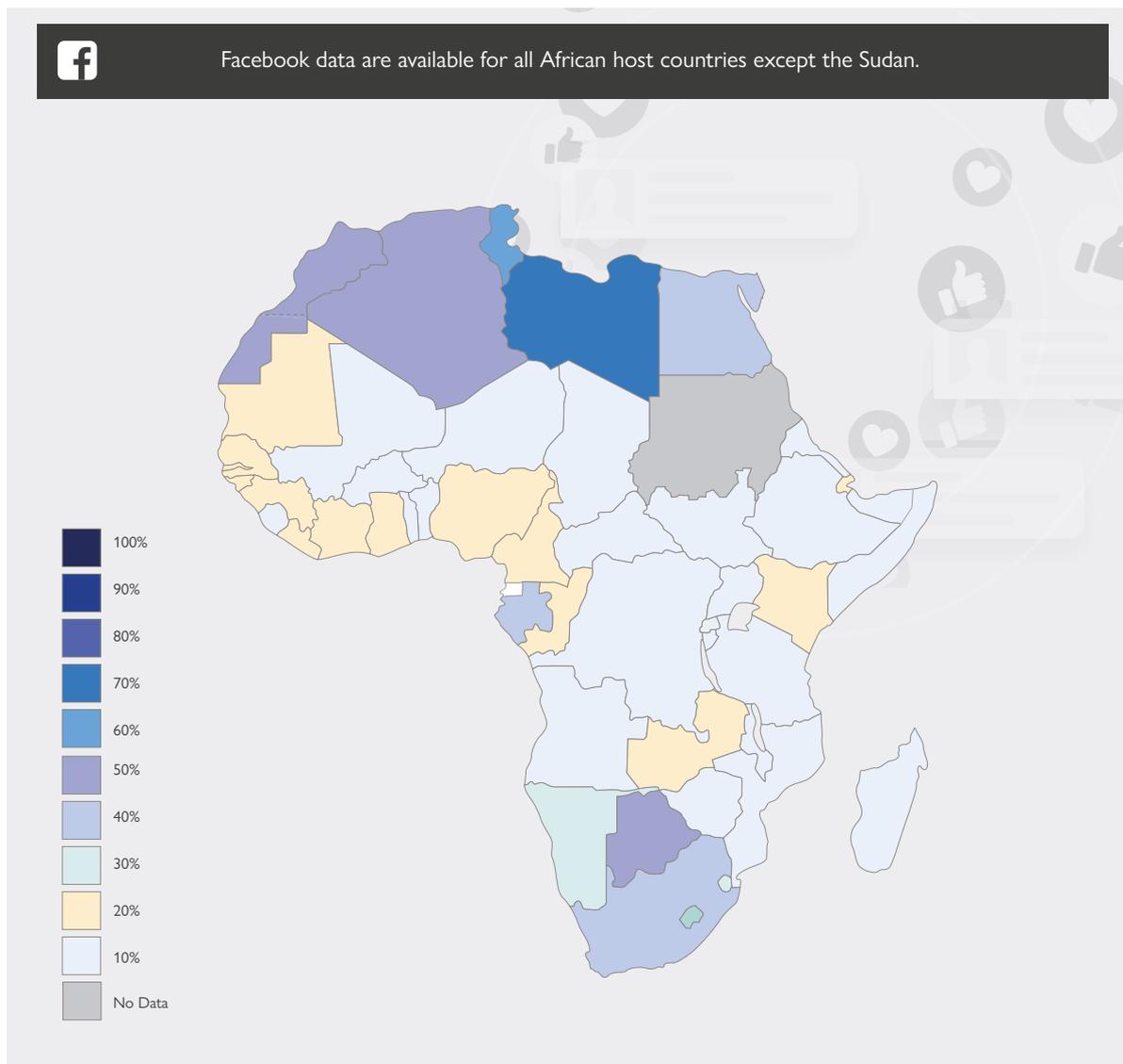
Digital trace data, such as audience estimates provided by the Facebook Advertising Platform, might be an opportunity for migration studies in developing contexts because of the broad number of countries that could be included in the analysis at very low cost. This new source of data has been leveraged to study migration in the United States (Zagheni et al., 2017), outmigration from Puerto Rico, United States and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (Alexander et al., 2019; Palotti et al., 2020), integration of migrants (Dubois et al., 2018; Stewart et al., 2019), gender gaps and fertility (Fatehkia et al., 2018; Rampazzo et al., 2018). In addition, Facebook advertisements can be used to administer cost-effective targeted online surveys (Hoffman Pham et al., 2019). Based on these prior studies, it seems that digital trace data can be used to complement rather than replace traditional data sources, such as censuses and surveys, providing a more detailed and timelier picture.

## 3.2. Migration data from Facebook for Africa

Here we explore the feasibility of using advertising audience estimates from Facebook to study migration within Africa. The data were collected in January 2020 and include estimates of the number of Facebook users who, according to the advertising platform, currently live in country X. Furthermore, where possible, we collected data on the number of Facebook users who lived in country X but now live in country Y. Estimates can be further disaggregated by the user's self-declared gender and other attributes. This type of data has been leveraged in several studies (Alexander et al., 2019; Dubois et al., 2018; Stewart et al., 2019; Zagheni et al., 2017), but not yet in the African context. Note, however, that it is not clear exactly how Facebook arrives at the label of "lived in country X" for a given user. The United Nations recommended definition of an international migrant as a "person who moves from their country of usual residence for a period of at least 12 months" (United Nations, 1998). The Facebook definition of the variable does not provide any temporal aspect. This lack of transparency is a key limitation of our approach.

For our feasibility study, we collected the number of monthly active users (MAUs) matching the provided targeting criteria. Using such data points for all supported countries – in particular, the set of countries of origin supported by Facebook is limited – we compute three sets of descriptive statistics: (a) the percentage of Facebook users per country – the Facebook penetration, (b) the availability of estimates of emigrants from particular African countries of origin, and (c) the number of African migrants living in another African country. As a comparison to the Facebook data, we use the United Nations population estimates for 2019.

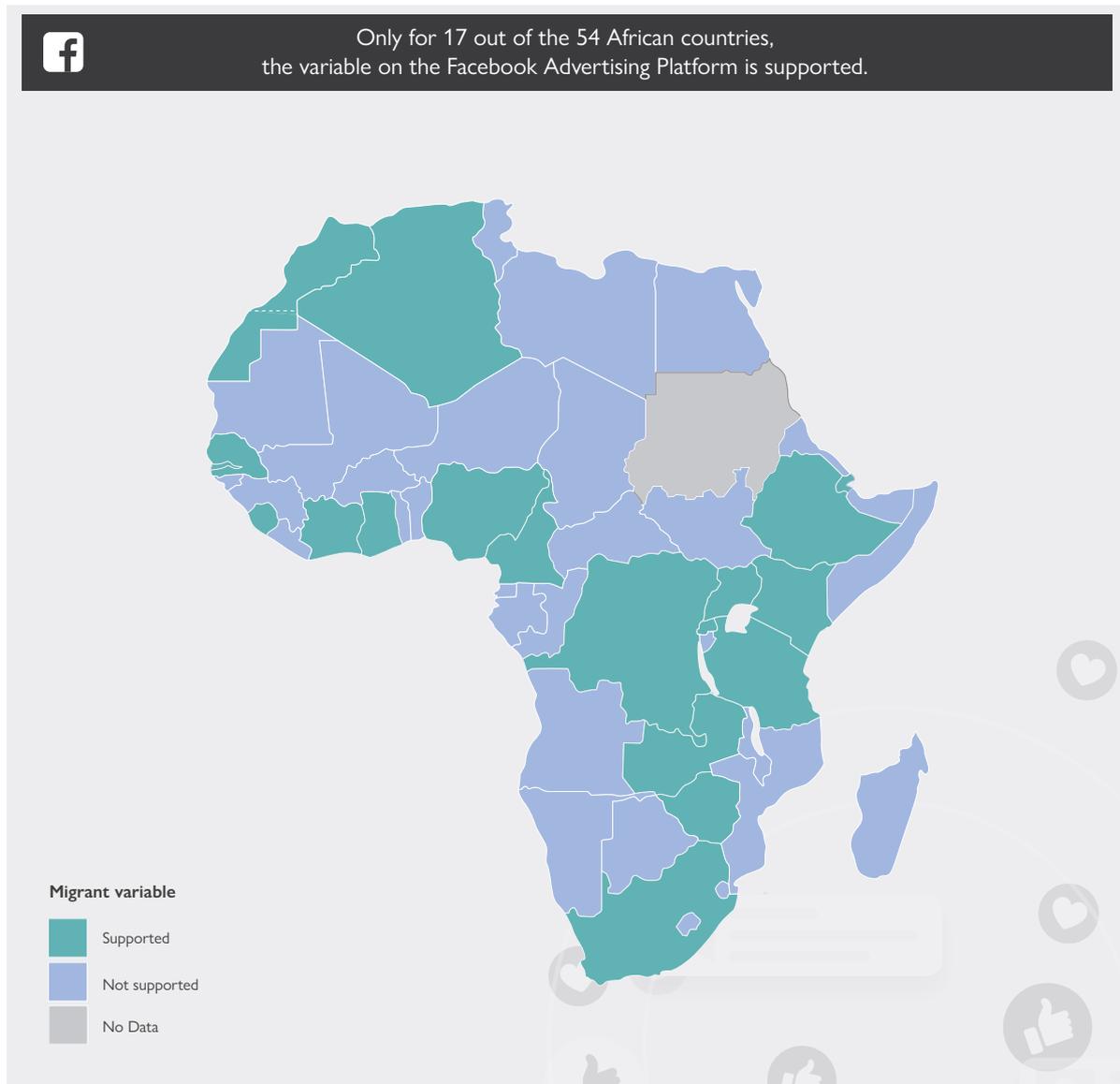
Figure 3.1 shows that Facebook data are available for all African host countries except the Sudan. The percentage of Facebook users, which is calculated as the ratio between the estimate of the Facebook MAUs divided by the estimated population in 2020, is heterogeneous: it is high in North African countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt) and in Southern Africa (Namibia, Botswana and South Africa), but lower in sub-Saharan Africa. Eritrea and the Niger have low Facebook penetration rates – equal to 0.59 per cent and 1.77 per cent, respectively – while Libya (68.10%), Mauritius (60.30%), Seychelles (66.80%) and Tunisia (58.63%) have the highest rates. We need to stress that the Facebook penetration rate might be biased by fake and duplicate accounts, as well as undercounts in the population estimates. Moreover, in 29 of the 54 African countries, the Facebook penetration rate is higher than 20 per cent.

**Figure 3.1.** Facebook penetration across African countries

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

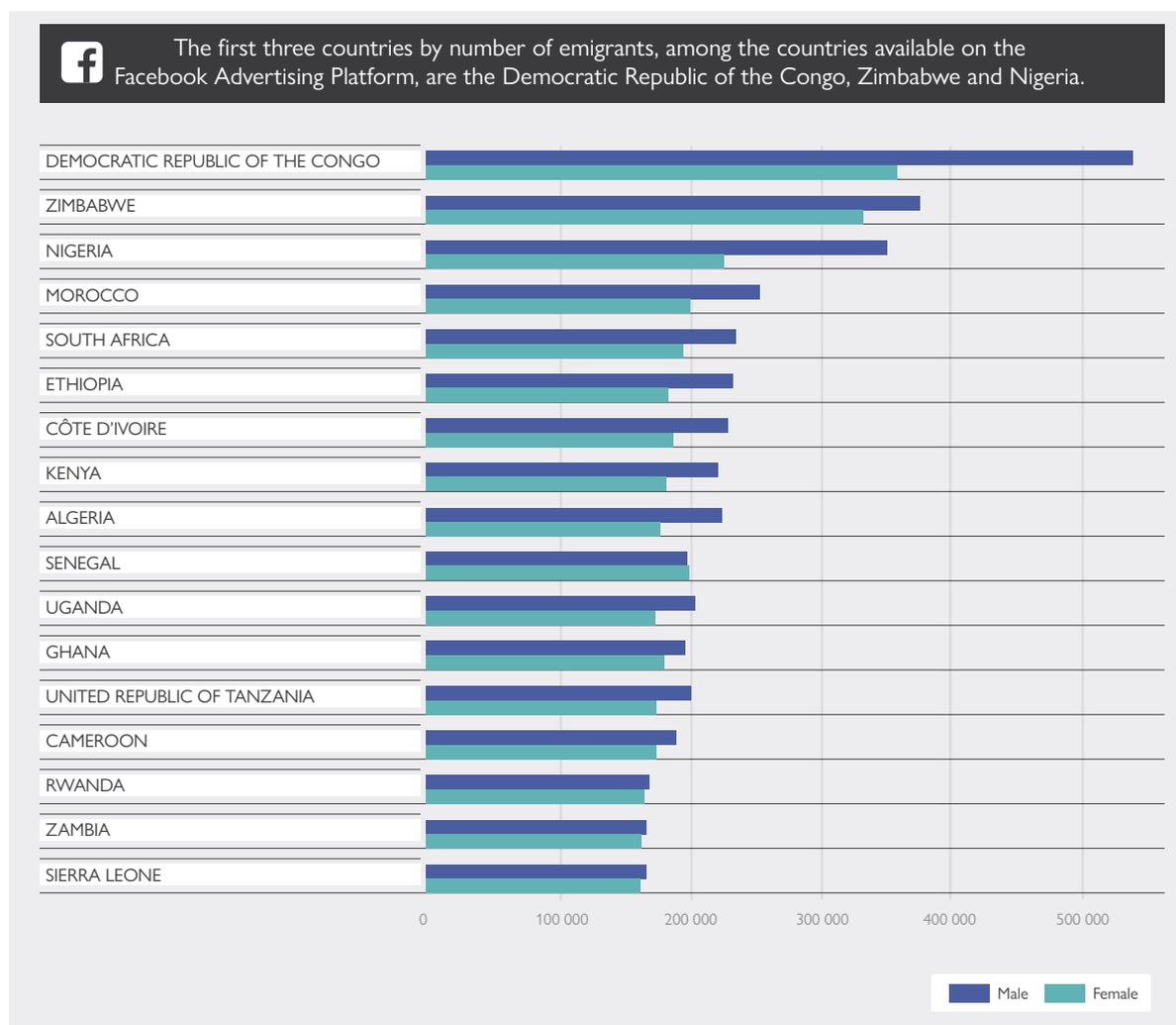
Concerning the country of origin – targeting Facebook users based on the countries in which they lived – Figure 3.2 highlights in green the countries for which estimates of the number of emigrants are available. For only 17 of the 54 African countries is this variable supported on the Facebook Advertising Platform.

**Figure 3.2.** Countries of origin supported for advertisements targeted using “lived in”



Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

**Figure 3.3.** Number of Facebook users living abroad in African host countries, disaggregated by country of origin and self-declared sex



According to data from this platform, the total number of “migrants” – Facebook users who “live abroad” in Africa, regardless of the country of origin – is 10.5 million, which is almost half of the 26.5 million estimate of the international migrant stock in Africa provided by the United Nations Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).<sup>3</sup> Of these, the number of migrants from African countries of origin is 5 million. The difference between the two Facebook figures, 64 per cent, might be explained by African countries of origin not supported by Facebook, or by migrants from the rest of the world.

In Figure 3.3, the number of migrants is shown by country of origin and by sex. The first three countries by number of emigrants, among the countries available on the Facebook Advertising Platform, are the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe and Nigeria. There are generally more male migrants, but the sex ratio is fairly balanced. These estimates can be disaggregated by additional variables such as age, self-declared education level, inferred interests, or device types used – often a strong proxy for the relative income (Palotti et al., 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Available at [www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp) (accessed 14 May 2020).

### 3.3. Conclusions

In this description of the Facebook advertising data for Africa, we showed that the percentage of Facebook users varies across countries, and that not all African countries are supported as countries of origin. However, we were able to present a raw number of migrants in Africa, and a disaggregation by country of origin and by sex. Facebook does not provide information on ethnic affiliation in African countries. In addition, only a few African languages are supported on the Facebook Advertising Platform. The languages spoken in Africa are limited to Swahili, Afrikaans and Arabic, as well as many European languages. Still, in some settings, the languages supported might provide additional signals, also on internal migration. The analysis presented in this document is at the national level, but could be refined to smaller granularity, such as region, county, city and postal code (depending on the country), as long as the group of interest includes at least 1,000 Facebook users.<sup>4</sup> Overall, our preliminary analysis again hints at the potential value of the data, while also illustrating challenges for any cross-national work, due to the strong heterogeneity of Facebook use. Especially for countries with low Facebook penetration, methodological efforts for correcting biases in the data are required (Zagheni et al., 2017). Research on how to combine digital trace data with traditional data sources is still ongoing. Here, using Bayesian approaches to combine data sources with different limitations seems promising (Gendronneau et al., 2019).

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<sup>4</sup> This is the lower bound set by the Facebook Advertising Platform on the number of Monthly Active Users.

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# 4.

## Trends and evolving arrival patterns through the Central and Western Mediterranean Routes

Maria Fedorova,<sup>1</sup> Tashia Shupert<sup>1</sup>



DATA

**Abstract:** This chapter provides a descriptive analysis of migrant and refugee arrival trends in Italy and Spain from January 2018 to June 2019. The chapter explores major monthly trends in arrivals in 2018 and the first half of 2019, and indications of potential rerouting between the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) and Western Mediterranean Route (WMR) for certain nationalities. The key findings are:

- (a) From 2018 to the first half of 2019, the WMR was more active than the CMR, with a higher number of arrivals to Spain than to Italy in most months;
- (b) Simultaneously with a significant decrease in arrivals in both Italy and Spain in the observation period, possible rerouting from the CMR to the WMR was observed among certain nationalities over time, such as among Guinean and Malian migrants and refugees;
- (c) From the start of 2017 to August 2019, over 90 per cent of migration flows in West and Central Africa were intraregional or within the same country.<sup>2</sup>

### 4.1. Introduction

In 2018 and the first half of 2019, migrant and refugee<sup>3</sup> arrival numbers to Europe continued a downward trend, following the peak in 2015 and 2016, and initial decline in 2017.

This chapter aims to provide a descriptive overview of mobility trends and possible shifts in routes<sup>4</sup> taken by migrants and refugees travelling towards Europe along the CMR<sup>5</sup> and the WMR<sup>6</sup> during 2018 and the first half of 2019. The analysis tries to answer two main questions: (a) What were major monthly trends in arrivals in 2018 and the first half of 2019? (b) Is there any indication of potential shift between routes for certain nationalities? The main analysis time frame is January 2018–June 2019, but to better understand patterns in arrival trends in a broader context, comparisons with

<sup>1</sup> IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM).

<sup>2</sup> IOM, 2019a, 2019b; and compilation of available data by DTM.

<sup>3</sup> In the context of this analysis, the phrase “migrants and refugees” is used to address sensitivities surrounding terms assigned to mixed migration groups and individuals.

<sup>4</sup> In the context of this analysis, “route” is to be understood as the path taken by migrants or refugees in transit to Europe by sea.

<sup>5</sup> In the context of this analysis, the CMR is to be understood as the route taken by arrivals in Italy by sea. While the CMR includes Italy as well as Malta, the chapter focuses primarily on arrivals to Italy only, as arrivals to Malta comprise only a fraction of the total arrivals on the CMR.

<sup>6</sup> In the context of this analysis, the WMR is to be understood as the route taken by arrivals in Spain by sea.

2017 and 2016 arrival patterns are provided where relevant. While other studies in the field also investigate recent trends and potential shifts over time on the CMR and the WMR (MHub, 2019; MMC, 2018), the present chapter contributes to ongoing discourse and literature, in part, by extending the discussion on evolving patterns through the two routes to the first half of 2019, in relation to the questions addressed above.

Given the focus on overall trends along the CMR and the WMR, discussion of trends along the Eastern Mediterranean Route (EMR) are largely outside the scope of this analysis. However, it is worth noting that the EMR remains the predominant route towards Europe in the period under review in terms of numbers of registered arrivals.<sup>7</sup> Analysis develops a deeper focus on the WMR and the CMR, primarily because indications of potential rerouting among certain nationalities are more evident between the CMR and the WMR. In comparison with the CMR and the WMR, a largely different set of declared nationalities is observed along the EMR, and potential rerouting between the EMR to either the CMR or the WMR is not apparent.<sup>8</sup>

Routes that migrants and refugees take to reach Europe are influenced by a constellation of different factors, including adjustment to conditions and possibilities in transit countries, as well as policy changes and route closures in transit countries or intended destinations. This chapter is not trying to identify causes of possible shifts in routes or factors influencing migrants' decisions to take specific routes. Rather, it should be read as an overview of trends and possible shifts in those trends and between routes in the period under analysis.

The paper is structured as follows: First, general trends on the CMR and the WMR in 2018 and the first half of 2019 are discussed, along with an overview of key numbers and arrivals trends for each route. Second, an analysis of those nationalities which may have rerouted over time is given. Analysis of potential rerouting of certain nationalities focuses on nationals from West and Central Africa, as these nationals indicate most evident signs of possible shifts in routes. In 2019, as in 2018, Spain was the main arrival country for migrants taking the Western African and Western Mediterranean routes (IOM, 2019b). However, from the start of 2017 to August 2019, over 90 per cent of migration flows in West and Central Africa were intraregional or within the same country (*ibid.*).

## 4.2. Methodology

The chapter is based on arrivals data of migrants and refugees collected by national authorities and collated by IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). These data do not represent total mobility trends into Europe. Given the descriptive analysis based on a specific period of time, observations and conclusions based on these data should be considered indicative rather than conclusive, and should not be understood as predictive of future trends.

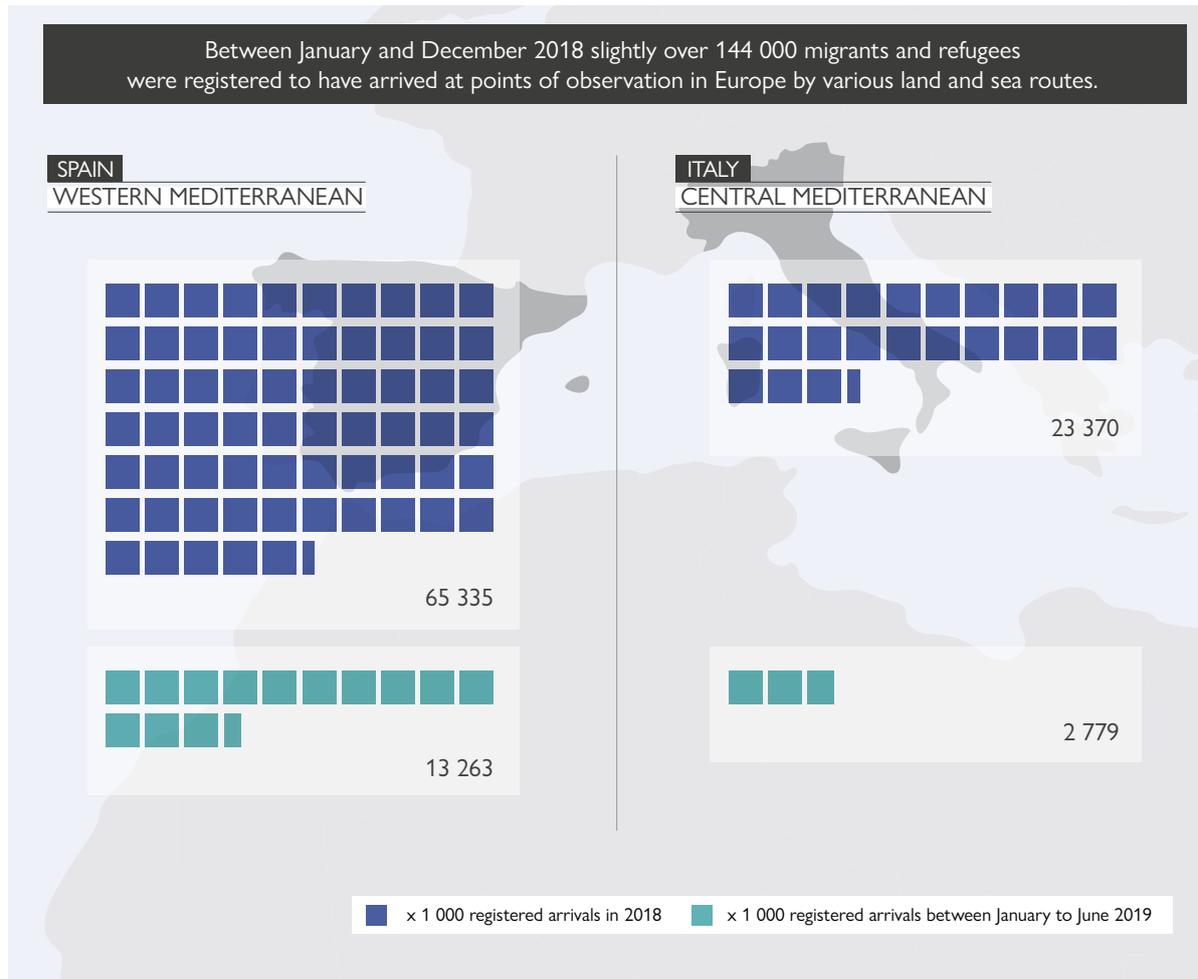
It is important to take note of data limitations and gaps affecting what the data can tell us about trends and possible shifts in routes along the CMR and the WMR. Data analysis is based on arrivals data from 2017 to the first half of 2019.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the trends analysed do not cover previous years and may not provide evidence of the larger shifts that have happened since 2015.

<sup>7</sup> DTM, national authorities and IOM offices.

<sup>8</sup> While there are some common, declared nationalities observed on all three routes, most declared nationalities observed on the EMR differ in comparison with those observed on the CMR and the WMR.

<sup>9</sup> According to the compilation of available data by DTM, national authorities and IOM offices.

**Figure 4.1.** Registered arrivals by sea to Italy and Spain, 2018 and January–June 2019



Sources: DTM, national authorities and IOM offices.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

### 4.3. Overview of arrivals in 2018 and first half of 2019

From January to December 2018, slightly more than 144,000 migrants and refugees were registered to have arrived at points of observation in Europe by various land and sea routes. This is 23 per cent less than the number of arrivals recorded in 2017, when a little more than 186,700 migrants and refugees were recorded arriving at points of observation, reiterating that observed numbers of registered arrivals do not represent total mobility trends into Europe.<sup>10</sup>

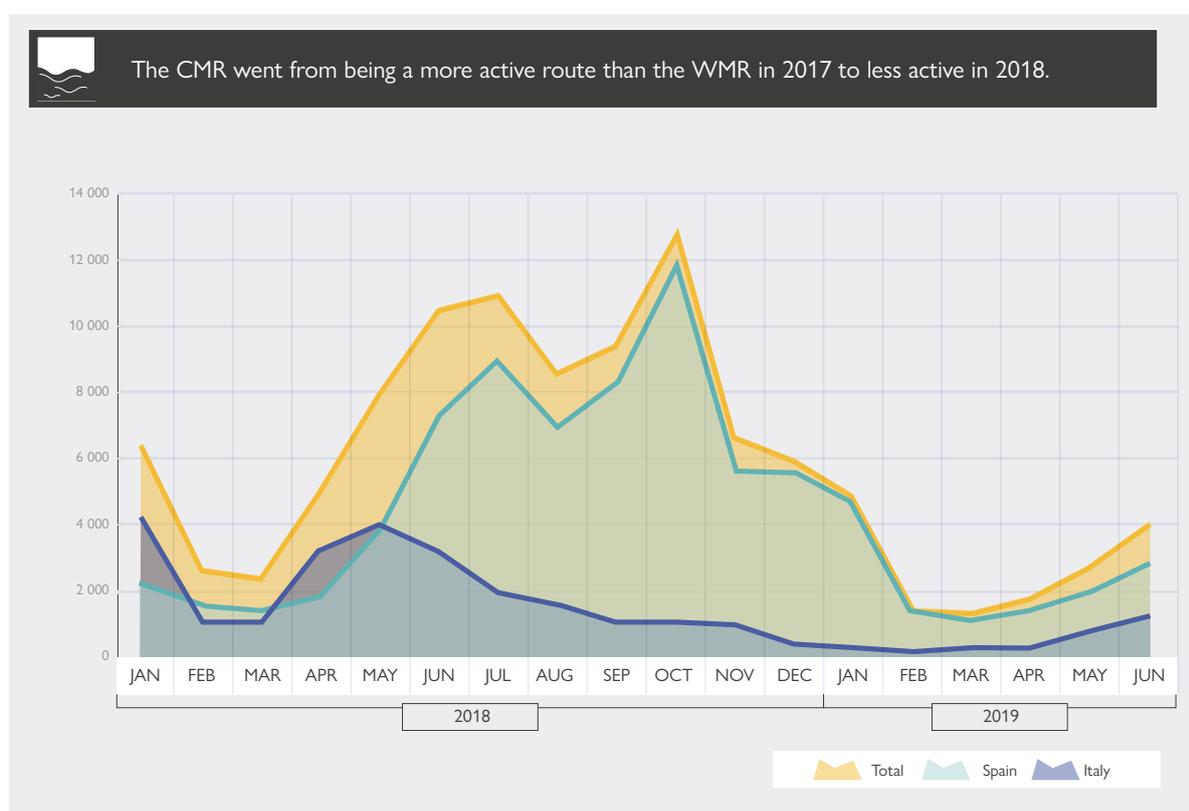
<sup>10</sup> Arrivals numbers of migrants and refugees in 2017 and 2018 may be marginally higher due to slight adjustments in the observed number of migrants and refugees in Cyprus in the observed period.

However, in the period under review, there was an increased number of arrivals of migrants and refugees to Malta. At the end of December 2018, a total of 1,445 migrants and refugees were reported to have arrived in the country, and the increase continued into 2019, the highest number reported since 2013, when 2,008 migrants and refugees were registered arriving.<sup>11</sup>

Simultaneously with the overall decrease in registered arrivals to Europe in 2018 and the first half of 2019, potential shifts were also observed in the main routes migrants and refugees took to reach Europe, a trend which becomes evident when looking at monthly arrival numbers to Italy (CMR) and Spain (WMR) in that period.<sup>12</sup>

The CMR went from being a more active route than the WMR in 2017 to less active in 2018. In the first half of 2017 (January to June), a total of 83,752 arrivals were registered in Italy. In contrast, a total of 23,370 arrivals of migrants and refugees were registered in 2018. In the first half of 2019, a total of 2,779 migrants and refugees were reported to have arrived in Italy. This constitutes a significant decrease of 83 per cent in comparison with the same period of 2018.

**Figure 4.2.** Monthly total registered arrivals by sea to Italy and Spain (January 2018–June 2019)



Sources: DTM, national authorities and IOM offices.

In turn, the WMR became more predominant than the CMR in 2018, with approximately 65,300 migrants and refugees arriving in Spain. The number of migrants and refugees who arrived in Spain in 2018 constituted a more than twofold increase compared with 2017, when just over 28,700 arrivals were reported. In the first half of 2019, there was a slight decrease in the number of migrants and refugees who arrived in Spain relative to the same period in 2018.

<sup>11</sup> While the total number of arrivals in Malta is relatively small in absolute numbers in comparison with the number of arrivals in Italy and Spain, it places pressure on services and communal infrastructure for a country with a total population of 483,530 individuals and few reception centres, with limited resources and capacity.

<sup>12</sup> According to the compilation of available data by DTM, national authorities and IOM offices. For a breakdown of registered arrival numbers to Italy and Spain per month (January 2018–June 2019), see annex.

### 4.3.1. Italy – Overview of arrival patterns

In 2018, arrival patterns to Italy noticeably fluctuated, showing a dip in the early months of 2018, followed by another rise through the spring months and subsequent decline in arrivals, which continued steadily throughout the second half of 2018 and early months of 2019.<sup>13</sup> January had the highest figure of migrants and refugees arriving in Italy in 2018 (a little more than 4,000), followed by an immediate dip in arrivals in February.

By June 2018, the number of arriving migrants and refugees saw a decrease, which marked an overall declining trend throughout the remainder of 2018. Less than 400 individuals were reported to have arrived in December 2018, the lowest number of monthly arrivals in Italy in 2018.

Early 2019 showed no significant deviation in arrivals to Italy, and overall figures remained low. A little more than 2,700 migrants and refugees were reported in the first half of 2019. This is an 83 per cent decrease in comparison with the same period of 2018.

Worth noting, however is an increase in arrivals to Italy observed from April to June. Spring months tend to mark an increase in arrivals along the CMR in general, as a similar trend (increase in arrivals) could also be observed in May and June of 2018.

### 4.3.2. Spain – Overview of arrival patterns

In the early months of 2018, figures indicate the WMR was less active than the CMR, with partial rerouting from CMR to WMR not yet noticeable.<sup>14</sup> For example, in January 2018, a total of 2,182 migrants and refugees arrived in Spain, just half the number of migrants and refugees who arrived in Italy in the same month. The number of migrants and refugees who arrived in Spain in following months – February and March – slightly decreased, and arrivals in Italy dropped to a comparable level. In April, the number of migrants and refugees who arrived in Italy again exceeded arrivals in Spain. However, by the end of June 2018, the number of arrivals to Spain significantly exceeded arrivals to Italy,<sup>15</sup> which in turn began to see a steady decrease.

From June onwards, the WMR became consistently more active than the CMR, and the number of arrivals to Spain remained higher than the number of arrivals to Italy throughout the second half of 2018, as well as in the first half of 2019.

In January 2019, there were approximately twice as many registered arrivals in Spain compared with the same month of 2018. From March 2019, the number of migrants and refugees who arrived in Spain increased slightly each month. Despite this increase in arrivals in Spain during the first half of 2019, comparing figures from June 2018 and June 2019 still shows a significantly lower number of arrivals in June 2019 compared with June 2018.

## 4.4. National composition of migrants and refugees: potential rerouting

Fluctuations in arrival patterns according to national composition of registered migrants and refugees in Italy and Spain over time may indicate possible rerouting between the CMR and the WMR.<sup>16</sup>

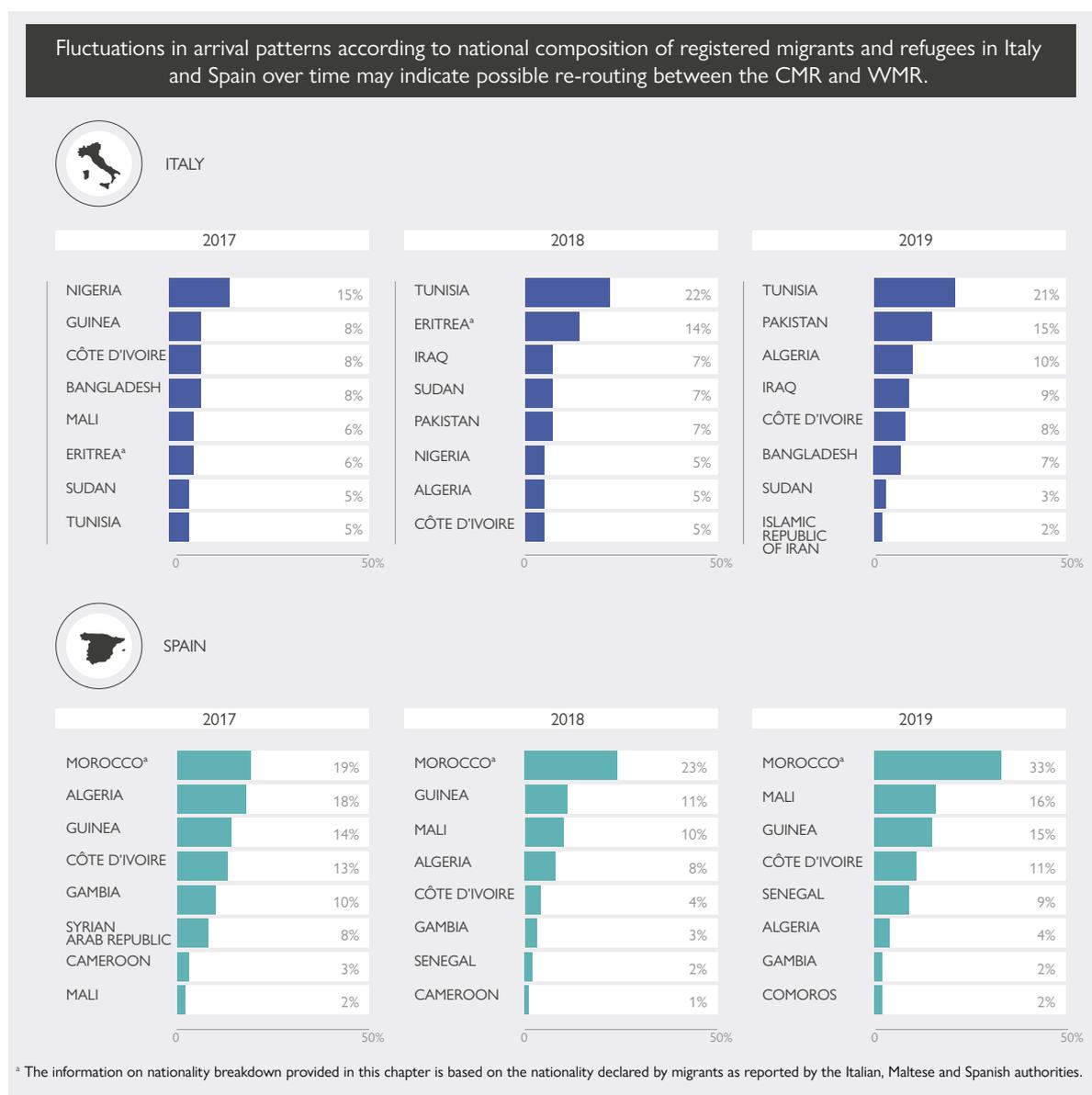
There were no significant changes in the main nationalities of arrivals in Spain from the first half of 2018 to the first half of 2019. Taking a broader time frame into account (as of 2017), the potential rerouting of some nationalities between the CMR and the WMR which started in 2018 and continued into 2019 becomes more apparent.

<sup>13</sup> See annex.

<sup>14</sup> See annex.

<sup>15</sup> June 2018 is the month Spain's Government allowed the Aquarius rescue ship to dock in Valencia.

<sup>16</sup> Findings are only indicative of potential trends in rerouting of discussed nationalities from the CMR and the WMR.

**Figure 4.3.** Top eight declared nationalities of arrivals to Italy and Spain (percentage of total arrivals per country) January 2017–June 2019

Sources: DTM, national authorities and IOM offices..

The nationalities analysed below are among the top declared nationalities of arrivals to Spain in 2017 which most clearly indicate a possible rerouting from the CMR to the WMR over time.

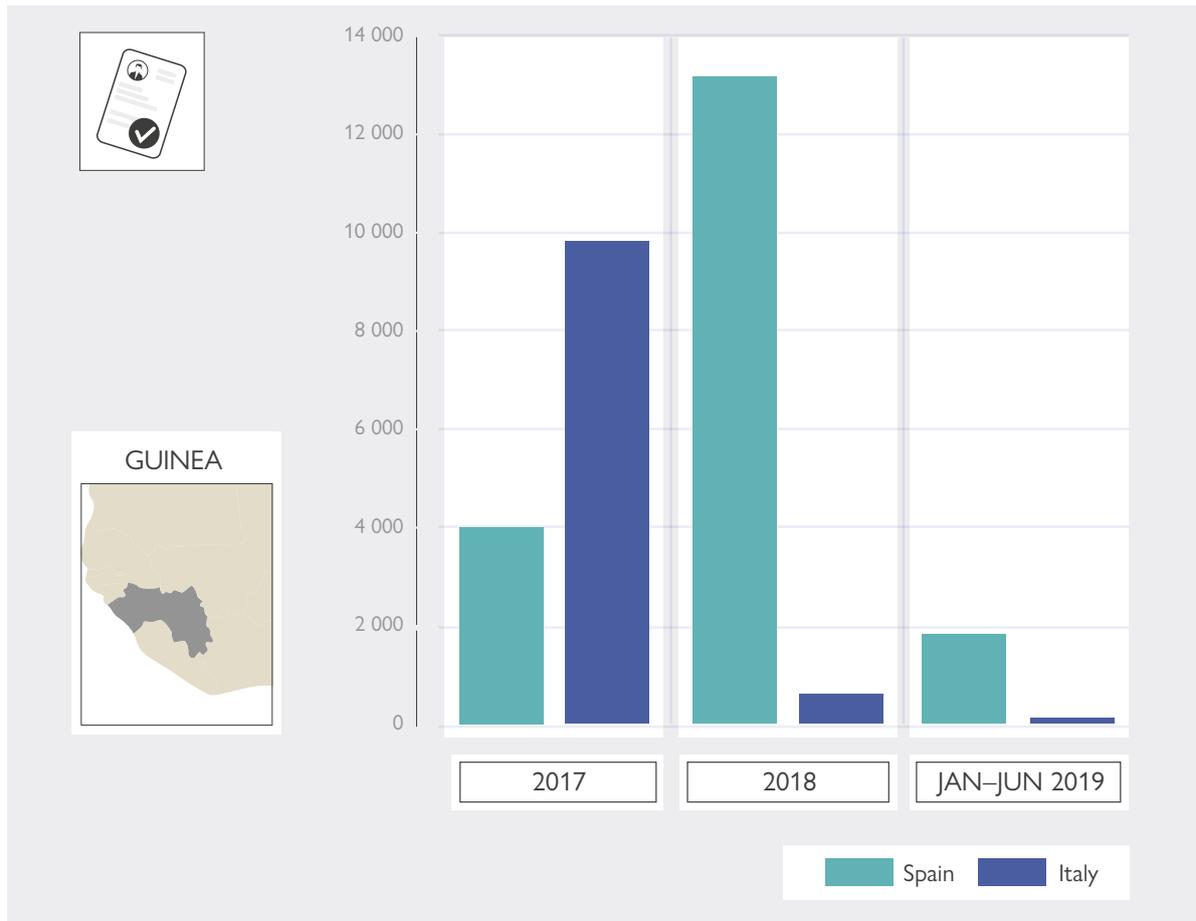
#### 4.4.1. Guinean nationals

In 2017, Guinean nationals mainly arrived in Europe along the CMR. The total number of Guinean nationals who arrived in Italy in 2017 was approximately twice as large as the number of Guinean nationals who arrived in Spain.

The situation changed in 2018, when a larger number of Guinean nationals arrived in Spain compared with Italy. The absolute number of Guinean nationals who arrived in Spain was approximately eight times the number of Guinean nationals who arrived in Italy in 2018.

While there was approximately a twofold decrease in the absolute number of Guinean nationals who arrived in Spain in the first half of 2019 relative to the same period of 2018, the decrease is much more pronounced in Italy. The number of Guinean nationals who arrived in Italy in the first half of 2019 in comparison with the first half of 2018 decreased by 92 per cent. This suggests a more significant decrease in Italy compared with Spain, indicating that, while fewer Guinean nationals arrived in Europe in 2019 overall, there is a potential shift in route favouring WMR countries for Guinean nationals in the period under review.

**Figure 4.4.** Absolute number of Guinean nationals registered in Italy and Spain (January 2017–June 2019)



Sources: DTM, national authorities and IOM offices.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

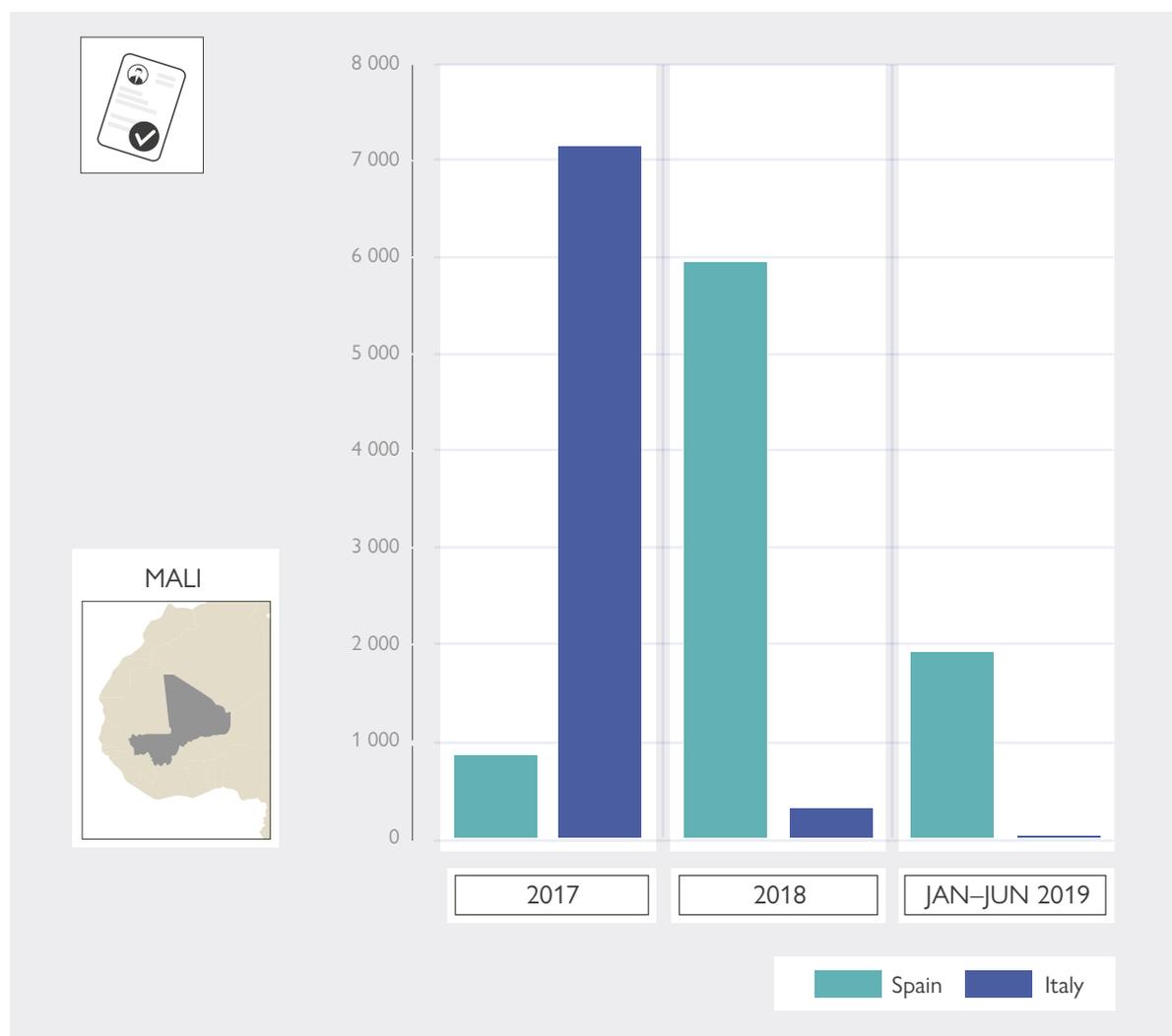
#### 4.4.2. Malian nationals

In 2017, Malian nationals were arriving in Italy in larger numbers than in Spain. In absolute numbers, arrivals of Malian nationals in Italy were 11 times higher than in Spain.

In 2018, this trend began to shift, with a ninefold increase in the absolute number of Malian nationals who arrived in Spain, in comparison with 2017. At the same time, the number of Malian nationals who arrived in Italy decreased by 88 per cent. It is evident that the WMR became a more active route for Malian nationals in 2018, with the total number of Malian nationals who arrived in Spain being seven times higher than the number of Malian nationals who arrived in Italy in 2018.

Taking into account a much higher rate at which arrivals of Malian nationals were decreasing in Italy in comparison with Spain, it could be concluded that Malian nationals continued to primarily follow the WMR over the CMR in the first half of 2019.<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 4.5.** Absolute number of Malian nationals registered in Italy and Spain (January 2017–June 2019)



Sources: DTM, national authorities and IOM offices.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

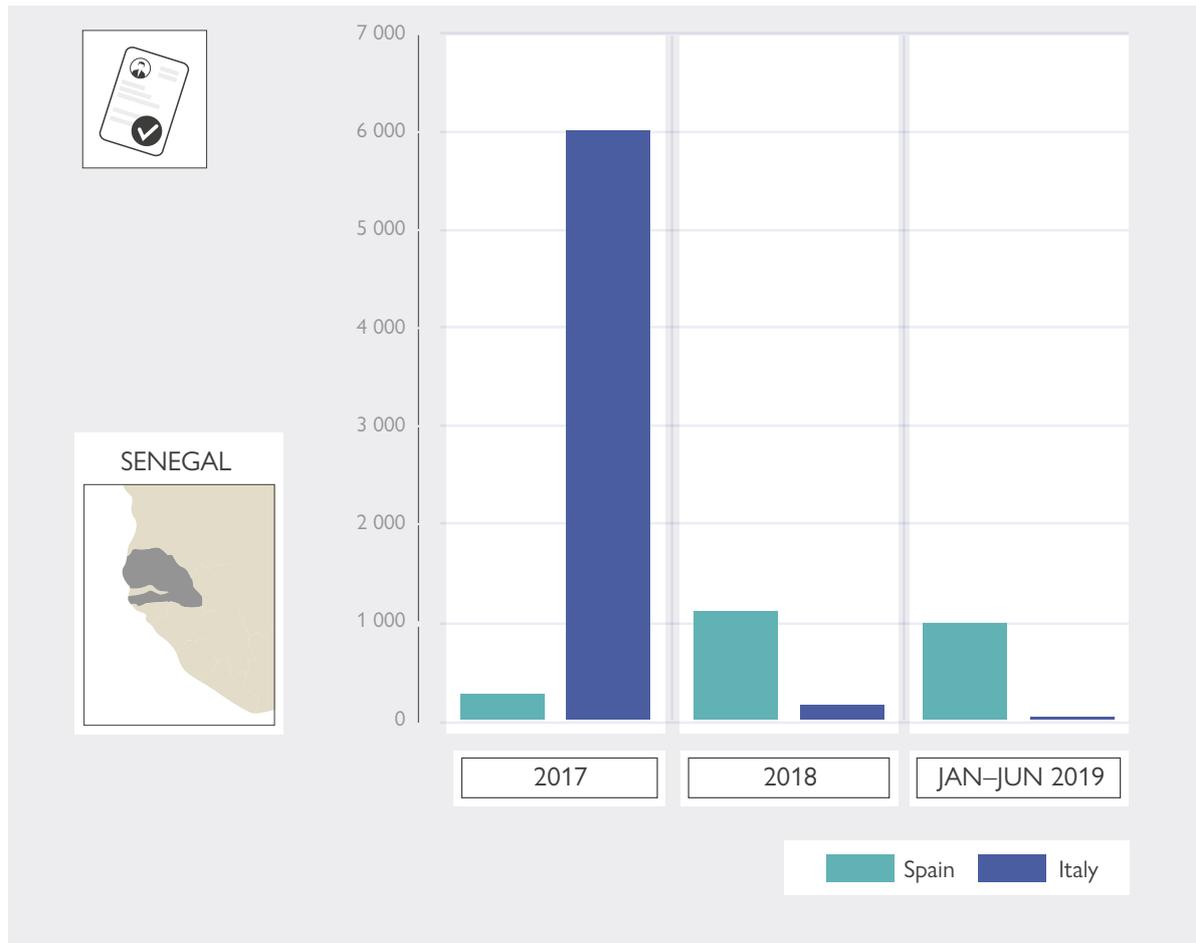
#### 4.4.3. Senegalese nationals

In 2017, Senegalese nationals were the 10th most commonly reported nationality of arrivals in Italy, comprising 5 per cent of all arrivals in the country. In contrast, Senegalese nationals represented just 1 per cent of all arrivals in Spain the same year. In 2018, however, the WMR became a predominant route followed by Senegalese migrants and refugees, who were among the top eight nationalities of arrival in Spain that year.

<sup>17</sup> In the first half of 2019, the absolute number of Malian nationals who arrived in Italy decreased significantly, by 96 per cent, in comparison with the same period of 2018.

The number of Senegalese nationals who arrived in Spain in 2018 was four times higher than in 2017, while the number decreased 22 fold in Italy in the same period. In the first half of 2019, the absolute number and the relative share of Senegalese nationals in Spain increased in comparison with the first half of 2018. In contrast, both the absolute number and relative share of Senegalese nationals decreased in Italy in the same comparison periods. These figures indicate Senegalese nationals partially rerouted from the CMR to the WMR, and the shift continued well into 2019.

**Figure 4.6.** Absolute number of Senegalese nationals registered in Italy and Spain (January 2017–June 2019)



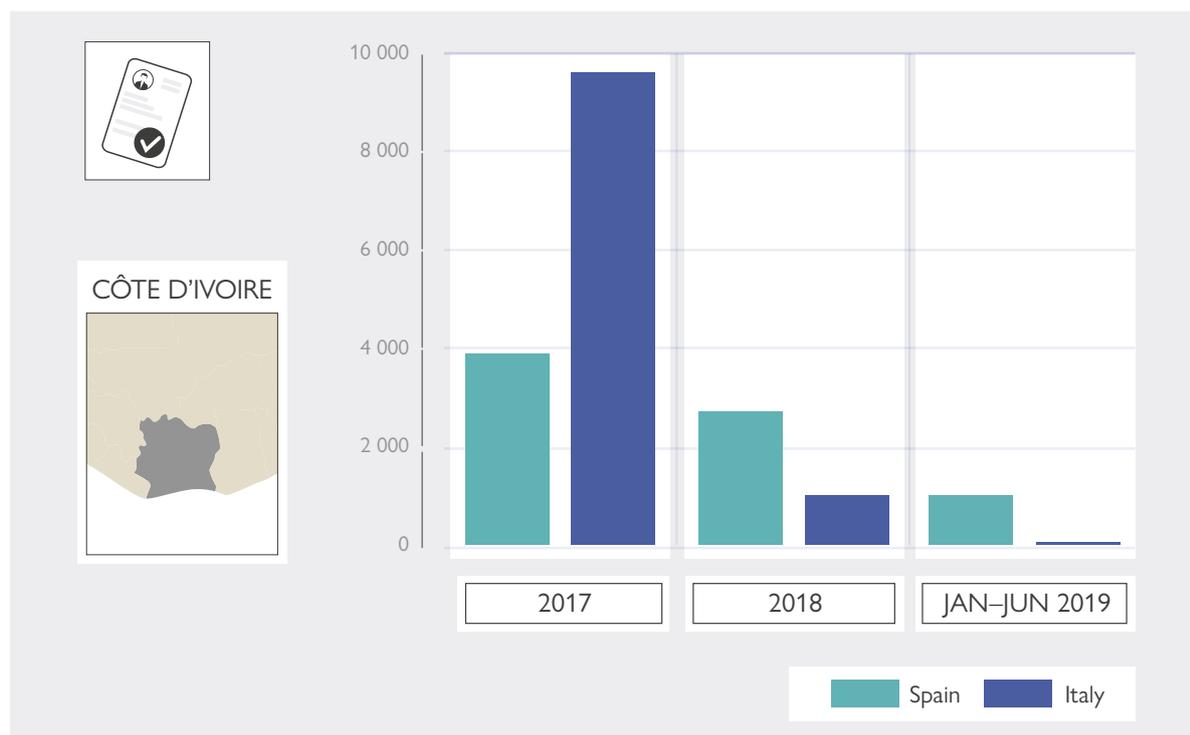
Sources: DTM, national authorities and IOM offices.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

#### 4.4.4. Ivorian nationals

In 2017, approximately three times more Ivorian nationals arrived in Italy compared with Spain. The dynamic changed in 2018, when an overall decline was noted in both countries, and a larger number of Ivorian nationals arrived in Spain compared with Italy (approximately twice as many arrivals in Spain as in Italy). In 2019, the absolute number of Ivorian nationals to both Italy and Spain continued to decrease. The decrease, however, was more apparent in Italy, where arrivals dropped by 80 per cent in the first half of 2019 relative to the first half of 2018.

While evidence of potential rerouting among Ivorian nationals is less pronounced than shifting trends among Guineans and Malians, overall figures do suggest a potential shift from the CMR to the WMR among Ivorians in the period under review.

**Figure 4.7.** Absolute number of Ivorian nationals registered in Italy and Spain (January 2017–June 2019)

Sources: DTM, national authorities and IOM offices.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

## 4.5. Key messages

Key messages include the following:

- The year 2015 marked the highest number of registered arrivals of migrants and refugees to Europe in comparison with the following years up to June 2019. Within the context of this overall declining trend, the WMR became more active than the CMR, in terms of overall numbers of registered arrivals in Europe, through these two routes by the second half of 2018. This trend persisted until June 2019, while noting that in early 2019, the EMR became the most active of the three routes and remained the predominant route to Europe throughout the first half of 2019.
- Simultaneously with a significant decrease in arrivals of migrants and refugees in 2018 and the first half of 2019 in both Italy and Spain, possible rerouting could be observed among certain migrant and refugee nationalities represented in transit to Italy and Spain over time, a potential trend that is more pronounced among Guinean and Malian nationals, reiterating that, between the start of 2017 and August 2019, over 90 per cent of migration flows in West and Central Africa were intraregional or within the same country.
- Analysis on migration trends over time – together with existing and ongoing research on the mobility, vulnerabilities and needs of displaced and mobile populations – provides relevant data and information needed to better inform the decisions, programming and policymaking processes of national authorities, national organizations and humanitarian agencies, to enable them to provide these populations with better context-specific assistance.

**Annex.** Absolute number of arrivals registered in Italy and Spain (2018 to June 2019)

Month and year	Italy	Spain	Total
January 2018	4 182	2 182	6 364
February 2018	1 065	1 518	2 583
March 2018	1 049	1 284	2 333
April 2018	3 171	1 706	4 877
May 2018	3 963	3 937	7 900
June 2018	3 147	7 323	10 470
July 2018	1 969	8 940	10 909
August 2018	1 531	7 022	8 553
September 2018	947	8 399	9 346
October 2018	1 007	11 788	12 795
November 2018	980	5 648	6 628
December 2018	359	5 578	5 937
January 2019	202	4 612	4 814
February 2019	60	1 366	1 426
March 2019	262	1 036	1 298
April 2019	255	1 479	1 734
May 2019	782	1 972	2 754
June 2019	1 218	2 798	4 016

Sources: DTM, national authorities and IOM offices.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

2019a DTM data story: Migration Flows in West and Central Africa. Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). Available at <https://migration.iom.int/data-stories/migration-flows-west-central-africa>.

2019b Regional Mobility Mapping West and Central Africa. Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). Available at <https://displacement.iom.int/reports/west-and-central-africa-%E2%80%94-regional-mobility-mapping-august-2019?close=true>.

Mixed Migration Centre (MMC)

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Mixed Migration Hub (MHub)

2019 Investigating evolving profiles, intentions, experiences and vulnerabilities of people on the move on Central Mediterranean and Western Mediterranean Routes in 2018. Available at [www.mixedmigrationhub.org/mmtf-noah-research/](http://www.mixedmigrationhub.org/mmtf-noah-research/).



Return from Conakry to Freetown, Sierra Leone. © IOM 2001/Amanda NERO



DATA

## 5.

## Migration in Libya post-2016: recently arrived migrants and migrants who have been in Libya for at least one year

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**Abstract:** This chapter explores differences and similarities between migrants who have recently arrived in Libya and those who have been there for at least one year, along the dimensions of labour migration, employment, intentions, remittances, access to services, humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities, based on International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Libya's Flow Monitoring and Mobility Tracking data. Although migration to Libya for both groups is primarily driven by economic motivations, available data gathered through thematic humanitarian needs modules of DTM Libya's Flow Monitoring Survey (FMS) indicate that more recently arrived migrants showed higher vulnerability levels across several indicators, while those who have been in country for more than one year report higher employment rates and remittances. At the same time, both are negatively impacted by structural problems, such as Libya's severely constrained health system, limited access to public services, and cross-cutting protection risks related to irregular migration and the protracted conflict in Libya. Labour migration policies and programmes as part of comprehensive migration management are a critical need, affecting both recently arrived migrants and those who have been staying in Libya for extended periods.

### 5.1. Introduction

Prior to the revolution in 2011, Libya was a primary destination for labour migration in North Africa. According to IOM estimates, the number of international migrants in Libya could have been as high as 2.5 million (European Training Foundation, 2014), and the number of foreign workers exceeded the native Libyan workforce. Relatively high salaries in Libya compared with its neighbouring countries encouraged migrant workers to seek employment in Libya – particularly those from Tunisia, Egypt, the Niger and the Sudan, but also those from many other African and Asian countries. Migrant workers were employed in a variety of sectors, including the oil industry, health, construction and agriculture.

After the fall of the Gaddafi regime in August 2011, many observers thought the emergency in Libya had come to an end, as a transitional Government was established. However, after a short period of calm, conflict and political turmoil escalated again, eventually reaching a state of civil war in 2014.

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Since then, Libya has been split between two rival Governments, the internationally recognized Government of National Accord in Tripoli and a competing administration in Tobruk, Eastern Libya. Within this context, a variety of different actors, including a multitude of armed groups, has contributed to a volatile environment of violence, economic downfall and humanitarian crisis.

Despite these detrimental factors, Libya is still hosting a sizeable number of international migrants. As per DTM's latest round of Mobility Tracking<sup>3</sup> in April 2020, at least 625,638<sup>4</sup> migrants were present in Libya. Although European media have predominantly focused on transit migration across the Mediterranean Sea from Libya to Europe, the majority of migrants in Libya still come from Libya's neighbouring countries the Niger, Chad, the Sudan and Egypt, accounting for 62 per cent of Libya's migrant population. Despite the current challenges and conflict in parts of the country, higher salaries vis-à-vis neighbouring countries and demand in Libya's labour market continue to make it an attractive destination for migration, often undertaken irregularly.

In light of differences between transitory and longer-term migration, this chapter will look at migration in Libya through the lens of length of stay, to analyse differences between transitory and longer-term migration to Libya. More specifically, Mobility Tracking and Flow Monitoring<sup>5</sup> data collected by DTM Libya will be analysed along these axes, distinguishing between recently arrived migrants and migrants who have been in Libya for at least one year.

Between January and August 2019, more than 13,000 individual surveys were conducted with migrants through purposive sampling in 19 of the 22 regions of Libya. The sample included both recently arrived migrants and those who had been living in Libya for a long period of time. Most interviews were conducted at key transit points as part of DTM's FMS. However, surveys also took place in residential areas of urban centres across the country. This chapter also includes findings from a joint research project on livelihoods, security perceptions and remittances of migrants who have been in Libya for at least one year, conducted by IOM DTM Libya and Columbia University in 2019 (IOM and Columbia University, forthcoming).

## 5.2. Methodology and limitations

The findings presented in this report are based on the analysis of data collected in Libya via two different DTM components: (a) DTM Mobility Tracking, which includes a Multisectoral Location Assessment at locality level; and (b) the DTM FMS.

Mobility Tracking is implemented in Libya along a bimonthly data collection cycle, and the data are collected countrywide in all 100 municipalities at 659 localities via key informant interviews. The data used in this assessment are from 2,170 key informant interviews conducted during the Round 30 Mobility Tracking data collection cycle, covering March–April 2020. This component tracks population movements to establish baseline estimates of various populations in the areas assessed, and includes a Multisectoral Location Assessment module that gathers data on the availability of services, multisectoral humanitarian needs and various other indicators of interest. Mobility Tracking covers all of Libya with data disaggregation down to municipality level (*baladiya*; admin unit 3) for data on services and needs, and to community or locality level (*mahalla*; admin unit 4) for population estimates.

The FMS is part of DTM's survey component for conducting interviews with migrants. These individual interviews with migrants include questions on migration dynamics vis-à-vis aspirations, intentions, migration decision-making, routes, potential return to the country of origin, and other migration-related aspects. In 2019, the FMS in Libya was expanded with the addition of thematic modules that include questions related to Education; Food Security; Livelihoods; Remittances; Health; Migration Challenges; Accommodation; and access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services. These thematic modules can be selectively activated as per the data needs at specific locations, and therefore this modular approach can also be used to guide operational planning of assistance provision to migrants.

<sup>3</sup> DTM Libya: Mobility Tracking Methodology. Available at <https://displacement.iom.int/reports/dtm-libya-mobility-tracking-methodology>.

<sup>4</sup> DTM Libya: Migrant Report, Round 30, March – April 2020. Available at <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/libya-%E2%80%94-migrant-report-30-march-april-2020>.

<sup>5</sup> DTM Libya: Flow Monitoring Methodology. Available at <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/dtm-libya-flow-monitoring-methodology>.

This report presents the findings of the 13,228 quantitative interviews conducted with migrants from 1 January to 24 August 2019. The interviews were conducted at key locations in the 19 regions (*mantika*; admin unit 2) of Libya (IOM, 2019a). The FMS interviews were conducted by 46 enumerators, who are trained on data collection, quantitative and qualitative research methods, definitions and concepts related to thematic modules, and assessments. Migrants' informed consent is verbally obtained before each interview, and they are informed about the purposes of the interview, the aims of the assessment, that their personal data will be saved in a non-identifiable way, that they are not obliged to answer all questions, that they can terminate the interview at any time, and that they will not be remunerated for the interviews. The questionnaire is filled electronically by the enumerator via the Kobo Collect application, and the data are stored directly into a dedicated and secure DTM database.

*Sampling approach:* DTM's Mobility Tracking has countrywide coverage in Libya (100 *baladiyas* and 659 *mahallas*), and includes an estimation of population figures at community or locality level (*mahalla*; admin unit 4). The data obtained via Mobility Tracking serves as a baseline estimate of the migrant stock in Libya that is subsequently used for identifying the migrant sample interviewed via the FMS at key locations – for instance, transit points such as bus stops and bridges along main migration routes, cafes, markets, parks, sites of accommodation or shelters, mosques, public buildings, work recruitment points and residential areas. While a fixed portion of the FMS interview questionnaire was administered to all the migrants interviewed, the modular thematic sections were selectively activated throughout the assessment period and therefore each thematic section covers a smaller subset of the entire sample.

*Limitations:* While the report presents findings from a large-scale implementation of the FMS throughout the year, it does not claim the interviewed sample to be statistically representative of the demographics of the broader migrant population in Libya. The findings relate to the sample and are not considered generalizable to the whole migrant population in Libya.

### 5.3. Profiles of recently arrived migrants and migrants who have been in Libya for at least one year

Among the migrants surveyed through DTM's FMS component in 2019, 58 per cent (7,660 individuals) were migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year, while 42 per cent (5,458 individuals) were recently arrived migrants.

While the recently arrived migrants surveyed through FMS interviews were equally distributed in the east, south and west of Libya, half of the migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year when the survey took place were identified in the west, 30 per cent in the south and 19 per cent in the east. While FMS data collection was based on purposive sampling (see preceding section), geographic distribution of the entire FMS sample (43% west, 32% south, 25% east) reflected DTM's Mobility Tracking migrant stock estimate fairly closely (49% west, 25% south, 26% east). Migrant workers tend to live in regions with high levels of economic activity, particularly along Libya's coastal line.

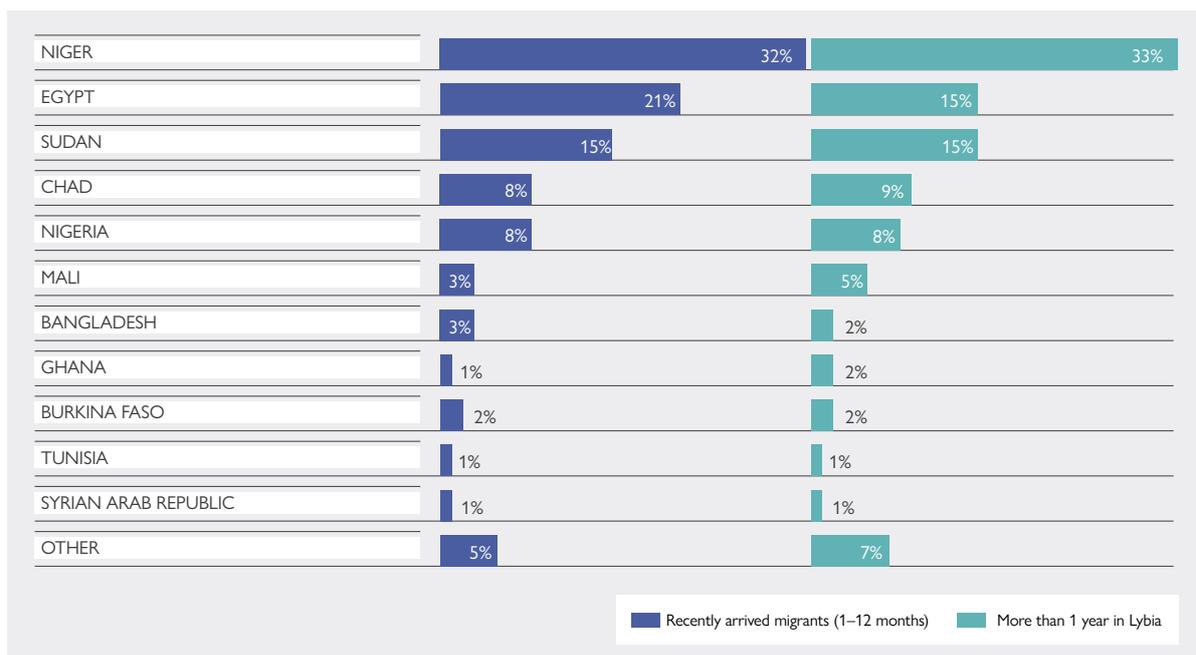
**Figure 5.1.** Distribution of migrants' location by length of stay in Libya



Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

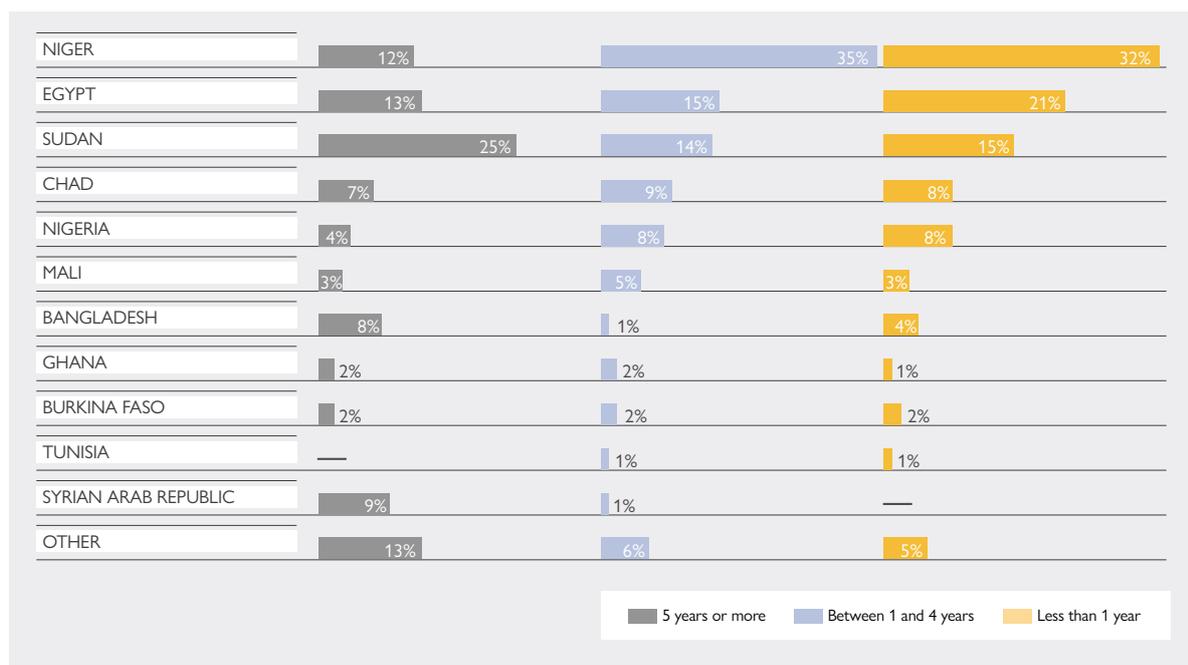
Among the main nationalities surveyed, Syrian nationals represented the highest proportion of migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year: 92 per cent of Syrian nationals reported having been in Libya for more than one year; and only 8 per cent had arrived less than one year prior to being interviewed. Given the historic presence of the Syrian community in Libya, this pattern was to be expected (Lifos Centre for Country of Origin Information and Analysis, 2016). Most other nationalities showed a more balanced distribution in terms of length of stay.

**Figure 5.2.** Surveyed recently arrived migrants and migrants who have been in Libya for at least one year



The distribution of nationalities was observed to be similar between recently arrived migrants and migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year; however, when further disaggregating the latter by length of stay in Libya, a noticeable trend emerged among those who had been in the country for five years or longer. The most common nationality recorded in this category were Sudanese migrants (26%), whose proportion did not exceed 15 per cent among more recently arrived migrants. Conversely, nationals of the Niger accounted for 32 per cent of more recently arrived migrants, but only for 12 per cent of surveyed migrants who had been in Libya for five years or more (Figure 5.3).

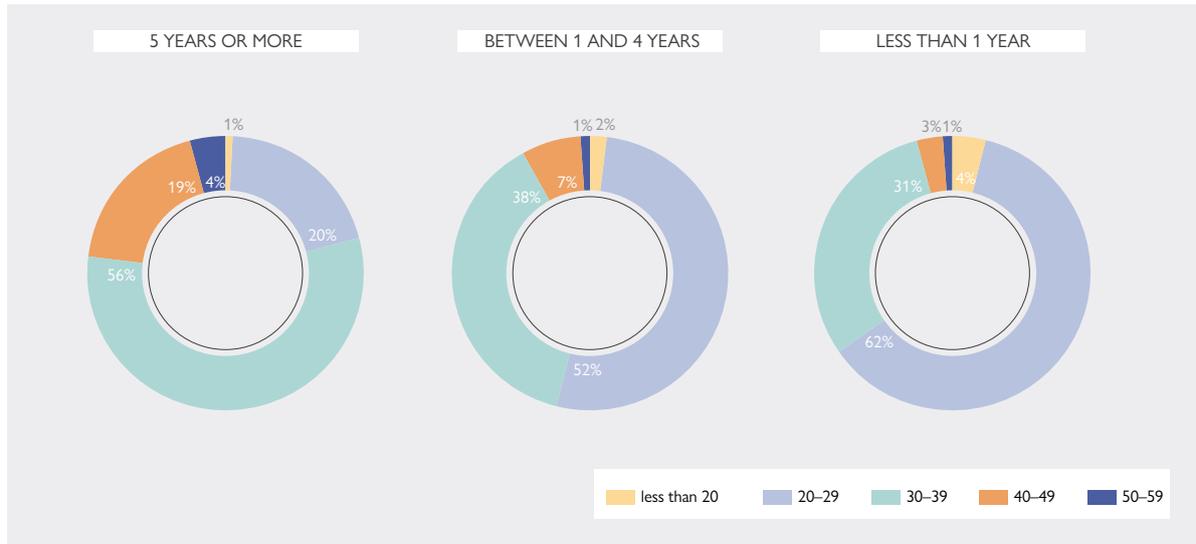
**Figure 5.3.** Distribution of migrants' nationality by length of stay in Libya



Comparing the age demographics of both groups, a noticeable trend emerges, as two thirds (66%) of more recently arrived migrants who were interviewed were less than 30 years old, while only half (51%) of all migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year fell into this age bracket; the mean age at entry was 27 years for both groups. Overall, more recently arrived migrants were mostly young males, whereas age distribution among migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year was more balanced.

This pattern also emerged very strongly when looking at the composition of age groups for different lengths of stay. More specifically, there appears to be a very noticeable trend that the proportion of older migrants gradually increases with length of stay of interviewed migrants (see Figure 5.4). While the majority (62%) of the recently arrived migrants were in their 20s, only 20 per cent fell into this category among migrants who had been in Libya for more than five years at the time of interview.

**Figure 5.4.** Length of stay of migrants by age group

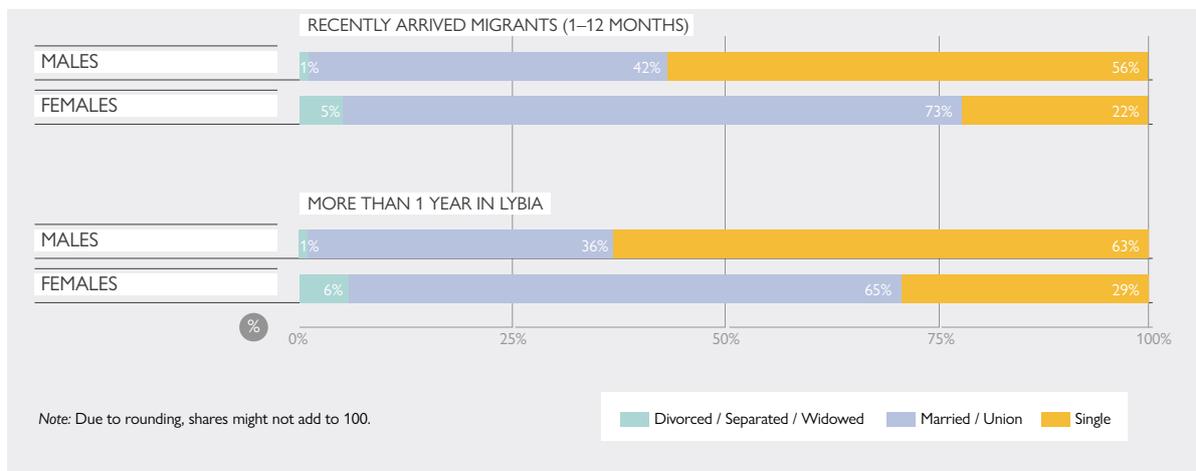


Among the surveyed sample, only 4 per cent were females. Among migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year, 5 per cent were women, compared with 3 per cent among the recently arrived. The low proportion of female migrants among respondents can be explained by a combination of less presence of female migrants in public areas, where surveys are usually conducted; non-response bias; and comparatively smaller share of female migrants in Libya's total migrant stock, estimated at 11 per cent in the last round of DTM's Migrant Stock Mobility Tracking.<sup>6</sup>

However, the proportion of migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year was higher among female migrants compared with males. Among the 517 females who were interviewed, 68 per cent had been in Libya for more than one year, compared with 58 per cent for male migrants.

The disaggregation by marital status highlighted a significant difference between males and females: while 69 per cent of female migrants assessed reported being married, only 39 per cent of males reported the same. Interviews with key informants during DTM Libya's bimonthly data collection cycles revealed that male migrants more commonly migrate alone or with friends, while female migrants tend to travel with their families (for example, their husbands). The proportion of married migrants was recorded to be higher for migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year than for recently arrived migrants.

**Figure 5.5.** Marital status by length of stay and sex



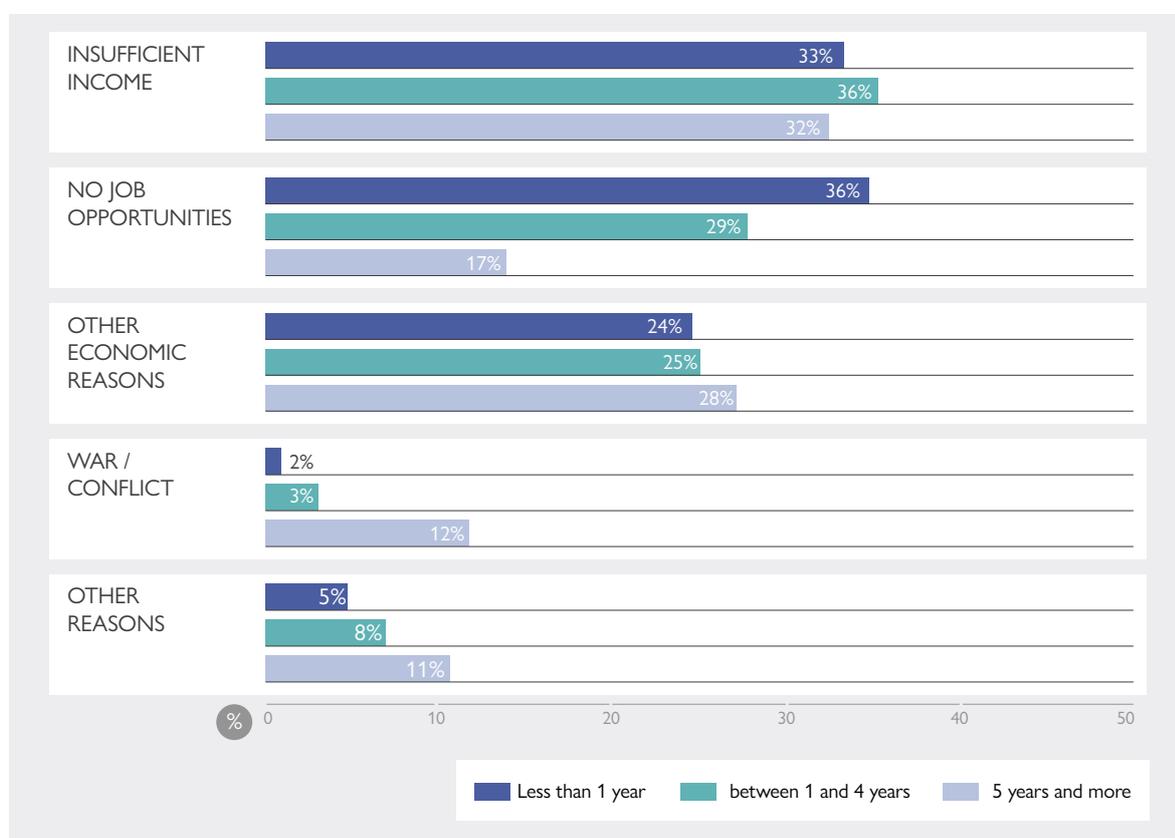
<sup>6</sup> DTM Libya: Migrant Report, Round 30, March – April 2020. Available at <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/libya-%E2%80%94-migrant-report-30-march-april-2020>.

## 5.4. Drivers of migration and intentions

The pivotal role that socioeconomic disparities traditionally play in pushing populations to migrate was also observed among the migrants surveyed by DTM Libya in 2019. The vast majority of migrants interviewed in Libya indicated that they left their countries of origin due to economic factors (90%). Irrespective of their initial reasons to migrate, most interviewees reported to be employed in Libya (76%). A smaller proportion of migrants indicated other reasons for leaving their countries of origin, such as conflict, limited access to services and slow-onset natural disasters. Conflict was reported as reason for leaving countries of origin primarily for three surveyed nationalities: Sudanese (36%), Syrians (20%) and Palestinians (8%).

Overall, the drivers of migration did not differ substantially by length of stay. Given the role of economic reasons as the overarching driver for migration to and through Libya, FMS surveys further disaggregated migration drivers between different economic motives (Figure 5.6).

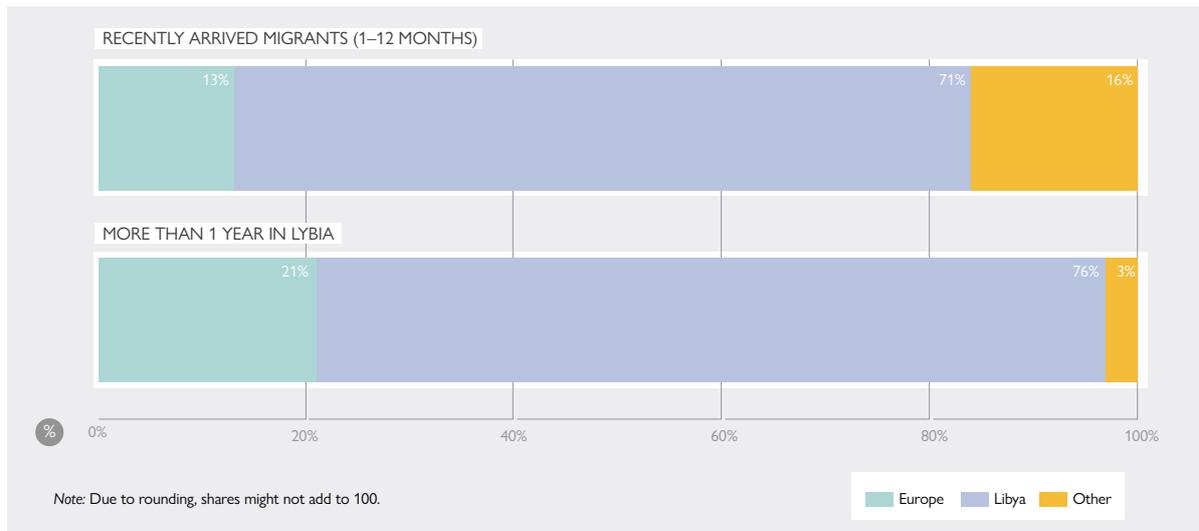
**Figure 5.6.** Main reason for leaving the country of origin by length of stay



In terms of migratory intentions, the majority of migrants who participated in DTM's survey indicated that they were planning to stay in Libya (73%). A comparison of reported intentions by length of stay in Libya suggests that this trend applies to both recently arrived migrants and those who have been in Libya for at least one year (Figure 5.7).

However, among respondents who planned to leave Libya, recently arrived migrants reported more frequently planning to go to Europe than the other group (21% versus 13%).

**Figure 5.7.** Intended final destination, by length of stay



### KDTM Libya Flow Monitoring: More than just numbers

#### Voluntary Humanitarian Return

During FMS interviews with migrants, DTM enumerators capture return intentions of surveyed migrants. Those indicating that they wish to be reunited with their families in countries of origin are systematically referred to IOM's Voluntary Humanitarian Return programme. In 2017–2018, IOM facilitated the voluntary humanitarian return of over 30,800 migrants from Libya to their respective countries of origin.

*“Your nature of helping others is so appreciated. My sister, my baby and myself were reunited with our family in Nigeria thanks to your guidance when I was lost in Tripoli. Your invaluable support holds a special place in my heart.”*

Adedayo I., Lagos, July 2019

When respondents were asked if they wanted to return to their countries of origin, 27 per cent of migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year answered in the affirmative, compared with 12 per cent among the recently arrived migrants. The most commonly reported reason for intending to return was being tired of the living conditions in Libya, reported by 36 per cent of migrants who had been in the country for at least one year and intended to return home (22% among recently arrived migrants). Other reported reasons included lack of job opportunities (27% more than one year, 18% less than one year), legal or physical barriers from continuing the migration journey (23% long-term, 18% short-term) and having accumulated sufficient savings from work in Libya (14% long-term, 13% short-term).

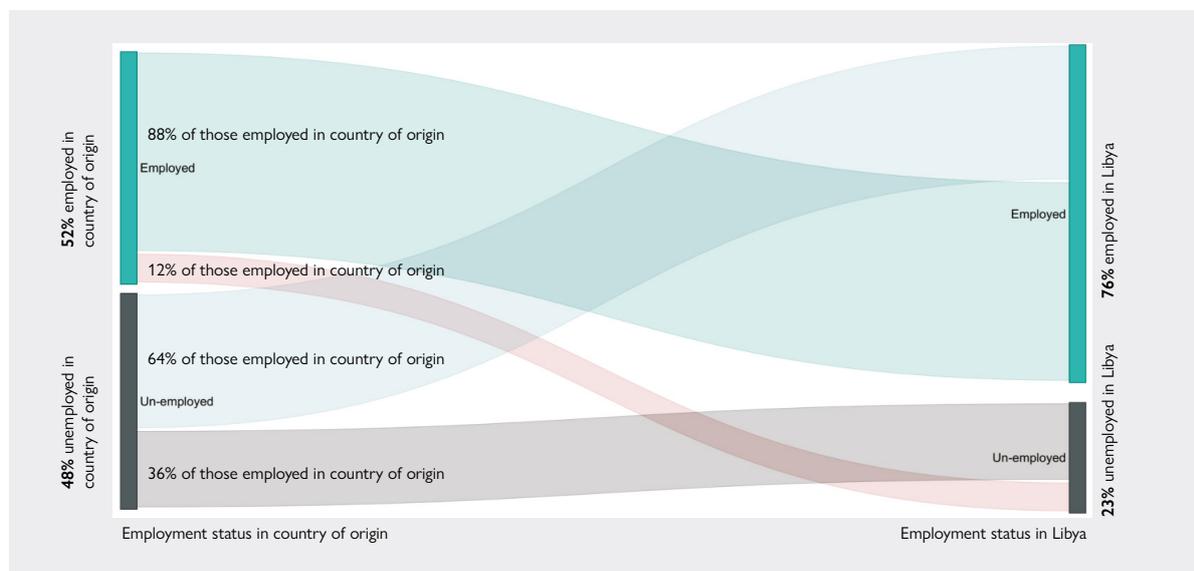
Of those who wanted to return home, migrants reported different preferences concerning planned date of return. Generally, migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year were more likely to plan on returning soon, while those who had arrived more recently intended to stay longer in Libya.

**Figure 5.8.** Expected date of return by length of stay

## 5.5. Employment and livelihoods

In the context of economic factors constituting a primary reason for migration for both groups, such aspirations translated into employment for most migrants in Libya. More specifically, 76 per cent of the migrants interviewed reported to be employed in Libya at the time of interview.

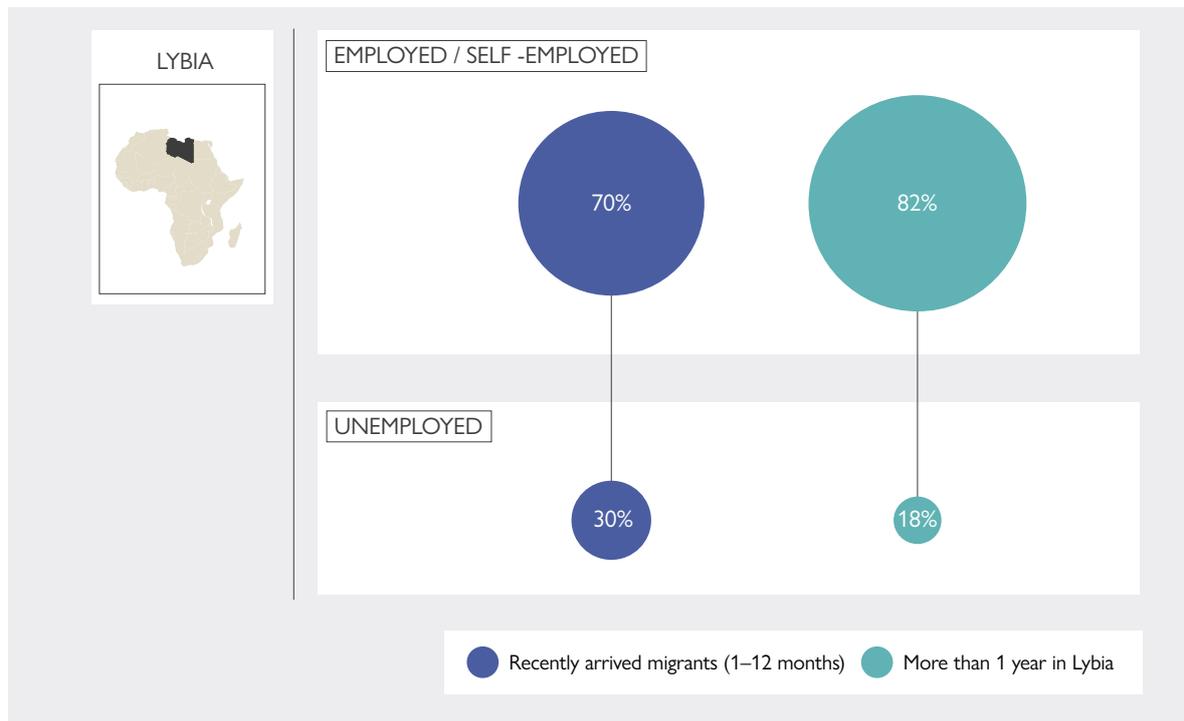
Notably, reported employment rates were substantially higher than in migrants' respective countries of origin, as only 53 per cent of the total sample indicated having jobs prior to leaving their countries. While the net impact of migration to Libya was seemingly positive with regard to employment status, 11 per cent of surveyed migrants who were in regular employment prior to departure reported not being employed in Libya at the time of interview (Figure 5.9). Further research on labour markets and labour migration dynamics could shed more light on possible underlying factors.

**Figure 5.9.** Change in employment status

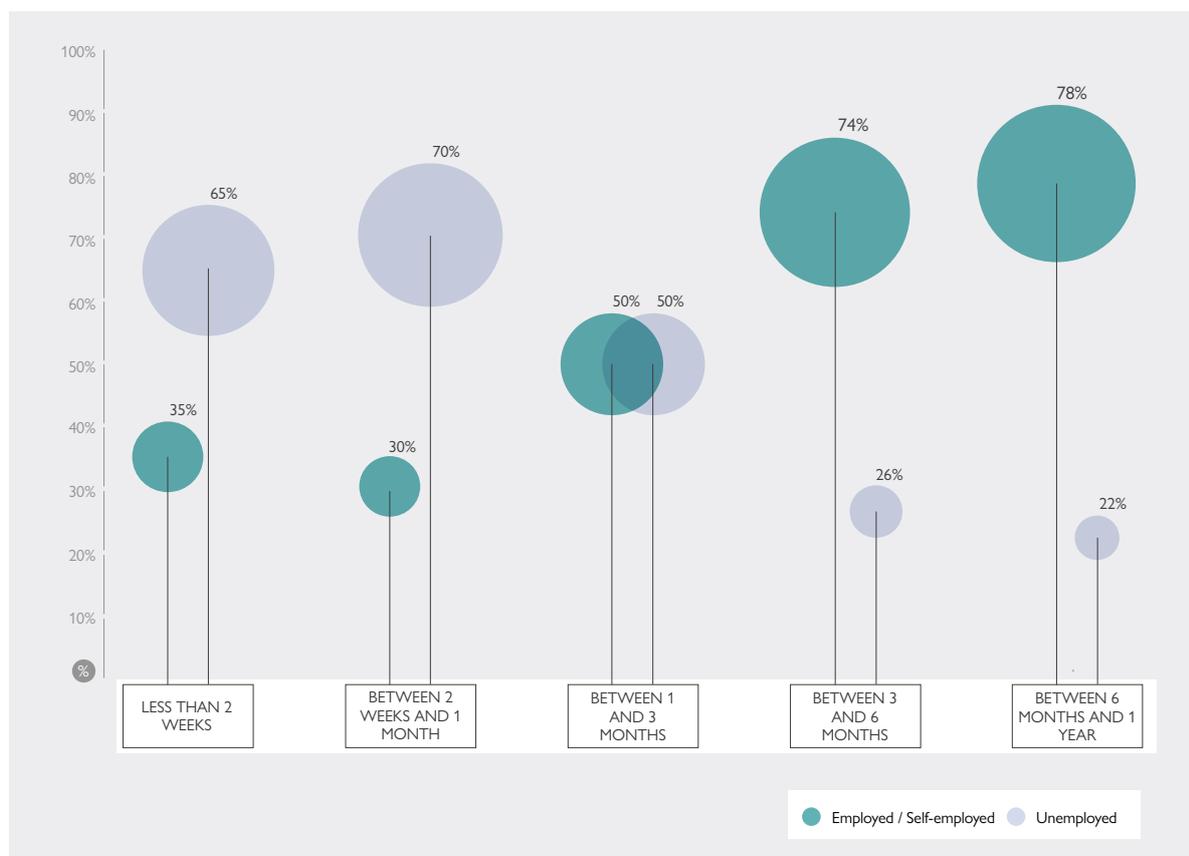
Comparing the two groups indicates higher employment rates for migrants who have been in Libya for at least one year (80%) than for recently arrived migrants (70%). This trend was observed among both male and female migrants; the majority of surveyed female migrants reported being employed (72%), with higher employment rates reported among migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year (76%) compared with more recently arrived migrants (62%).

The strong correlation between finding employment and length of stay in Libya becomes more evident when further disaggregating among more recently arrived migrants, as those who had been in Libya for less than two weeks (35% employment rate) and between one and three months (50% employment rate) were significantly less involved in income-generating activities.

**Figure 5.10.** Distribution of migrants' employment status in Libya by length of stay



Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

**Figure 5.11.** Distribution of migrants' employment status in Libya by length of stay for more recently arrived migrants

### DTM Libya Flow Monitoring: More than just numbers

#### Labour Mobility and Human Development

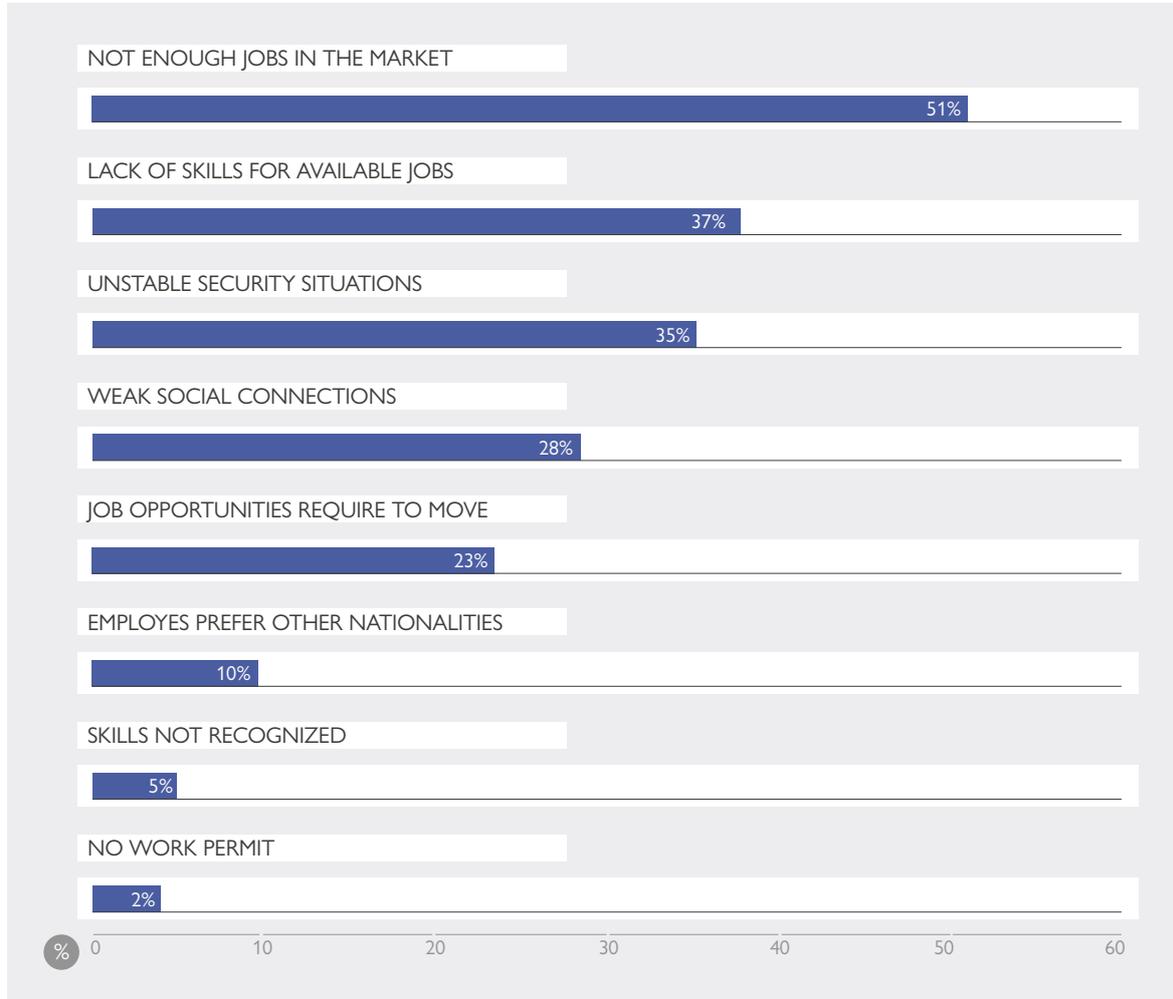
As part of the FMS, DTM data collectors capture educational profiles of migrants as well as their employment status and professional background. These profiles have been critical for informing IOM Libya's Labour Mobility and Human Development programming and advocacy for labour migration policies as integral parts of comprehensive migration management. In 2020, DTM Libya plans to roll out a new FMS module to capture additional data on migrants' skills to inform labour migration programming in Libya.

For both migrant groups, construction, water supply, electricity and gas were the primary employment sectors, followed by agriculture, pastoralism and the food industry field, as well as manual craft.

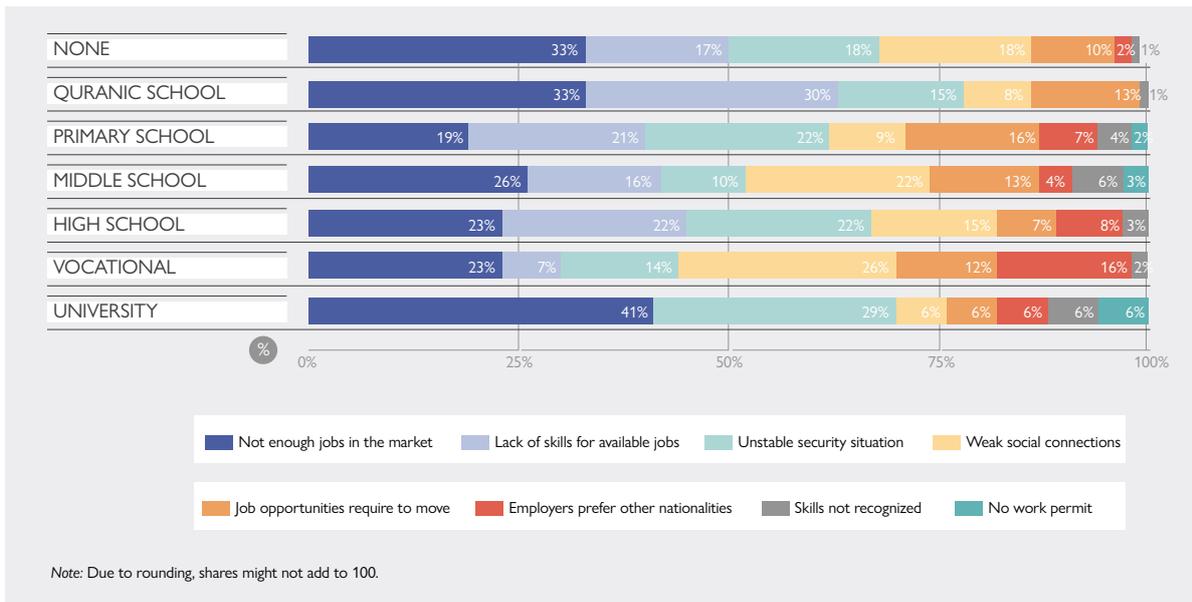
In the context of a study on the livelihoods of migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year, conducted by IOM and Columbia University, around 36 per cent of respondents reported facing difficulties at some point in their search for work in Libya (448 of 1,244). Those from sub-Saharan Africa appeared to have faced greater challenges than their counterparts from countries in North Africa. For example, 46 per cent of Nigerians (46 of 99), 44 per cent of people from the Niger (193 of 434) and 40 per cent of Malians (26 of 65) reported difficulties at some point, compared with 29 per cent of Sudanese (48 of 165) and 22 per cent of Egyptians (39 of 176). Geographically, finding work was most difficult in the South. Most respondents surveyed in the South reported challenges finding work (60%, 214 of 357).

Among those who struggled to find employment, limited job availability was the most commonly cited barrier. Notably, “insufficient skills” was the second most reported obstacle raised by surveyed migrants, potentially indicating a mismatch between the skill set of the migrant and areas of demand in the Libyan labour market.

**Figure 5.12a.** Obstacles to finding employment (n=448)

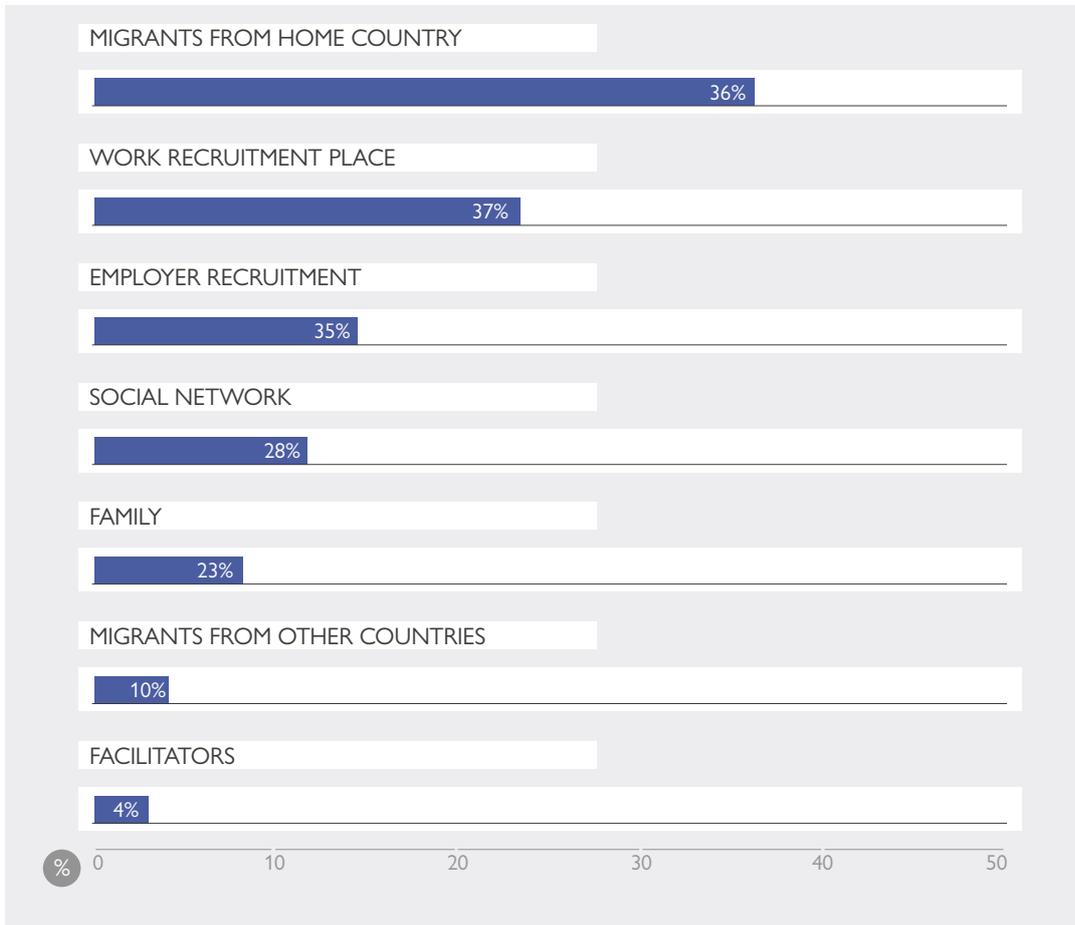


**Figure 5.12b.** Obstacles to finding employment by level of education (n=448)



Among migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year, and across all countries of origin, contact with fellow migrants was the most common means of finding employment, though people from the Niger reported work recruitment places as equally common.

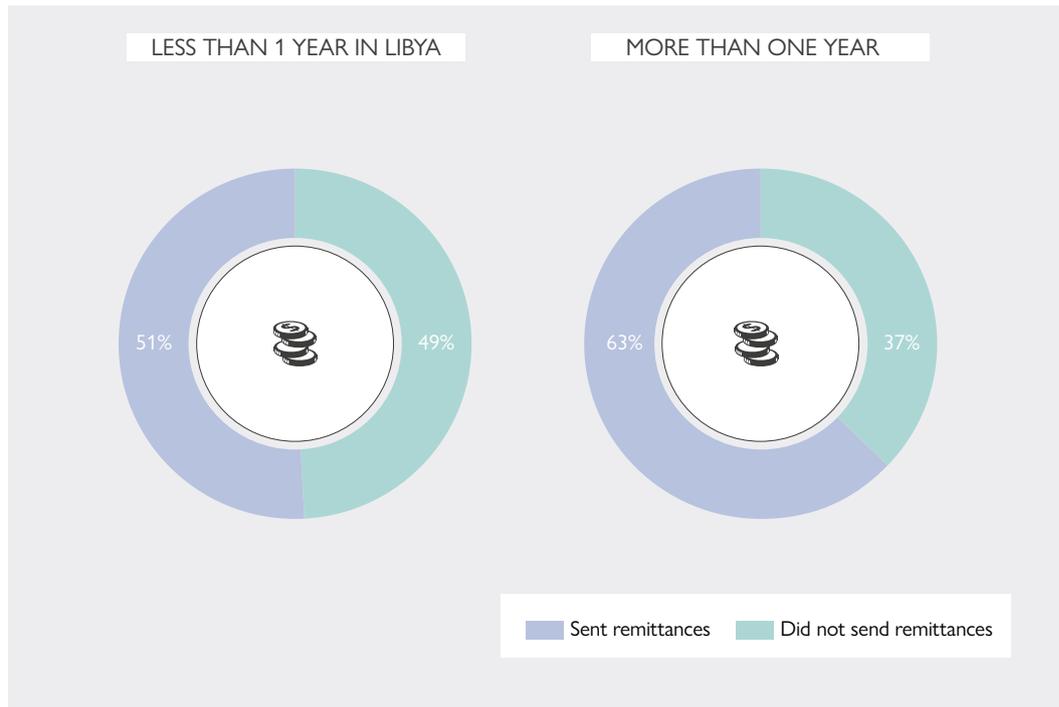
**Figure 5.13.** Means of obtaining work (n=448)



## 5.6. Remittances

Among the 13,000 migrants surveyed through DTM's FMS, the majority reported having sent remittances back home since they arrived to Libya. In line with higher employment rates among migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year, transfer of remittances was more common among them (63%) than among recently arrived migrants (51%).

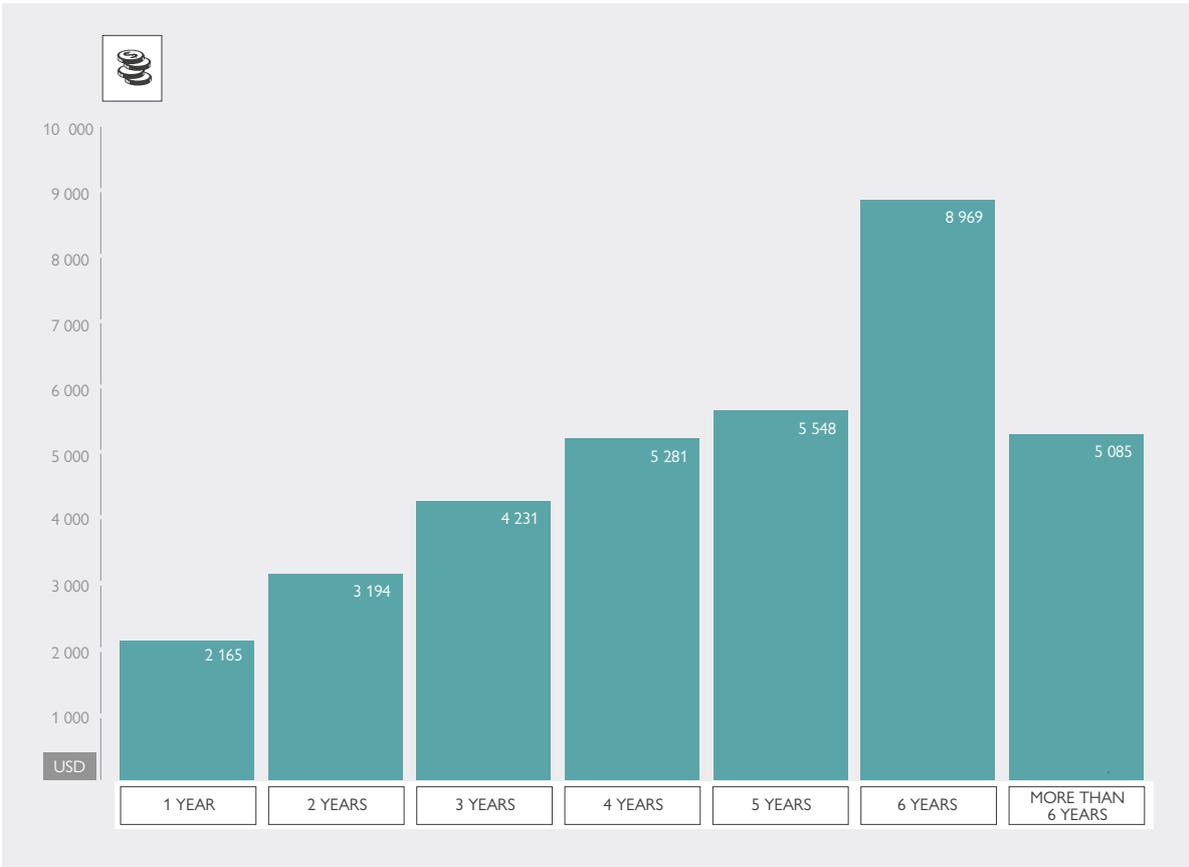
**Figure 5.14.** Transfer or remittances by length of stay



Furthermore, the longer the time spent in Libya, the higher the amount of remittances sent home. This trend was very evident for migrants who had been in Libya between one and six years.

For those who had been living in Libya for longer than six years at the time of interview, the pattern was less straightforward. Qualitative data suggest possible higher prevalence of family members and ties in Libya for this particular group.

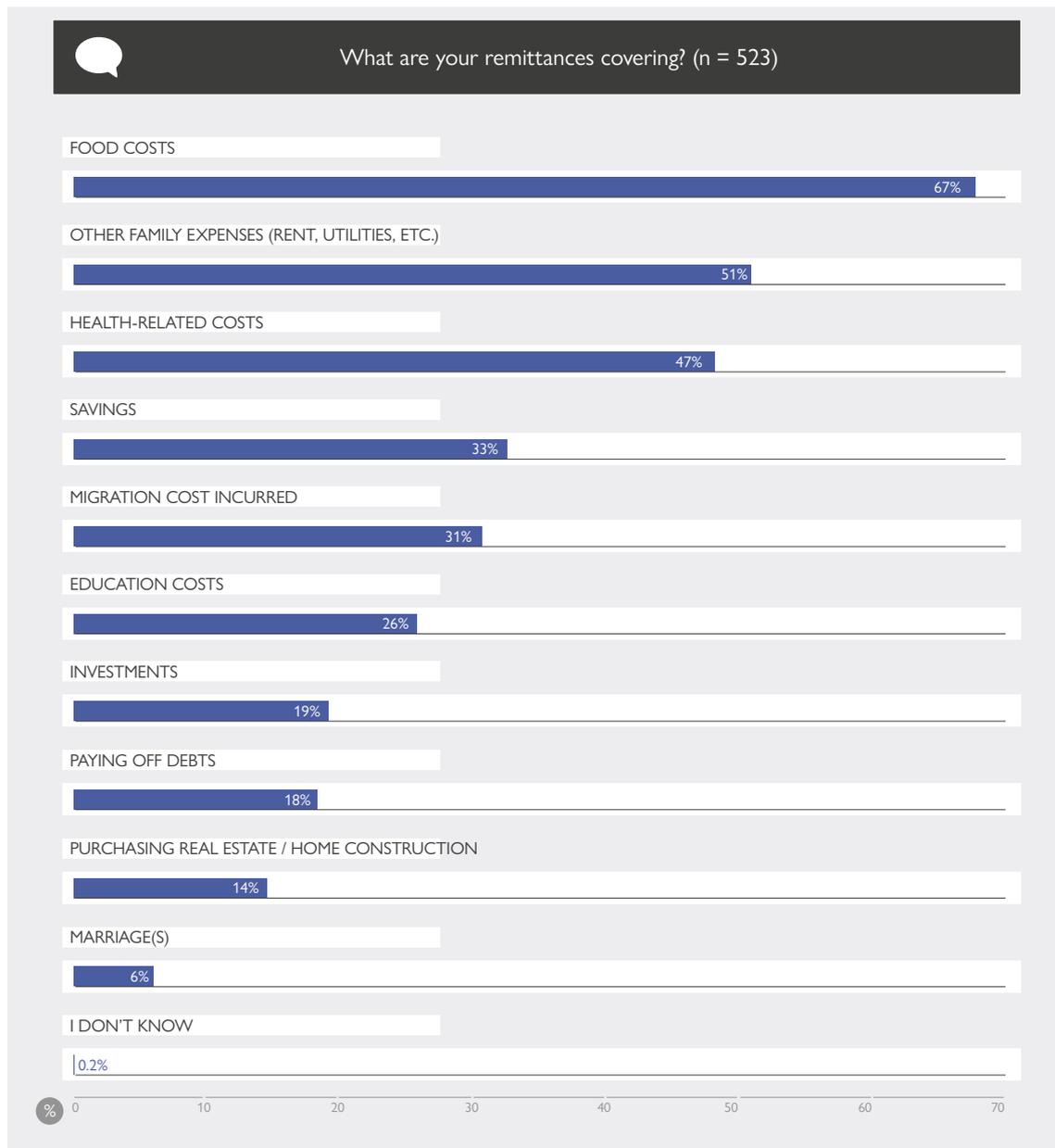
**Figure 5.15.** Remittances sent on average, by length of stay in Libya



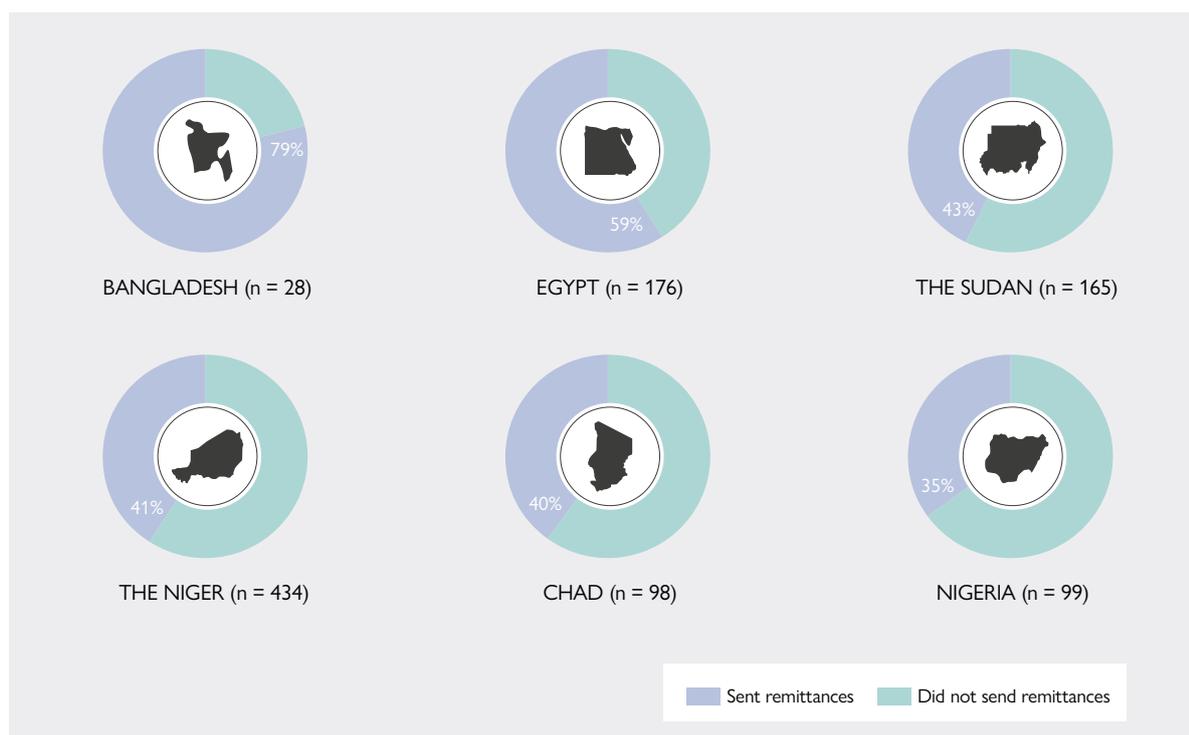
Based on the IOM and Columbia University study, the family was reported as the primary recipient, including spouses or intended spouses, parents, children and siblings. Additionally, 5 per cent of those who had been sending remittances reported transferring a portion of them to creditors. More than half of those sending remittances identified themselves as the primary source of income for the household receiving their remittances. Notably, across all employment statuses, similar shares of respondents reported sending remittances.

Migrants reported that remittances were mostly used for covering basic needs, primarily food, health care and other family expenses, such as rent and utilities.

**Figure 5.16.** Expenses covered by remittances



Notably, higher proportions of Bangladeshis reported sending remittances (79%, or 22 of 28) than any other national group (though the total sample size of respondents from Bangladesh was comparatively small). The nationalities with the highest percentage of respondents reporting sending remittances are shown in Figure 5.17.

**Figure 5.17.** Percentage of nationals who report sending remittances

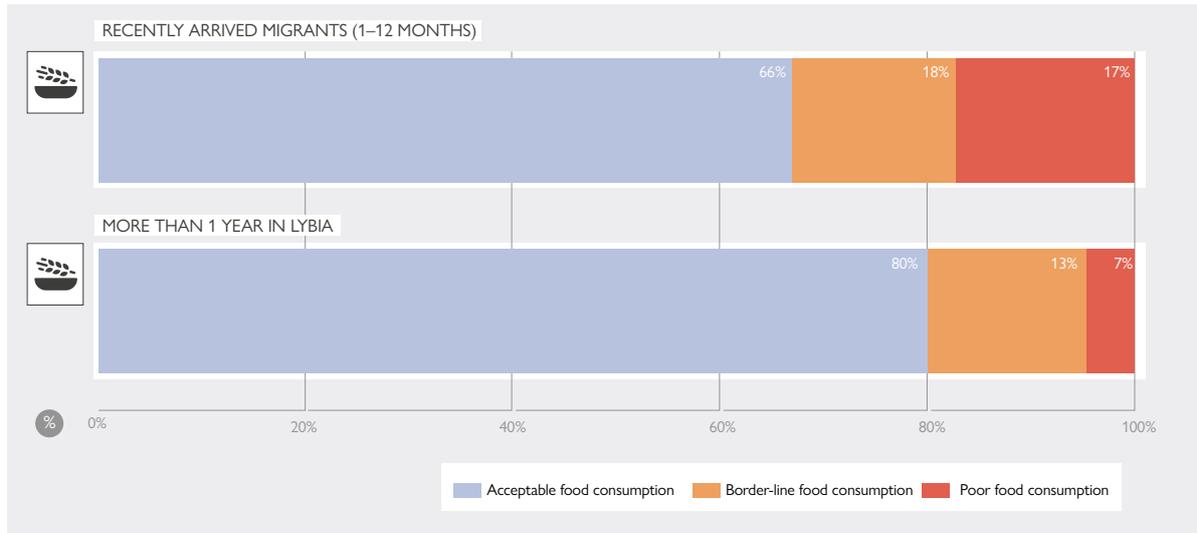
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## 5.7. Food security

As a part of the FMS assessment, one of the main indicators used to determine the extent of food insecurity among the assessed migrant population was the Food Consumption Score. The score, established and widely used by the World Food Programme (WFP), is a composite score based on dietary diversity, food frequency and relative nutritional importance of different food groups. The score is based on the reported consumption patterns of the respondents during a seven-day recall period, and the findings are subsequently grouped into three categories: “poor”, “borderline” and “acceptable” food consumption.

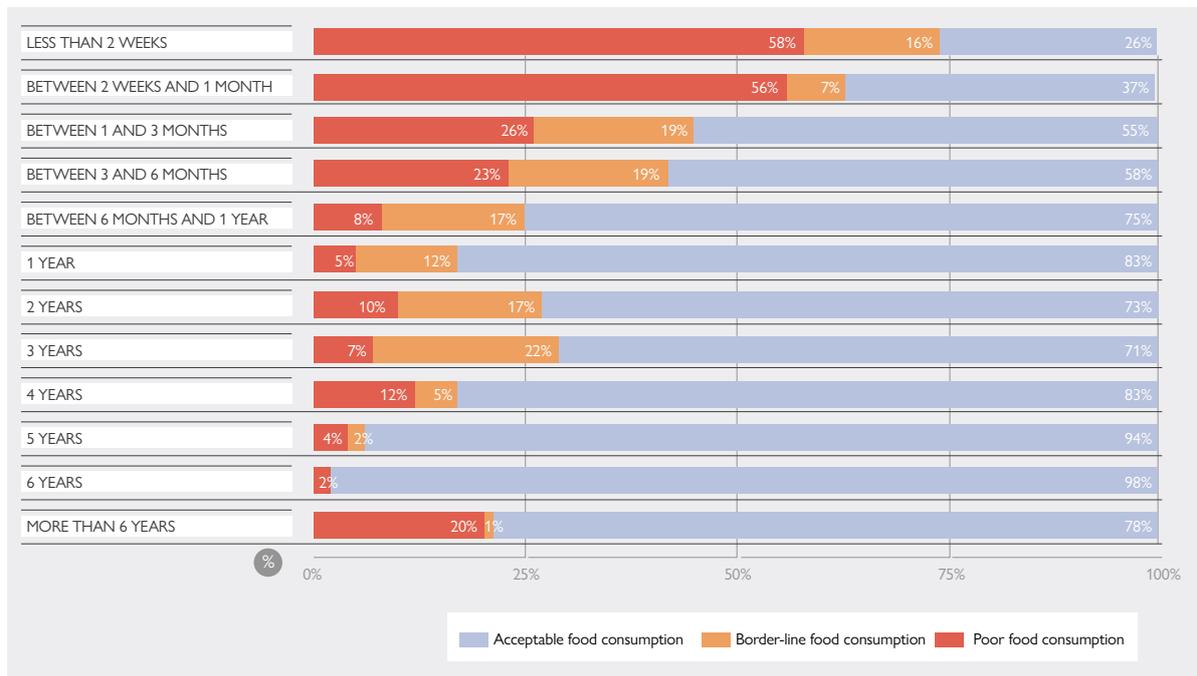
When looking at Food Consumption Score scores of the surveyed population by duration of stay in Libya, migrants who had recently arrived in the country were significantly more likely to have poor or borderline food consumption scores, indicating potential food insecurity.

**Figure 5.18.** Food consumption score by length of stay in Libya



Similar to employment rates, this pattern was particularly evident when further disaggregating among those who had been in Libya for less than one year. Especially those who had been in Libya for less than a month showed alarmingly high shares of poor food consumption scores, exceeding 56 per cent of the total sample of this group.

**Figure 5.19.** Duration of stay – Food consumption



More recently arrived migrants were not only reported to consume less diversified food, but also a substantial share of respondents (40%) compromised their food consumption in the week prior the interview.

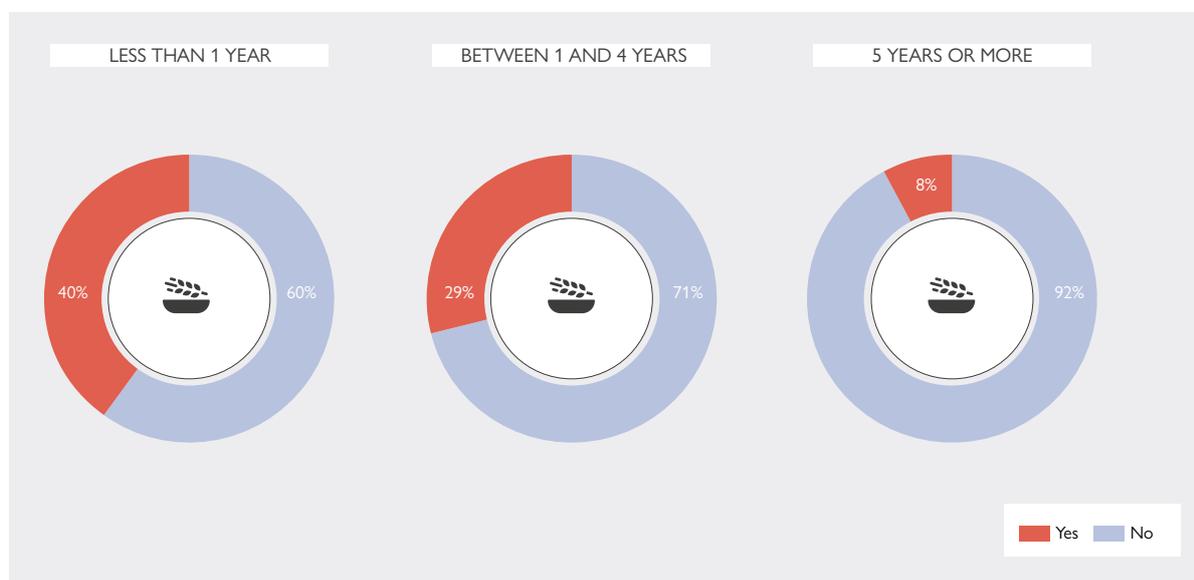
Among migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year, the share compromising their food consumption was lower – equalling 29 per cent of those who had been in Libya for one to four years, and only 8 per cent of those who had been in the country for more than five years.

### DTM Libya Flow Monitoring: More than just numbers

#### Food assistance for vulnerable migrants in Libya

Following the integration of a pilot food security module into DTM Libya's FMS, in collaboration with WFP, IOM and WFP started piloting ready-to-eat rations for 25,000 vulnerable migrants in Libya between November 2019 and February 2020. Vulnerability criteria identified through the FMS and WFP's Migration Pulse<sup>7</sup> include recent arrivals, female migrants and unemployed migrants, and are among the targeted beneficiaries. FMSs also support the identification of vulnerable, food-insecure migrants through DTM's interview across the country.

**Figure 5.20.** Did you compromise your food consumption in any way over the past 7 days?



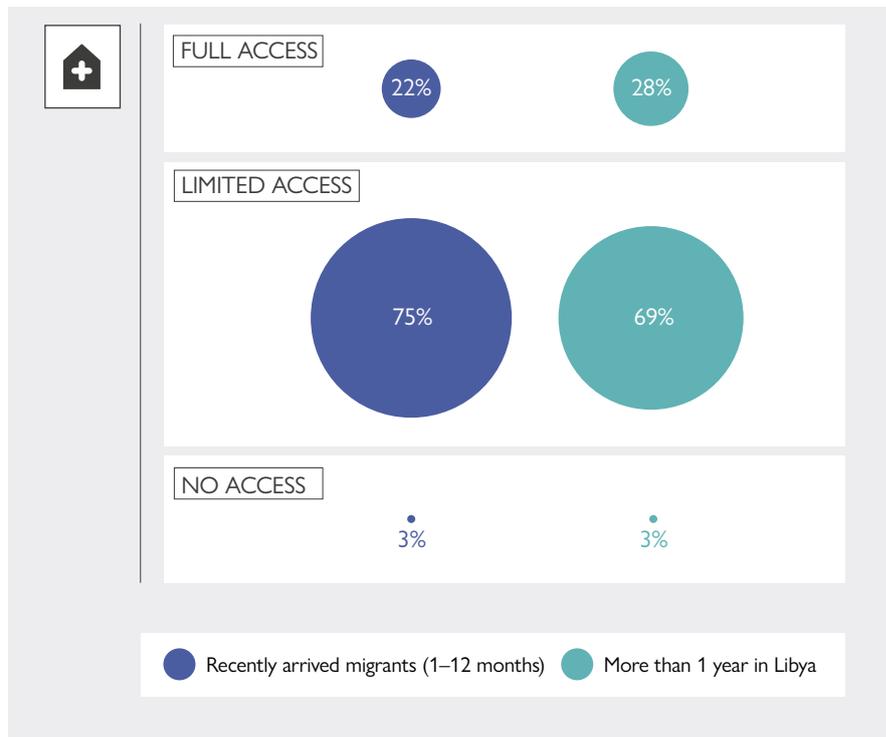
## 5.8. Migrant health

Concerning access to health services, most migrants, regardless of length of stay, reported significant barriers in Libya, with only 26 per cent of the interviewees indicating full access to medical services when needed. Possible underlying factors include lack of documentation in the case of irregular migration, often preventing migrants from accessing public health services. While access constraints to services (where available) particularly affect migrants, it is important to highlight that quality and availability of health care in Libya are among the primary humanitarian and public service provision gaps heavily affecting all population groups, including Libyan citizens. In the last round of DTM's Multisectoral Location Assessment, only 55 per cent of public hospitals and 52 per cent of public health centres and clinics across the country were identified to be fully operational. In almost all municipalities (98%), irregular supply of medications was reported as a constraint, particularly for chronic diseases (IOM, 2019b).

<sup>7</sup> See <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/dtm-wfp-hunger-displacement-and-migration-libya>.

Nonetheless, reported access to health services differed modestly by length of stay, with the migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year reporting slightly higher rates of unrestricted access relative to recently arrived migrants (28% versus 22%). As for access to other public services, this trend could be related to higher levels of integration into host communities, more information on services available to migrants and greater ability to afford private health care, thanks to higher employment rates.

**Figure 5.21.** Migrants' access to health services by length of stay in Libya



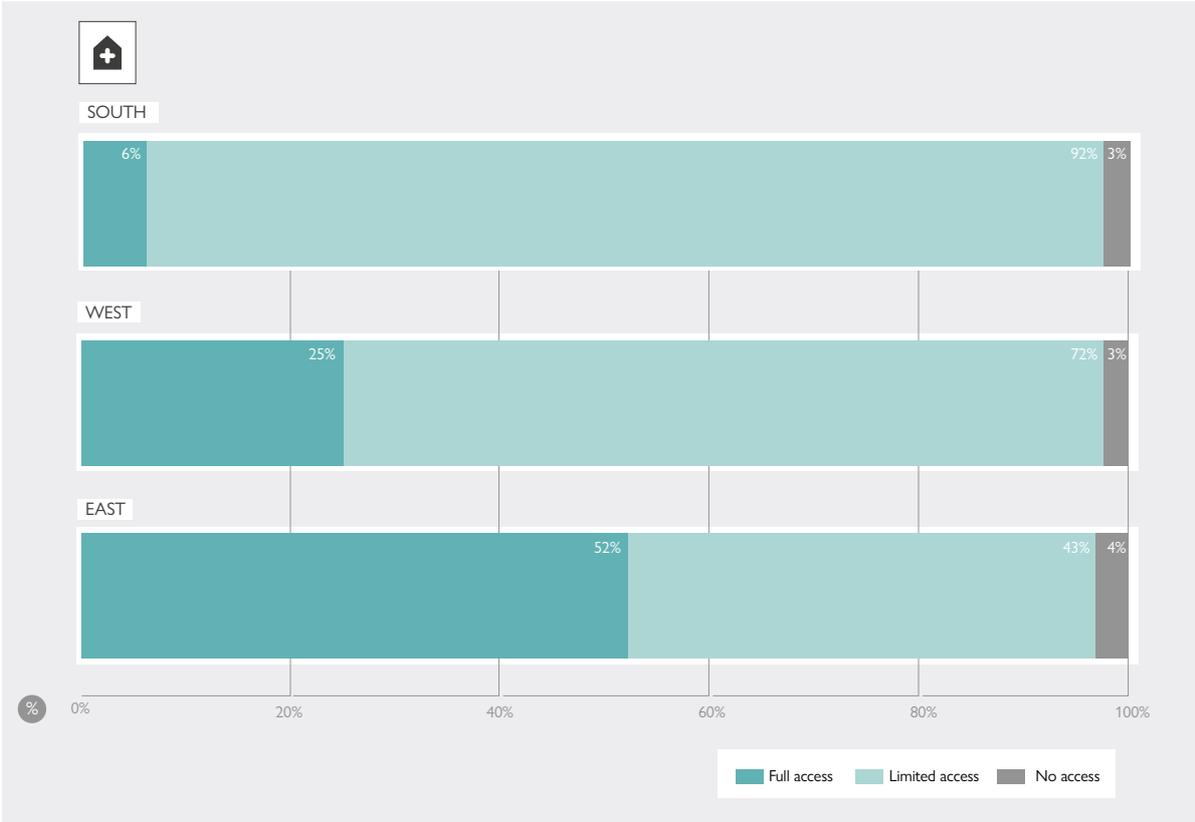
Further analysis showed substantial geographic differences in migrants' access to health services. The Eastern region of Libya recorded the best access to health facilities compared with other parts of the country, as a slight majority of respondents (53%) reported having full access to health services.

### DTM Libya Flow Monitoring: More than just numbers

#### Vaccination campaigns and migrant health surveillance

As part of DTM's flow monitoring activities at key transit points across the country, data collectors also conduct syndromic health surveillance of migrants, in coordination with the World Health Organization, the National Centre for Disease Control and the Ministry of Health. Weekly reports and ad hoc alerts provide health partners with timely information on unusual public health events and potential disease outbreaks. Furthermore, urgent cases are referred to health responders by enumerators for verification, diagnosis and assistance. In 2018, DTM Libya's enumerators also conducted outreach campaigns across the country for the National Campaign for Vaccination against Measles, Rubella and Polio.

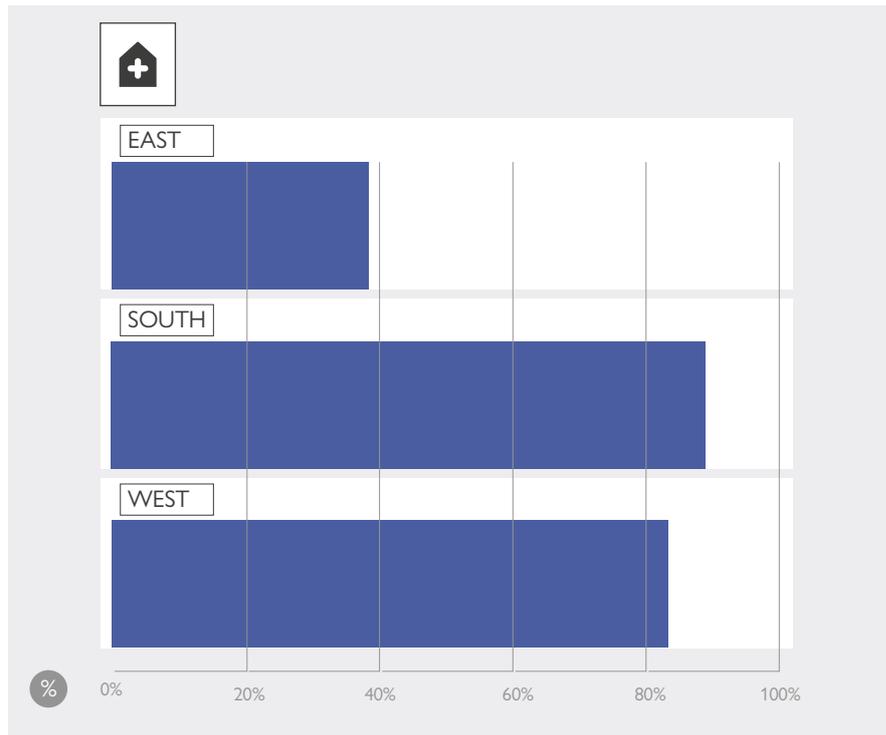
**Figure 5.22.** Migrants' access to health services, by region in Libya



In contrast, in the South of Libya, health was reported as one of the most urgent humanitarian needs. More specifically, 92 per cent of migrants surveyed in the South reported having limited access to health services and only 6 per cent reported having full access.

The variation in access to health services across Libyan regions was also visible through DTM's Mobility Tracking data.

**Figure 5.23.** Proportion of communities reporting health services among the three main needs for migrants



In 89 per cent of the communities covered in the Libyan South, key informants reported health services as one of the three priority needs for migrants living there. The percentage did not exceed 40 per cent of the communities surveyed in the eastern region.

## 5.9. Conclusion

This analysis shows that migrants in Libya come from a variety of countries, though the majority originate in neighbouring countries. Leaving one's country and migrating to Libya are primarily driven by economic motivations, reflecting the underlying factors impacting migrants in their countries of origin, such as insufficient income and lack of job opportunities.

The data gathered through thematic humanitarian needs modules of DTM Libya's FMS indicate that more recently arrived migrants showed higher vulnerability levels across several indicators. Recently arrived migrants in Libya were identified to be in particular need of humanitarian assistance, such as food assistance, and also reported lower employment rates than those who had been in Libya for more than one year. Migrants who had been in Libya for at least one year reported more frequently sending remittances to their home countries and, in terms of demographics, included proportionally more females and individuals above 30 years old.

At the same time, regardless of length of stay, all migrants are adversely affected by structural issues, such as Libya's severely constrained public and private health system, limited access to public services and cross-cutting protection risks related to irregular migration and the protracted conflict in Libya. Libya is a signatory to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and efforts by the Government of National Accord and partners provide an opportunity to ensure adequate protection of migrants' rights. In this context, the need for labour migration policies and programmes as part of comprehensive migration management remains a critical issue.

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# 6.

## Overview of migration trends and patterns in the Republic of the Niger, 2016–2019<sup>1</sup>

Lorelle Yuen<sup>2</sup>



BORDER MANAGEMENT

**Abstract:** This chapter provides an overview of migration trends and patterns in the Niger from January 2016 to December 2019. Migration trends shifted drastically after the implementation of the 2015-36 Law, which criminalized irregular migration. Migration routes became more fragmented and outgoing flows towards Libya decreased significantly from 2017 onwards. The profiles of migrants also changed, with fewer foreign nationalities migrating through the Niger and people from the Niger increasingly migrating to Algeria, in addition to Libya. A key trend emerging in 2018 and 2019 was the significant increase in flows to the Niger from Algeria as a result of the strict enforcement of immigration laws in Algeria, leading to the expulsion and repatriation of migrants to and through the Niger.

### 6.1. Introduction

The Niger is at the centre of intraregional, interregional and internal migration. Located on important migration routes linking West, Central, East and North Africa, its strategic position makes it a key transit country for migrants. Indeed, numerous regional migration routes converge and cross in the Niger, a major country of transit for migrants seeking to reach other countries in West and Central Africa, or travelling to and from North Africa, as well as for migrants travelling to the Niger as a final destination, mainly for economic opportunities.

Mobility in the Niger has many interacting layers, including circular movements of seasonal migrants who work in agriculture, mainly in Libya and increasingly in Algeria; tradespeople headed for markets; migration of women and children going to Algeria to beg and sell on the street; and migration to regions in the Niger with economic activity, such as gold mines, oil drilling sites and crop-raising areas where some migrants may work temporarily during their transit periods in the Niger to save money before continuing their journeys. Another important dimension of mobility in the Niger is the repatriation and expulsion of people from the Niger, and migrants from West and Central Africa from Algeria.

<sup>1</sup> This chapter was written with support and insightful inputs from the Information Management Unit and the Displacement Tracking Matrix teams in the Niger; including in particular Murat Dominique Vagery, Ousmane Chegou Kore, Ismael Alio Tiemogo, Djibrilla Moustapha, Mahaman Noura Sani Salissou, Dan Ballan Mahamn Sani and Boubacar Issoufou Tiado

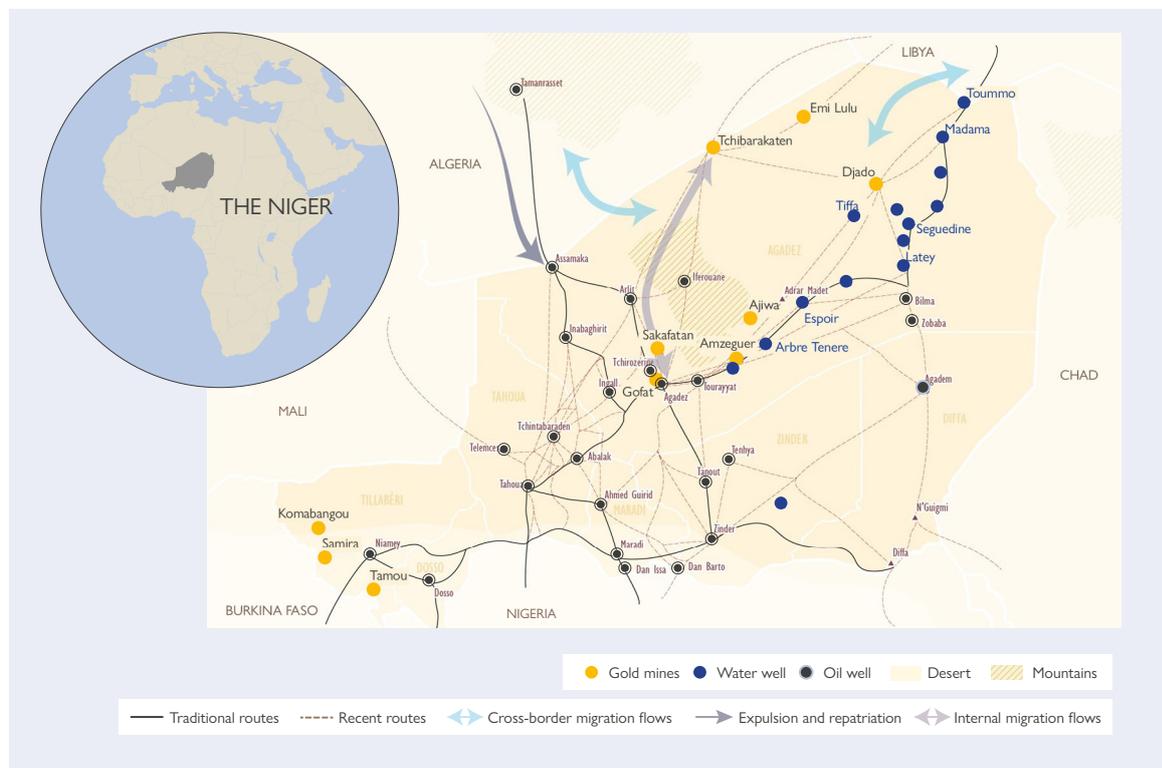
<sup>2</sup> IOM Niger.

Migration trends have shifted significantly in the past few years as a result of different factors, including the ongoing crisis in Libya and growing insecurity in the border regions since 2011; the adoption of the law against the unlawful trafficking of migrants (*Loi N° 2015-36 relative au trafic illicite de migrants*) on 26 May 2015 by the Government of the Niger, criminalizing irregular migration; the discovery and closure of gold mines in the Niger; and stricter immigration policies adopted by Algeria.

This paper will highlight the main trends observed in the Niger from February 2016 to December 2019. The main data sources used include IOM Niger's flow monitoring data, which capture cross-border flows and migratory flows within the Niger, and datasets of migrants registered in one of IOM Niger's six transit centres. The majority of the migrants in these datasets have been expelled and repatriated from Algeria.<sup>3</sup>

First, the key trends and patterns in cross-border migration between the Niger, Algeria and Libya will be presented. This will be followed by an analysis of migration trends within the Niger for migrants who travel to the Niger as their final destination. Finally, the phenomenon of return migration trends as a result of repatriations and expulsions will be discussed.

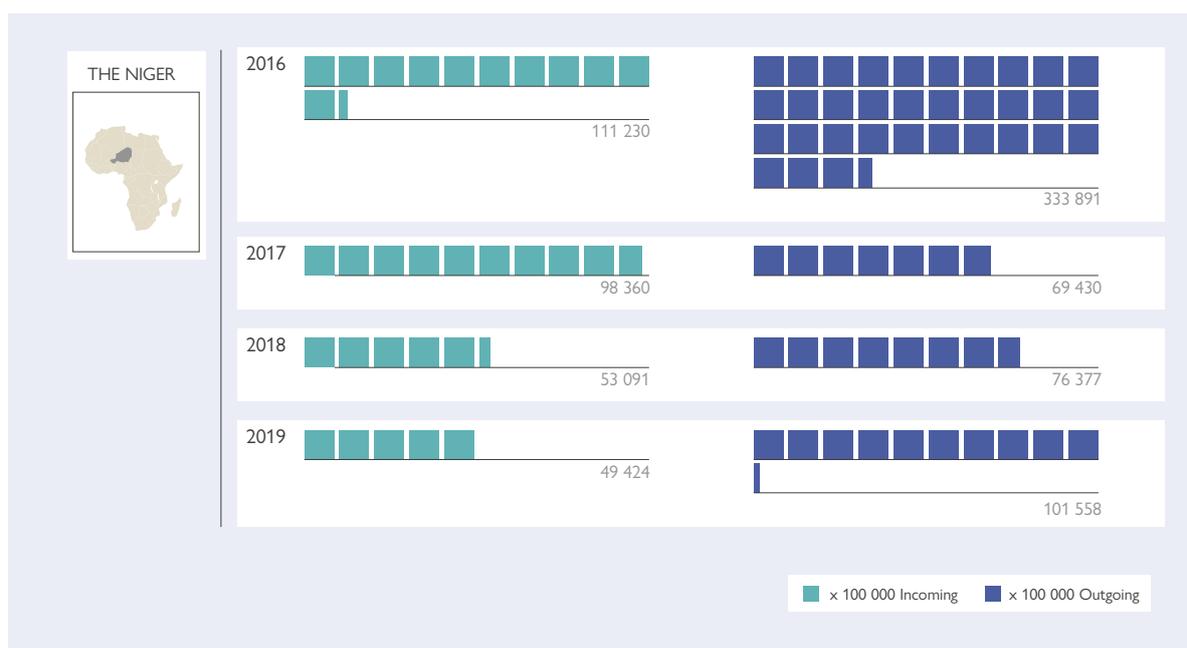
**Figure 6.1.** Map of migration routes and main economic zones of interest in the Niger



Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

<sup>3</sup> Data sources are described in more detail within the respective sections.

**Figure 6.2.** Migration flows at Arlit and Séguedine Flow Monitoring Points, 2016–2019



Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

## 6.2. Cross-border flows between the Niger, Libya and Algeria

Cross-border migration flows between the Niger and its neighbours to the north, Algeria and Libya, were observed through the flow monitoring points (FMPs)<sup>4</sup> set up in Arlit and Séguedine since February 2016 to understand the trends and patterns of migration flows to and from Algeria and Libya. These two countries are the final destinations for most migrants while, for some, they are a stepping stone before reaching Europe.<sup>5</sup>

The trends in cross-border migration changed significantly during the period between February 2016 and December 2019. In 2016, over 445,000 migrants were observed migrating between the Niger and Libya and the Niger and Algeria, in both directions. The majority (over 312,000 persons, or 70%) were foreign migrants, mainly of Nigerian, Gambian, Senegalese and Ivorian nationalities, and most (nearly 300,000 persons or 67%) were headed to Libya or countries in Europe (see Figure 6.3). However, in 2017, trends shifted considerably. The implementation of Law No. 2015–36 of 26 May 2015 criminalizing the smuggling of migrants in the Niger<sup>6</sup> contributed to a sharp (62%) decrease in migration flows to and from Algeria and Libya, as observed by the FMPs. Increased patrols and security forces enforcing the law, and stiff punishments for those caught smuggling or transporting migrants illegally, led to the fragmentation of migration routes in efforts to evade controls. Migration routes, which originally followed the national roads, disintegrated into a multitude of informal bypass routes that changed frequently, rendering migrants more vulnerable

<sup>4</sup> The flow monitoring methodology is used to collect quantitative data on the number of migrants and basic demographic information. IOM enumerators collect data at FMPs using a mixed-method approach of direct observation and semi-structured interviews with key informants (such as personnel at bus stations, police or customs officials, bus or truck drivers or migrants). Data are collected at the group level using a standardized questionnaire to understand the estimated number of migrants disaggregated by sex, age, nationality and area of departure and destination. FMP data have been collected daily since February 2016 at the FMPs in Arlit (key transit point to Algeria) and Séguedine (key transit point to Libya).

<sup>5</sup> The FMP data used in this analysis are from February 2016 to December 2019.

<sup>6</sup> The law penalizes both irregular entry and exit of any person who is not a national of the Niger or a foreigner legally resident of the Niger, and penalizes the migrant person as well as the smuggler.

to exploitation by their smugglers. Those who still chose to migrate despite these obstacles faced increased risks, as journeys through the vast Sahara desert became more dangerous. At the same time, migration movements became more difficult to record and quantify. As people from the Niger were not subject to the controls following the 2015–36 Law, however, factors explaining the decreasing numbers of people from the Niger going to Libya may include increased insecurity in Libya.<sup>7</sup> As such, the flows to and from Libya from 2017 onwards have become more established circular migration patterns, consisting overwhelmingly (around 90% in 2017–2019) of people from the Niger going to and from Libya, with the highest levels of flows consistently observed at the end of the rainy season, around September and October each year. However, despite decreasing numbers of people from the Niger observed migrating to and from Libya, the proportion of people from the Niger leaving for Libya versus returning to the Niger has more than doubled since 2018, indicating that people from the Niger are migrating for longer periods.<sup>8</sup>

The effects of the 2015-36 Law were not so pronounced along the route to and from Algeria in 2017 compared with 2016. However, drastic changes were observed in 2018. The number of foreign migrants – mainly from Mali, Guinea, Nigeria and Cameroon – dropped from around 54,000 in 2016 to around 40,500 in 2017, with a larger drop in 2018 to 20,300 and in 2019 to 14,200. The decrease in 2018 may be a result of Algeria's strict enforcement of its immigration laws, starting at the end of 2017 and into 2018 and 2019, leading to an increased number of migrants being expelled and repatriated to the Niger in large groups. The increased presence of Algerian troops to reinforce its border with the Niger, as well, may also have been a deterring factor for migrants, especially foreign migrants, explaining the decrease in the number of foreign migrants observed going to Algeria.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, the number of people from the Niger observed going to and from Algeria increased in the same time period, most significantly in 2019 (around 5,000 in 2016, 13,000 in 2017, 20,000 in 2018, and 65,000 in 2019), indicating people from the Niger migrating increasingly to Algeria to seek economic opportunities, and as an alternative to Libya, perhaps due to growing insecurity in the country.<sup>10</sup> As the number of foreign migrants observed travelling between the Niger and Algeria has been decreasing, people from the Niger are increasingly travelling on this route, and are now making up a growing proportion (92%) of flows observed between the Niger and Algeria, with 82 per cent of all flows observed to and from Algeria in 2019 consisting of people from the Niger, a drastic change from previous years, when people from the Niger made up only a minority of flows (17% or 11,000).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The number of people from the Niger going to and from Libya decreased more gradually over the years: a 25 per cent decrease between 2016 and 2017, a 32 per cent decrease between 2017 and 2018, and a 5 per cent decrease between 2018 and 2019.

<sup>8</sup> In 2018 and 2019, twice the number of people from the Niger were observed going to Libya versus returning from Libya, a reversal of trends from 2016 and 2017, when more people from the Niger were observed to be returning to the Niger than going to Libya.

<sup>9</sup> The oft-changing migration routes to evade patrols and security forces contribute to difficulties in quantifying movements. IOM Niger uses its network of focal points located in key points along the migration corridors to understand the changes in the migration routes.

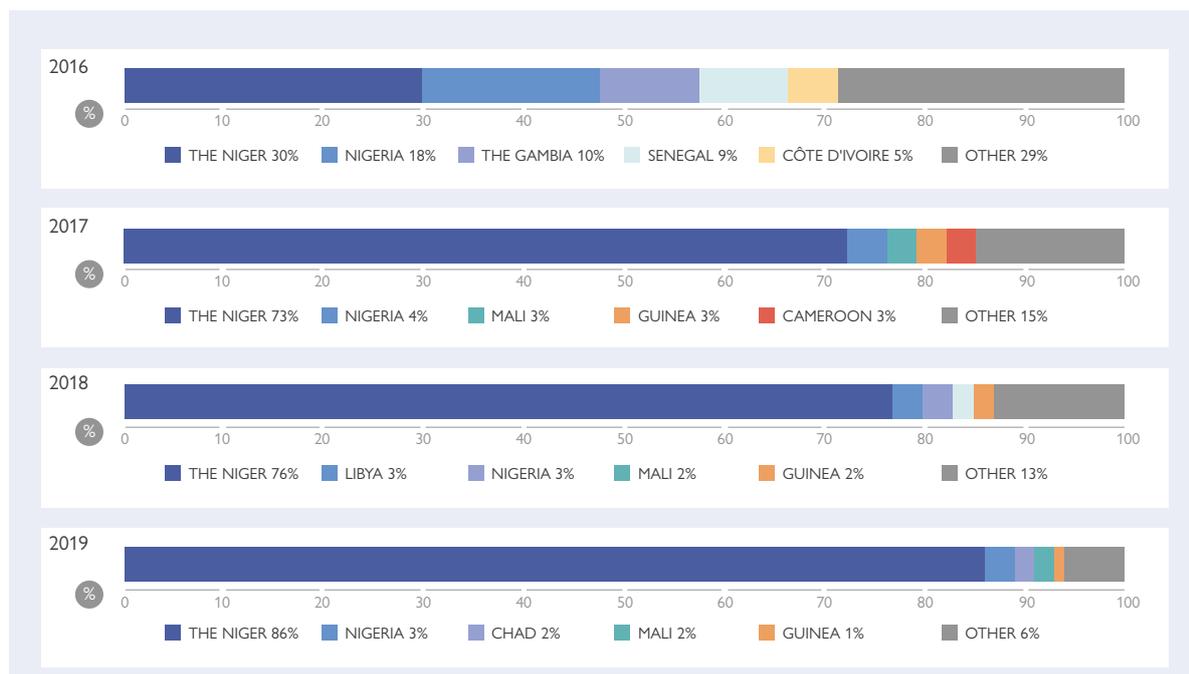
<sup>10</sup> An equal proportion of people from the Niger were observed going to and from Algeria and Libya in 2019, indicating that Algeria, in addition to Libya, had become a major destination for people from the Niger engaged in circular migration. Comparatively, in 2016, less than 10 per cent of all people from the Niger were observed migrating to and from Algeria, while over 90 per cent were observed going to and from Libya.

<sup>11</sup> People from the Niger comprised 17 per cent (11,000 persons) of flows observed between the Niger and Algeria in 2016: 33 per cent or 20,000 persons in 2017, 60 per cent or 31,000 persons in 2018, and 82 per cent or 65,000 persons in 2019.

**Figure 6.3.** Number of incoming and outgoing migrants observed at Arlit and Séguedine flow monitoring points, 2016–2019



Note: These maps are for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

**Figure 6.4.** Percentage of migrants observed crossing Arlit and Séguedine flow monitoring points by nationality, 2016–2019

### 6.3. Migration within the Niger

In addition to being a major transit country, the Niger is also a destination country for migrants looking for economic opportunities. Economic zones of interest such as gold mines attract both people from the Niger and migrants from other West African countries (Figure 6.1). Migration flows within the Niger started to be captured by FMPs in 2018, which includes migrants both of people from the Niger and those of foreign nationalities.<sup>12</sup> In 2018 and 2019, an average of 10,000 to 11,000 people per month were observed migrating within the Niger. In 2019, people from the Niger comprised 80 per cent of all migrants migrating within the Niger (up from 59% in 2018), while foreign migrants represented 20 per cent (down from 41% in 2018). The main foreign nationalities observed were Chadians, Sudanese and Nigerians.

The main destination cities within the Niger for all migrants were Arlit/Assamaka (79%), followed by Tchibarakaten (12%) and Agadez (9%).<sup>13</sup> These cities are all located in the northern part of the Niger, where there are economic opportunities for migrants. Tchibarakaten is located 600 km north-east of Arlit and just 4 km from the Algerian border.

Migrants going to Arlit typically intend to travel further northwards to Algeria and Libya after earning enough money to finance the rest of their migration journeys. Female migrants from the Niger in Arlit are typically engaged in domestic work, while female foreign migrants – mainly those from Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Cameroon – work in brothels or bars to save money. Others live in ghettos or at railway stations in Arlit until they can find a smuggler to take them further north.

<sup>12</sup> Internal migration flows within the Niger are measured based on departure and destination cities, which are both reported to be within the Niger. These data were collected using the FMP methodology at Arlit and Séguedine FMPs. Data used for analysis in this section are from January 2018–December 2019.

<sup>13</sup> IOM Niger FMP data, 2019.

Migrants going to Tchibarakaten intend to work in the gold sites. Tchibarakaten is a village created after the arrival of gold miners (people from the Niger and foreign migrants) in large numbers after the Djado gold site closed in early 2017 due to security concerns. The discovery of gold in Djado in April 2014 led to a gold rush, drawing thousands of prospective gold miners, dominated by foreigners from Chad and the Sudan (Pellerin, 2017). Security concerns led to a decrease in the number of migrants transiting to the north of the country. Following the closure of the site, the gold seekers retreated to the Tchibarakaten site, a remote site along the border with Algeria run predominately by people from the Niger.

In general, gold mines attract tens of thousands of migrants to the northern part of the Niger. These sites host an estimated 450,000 people in the Niger (OECD, 2018), mainly from the Niger, the Sudan, Chad and Nigeria. Despite the fact that several gold mines have been closed by the authorities, a significant number of them continue to operate illegally. Unlike migrants going to Arlit, the rest of the migrants, except for the Sudanese, reported the Niger as their final destination, and their intention was to earn enough money from working in the gold mines before returning home (IOM, 2019). Sudanese migrants, on the other hand, most of whom are from the Darfur region, reported to have left for reasons of war and insecurity, and as such, intended to go to Libya after Tchibarakaten, or to seek asylum in the Niger.

In addition, there are many iron mines in the northern part of the Niger which also attract migrants. Oil sites in Diffa have also attracted workers, although instability and insecurity in that region since 2014 have led to the closure of some oil sites.

## 6.4. Expulsions and repatriations

The strict enforcement of immigration policies in line with the Government of Algeria's Law No. 08-11 – which governs the conditions of entry, stay and circulation of foreign nationals (*Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne*, 2008), particularly towards the end of 2017<sup>14</sup> – led to an unprecedented number of migrants (the majority from Mali and Guinea) being expelled to the Niger, particularly towards the end of 2017.<sup>15</sup> Expulsions continued throughout 2018 and increased further in 2019 (see Figure 6.5). Expelled migrants are dropped off by Algerian authorities at Point Zero, a location at the border between Algeria and the Niger 12 km from Assamaka, the nearest border town in the Niger. IOM Niger conducts Humanitarian Rescue Operations starting at Point Zero to transport migrants stranded at Point Zero to Assamaka.<sup>16</sup> Once in Assamaka, migrants are informed about IOM's assistance, including transportation services to the nearest urban centre, Arlit, and IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Repatriation (AVRR) programme. Migrants who opt for assistance are registered and their basic demographic information is collected.<sup>17,18</sup> Once in Arlit, migrants have the option to stay in IOM's transit centre if they wish to benefit from IOM's AVRR programme to help them return home.

<sup>14</sup> Since 2014, the Government of Algeria started to organize official convoys for the repatriation of hundreds of people from the Niger to go from Algeria to the Niger after the agreement between the two States. The situation became more serious and complex as of August 2017, with the successive waves of arrests of sub-Saharan African nationalities in Algeria (majority Malians and Guineans), who were then placed in detention centres, while access to these camps has been denied to lawyers and/or international organizations.

<sup>15</sup> In 2019, Malians and Guineans represented 56 per cent of migrants expelled to the Niger, based on IOM Humanitarian Rescue Operations registration data.

<sup>16</sup> Migrants who benefit from IOM's emergency assistance through its Humanitarian Rescue Operations are registered by IOM staff. Basic demographic information is collected in order to assist migrants. Data have been collected since August 2017, when an increasing number of migrants were being expelled in large groups.

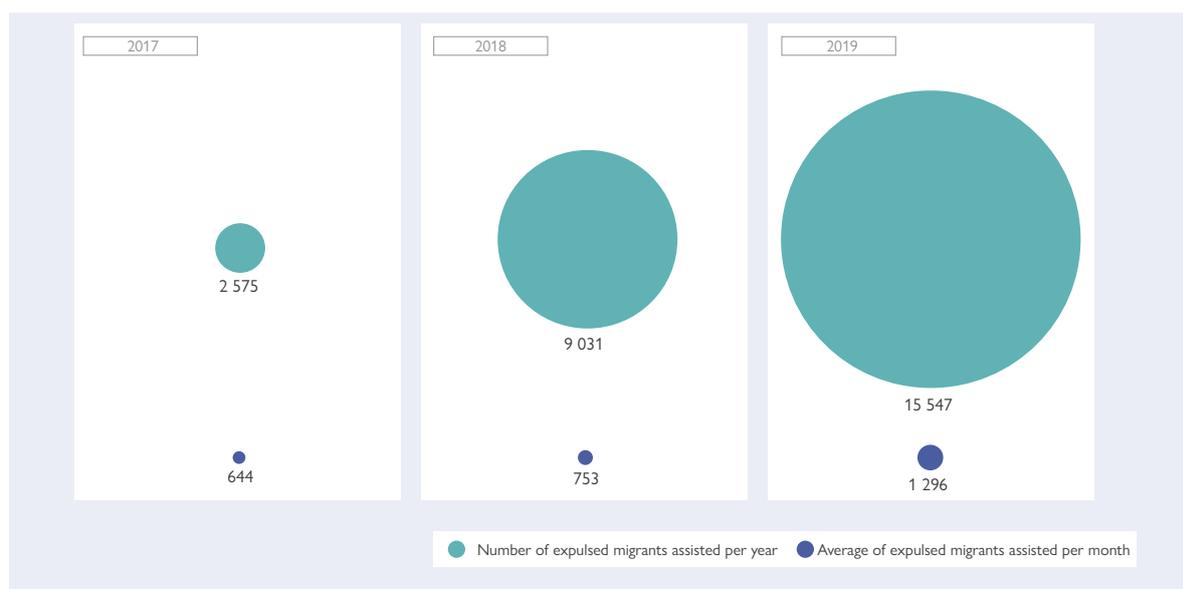
<sup>17</sup> IOM conducts an initial basic registration in Assamaka for all migrants who wish to be transported to the nearest urban centre, Arlit. As most migrants agree to be assisted, these data provide an estimated number of migrants expelled from Algeria. These data were analysed in this section from September 2017 to December 2019. Once migrants reach Arlit, only migrants who wish to receive further assistance through IOM's AVRR programme are registered (a more detailed registration process) at the transit centre. Usually, around 95 per cent of migrants who are transported from Point Zero and Assamaka also opt for IOM's AVRR programme.

<sup>18</sup> From September 2017 to December 2019, a total of 33,768 migrants were observed and recorded by IOM Niger as expelled to either Point Zero or Assamaka, of which 80 per cent or 27,153 migrants requested IOM's assistance to reach the nearest urban town, Arlit.

The vast majority (97%) agree to be assisted, and stay in the transit centres in the Niger before they are assisted with voluntary return to their home countries, mainly within West and Central Africa.<sup>19,20</sup> The number of expelled migrants from Algeria nearly doubled in 2019 compared with 2018, with 1,296 migrants per month expelled in 2019, compared with 753 per month in 2018 (see Figure 6.5).

Similarly, the number of migrants from the Niger repatriated to the Niger from Algeria more than doubled in 2018 compared with the previous year (from 6,800 in 2017 to nearly 15,000 people from the Niger repatriated in 2018). However, repatriations slowed by 34 per cent in 2019 relative to 2018 (nearly 11,000 repatriated in 2019 compared with nearly 15,000 in 2018). Repatriations of people from the Niger began in December 2014, under an agreement between the Governments of the Niger and Algeria; however, the pace significantly increased in 2018 and 2019 (see Figure 6.6).<sup>21</sup> The majority of people from the Niger originally repatriated migrated to Algeria to seek job opportunities, and the majority of them were women and children from the department of Kantché within the region of Zinder. They were mainly employed in the informal sectors in Algeria, often limited to begging, prostitution and cleaning. This phenomenon is attributed to a combination of factors, including few formal employment opportunities in Algeria combined with large households in Kantché in particular; and decades of tradition of migration as a means to make a living. Historically, the population migrated to Nigeria; however, due to the insecurity related to Boko Haram since 2009, migration shifted northwards to Algeria instead (IOM, 2016).

**Figure 6.5.** Number of migrants expelled by year and monthly rate of expulsions by year, September 2017–December 2019

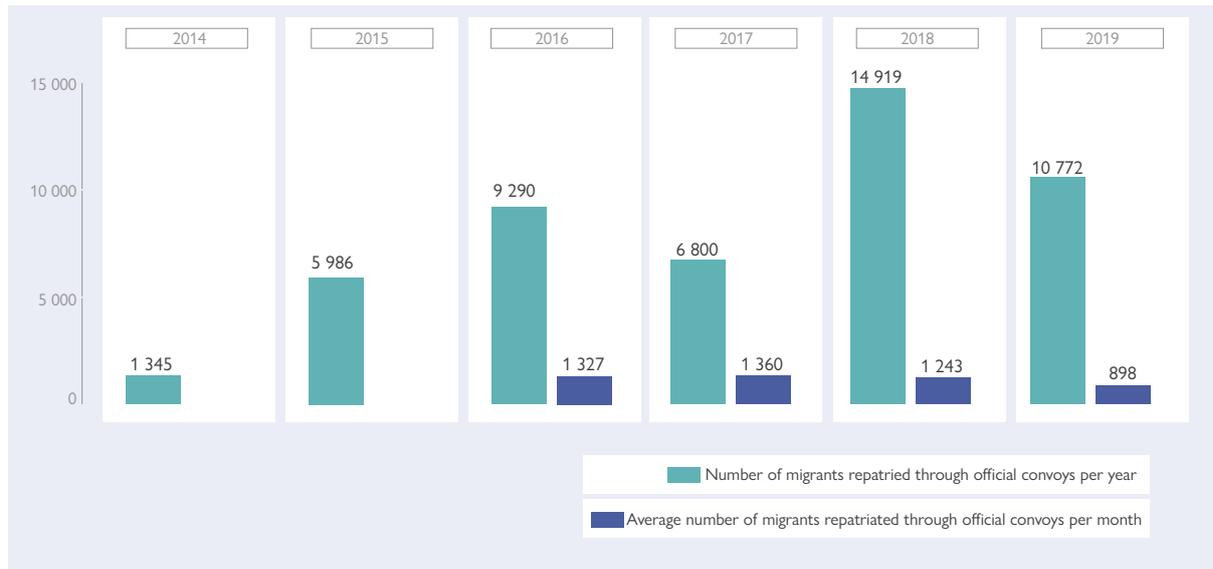


<sup>19</sup> The percentage of migrants expelled from Algeria who were rescued and opted to stay in IOM's transit centre in 2019, a slight increase from 2018 (95%) and 2017 (94%).

<sup>20</sup> Migrants transiting through the Niger who choose to return to their countries of origin or communities of origin (for migrants from the Niger), with the assistance of IOM, temporarily stay in one of IOM's six transit centres across the Niger until their scheduled departures to their home countries or communities. All migrants arriving at the transit centres are registered and informed about their rights, and services provided by IOM. The number of migrants in the transit centres increased from 6,248 in 2016 to 9,099 in 2017, 20,056 in 2018 and 18,534 in 2019.

<sup>21</sup> Since 2014, IOM provides technical and humanitarian support to the Government of the Niger in registering migrants from the Niger returning from Algeria through official convoys, which are organized by the Government of the Niger. IOM staff support the Government by collecting basic demographic data from each migrant, including their area of origin.

**Figure 6.6.** Number of migrants repatriated to the Niger through official convoys from Algeria and monthly rate of repatriations by year, December 2014–December 2019



Source: IOM data on Humanitarian Rescue Operations, indicating migrants expelled from Algeria and assisted by IOM Niger.

## 6.5. Conclusion

Migration in the Niger is internal, intraregional and interregional. People from the Niger and foreign migrants travel to northern parts of the Niger for employment opportunities such as gold mining. Interregional migrants, mainly from West and Central Africa, including people from the Niger, head to North Africa to work in the fields during harvesting season or to find other economic opportunities. Moreover, while migration drivers in the region seem to primarily be economic, there are plenty of other factors driving migration, such as the impact of enforcing strict immigration policies and insecurity in neighbouring countries. The fluid and multidimensional migration trends in the Niger demonstrate the critical role of the country at the crossroads between the western, central and northern regions of Africa.

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# 7.

## Migration aspirations in West and North Africa: what do we know about how they translate into migration flows to Europe?

Irene Schöfberger,<sup>1</sup> Eduardo Acostamadiedo,<sup>1</sup>  
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DATA

***Abstract:** Aspiring migrants from Africa are less likely than other migrants to migrate to their preferred international migration destinations. This chapter explores migration aspirations and intentions, and actual migration of citizens of 18 North and West African countries, paying particular attention to migration to Europe. Drawing on a combination of statistics from the Gallup World Poll, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Eurostat, Frontex and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, it provides evidence for the discrepancy between the number of people intending to migrate to Europe and actual regular and irregular migration flows. It does so by exploring regional differences and drawing on theoretical frameworks on migration aspirations and (cap)abilities.*

### 7.1. Introduction

Migration from and within Africa is growing and its destinations are becoming increasingly diversified (European Commission, 2018). Eight of the 10 diaspora communities that have been growing the fastest during the last decade originated in African States (Connor, 2018). And while most African migration still takes place within the continent, South–North and South–South migration out of the continent are increasing (European Commission, 2018). Yet, aspiring migrants from Africa are less likely than other migrants to migrate to their preferred international migration destinations. This is particularly true for aspiring migrants from West Africa (Tjaden et al., 2019).

This chapter explores migration aspirations and intentions, and the actual migration of citizens of 18 North and West African countries,<sup>2</sup> paying particular attention to migration to Europe.<sup>3</sup> First, the chapter explores migration desires and intentions in the selected countries, providing an update on previous IOM reports on the topic (such as Tjaden et al., 2017), based on more recently available data. It then provides

<sup>1</sup> IOM’s Global Migration Data Analysis Centre.

<sup>2</sup> The chapter focuses on the following 18 North and West African countries: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Togo and Senegal.

<sup>3</sup> Due to a limited availability of migration inflow data for the period 2010–2016, all Europe-related data presented in this chapter refer to the following 22 European countries only: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

evidence for the discrepancy between the number of people intending to migrate to Europe and actual regular and irregular migration flows. It does so by exploring regional differences and drawing on Carling's (2002) and de Haas's (2014) frameworks on migration aspirations and (cap)abilities – meaning migrants' psychological assessment of emigration as a possible course of action and their possibilities to translate aspirations into actual migration (see Box 7.1).

This is an exploratory chapter.<sup>4</sup> Data currently available on migration desires and plans in North and West African countries, on migration outflows from these countries and on the extent to which these are directed towards non-European countries are still not comprehensive. Therefore, it is currently still not possible to fully understand why many aspiring migrants from the two regions do not eventually migrate to Europe or migrate elsewhere. However, exploring migration aspirations, intentions and actual migration is essential, in order to understand underlying relevant trends.

The chapter is based on five main sources of data. Section 7.2 is based on survey data on migration desires and plans from the Gallup World Poll. Section 7.3 is based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2020) and Eurostat (2020) data on regular migration flows, Frontex estimates of irregular migrations flows,<sup>5</sup> and demographic statistics from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA, 2020) Population Division. The final section of the chapter maps relevant data gaps and suggests how these could be addressed.



### Box 7.1. Migration aspirations and the (cap)ability to migrate

The concept of migration aspirations has been used to indicate an individual's psychological assessment of conceiving emigration as a possible course of action (Carling and Schewel, 2018). Migration intentions, meanwhile, refer to aspiring migrants' concrete plans to move. The concept of aspiration has been defined as “a function of people's general life aspirations and perceived spatial opportunity structures” in both places of origin and destination (de Haas, 2014:23). In this way, the concept of aspiration focuses more on factors shaping decisions and desires (not) to leave, such as social, cultural and economic capital, social norms and expectations (Carling and Collins, 2018; Schewel, 2019).

Researchers have tried to explain the factors shaping migrants' possibilities to translate their migration aspirations into actual migration through concepts such as migration ability and capability. Through his ability–aspiration model, Carling suggested that migration ability is the “capacity to convert [migration aspirations] into reality, given context-specific obstacles and opportunities” (Carling and Schewel, 2018:955). He pointed out that different socioeconomic groups experience migration barriers differently. In particular, he suggested that restrictive immigration policies render it difficult for low-skilled individuals to access legal migration channels. This may lead them to “involuntary immobility” or to search alternative migration “modes”, such as irregular migration. Carling furthermore suggested to conceptualize

<sup>4</sup> This is an exploratory chapter and some methodological limitations need to be mentioned. To begin, methodological limitations of the Gallup World Poll data on migration desires and plans are likely to affect their comprehensiveness (see Box 7.2). Estimates based on survey data used pooled data for the years 2010–2015, in order to compensate for limited sample sizes and different sampling frames. The missing data were imputed with a moving average, to increase the balance of the panel, and design and weights were adjusted for pooling countries, years or number of surveys per year. Further limitations are due to the nature of migration flow data. Different collection techniques applied by different States limit their comparability. Data on regular migration flows are based here on residence permits; however, those who received residence permits may have arrived irregularly. Data on irregular migration flows can moreover only be based on estimates. In addition, only persons 15 years old and older could be considered, due to the unavailability of data for younger persons. However, it must be noted that a high percentage of migrants are estimated to be younger than 35 years old and many are younger than 15 years old. Due to these limitations, percentages indicated here may be biased.

<sup>5</sup> Frontex estimates of irregular migration flows are based on estimated irregular border crossings. For the methodological details, please see Frontex (2020).

migration ability in two ways: (a) as “the potential ... of realizing migration aspirations, regardless of whether the individual has such aspirations”; and (b) as “revealed ability ... of someone who has actually migrated”. The latter is used in this chapter. Similar to Carling’s ability concept is de Haas’ concept of capability, which defines “human mobility as people’s capability (freedom) to choose where to live, including the option to stay” (de Haas, 2014:2).

## 7.2. What do we know about migration desires and plans in West and North Africa?

There are different ways to measure migration aspirations and intentions (see Carling and Schewel, 2018). This chapter explores migration desires – that is, individual preferences to emigrate independently of any possible limitation to do so – and migration plans – that is, whether people with migration desires have made concrete plans to fulfil them in the following 12 months. The analysis is based on the Gallup World Poll (GWP) data on migration desires and plans collected between 2010 and 2017 in 18 countries in West and North Africa. Box 7.2 provides more information on the GWP.



### Box 7.2. Gallup World Poll data on migration desires and plans

The Gallup World Poll (GWP) provides data on migration desires and plans in more than 160 countries for the years 2010–2017. These data were collected through telephone surveys and face-to-face interviews with at least 1,000 individuals per country, with a semi-annual, annual and biennial frequency, depending on the country. With some exceptions, samples are probability-based and nationally representative of the resident population 15 years old and older. The GWP collects data on migration desires and plans through the following survey questions:

- Migration desires: “Ideally, if you had the opportunity, would you like to move permanently to another country, or would you prefer to continue living in this country?”
- Migration plans: “Are you planning to move permanently to another country in the next 12 months, or not?” (This was asked only of those who expressed a desire to migrate.)

The GWP is currently the largest source of data on migration desires and plans globally. However, its comprehensiveness is debated, mostly due to its methodological limitations. For example, uneven access to telephone services – such as in rural regions of West Africa – is not considered. Recently, some researchers have suggested that the poll’s methodological approach risks neglecting complex (local) contexts and specific forms of mobility, such as temporary migration (for example, Carling and Schewel, 2018). Other researchers have pointed to the limited ability of the GWP to compare country trends over time and at its being proprietary, and have proposed alternative tools, such as using georeferenced online search data to measure migration intentions in origin countries in order to predict subsequent outflows (Böhme et al., 2019).

Around one in three respondents in North and West Africa expressed a general desire to move abroad. The share of people who desire to emigrate increased by 12 percentage points between 2011 and 2017, from 27 per cent to 39 per cent. Migration desires vary between and within West and North Africa. In 2017, almost half of the surveyed West African nationals (43%) said that they would like to emigrate, whereas in North Africa this was true for one third of the population 15 years old or older. Box 7.3 provides evidence on why African nationals may consider emigration.



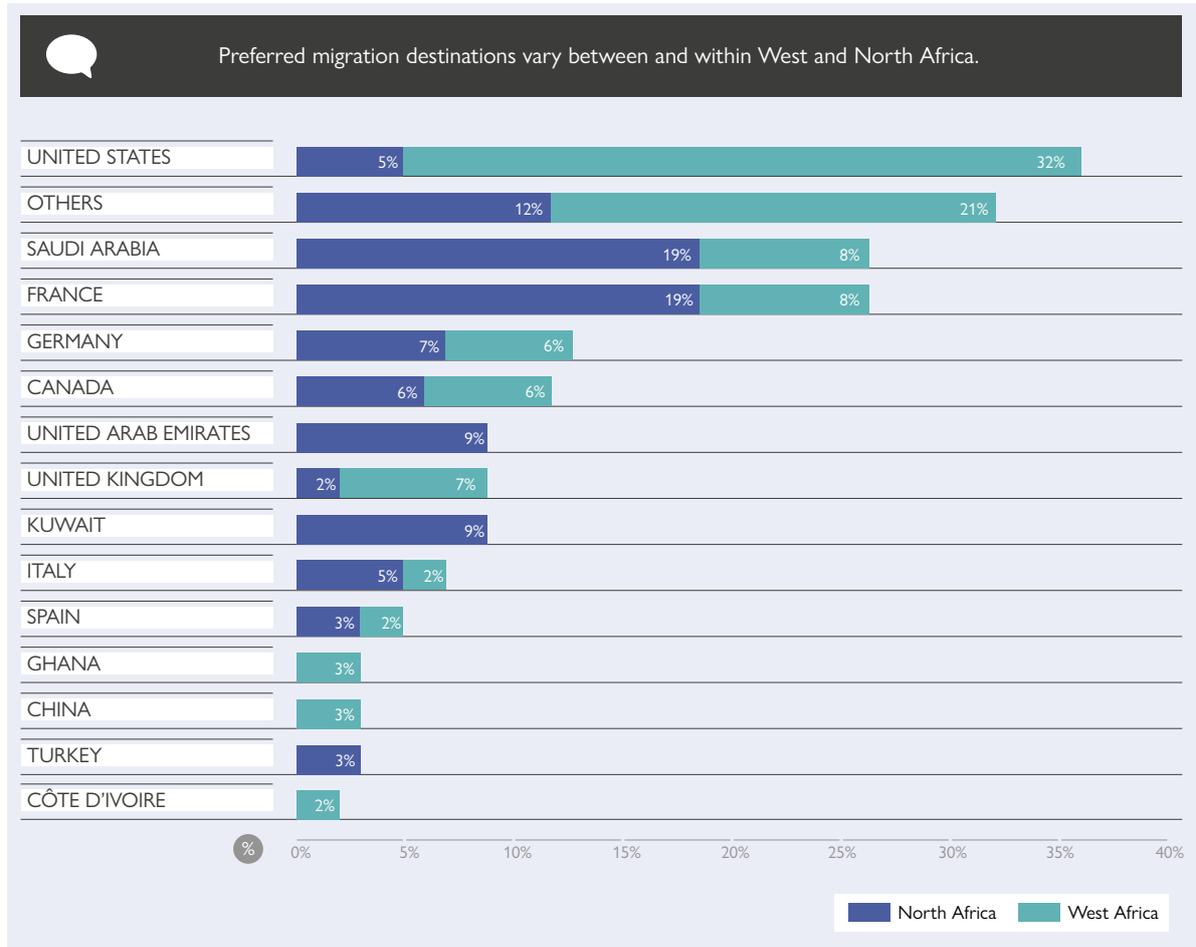
### Box 7.3. Why African nationals consider emigration – evidence from the Afrobarometer

The Afrobarometer<sup>6</sup> (2019) provides evidence on the reasons why African nationals consider moving abroad, based on nationally representative surveys. These data confirm research findings on the role of “income and job availability at destination, but also geographical, cultural and institutional distance and social linkages (networks)” as migration determinants (Docquier et al., 2014:6). Economic factors appear to be particularly important: in 2016–2018, more than half of respondents in Cabo Verde (64%) and Senegal (54%) reported “finding work” as the main reason for considering emigration. In other West African countries (Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Togo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Niger and Mali), “finding work” was the main reason for emigration for a smaller, but still consistent, share of respondents (25–35%), whereas “poverty/hardship” was the most cited factor (40–50% of respondents indicated this). Data also show the presence of “ongoing, perhaps mundane social processes that drive mobility, such as the search for an education, a spouse or a better life in the city” (Bakewell and Bonfiglio, 2013:4). Ten per cent of respondents in the Gambia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Morocco said that they would like to emigrate in pursuit of better education opportunities. Other reasons reported by respondents included travel/tourism, business prospects and family reunification. Political reasons appear to be less relevant: “better democratic environment”, “political persecution” and “civil war” were all indicated by less than 2.1 per cent of persons having considered migration in all West African countries considered by the Afrobarometer. However, 4.2 per cent of persons having considered migration in Morocco and 3 per cent in Tunisia indicated “better democratic environment”.

Preferred migration destinations vary between and within West and North Africa. Generally, people who expressed a desire to move in 2017 mentioned North America (11%), Europe (11%), Asia (including the Middle East – 9%) and the Arabian Peninsula (6%) as preferred destination regions. Only 3 per cent stated they would like to move to another country in Africa. The United States (22%), Saudi Arabia and France (both at 12%) were the most cited preferred destinations overall, but there are regional differences. In West Africa, the preferred regions of destination are North America (16%) and Europe (10%), whereas in North Africa, Europe and the Middle East prevail (both at 12%). Destinations in Western Asia – primarily Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait – are particularly popular among potential migrants in North Africa (12%). Four per cent of potential migrants in West Africa would like to migrate to another African country, while this is true for none of the individuals surveyed in North Africa. Finally, preferred migration destinations vary at the national level, too. For example, 25 per cent of respondents with a migration desire in Algeria and 20 per cent in Senegal would like to go to Europe, while this is true for only 3 per cent of respondents in the Niger and Egypt. Figure 7.1 provides an overview of preferred countries of destination among respondents who expressed a migration desire.

<sup>6</sup> The Afrobarometer conducts regular public attitude surveys on social, political and economic questions in 37 African countries. It does so through face-to-face interviews with a randomly selected sample of 1,200 or 2,400 people in each country.

**Figure 7.1.** Preferred countries of destination among respondents in West and North Africa who expressed a general desire to emigrate in 2017<sup>7</sup>



Source: Gallup World Poll, 2017.

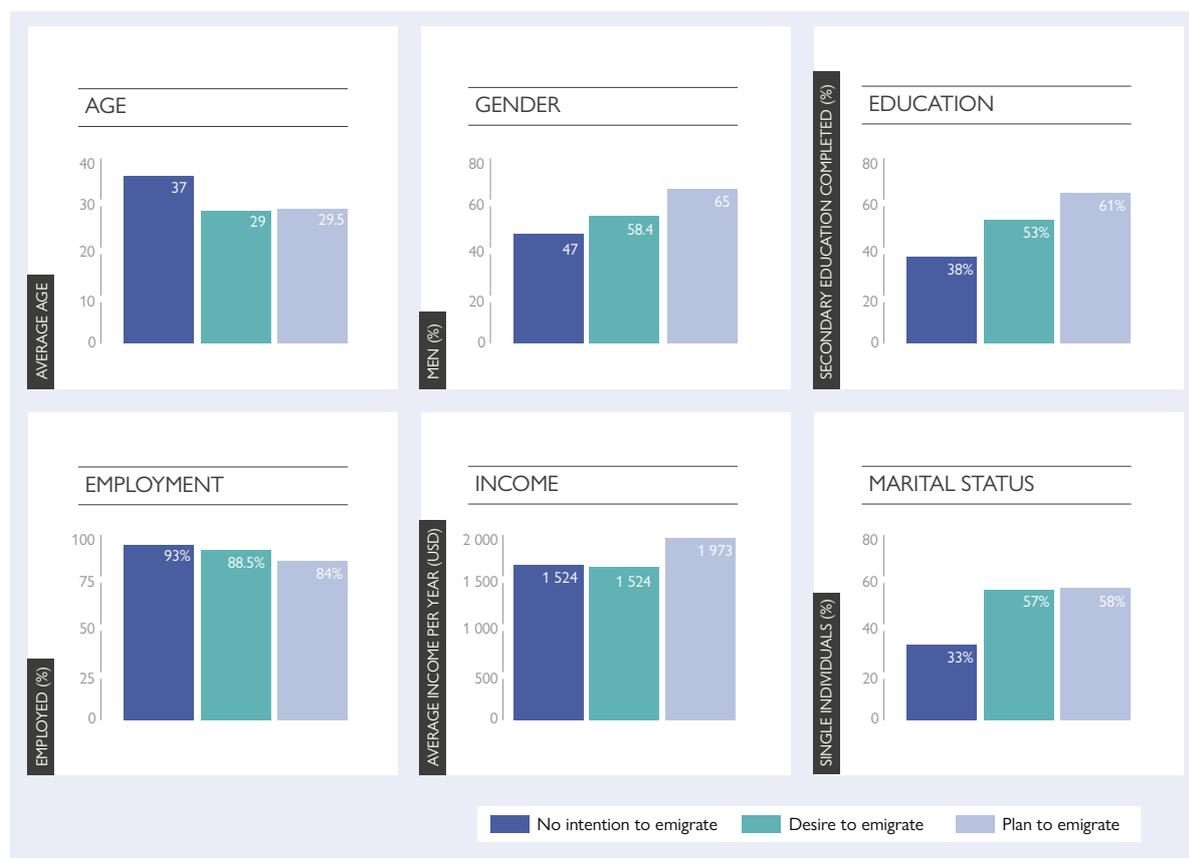
Note: Design and population weights are included.

Only 4.4 per cent of all respondents in West and North Africa said they were making concrete plans<sup>8</sup> to migrate abroad. Every year from 2010 to 2015, an average of 31 per cent of respondents across the 18 selected countries reported a general desire to migrate, whereas only 4.4 per cent indicated that they had made concrete plans to do so in the following 12 months. Among those with concrete plans to migrate, only one in three said that they were planning to move to Europe.

Aspiring migrants are on average younger, better educated and tend to have higher incomes than the rest of the population. They are also more likely to be male and single. This is true both for individuals who desire to emigrate and – even more so – for individuals who make concrete plans to migrate. People with these characteristics are more likely to have the social and economic capital to comply with immigration requirements in countries of destination and to finance migration costs. Figure 7.2 provides information on socioeconomic characteristics of aspiring migrants.

<sup>7</sup> Preferred countries of destination among respondents in West and North Africa who expressed a general desire to emigrate in 2017 were calculated in two steps. First, the share of respondents desiring to move to each country of destination was calculated for each of the 18 countries of origin considered in this chapter. Then, the average share for each preferred country of destination was calculated and adjusted for population size in countries of origin. Methodological limitations of GWP data indicated in Box 7.2 need to be considered.

<sup>8</sup> GWP data on migration plans are not yet available for 2016 and 2017. Therefore, data on migration plans presented here refer to the time period 2010–2015.

**Figure 7.2.** Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents, 2010–2015

Source: Gallup World Poll, 2010–2015.

Note: Estimates based on pooled data for 2010–2015. Design and population weights included.

### 7.3. From plans to actual migration to Europe

Plans to emigrate or stay change over time. In particular, migration plans do not always materialize. Individual characteristics such as social and economic capital, and structural or contextual factors – such as migration policies, changing risks and opportunities, and geographical distance – have an impact on aspiring migrants' will and possibilities to translate their migration plans into reality (Carling and Schewel, 2018). As a result, people may decide not to migrate, to migrate to alternative destinations, or to choose alternative means to migrate (such as through irregular channels). More information on this is provided in Box 7.4.

This section explores the extent to which plans to migrate translate into actual migration. Given the limited availability of statistics on regular and irregular migration flows at the global level,<sup>9</sup> only statistics on movements from the 18 selected countries to the 23 European countries for which data are available are considered here.

The section compares: (a) data on the number of people (yearly average) with plans to migrate from the 18 selected countries to the 23 European countries for which data are available for the period 2010–2015, and (b) data on yearly average migrant inflows from the selected 18 countries to the same 23 European countries for

<sup>9</sup> Data on migrant flows are not available at the global level. Only 45 countries report them to the United Nations and comparable migration flows data are largely limited to OECD countries and to regular migration. This renders it difficult to describe migration flows involving non-OECD countries, such as the 18 North and West African countries considered in this brief, and irregular migration flows. For more information on data availability, see Mosler Vidal (2019).

the period 2011–2016.<sup>10</sup> Data on migration plans refer to plans to migrate in the 12 months following the time of the interview. Data on yearly average migrant inflows are based on data on residence permits issued for at least 12 months<sup>11</sup> and on estimates of irregular arrivals. Migration journeys can have variable lengths, ranging from several hours to years. In addition, they are not always linear and may involve shorter or longer periods in countries of transit. While the two data sets do not refer to the same groups of individuals, comparing them can provide an indication of the gap between migration plans and actual migration to certain destinations.

From 2011 to 2016, the estimated yearly average migration inflows from the 18 selected countries to Europe have been equivalent to 7.1 per cent of the yearly average number of individuals indicating that they had made migration plans between 2010 and 2015. On average, each year between 2010 and 2015, about 4 million individuals made plans to move to the European Union in the following 12 months, whereas each year from 2011 to 2016, estimated regular and irregular arrivals were about 300,000.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 7.3.** Migration plans and estimated inflows to the European Union, 2010–2015<sup>13</sup>



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on survey data on migration desires and plans from Gallup World Poll, demographic data from UN DESA Population Division, data on regular migration flows from Eurostat (2020) and OECD (2020), and estimates of irregular migration flows from Frontex (2020). Design and population weights are included.

<sup>10</sup> Comparison is made between data for migration plans in 2010–2015 and migration inflows in 2011–2016, in order to account for the fact that plans can take time to materialize.

<sup>11</sup> Eurostat and OECD data on regular arrivals are calculated using first residence permits issued for at least 12 months as a proxy for flows. Given the lack of reliable data on irregular arrivals and partial overlaps between data on regular and irregular arrivals, estimates presented here can only be indicative.

<sup>12</sup> This number is calculated as a combination of Eurostat and OECD data on regular arrivals and Frontex estimates on irregular arrivals that are based on border crossings. Given the lack of reliable data on irregular arrivals and partial overlaps between data on regular and irregular arrivals, these estimates are indicative. Irregular arrivals in the years 2011–2016 were significantly higher than in previous years.

<sup>13</sup> These data refer to migration from the 18 African countries considered to the 23 EU countries considered. The absolute number of adults with plans to emigrate is calculated by multiplying the percentage of survey respondents that reported a plan to emigrate to EU countries considered with the population data. Estimates include people 15 years old and older. Design and population weights are applied. Estimates are based on pooled data for 2010–2015.

There are regional differences regarding whether migration plans lead to actual migration. Migrants from North Africa are more likely than migrants from West Africa to enter European countries regularly, based on available data. Whereas from 2011 to 2016 the yearly average number of individuals who migrated regularly to Europe from the North African countries considered was equivalent to 11.3 per cent of the yearly average number of those who said they had made migration plans from 2010 to 2015, the share was 3.1 per cent in the West African countries analysed. The estimated yearly average number of individuals who migrated irregularly was equivalent to 1.3 per cent of yearly average migration plans for both North and West Africa.<sup>14</sup>



#### Box 7.4. Potential migrants may decide to stay or to move to alternative destinations

Potential migrants may decide to stay in their countries of origin or to migrate elsewhere. This can happen because of changes in how they perceive their opportunities and capabilities at home and elsewhere (for comparison, see de Haas, 2014; Carling and Schewel, 2018).

- **The decision to (wait and) stay in the country of origin** may be linked to a perceived improvement of work opportunities and/or to changes in the personal situations and life aspirations of potential migrants. People may also consider that their prospects to migrate and to live in their desired migration destinations have become worse – for example, due to economic downturns or changing immigration policies. People may also be forced to stay due to an onset or increase of violence and insecurity.
- **The decision to move to alternative destinations** may be linked to changes in the perception of risks and opportunities in different countries of transit and destination, and/or to changes in the personal situations and life aspirations of potential migrants. As a result, migrants who initially desired to migrate to Europe may become internal migrants or migrate to other non-European countries. West African migrants are more likely to remain in the region, where they can benefit from the Economic Community of West African States Protocol of Free Movement, or on the continent: it is estimated that around 7 out of 10 West African migrants remain in Africa, against just around 1.5 out of 10 North African migrants (European Commission, 2018). In some cases, internal and interregional migration can serve as a step towards future migration to the European Union or elsewhere. During short- and long-term migration phases in transit countries, migrants can improve their capability to move to Europe by, for instance, working to finance migration costs or by enrolling in education programmes to fulfil immigration requirements. In other cases, however, migrants' capability to move can decrease – for instance, due to experienced situations of vulnerability.

Between 2011 and 2016, the yearly average of regular arrivals was 247,266 and the estimated average of irregular arrivals was 55,664. In other words, estimated irregular arrivals were equivalent to about 20 per cent of regular arrivals. On average, out of every 100 North and West African citizens who made migration plans, 6 entered European countries regularly, and an estimated 1 entered irregularly.

The share of individuals who realized their migration plans entering European countries irregularly<sup>15</sup> tended to be slightly higher for West African countries with a low human development index. Some countries had a slightly higher share of estimated irregular inflows over total inflows than the others, when considering yearly averages

<sup>14</sup> The statistical significance of regional differences with regard to migration plans was checked.

<sup>15</sup> For a comparative analysis of regular and irregular migration flows from Africa to Europe, see Mosler Vidal et al. (2019).

between 2011 and 2016. These are Mali (34%), Côte d'Ivoire (27%), Sierra Leone, (26%), Nigeria (26%), Guinea (26%), Liberia (25%), Burkina Faso (24%), the Niger (22%) and Ghana (19%). Every year between 2011 and 2016, all these countries except for Ghana were classified as having a low human development index, lower than most of the other countries considered in this brief (UNDP, 2019).

## 7.4. Research and data gaps and limitations, and how to address them

A comprehensive analysis of the gap between plans to migrate and actual migration can hardly be conducted based on currently available data. Still, this question is essential for the identification of effective migration policies able to maximize the possible benefits of migration for countries of origin, transit and destination. In particular, the following research and data gaps need to be filled:

- **More research on migrants' capability to translate migration desires and plans into actual emigration:** More research is needed, particularly on the role of migrants' individual characteristics and their inclusion in social networks, as well as broader contextual variables, such as migration policies and economic and political situations in countries of origin, transit and destination.
- **Data on the socioeconomic characteristics of undocumented migrants:** Related questions could be included in existing data collection tools employed in Africa and the European Union, such as the Displacement Tracking Matrix, in order to understand how these characteristics influence migrants' access to regular and irregular migration possibilities.

The following measures can help improve the availability of relevant data:

- **Support to national statistical offices in Africa, including through data capacity-building initiatives,** in order to improve the ability of national statistical offices to collect data on the above: Data collection strategies relevant in this regard include conducting specific migration surveys, integrating migration-related questions into national population censuses and improving administrative data systems.
- **Facilitation of interregional and international data-sharing mechanisms,** in order to improve cooperation between national statistical offices and make the most of existing data already collected by countries: In particular, data on migration inflows collected by countries of destination could provide information on migration outflows from countries of origin.
- **Exploration of the potential of new data sources,** such as data from online searches and social media: More efforts should be directed towards harnessing openly available data or data that are already collected by private companies to estimate migration flows and intentions, while paying attention to issues related to difficulties in separating migrants from non-migrants (based on the United Nations-recommended definitions), representativeness of the data (as aspiring migrants with lower migration capability may also have less access to Internet connections and smartphones), as well as individual privacy and civil liberties.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> For examples, see <https://migrationdataportal.org/data-innovation> (accessed 23 June 2020).

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## 8.

Using big data to estimate migration  
“push factors” from AfricaConstantinos Melachrinos,<sup>1</sup> Marcello Carammia,<sup>1</sup>  
Teddy Wilkin<sup>1</sup>

DATA



ADVERSE DRIVERS

**Abstract:** This chapter explores the use of big data to estimate monthly country-level “push factors” of asylum-related migration. It also looks at whether estimates of push factors in countries of origin correlate with traditional data on irregular migration on the Central Mediterranean Route and asylum applications lodged in Italy. The frequency of negative and disruptive events in individual countries was aggregated into a composite Push Factor Index, which strongly correlates with applications for asylum in Europe in 2016 and 2017. However, following the effective closure of the Central Mediterranean Route in 2018 and 2019, this correlation was no longer apparent, showing that the explanatory power of the Push Factor Index is dependent on enabling factors.

**COVID-19 update\***

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has invested heavily in modern systems for forecasting asylum-related migration – big data are harvested and analysed with machine learning and, in 2019, a major scenario exercise brought together experts to create scenarios of how international protection may look in the years ahead. No matter how sophisticated the technology or how insightful the participants, neither of these approaches was able to predict the pandemic or its effects on displacement and international protection, nor can they be invoked to simulate the post-COVID-19 world. All forecasting techniques depend on reliable data to feed into quantitative systems, but at the moment, such data are lacking, especially from low-capacity or non-transparent countries. Equally, scenarios require experts to have some knowledge and involvement in similar situations, but the features of this pandemic are unique, and disparate processes are already interacting with each other in complex and unpredictable ways. As a result, predictions are befittingly rare and cautious, but speculative trends are already emerging.

Complete lockdowns were relatively easy to implement – short, sharp, shocks that united entire continents in the face of adversity. Now the challenge in the short term is how to implement and manage divergent easing of the lockdowns across some countries, while others struggle with the virus still taking hold, with potentially divisive effects on displacement, mobility and protection needs. This analysis suggests that two diametrically

\* EASO Special Report Asylum Trends and COVID-19 - Issue 2", published June 2020, available at [www.easo.europa.eu/publications/easo-special-report-asylum-trends-and-covid-19-issue-2](http://www.easo.europa.eu/publications/easo-special-report-asylum-trends-and-covid-19-issue-2).

<sup>1</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO).

opposed forces seem to be at work: on the one hand, interrelated effects of the pandemic – such as contracting economies, food insecurity, social unrest, political tensions, hardening societies and deepening divisions between population groups – could result in massive displacements and possibly onward movement towards Europe, including many persons with international protection needs. On the other hand, migration patterns will likely remain highly disrupted, due to restrictions on mobility, possibly coupled with increased digital surveillance. Combined, these two forces raise important questions about the number of people likely to be in need of international protection, and their ability to access protection services, whether or not this occurs in Europe or elsewhere.



## 8.1. Introduction

Events such as conflict, economic hardship, poor governance, deteriorating political situations and social exclusion of marginalized groups have the potential to internally displace entire communities or force them to leave their homes to seek refuge in other countries. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) uses big data on media-covered events<sup>2</sup> to monitor such events, which are selected and weighted according to the magnitude of the effect they are likely to have on asylum-related migration. In the interests of simplification, and for analytical purposes, these data have been aggregated into a composite indicator for each country of the world, the Push Factor Index (PFI).

The aim of this chapter is to examine whether big data can be exploited to estimate country-level “push factors”<sup>3</sup> of asylum-related migration, and whether such estimates of push factors in countries of origin correlate with irregular migration in the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR). Comparing the PFI with traditional data on asylum-related migration, such as the number of lodged asylum applications, is necessary to ascertain the extent to which signals in the PFI reflect real-world events. The chapter shows that the PFI is a good first step in combining big data with traditional data and extracting insights that are practically useful in the field of asylum-related migration. However, more work is needed to further refine the PFI and better explain the relationship with migration and asylum processes, as described by administrative indices.

This analysis proceeds in the following way. Firstly, in the interests of context, the first section presents a general overview of the situation of asylum-related migration on the CMR in 2019. Subsequently, we introduce the PFI, show recent push factors for African countries, and analyse their relationship with asylum applications and recognition rates in receiving countries that implement the Common European Asylum System as of 2019, that is 27 European Union member States plus Norway and Switzerland (EU+). The final section presents an analysis of push factors in Libya and asylum applications in Italy. The conclusion reappraises the findings and raises questions for future research.

## 8.2. Asylum-related migration along the Central Mediterranean Route in 2019

The CMR<sup>4</sup> is one of the most dangerous migratory routes, as evidenced by the number of deaths recorded by the IOM Missing Migrants Project,<sup>5</sup> with Libya often as the main point of departure. The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA) receives data on registered irregular arrivals along the Mediterranean routes.<sup>6</sup> The main nationalities of migrants travelling<sup>7</sup> on each route in 2019 are illustrated in Figure 8.1, which suggests that migrants tended to follow the shortest route towards the European Union. For example, Tunisians and sub-Saharan Africans were mostly registered after arriving on the CMR, whereas Algerians and Moroccans primarily used the Western Mediterranean, and Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans the Eastern Mediterranean route.

<sup>2</sup> The Global Database on Events, Language and Tone (GDELT) Project. Available at [www.gdeltproject.org/](http://www.gdeltproject.org/).

<sup>3</sup> By “push factors” we mean events in countries of origin that have the potential to generate migration or displacement. By using this expression we do not intend to adhere to the push and pull factors framework (Lee, 1966), we just refer to terms of practical use among migration practitioners and analysts.

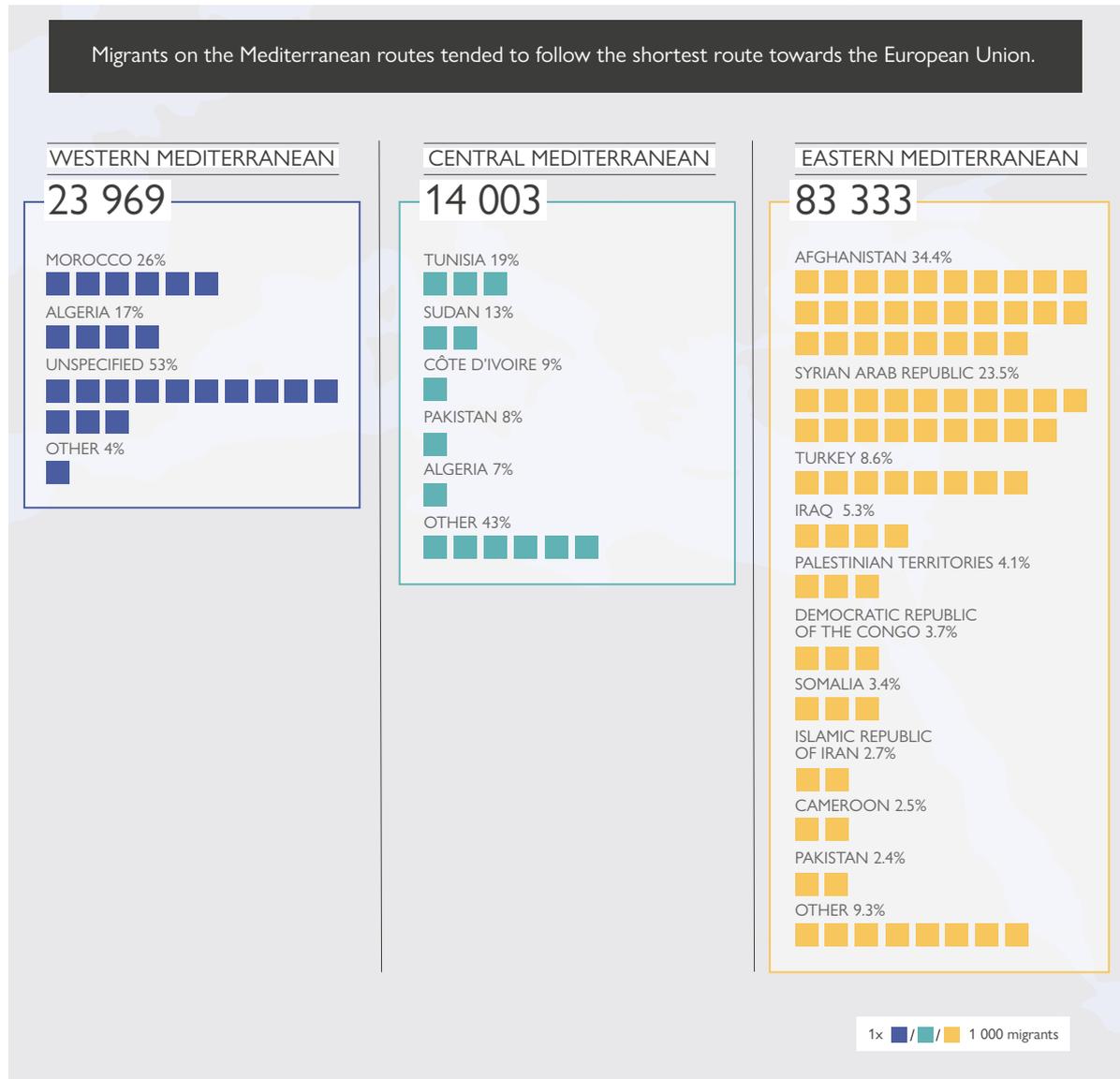
<sup>4</sup> CMR is defined as the route from sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa and then across the Mediterranean Sea, mostly to Italy and to a lesser extent also to Malta (UNHCR, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Available at <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean>.

<sup>6</sup> Available at <https://frontex.europa.eu/along-eu-borders/migratory-map/>.

<sup>7</sup> Throughout the paper, any discussion regarding travelling across the CMR refers to detections of arrivals, according to EBCGA.

**Figure 8.1.** Registrations of irregular arrivals in 2019 across the Western, Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes, by citizenship



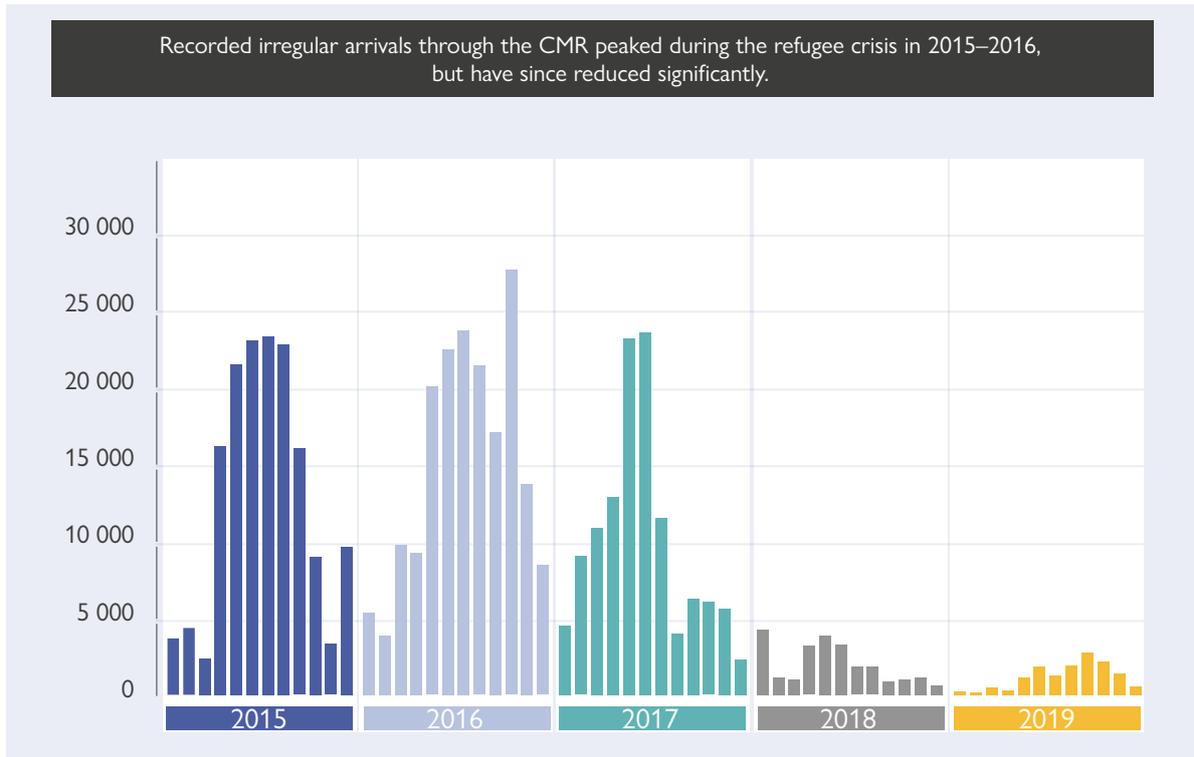
Source: EBCGA.

Note: Percentages refer to the percentage of detections of nationals of each citizenship along each route.

### 8.2.1. Irregular arrivals

Recorded irregular arrivals through the CMR peaked during the refugee crisis in 2015–2016, but have since reduced significantly, as shown in Figure 8.2.

**Figure 8.2.** Monthly flows in the Central Mediterranean Route declined in 2018–2019, due to increased patrolling by Libyan coast guard and decreased search and rescue operations



Source: EBCGA.

In 2019, far fewer irregular arrivals were recorded on the CMR than in 2018 (Figure 8.3), following increased patrolling by the Libyan authorities<sup>8</sup> and restrictions on search and rescue operations in the region. Tunisia also emerged as an important departure country towards the end of 2018<sup>9</sup> when irregular arrivals plunged by 80 per cent, to their lowest level since 2012.<sup>10</sup> In 2019, irregular arrivals on the CMR fell by another 41 per cent, to just 14,000.<sup>11</sup>

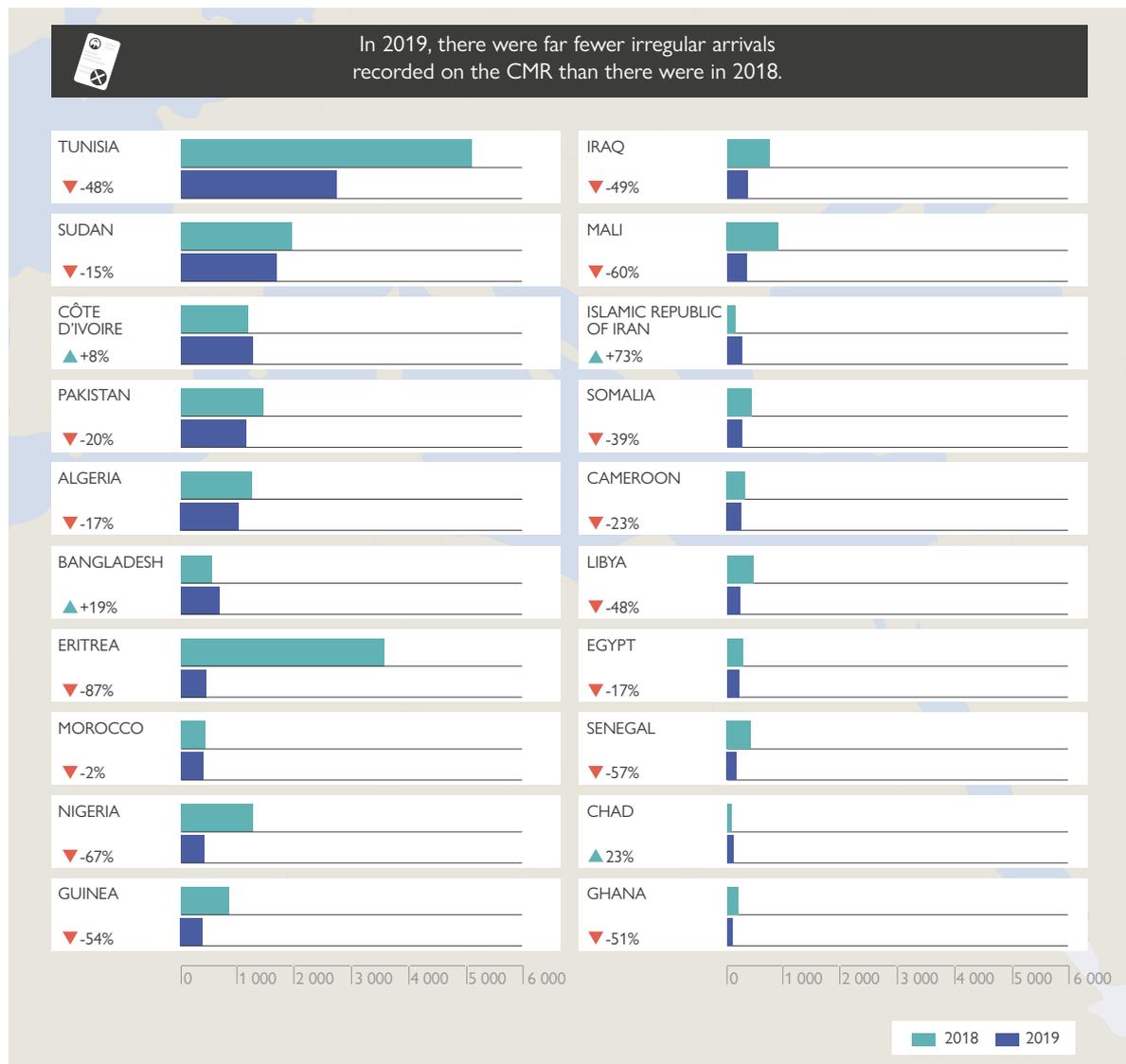
In 2019, the top 20 countries of origin of migrants arriving via the CMR included Northern African, as well as sub-Saharan African countries. Nationals from Tunisia, Eritrea, Nigeria and Mali arrived in lower numbers in 2019 compared with the year before. According to media reports, Tunisians tended to arrive in Sicily (Reuters, 2007), while Algerians tended to arrive in Sardinia (InfoMigrants, 2019; WorldCrunch, 2017), due to geographical proximity. Nationals of sub-Saharan African countries travelled through Libya, while citizens from the Middle East (Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq) typically arrived on sailing boats from Greece towards Puglia (ANSA, 2019). Citizens of Bangladesh used to arrive in even larger numbers through Libya, whereas Pakistani nationals were split between the Eastern and Central Mediterranean routes, before being diverted via the Western Balkans and Slovenia since the closure of the Central Mediterranean route in 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Frontex FRAN Q2 2018, available at <https://frontex.europa.eu/publications/fran-q2-2018-EkjTNR>.

<sup>9</sup> Frontex Risk Analysis for 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Frontex Migratory Routes, available at [www.frontex.europa.eu](http://www.frontex.europa.eu).

<sup>11</sup> Frontex News Release, 8 January 2020.

**Figure 8.3.** Recorded irregular arrivals in 2018 and 2019 on the Central Mediterranean Route and percentage change between years

Source: EBCGA.

### 8.2.2. Asylum applications

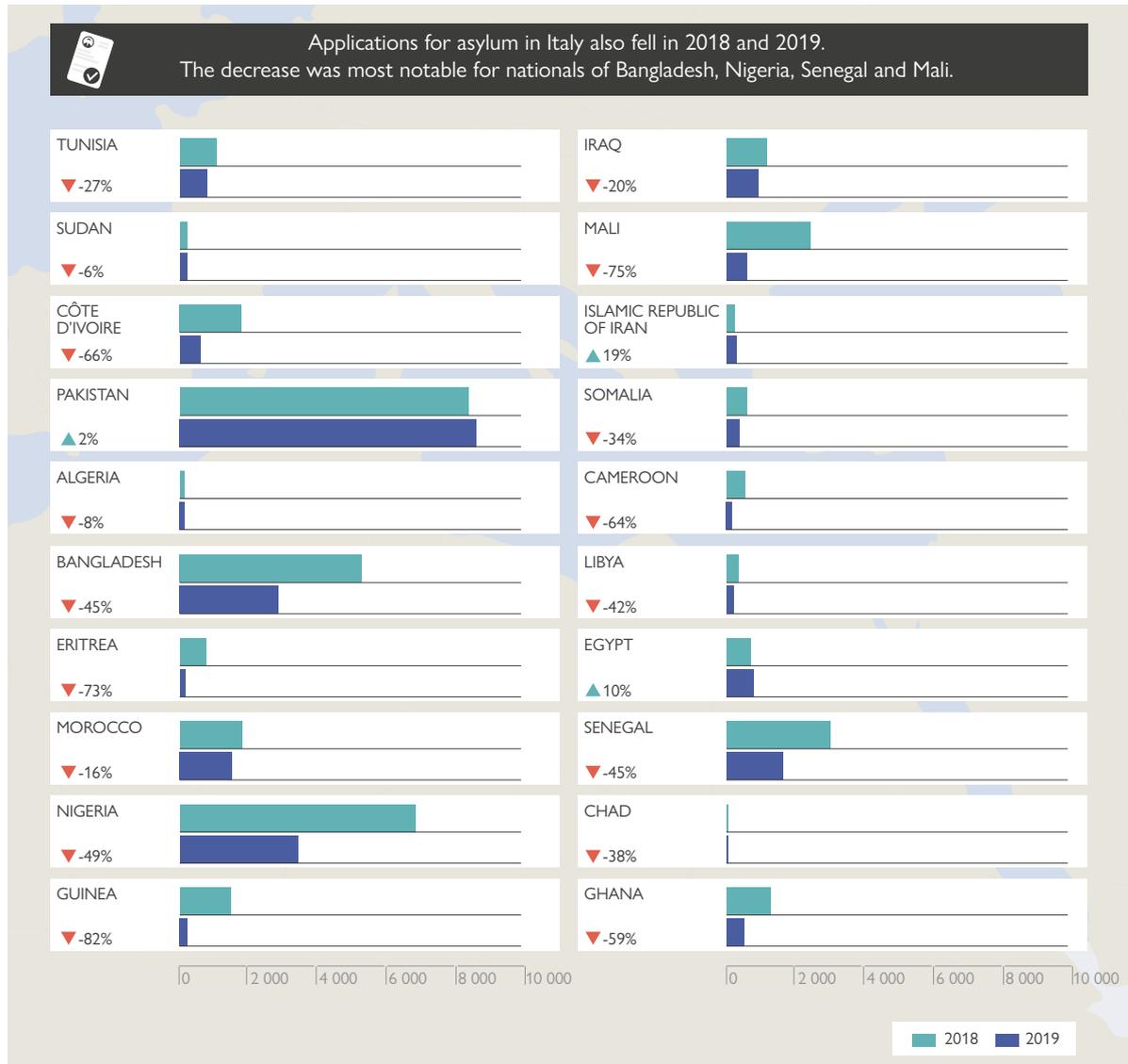
Applications for asylum in Italy also fell in 2018 and 2019. Figure 8.4 illustrates the extent to which nationals of the main countries of origin applied for asylum in Italy, according to public data from Eurostat.<sup>12</sup> The decrease was most notable for nationals of Bangladesh, Nigeria, Senegal and Mali.

Pakistanis lodged similar numbers of applications in 2018 and 2019, but they were not recorded in high numbers on the CMR, which suggests that they arrived via different means. In contrast, asylum applications from nationals of Nigeria and Bangladesh decreased sharply in the period, around 50 per cent. Libyan nationals applied for asylum in much reduced numbers, following the decrease of irregular arrivals on the CMR, suggesting that Libyans may now stay in their country, or seek asylum in neighbouring countries in Africa.

<sup>12</sup> Eurostat data on asylum, comparing annual figures for both years. Available at [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics) (accessed 20 March 2020).

Sub-Saharan migrants from countries such as Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Mali and Eritrea also arrived in Italy via the CMR in lower numbers (>50%), possibly as a result of the increased interceptions and returns by the Libyan Coast Guard, fewer search and rescue operations in the Central Mediterranean, or both.

**Figure 8.4.** Asylum applications in Italy in 2018 and 2019, with percentage change between the years



Source: Eurostat.

### 8.2.3. Relationship between arrivals on the Central Mediterranean Route and applications for asylum in Italy

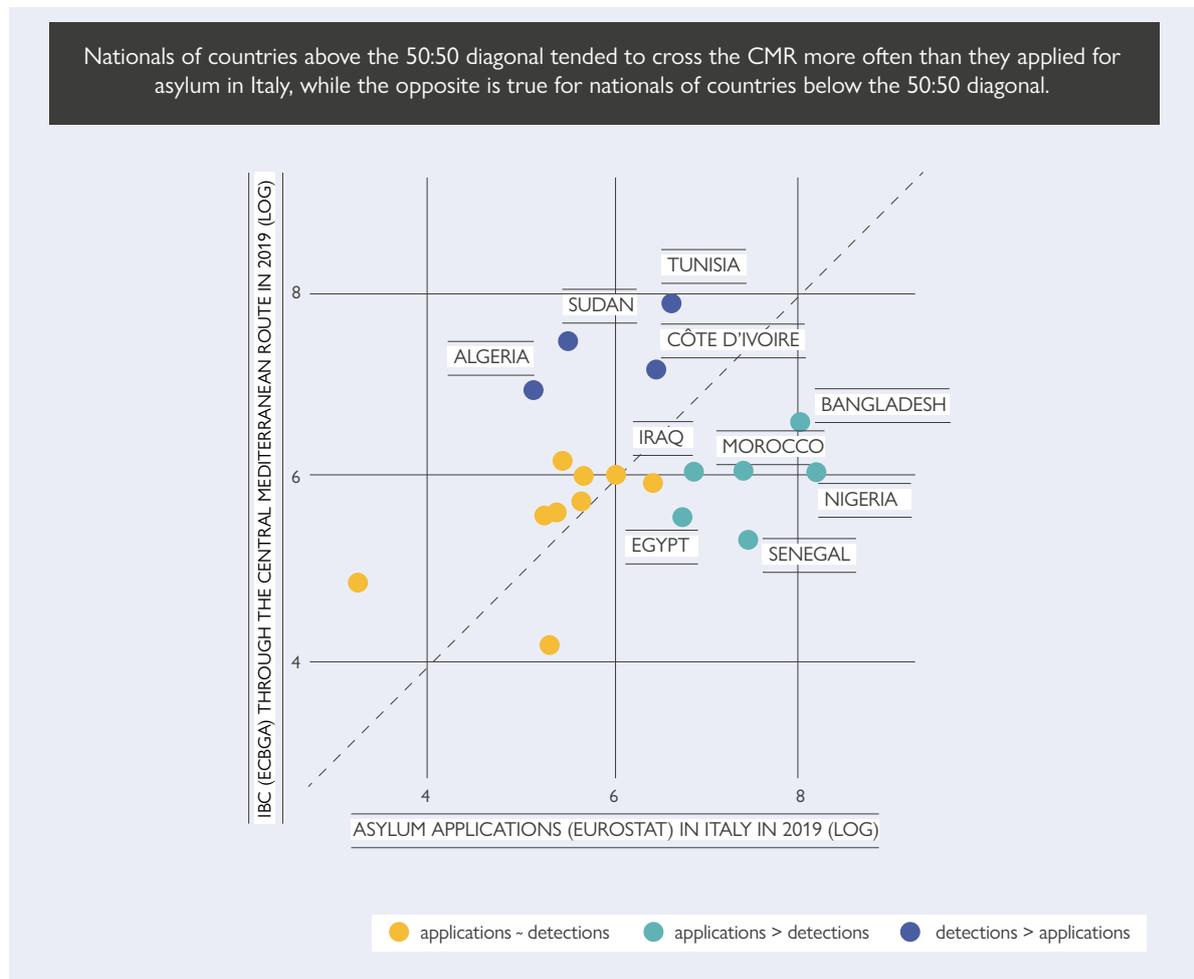
Irregular arrivals on the CMR tend to co-vary with asylum applications in Italy, since asylum applications are often lodged upon arrival. Figure 8.5 shows the most commonly recorded citizenships on the CMR and the extent to which their arrivals in 2019 correlate with asylum applications lodged in Italy.<sup>13</sup> Nationals of countries close to the dotted 50:50 diagonal line tended to apply for asylum in Italy in similar numbers as they arrived via the CMR. The

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

strength of the correlation has been reduced in recent years, pointing to a gradual decoupling of the trends; that is, arrivals who did not apply for asylum and/or applications lodged by those who did not arrive via the CMR.<sup>14</sup>

Tunisia, the Sudan and Côte d'Ivoire occur in the analytical space above the 50:50 diagonal line in Figure 8.5, which suggests that nationals of these countries tended to cross the CMR more often than they applied for asylum in Italy. This could imply that they were not in need of international protection, or they immediately moved to another European Union member State and applied for asylum there instead. In contrast, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Morocco and Senegal occur in the analytical space below the 50:50 diagonal line, which suggests that they tended to apply for asylum in Italy much more often than they were recorded arriving on the CMR, further supporting the hypothesis that they arrive through different routes to Italy, although the lodging of repeated applications may lessen the strength of this conclusion.

**Figure 8.5.** Asylum applications in Italy compared with irregular arrivals on the Central Mediterranean Route in 2019, for selected nationalities



Note: The 50:50 diagonal line denotes equal numbers of asylum applications in Italy and irregular arrivals across the Central Mediterranean Route.

<sup>14</sup> The correlation went down from 0.79 in 2016, to 0.76 in 2017, 0.42 in 2018, and 0.39 in 2019. The interpretation of this finding is not straightforward, as these are different data collections, and do not necessarily point to the same underlying populations.

### 8.3. Big data and “push factors”

Events such as conflict, economic hardship, deteriorating governance, political tensions and social exclusion of marginalized groups have the potential to forcibly displace groups of individuals, or even entire communities, either to other areas within their country of origin, or to other countries where they seek refuge. EASO uses GDELT (see footnote 2), where global print and electronic media reports in more than 100 languages are geolocated and categorized according to their type, as a quantitative source, near to real-time data on geolocated events. These data describe all events in near to real time, once they are reported in the media.

Because not all events have the potential to generate migration, we selected 240 types of events and weighted them according to their severity and their potential effects on outward migration. Events were then placed in five macro categories: political, social, conflict, economic and governance. Examples of political events include demands for release of persons or property, threats, arrests, expulsion and deportation of individuals. Social events include protests, demonstrations and strikes. Conflict events commonly include, among others, the use of conventional military force, mass killings and military occupation. Economic and governance events include trade embargoes or economic sanctions and demands for change in leadership or policy change, respectively. To prevent overestimating the impact of some events due to preferential media coverage, each event is counted once per day, irrespective of the number of articles or mentions of articles referring to that event in the same day. As a result, our estimation of the push factors represents the magnitude of events and not their media coverage. To enable simplification and further analyses, we then aggregated these events to create a country-level composite indicator for each country of the world, the Push Factor Index (PFI).

Although big data may to some extent sacrifice accuracy in the interests of timeliness and coverage, they can provide useful complements to traditional data sources, or cover gaps in administrative collections. The World Bank’s Statistical Capacity Indicator<sup>15</sup> also a composite score, but in this case it describes the capacity of a country’s statistical system. It is based on a diagnostic framework assessing methodologies, data sources, periodicity and timeliness. According to the Statistical Capacity Indicator, there are significant data gaps in migration topics for some countries in Africa, due to either the lack of capacity, lack of resources, or both. The PFI is specifically designed to avoid these gaps altogether, because it can be produced for every country in the world, independently of infrastructure and/or capacity of the national statistical offices.

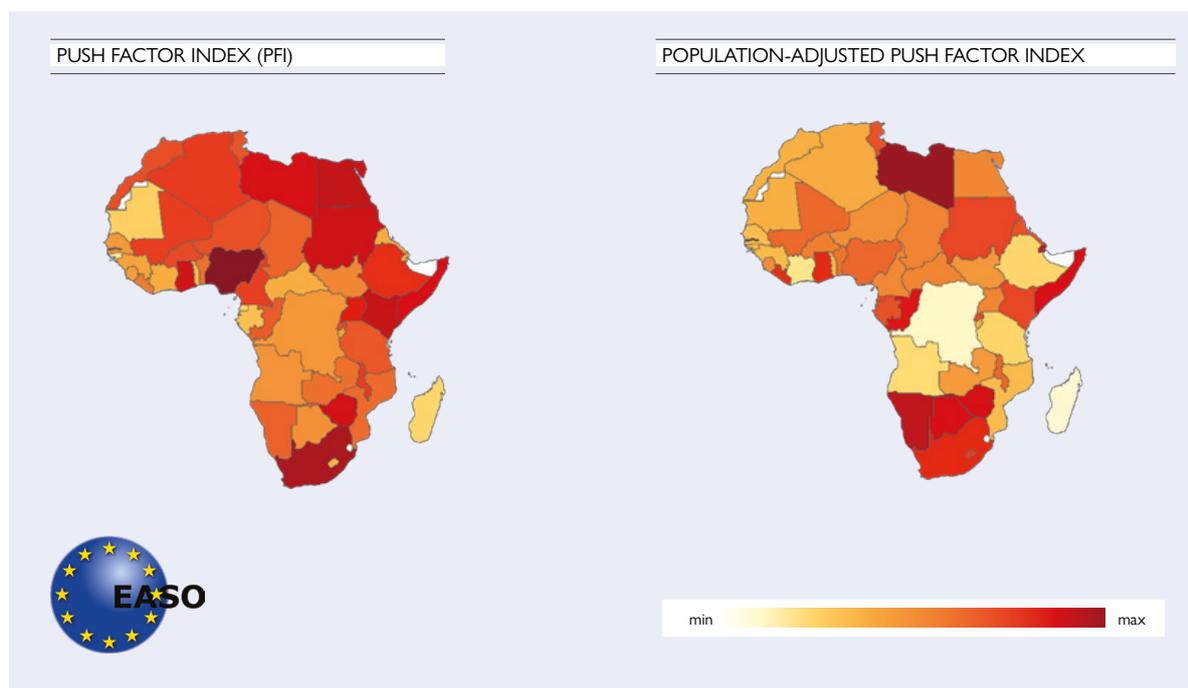
The 2019 PFI for each country in Africa is shown in Figure 8.6 (left panel). Countries with high PFI include Nigeria, the Sudan, Egypt, Libya and South Africa. However, it is not unreasonable to assume that PFI may depend to some extent on a country’s population size since, in general, more events are generated (and reported in the media)<sup>16</sup> by larger populations. This does not necessarily bias the indicator, as larger populations also generate larger migration potential. When adjusting for the country’s population size, as shown in Figure 8.6 (right panel), Libya, Namibia and Somalia instead are the most prominent, and therefore carry the strongest signal of conflict and disruptive events per capita.

Higher PFI suggests that these countries face more conflict events, social uncertainties or economic hardship that may prompt their citizens to migrate. Be that as it may, whether they do migrate depends on a range of additional factors within and outside of countries of origin, including the willingness and ability to travel, the existence of accessible routes or smuggling networks, diasporas or migration networks, as well as the financial resources needed for the trip.

<sup>15</sup> Available at <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/statisticalcapacity>.

<sup>16</sup> The impact of possible media reporting gaps on the PFI is beyond the scope of this study.

**Figure 8.6.** EASO Push Factor Index in Africa for 2019 (left panel) and population-adjusted Push Factor Index for 2019 (right panel), with darker shades indicating higher values of the Index

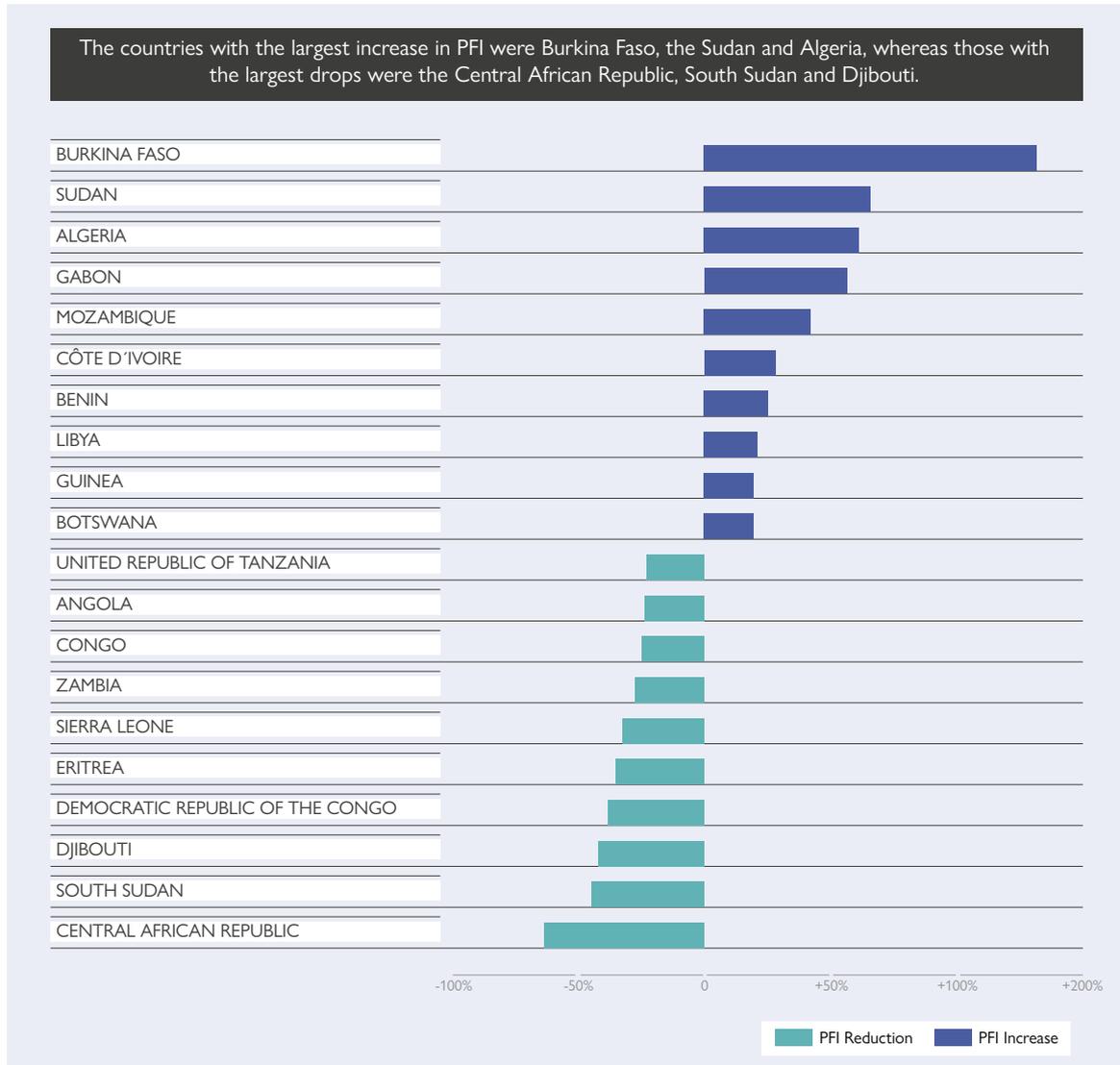


Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

In 2019, the PFI for Africa as a whole decreased by just five percentage points from 2018, down in 28 countries, but up in 13 countries. The countries with the largest increase in PFI, as shown in Figure 8.7, were Burkina Faso, the Sudan and Algeria, whereas those with the largest drops were the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Djibouti.

A PFI rise in these countries could be associated with a deterioration in the security situation, as in Burkina Faso. After the collapse of the regime and the people power revolution in 2014 (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019), hundreds of attacks have been registered in the country (The New Humanitarian, 2019a), which since 2019 is facing a surge in violence caused by terrorism activities spilling over from neighbouring countries and indigenous militia (The New Humanitarian, 2019b; BBC, 2020a). In 2019, peace talks resumed in the Sudan after a standstill of about two months. Still, there are 2 million people internally displaced, the economic situation continues to be critical, and violence has erupted between communities in West Darfur (The Economist, 2019; IOM, 2019; UN News, 2019; UNHCR, 2020). In Mozambique, 1.6 million people are facing severe food insecurity, due to two major weather-related disasters that affected the country. In addition to that, economic grievances and political powerlessness to face internal security threats have put the country's stability at risk (FAO, 2019; RFI, 2020). Gabon, one of Africa's richest countries, thanks to its natural resources, foiled an attempted military coup against President Ali Bongo, who has ruled the country for over four decades (BBC, 2019; RFI, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2020). Civil protests can also influence the PFI, as was the case in Algeria. A peaceful civilian movement took to the streets of several cities for Friday protests, marching against the ruling class and asking for new elections and the reshaping of the entire governing system (Foreign Policy, 2019).

**Figure 8.7.** Push Factor Index percentage change between 2018 and 2019 for the countries with the biggest change in Africa

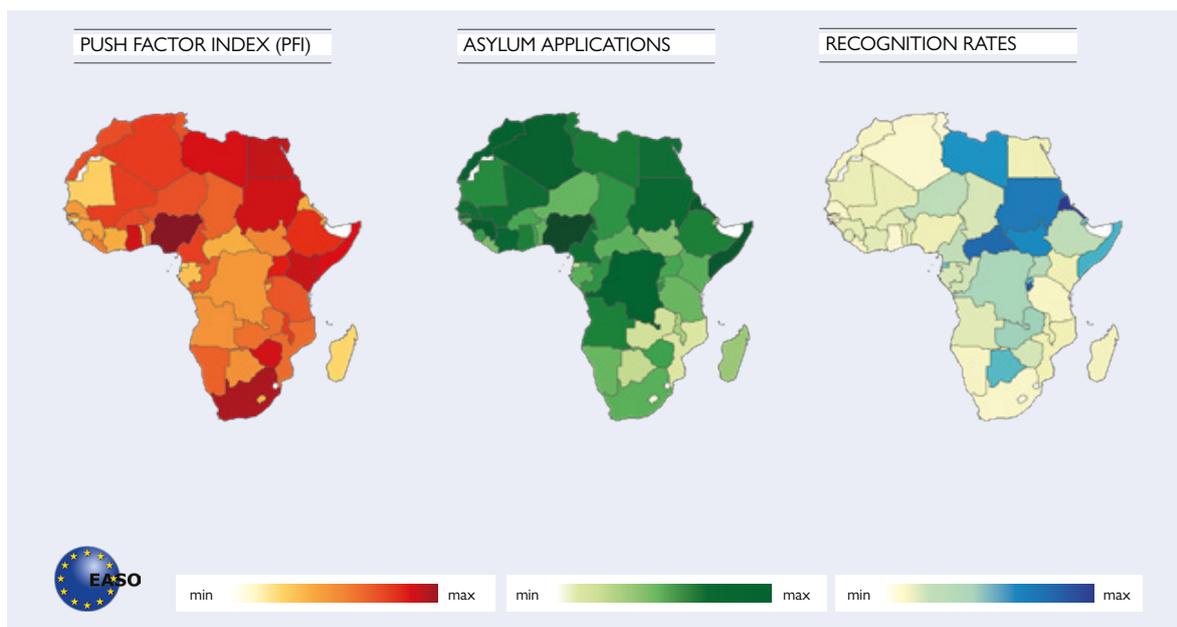


### 8.3.1. The big data PFI and its relationship with asylum applications and recognition rates in the EU+

The big data PFI is again shown in Figure 8.8 (left panel), but this time alongside the number of asylum applications lodged in the EU+ by nationals of each country (middle panel) and their European Union-regulated recognition rate<sup>17</sup> in 2019 (right panel). Despite the many other factors that affect asylum-related migration, and even though there is a time lag between departure, application and decision, nationals of countries with high PFIs tend to lodge more asylum applications, and their applications tend to have a higher recognition rate. This is an important finding, pointing to the reliability of the PFI as a measure of migration-generating events in countries of origin, and to the usefulness of monitoring those events.

<sup>17</sup> Asylum recognition rate is defined as the share of positive decisions in the total number of asylum decisions at first instance. See [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Asylum\\_recognition\\_rate](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Asylum_recognition_rate).

**Figure 8.8.** The Push Factor Index (left panel), asylum applications (middle panel) and recognition rates (right panel) for African countries for 2019, with darker shades indicating higher values.



Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

For example, Libya and the Sudan had high PFIs, mostly due to conflicts taking place in these countries, plus nationals lodged many asylum applications in the EU+ and had high recognition rates. In these cases, changes in the PFI may even be used to foresee movements of populations in need.

In Nigeria and Egypt, the PFI was also high, and citizens of these countries lodged many asylum applications in the EU+, but the recognition rate tended to be low. This might be because the PFI was largely generated by economic or political issues rather than those clearly indicating a possible need for international protection.

Nevertheless, some exceptions occur. The PFI was low in South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Eritrea, even though citizens of these countries had high recognition rates; moreover, Eritrean was the only citizenship in this group lodging many asylum applications. This may indicate that nationals from these countries faced more push factors in the past, and that there was a considerable time lag between departure, arrival in the European Union and decision; or that there were additional push factors not considered in the PFI, or that media coverage was more limited compared with other countries in Africa, and/or that nationals from these countries may not have been able to migrate, or migrated to other destinations outside the EU+.

Figure 8.9 shows how PFI correlates with the number of applications for asylum in EU+ for African citizenships<sup>18</sup> for each year from 2016 to 2019. Overall, the relationship is positive. In other words, countries with higher PFI tend to have citizens who lodge more applications for asylum in the EU+, and vice versa.

Although the extreme complexity of asylum-related migration means that no single indicator can entirely explain or predict the phenomenon, the PFI, which can be updated on a daily basis, provides a useful estimation of the root causes of asylum-related migration, and it delivers a sensible framework for predictive analyses. Comparing PFI in 2016 and 2017 with number of asylum applications lodged by nationals of African countries, some 21 per cent of the variation in applications is explained by differences in push factors. However, in 2018 and 2019, this drops to just 7 per cent.<sup>19</sup> The decoupling between the PFI in African countries and migration to EU+ points to the potential effect of relevant factors different from events in countries of origin, including events or policies in countries of transit

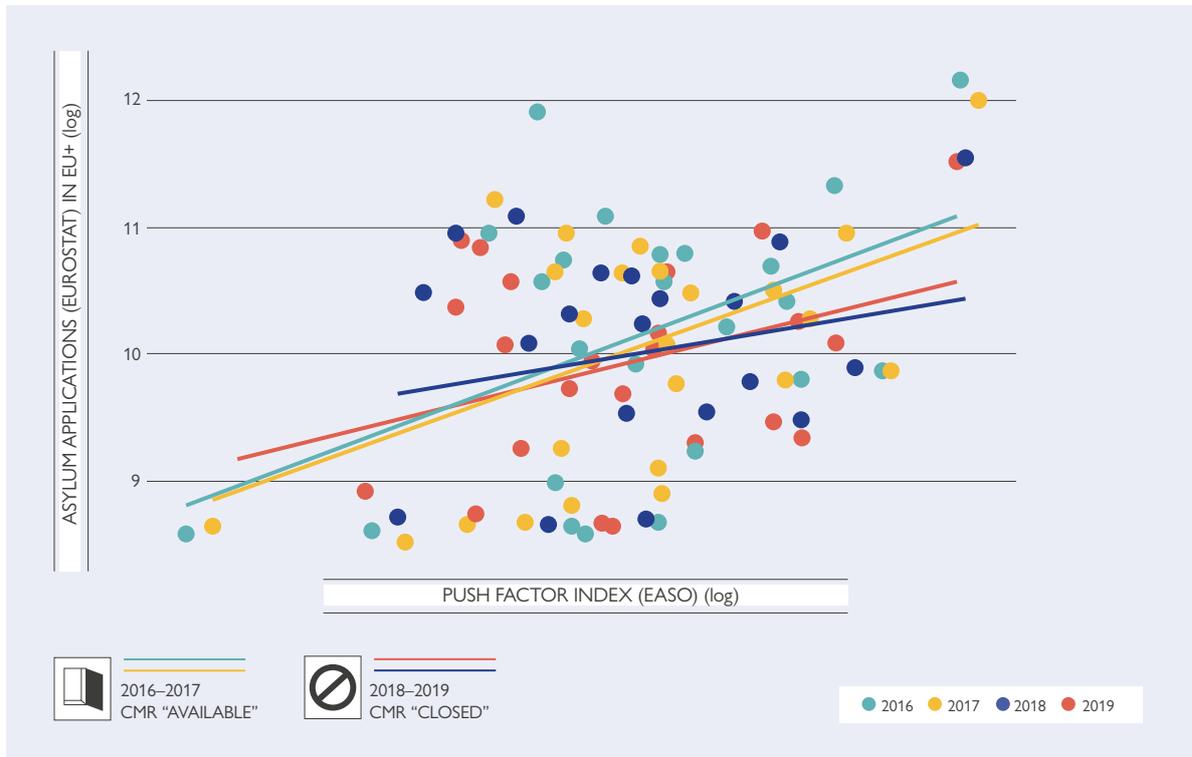
<sup>18</sup> African citizenships with more than 1,000 asylum applications in the EU+ in 2019 are included in the sample.

<sup>19</sup> The correlation coefficient decreased from 0.45 ( $R^2$  0.21) in 2016 and 0.46 ( $R^2$  0.21) in 2017, to 0.24 ( $R^2$  0.06) in 2018 and 0.27 ( $R^2$  0.07) in 2019.

and destination. This seems to have been the case for increased patrolling by the Libyan coast guard and reduced search and rescue operations along the CMR, which had the effect of decreasing the explanatory power of the PFI in the CMR: flows through this route have decreased substantially, despite the persistence of the push factors at home.

This illustrates the importance of the CMR for asylum-related migration into the EU+ from African nationals. At the same time, it shows that the PFI, itself an aggregation of push factor events covered in the media, can contribute to the understanding of asylum-related migration, when the route is available. Further studies are needed to establish alternative or complementary explanations, such as whether asylum seekers are looking for alternative routes, arriving to the EU+ later; whether they seek alternative destinations outside the EU+; or whether they are stuck in Libya or returned to their countries for lack of an available route to asylum.

**Figure 8.9.** Push Factor Index of African countries correlated with the number of asylum applications lodged in the EU+, 2016–2019



Note: PFI of African countries was generally correlated with the number of asylum applications they lodged in the EU+. However, the relationship was strong in 2016 and 2017, when the CMR was available, and was weaker in 2018 and 2019, when the Route became much less available. Each bullet denotes a different African citizenship in each year.<sup>20</sup>

## 8.4. Libya in the Central Mediterranean Route

Libya is the main country of embarkation on the CMR and has been a destination country for many migrants within and beyond the region (European Council, n.d.), even in recent years, when the present civil war has escalated.

Since 2011, rival governments have been competing for power over the country. On one side, the western-based, Tripoli-led, internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) controls the western regions, while a coalition called the Arab Libyan Armed Forces, formerly known as the Libyan National Army, holds most of the oil-producing wells in the eastern districts (Reuters, 2019a). Outside parties – namely Turkey and the Russian Federation,

<sup>20</sup> PFI is a composite index aggregating big data from media reports; hence it does not make sense to add scale.

each supporting opposite factions, but also other Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt – are also currently involved in the conflict, with possibly common economic geostrategic interests in the area (International Crisis Group, 2020a). Turkey authorized the deployment of forces to support the GNA, which was losing strength against the Haftar-led troops (The Guardian, 2020) and led to Sirte being seized by Haftar forces in January 2020, soon after Turkey deployed troops in support of the GNA (BBC, 2020b). Still, Turkey and the Russian Federation called for a ceasefire agreement at the beginning of 2020, getting support from both Libyan sides before the Arab Libyan Armed Forces leader refused to sign at the last moment (International Crisis Group, 2020b). In the meantime, the escalating instability and insecurity in the country exposes migrants and asylum seekers – as well as Libyan citizens, who may have to find international protection outside their country – to high risks and casualties, such as the fatal airstrike on a detention centre in July 2019, when 53 people were killed and more than 80 were injured (UN News, 2020).

#### 8.4.1. Push Factor Index in Libya and asylum applications in Italy

Push factors in transit countries are expected to influence asylum applications in the EU+, more notably countries of first arrival/disembarkation, such as Italy and Malta, regarding the CMR. To investigate this hypothesis, it is possible to compare the PFI within Libya, the main country of departure in the CMR, and the asylum applications lodged by nationals of the main countries of origin that pass by or reside in Libya.

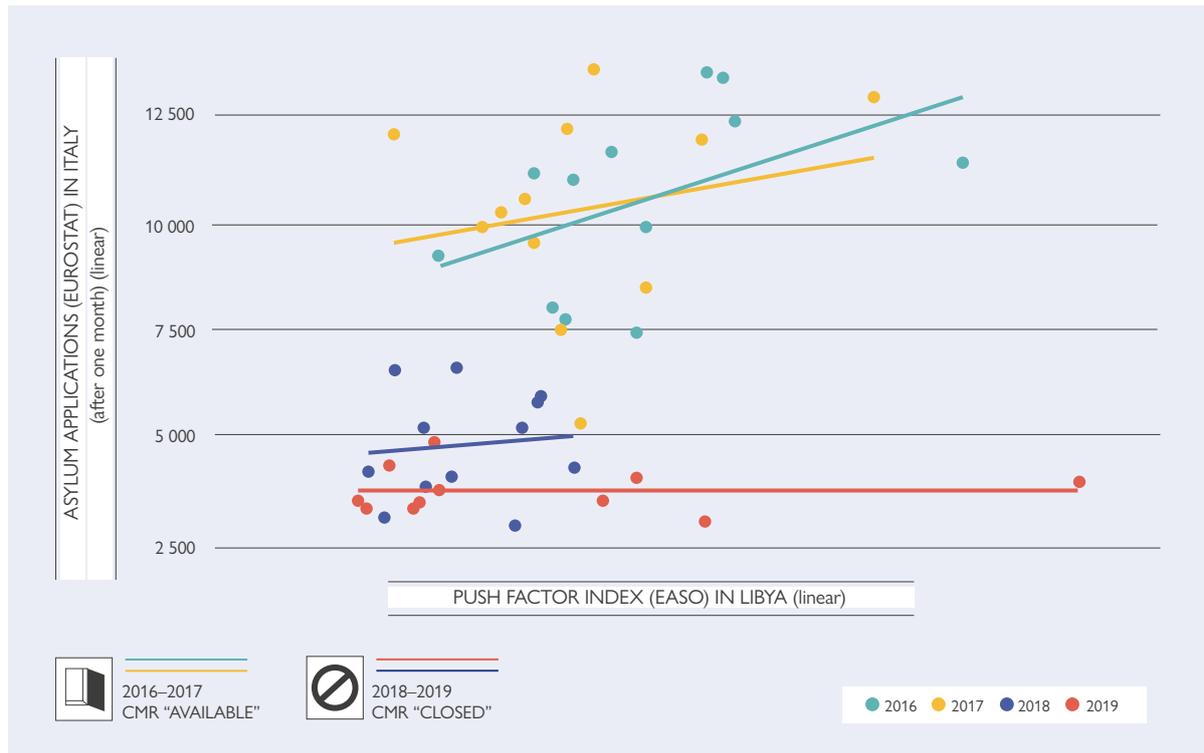
Figure 8.10 shows the relationship between PFI in Libya during one month, and asylum applications in Italy during the following month since January 2016, separated by year. The PFI in Libya and asylum applications are correlated in 2016 and 2017, suggesting that an increase in push factors in Libya may lead to an increase in the number of asylum seekers entering Italy and applying for asylum there; however, the correlation falls off in 2018 and 2019. Quantitatively, and despite the multitude of factors affecting migration, push factors in Libya explained 22 per cent of the number of asylum applications in Italy in 2016, but this decreased to 4 per cent in 2017 and virtually 0 per cent in 2018–2019.<sup>21</sup> This suggests that, while the PFI in Libya could partly explain the number of asylum applicants in Italy for as long as the CMR was available, it has no longer done so since 2018, when search and rescue operations decreased in the region and the route was closed.

These results further reinforce the explanatory power of the PFI towards asylum-related migration in the EU+, by focusing on the PFI in a country of embarkation (Libya) and the asylum applications in a country of first arrival (Italy) with a lag of one month, as shown for 2016 and 2017.<sup>22</sup> Since the closure of the CMR, however, the explanatory power of the PFI has been reduced. This may be because asylum seekers no longer use this route to enter the EU+ and need to seek alternative routes or alternative destinations, which would take longer than the one-month lag to manifest. Further investigation is necessary to investigate the role of these and other confounding factors.

<sup>21</sup> The correlation coefficient decreased from 0.47 ( $R^2$  0.22) in 2016, to 0.20 ( $R^2$  0.04) in 2017, 0.12 ( $R^2$  0.01) in 2018, and -0.01 ( $R^2$  0.0001) in 2019.

<sup>22</sup> We also analysed different time lags, notably of 1, 3, 6 and 12 months.  $R^2$  are 0.16, 0.13, 0.14 and 0.25 for all years together. The 12-month delay seems to maximize the relation, but it does not include 2019, when the route was effectively closed and the  $R^2$  was especially low. Doing the numbers per year shows a similar picture to the one month (0.22, 0.04, 0.01, 0.001 for 1-month; versus 0.19, 0.00, 0.13, 0.12 and very low correlations for 3 months; versus 0.04, 0.01, 0.04, 0.43 and negative correlation in 2016 for 6 months; versus 0.03, 0.11, 0.07 for 12 months). The year 2019 had relatively stable asylum applications, so including it is what makes the  $R^2$  lower for the lag of one month. Overall, it makes sense as a lag considering the travel time from Libya to Italy.

**Figure 8.10.** Push Factor Index in Libya correlated with the number of asylum applications lodged in Italy, 2016–2019

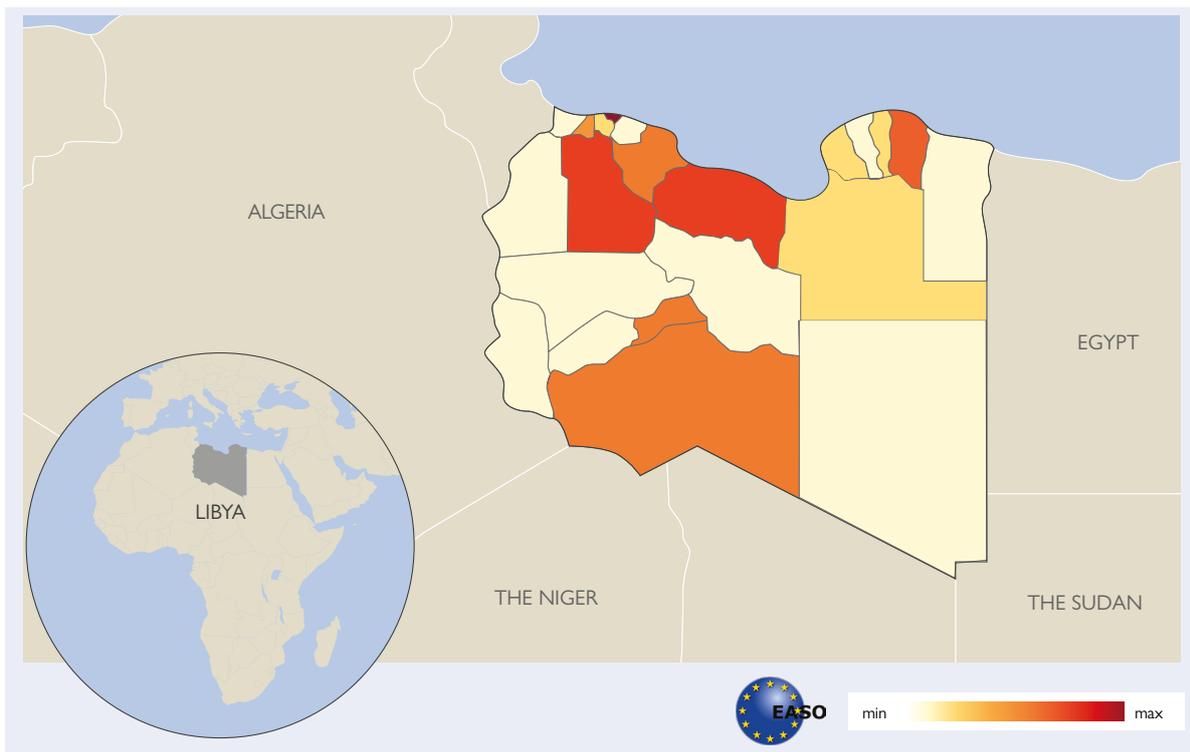


Note: PFI correlates with asylum applications in Italy during the next month, for the years 2016–2017, but the relationship atones in 2018 and 2019. Each bullet denotes one month in the respective years.<sup>23</sup>

## 8.4.2. Push Factor Index subnational map

The PFI offers the possibility to extract negative and disruptive events from big data on push factors also at the subnational level, allowing a more nuanced view of the conflict factors to emerge from the data. Figure 8.11 shows the absolute value of the PFI in Libya in 2019, separated in districts (shabiya) of Libya. PFI is highest for Tripoli, which is the capital, the most densely populated area, and the target of Libyan National Army advances in 2019 (Reuters, 2019b). Other notable districts with high PFI in 2019 include Sirte and Jabal al Gharbi, important for their strategic location because of oil fields and pipelines, where battles occurred in 2019 (DW, 2020). Several sparsely populated districts, away from points of strategic importance, exhibit low PFI, whereas the district of Murzuq in the South has seen violence from Islamic State and the Levant militants and United States strikes against them (New York Times, 2019), which contributed to its higher PFI.

<sup>23</sup> PFI is a composite index aggregating big data from media reports; hence it does not make sense to add scale.

**Figure 8.11.** Push Factor Index in Libya in 2019, with darker shades indicating a higher Index

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

The subnational PFI map in Figure 8.11 offers a snapshot of the push factors in Libya in 2019. Because of effective Libyan Coast Guard patrolling of its territorial waters and the ongoing civil war possibly affecting migrant smuggling networks, the number of migrants departing from Libya was at its lowest levels for the past several years, also evidenced by the decrease in the number of asylum applications from Libyan nationals in Italy.

## 8.5. Conclusion

The PFI, elaborated by EASO based on big data on media-covered events in origin countries, correlates in significant and interesting ways with official statistics on irregular arrivals in EU+ countries, the number of asylum applications lodged there, and the recognition rates. The present study analyses the relation between the PFI and asylum applications by nationals of African countries, while showing the effects of the decrease in search and rescue operations in the CMR in the number of migrants travelling through this route.

While before 2018 asylum applications in Italy were correlated with push factor events occurring the previous month in Libya, this changed when the CMR became less viable. Indeed, even at the level of the African continent, the PFI was more strongly correlated with asylum applications from African nationals in the EU+ during 2016 and 2017 than in 2018 and 2019, when the CMR was effectively closed. The focus on Libya confirmed the correlation between push factor events and asylum applications while the route was more accessible. It also highlighted how the analysis of the PFI at the subnational level can illustrate hotspots of push factors or conflict, which could support operations and research in the countries of origin.

Because it can be produced for every country in the world, independently of infrastructure and/or capacity of the national statistical offices, the PFI can be a useful complement to official statistical and moderate gaps in migration data that affect other studies. Moreover, the availability of the PFI in close to real time makes it a relevant tool for monitoring the situation in countries of origin and the varying potential for migration, thus supporting better preparedness in countries of destination.

While this chapter provides some evidence in favour of the usefulness of the PFI, a number of additional analyses would be needed to further corroborate the Index and better understand how and to what extent it contributes to monitoring, understanding and anticipating migration and asylum flows. These analyses, which go beyond the scope of this chapter, would include, for example, testing the robustness of the PFI, as well as comparing it with other indices and datasets, such as the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) data on conflict, the Fragile States Index, and other similar sources of event data, such as the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED).

Although further studies are necessary to better understand the relationship between push factors and asylum-related migration and the strong impact of enabling/intervening factors, the PFI is a first step in combining big data with traditional data and extracting insights that contribute to research and are practically useful in the field of asylum-related migration.

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# 9.

## Migration on the Western Mediterranean Route as “new nomadism”: focus on Mauritania<sup>1</sup>

Lisa Godde<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** *This chapter explores the links between modern migration and long-standing transhumance movements in Mauritania. In the country, livestock farmers have for a long time practiced internal and cross-border transhumance, to optimize access to water and pasture. This has allowed them to cope with harsh environmental conditions. However, in recent decades, transhumance has been affected by challenges such as climate change and violent conflicts. As a result, livestock farmers have abandoned it and are instead migrating to the urban centres. Mauritania’s economic hubs are also magnets for regional migrants, mostly from other West African countries. This chapter draws on data collected through IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix in three Southern regions of the country where transhumance practices are frequent as well as in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou.*

Flanking the Atlantic Ocean and the sprawling Sahara Desert, the semi-desertic<sup>3</sup> country of Mauritania, linking North and sub-Saharan Africa, has traditionally attracted flows of people and goods. A process of urbanization, leading to a boom of the construction sector in its cities since the 1950s, has made this vast country (1,030,000 km<sup>2</sup>) an important magnet for people seeking economic opportunities (Tanguy, 2003).

In addition, the approximately 4 million inhabitants of the country are to a large extent of nomadic origins (Frérot, 1997). The rapid development of its cities, accompanied by the impact of climate change, such as prolonged droughts in the second half of the twentieth century, led progressively to urbanization and a decrease in nomadic life, as a growing number of transhumants, nomads or farmers see themselves forced to migrate to the cities to escape poverty.<sup>4</sup>

While the country’s infrastructure has also rapidly expanded over the past decades, Mauritania’s economy continues to be largely dependent on the agriculture and livestock sectors. Twenty-six per cent of the gross domestic product is derived from the agricultural sector, and both agriculture and livestock provide a means of subsistence to 62 per cent of the Mauritanian population.<sup>5</sup> Specifically, transhumance, defined as “the action or practice of moving livestock from one grazing ground to another in a

<sup>1</sup> The author is grateful to Laura Lungarotti for useful comments and suggestions on this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> IOM Mauritania.

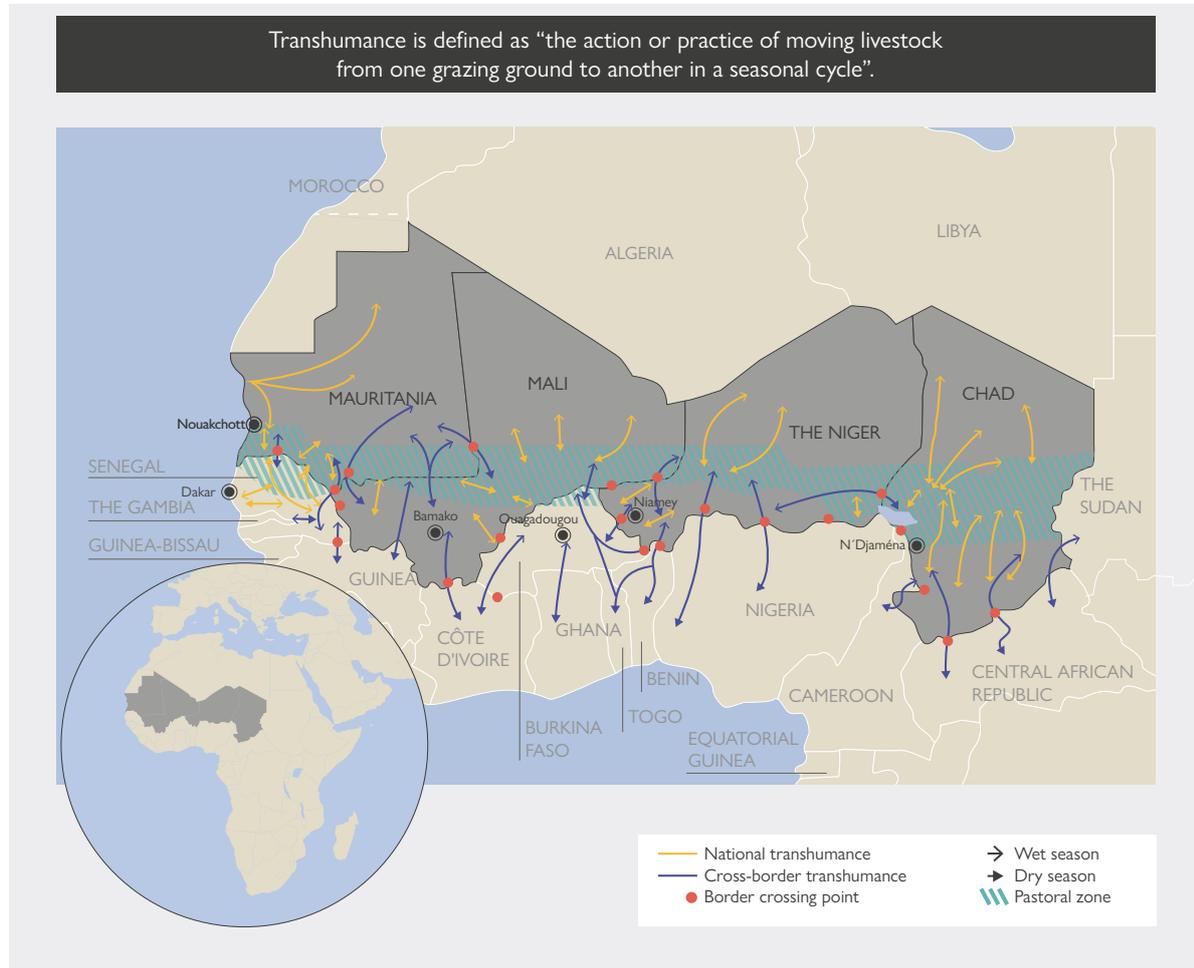
<sup>3</sup> The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that more than 80 per cent of the surface of the country is desert.

<sup>4</sup> Fahem (1993) explores additional reasons for the decrease of nomadism in Mauritania, such as the creation of iron and copper mining in Fderick and Akjouj attracting a growing workforce; political events, such as the establishment of new States after the fragmentation of French West Africa; and the abolition of slavery in 1980.

<sup>5</sup> FAO, “Family Farming Knowledge Platform”, available at [www.fao.org/family-farming/countries/mrt/en/](http://www.fao.org/family-farming/countries/mrt/en/).

seasonal cycle”,<sup>6</sup> continues to be one of the country’s central sources of income in the twenty-first century. These seasonal movements are undertaken by herders in search of grazing land and water for their animals towards Mauritania’s southern regions, and in its neighbouring countries, Senegal and Mali.

**Map 9.1.** Transhumance movements in the Sahel belt.



Source: OECD, 2014. Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD). An atlas of the Sahara-Sahel: Geography, Economics and Security. OECD Publishing, Paris.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

IOM’s Transhumance Tracking Tool, a new IOM data collection method, aims to study those movements in Mauritania and other countries in the region, to understand their evolution, origin and impact on social cohesion, livelihood and other key development indicators. During a first data collection phase<sup>7</sup> conducted by IOM Mauritania from 18 March to 16 May 2019, 2,200 herds were counted in 10 locations, accompanied by approximately 8,600 people – Mauritians (95%), Senegalese (4%) and Malians (1%) – and 450,000 animals during this two-month period (IOM, 2019a, 2019b). Similarly, later the same year,<sup>8</sup> 9,100 herders and over 713,000 animals were counted in 22 locations<sup>9</sup> during a period of two months (10 November 2019–8 January 2020). The strong seasonality of transhumant

<sup>6</sup> Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries. Transhumance (Definition). Available at [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/transhumance](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/transhumance).

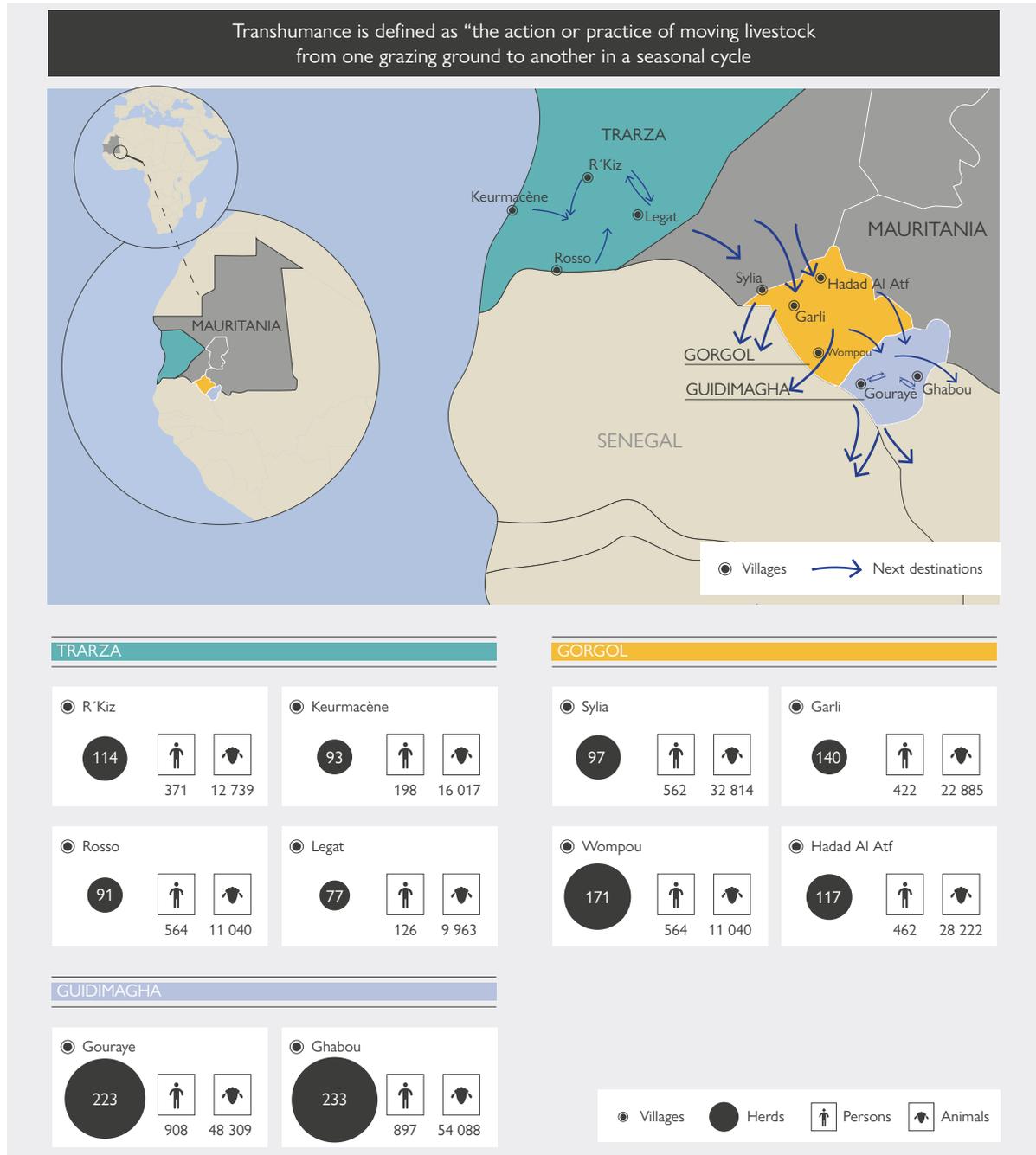
<sup>7</sup> Herds were counted through short interviews for eight hours a day, four days a week.

<sup>8</sup> Between November and December 2019 (IOM, forthcoming (a)).

<sup>9</sup> Accompanied by, on average, 238 people (per day, in all 22 locations). Counting is conducted for five days per week.

movements – with more herders moving south from March to May – is also reflected in the numbers: The average daily number of herders counted *per location* decreased from 18 from March to May, to 2 from November to January. Similarly, the number of animals changed from 1,183 animals *per day and per site* to 721 animals *per day and per site*.

**Map 9.2.** Transhumance movements counted in the regions of Trarza, Gorgol and Guidimagha, Mauritania between March and April 2019.



Source: IOM, 2019a.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

Transhumance has been a long-standing practice in Mauritania and has been practiced by all ethnicities present in the country,<sup>10</sup> involving at times entire families, including children. Livestock farming allows the population to subsist in hostile environments marked by climatic imbalances, which affect plant and animal production, as well as food security. Given the harsh environmental conditions in Mauritania, livestock production depends particularly on internal and cross-border mobility in order to optimize access to water and pasture. As a result, the timing and routes of transhumance reflect the variability of rainfalls, as well as the distribution of water and pasture, which varies from season to season.

In recent decades, transhumance herders are continuing to experience long-standing challenges in addition to facing newer ones. While in many cases farmers let animals pasture on fields after crops, conflicts may arise when sedentary farmers and transhumants use the same resources, when agricultural fields are damaged by herds passing through, or when farmers see themselves forced to expand the area used for cultivation, clashing with traditional transhumance routes (Sy, 2015; Bruckmann, 2017). In addition, transhumance practices in the Sahel are highly vulnerable to climate change (Hellendorff, 2012), which can to some extent be explained by the precarity of a primary sector that is hardly diversified.<sup>11</sup> Recurrent droughts in recent decades (Yacoub and Tayfur, 2016) reduce the availability of resources, increase health problems for both humans and animals, while also changing the routes taken by the transhumants (Maman Moutari and Frédéric, 2013).

IOM Mauritania's Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT) activities conducted in three regions characterized by strong transhumance presence highlighted one key message: 62 per cent of the interviewed herders mentioned that severe environmental challenges over the previous month affected their migration in a number of ways.<sup>12</sup> In addition, 6 per cent confirmed having gotten into conflict with communities. In recent years, clashes between herders and farmers – spurred in some cases by arms proliferation, and mostly triggered by contested land use and access to water – have been on the rise in neighbouring countries such as Mali and Senegal (UNOWAS, 2018; ECC Platform, n.d.; Velturo and Dick, 2020). In Mauritania, the escalation of conflicts between sedentary farmers and herders, in combination with the vastness of Mauritania's borders,<sup>13</sup> might thus pose a risk for the stability of a country surrounded by security-wise unstable countries across the Sahelian Belt (ECA, 2017).

The reduced availability of resources and the increased risk of clashes in certain areas have led to a growing number of herders on the move seeing themselves forced to cover longer distances to find water and grazing grounds, while others migrate to the city to take up work opportunities in an urban context. The separation between these lifestyles and the transition from transhumance to urban migration is, however, far from clear cut. Many families have adopted mixed strategies to adapt to those new challenges, with activities other than livestock farming contributing to the household's income, such as agriculture and trade, as well as internal or international labour migration (Thébaud, 2017).

Economic hubs within the country are not only attracting an increasing number of (former) livestock farmers, but have also become important magnets for regional migration, mostly from other West African countries (IOM, 2019c). Mauritians – accustomed to populations transiting through the country as part of the intraregional transhumance movements – are now witnessing an increased number of foreigners reaching Mauritania's cities in search of employment opportunities. An estimated 84,000 sub-Saharan migrants are living in Mauritania's capital Nouakchott of 1.2 million inhabitants, while an estimated 29,000 sub-Saharan and 2,900 North African migrants were part of Nouadhibou's<sup>14</sup> landscape, as of October 2019.

The continuously high demand in the cities' construction, fisheries and services sectors, coupled with the country's geographically strategic location,<sup>15</sup> have made Mauritania an important transit and destination country on the Western Mediterranean Route. While little official data are available on this prior to 2018, a majority (75%) of the

<sup>10</sup> Moors, Fula, Tuareg and other ethnic groups account for less than 1 per cent of the total population.

<sup>11</sup> The agriculture and livestock sectors in the Sahel are characterized by an almost complete dependence on rainwater, a limited use of additional external inputs such as fertilizers, an absence of mechanization, and weak links to markets (Hellendorff, 2012).

<sup>12</sup> Lack of water sources and pasture led to the death of some animals, the increase of malnourishment and fatigue. Some herders decided to do cross-border transhumance (to Senegal or Mali), while others mentioned their change in direction within the country.

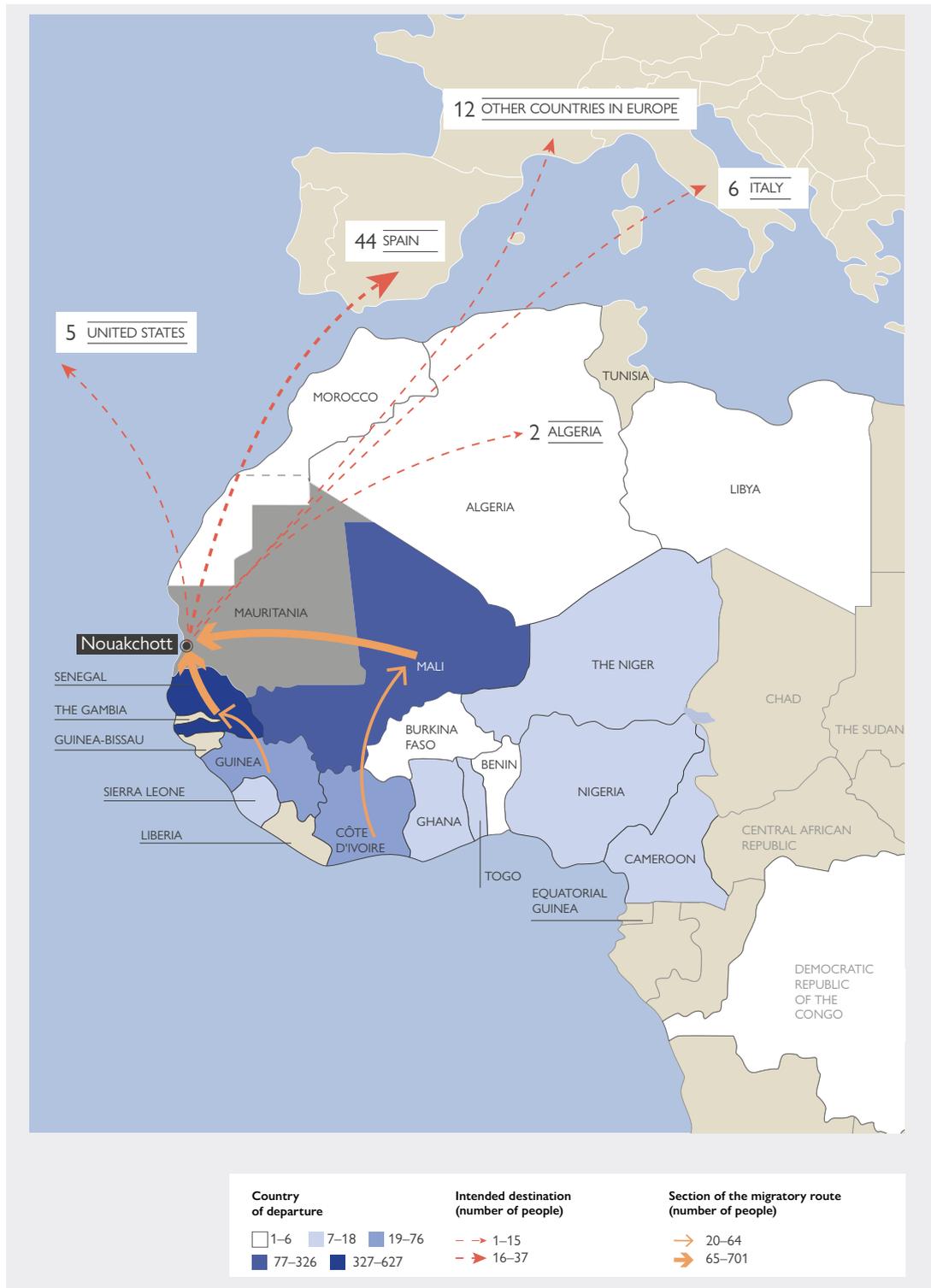
<sup>13</sup> These include 5,074 km of borders with Mali, Senegal, Algeria and Western Sahara.

<sup>14</sup> Population size of 142,000 (Office National de la Statistique, 2019. Nouadhibou en chiffres, 2014-2018).

<sup>15</sup> Mauritania is located 800 km from the Canary Islands (a point of entry to the European Union) and neighbouring Morocco.

migrants interviewed by IOM in Nouadhibou in March 2019 arrived in or after 2016. This could be explained in different ways: either the city hosts mostly short-term or transit migration and/or the overall number of migrants moving to Nouadhibou has increased in recent years.

**Map 9.3.** Countries of origin, countries of transit and final destinations at the moment of departure of individuals surveyed in Nouakchott, June 2019.



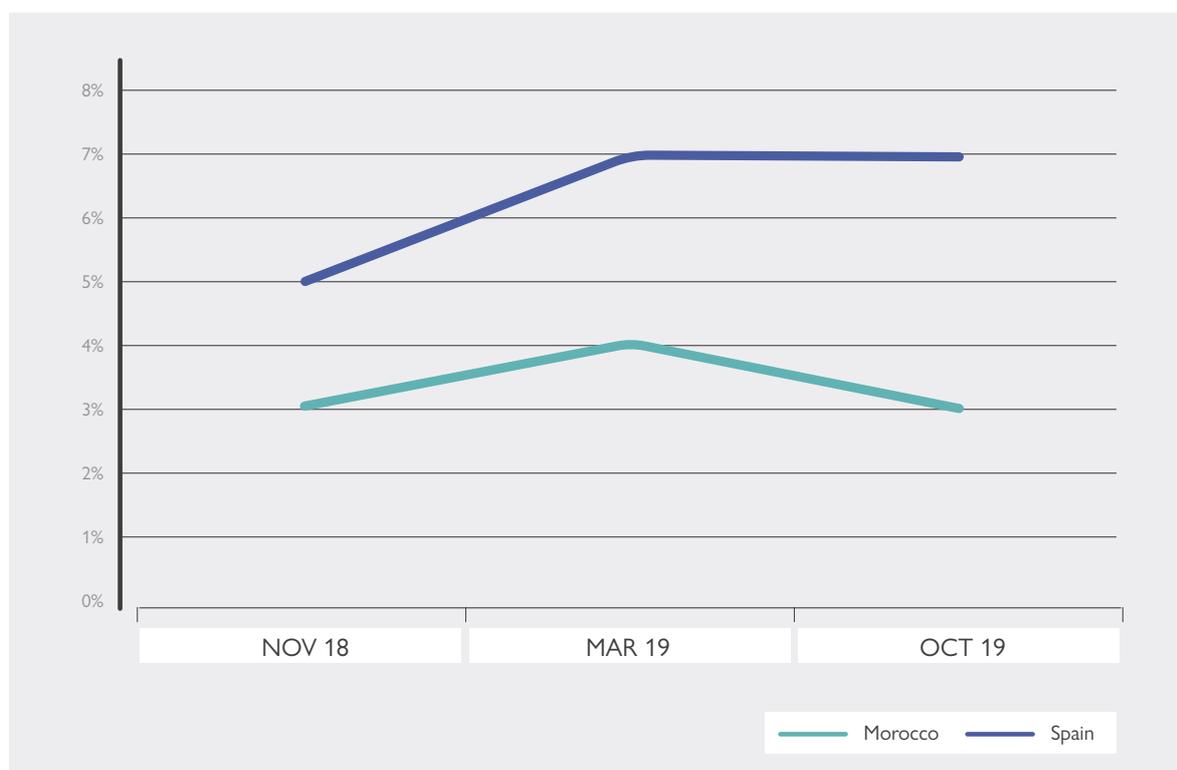
Source: IOM, 2019c.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

Mostly young male individuals from Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and the Gambia migrate to or through the country. Over two thirds of the almost 1,200 migrants surveyed<sup>16</sup> in Nouakchott in June 2019 were between 18 and 35 years of age, highlighting the fact that the migrant population is essentially composed of youth. In addition, they also indicated being mainly in search of economic opportunities.

Almost two thirds (63%) of the individuals interviewed as part of data collection activities in Nouakchott (IOM, 2019d) left their countries of origin for economic reasons, while another 14 per cent left to join family members. Although some stay in this Northern Mauritanian city for the latter reason, others hope to continue their journey towards Europe or Northern Africa. Most recent data on future movement intentions have been collected during individual surveys, with samples of almost 1,200 migrants in Nouakchott and around 600 migrants in Nouadhibou (ibid.). While 39 per cent of persons interviewed in the capital mentioned they planned on staying, a similar proportion (38%) of migrants interviewed in the Northern Mauritanian city of Nouadhibou intended to leave within the next few weeks in March 2019 (16% to move to a different country). The proportion decreased half a year later, when a sample of over 800 migrants was interviewed in Nouadhibou. At this point, 21 per cent of interviewed individuals planned on leaving, either to go to a different country (13%) or to return to their countries of origin (8%), for instance due to challenges in finding a (stable) job or security-related issues (IOM, forthcoming (b)).

**Figure 9.1.** Intended movements from Nouadhibou to Morocco and Spain



Source: Calculations by the author based on IOM 2018 and 2019d, and forthcoming (b).

Note: Intended movements from Nouadhibou to Morocco and Spain during the month following the survey, for individuals interviewed by DTM Mauritania. Interview sample: 544 individuals in November 2018, 597 in March 2019, 804 in October 2019.

<sup>16</sup> The number of migrants surveyed per identified area is calculated to represent proportionally the distribution of migrants as estimated during the baseline assessment (84,000 sub-Saharan migrants in the nine departments of Nouakchott).

Mauritania is a country of transit for migrants intending to reach Europe, North Africa or other destinations. It is also a country of origin, as 325,400 Mauritians are estimated to be living abroad, mainly in other West African countries<sup>17</sup> (70%), in the Gulf States (11%), in the Maghreb (9%), and in Europe (8%) (Jiddou and Brahim, 2010; Thiam, 2018). The Mauritanian diaspora contributes to the socioeconomic development of the country through the transfer of remittances as well as of qualifications and skills, particularly in cases where they eventually return to their countries.

These multifaceted recent migration trends in Mauritania highlight the co-existence of different movements, towards the South and the North as well as intranational and international. Mauritania is a country of origin, transit and destination, where long-standing internal and cross-border mobility-based practices are observed alongside more recent migration flows to urban economic hubs. In the wake of modern-day challenges, Mauritania's cities, rapidly developing over recent decades, offer important opportunities for both former herders as well as individuals from Mauritania and the broader Western African region in search of new livelihood opportunities.

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# 10.

## Transhumance Tracking Tool – a regional perspective of mobility in West Africa

Damien Jusselme<sup>1</sup>



DATA

**Abstract:** IOM's *Transhumance Tracking Tool* is composed of two data collection mechanisms. The first is a “flow registry”, a data collection tool used in the location of key seasonal transhumant movements. The second is an early warning system, a localized alert system that uses large networks of existing key informants to share and receive information related to transhumance events.

Insecurity and climate variability have led to shifts in seasonal transhumant movements in West and Central Africa. In particular, the unpredictability of international herder movements due to climate variations, through agricultural lands across the three States composing the Liptako–Gourma (Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger), have led to recurrent local conflicts, as mobile herds sometimes graze on uncollected crops, thereby diminishing revenues of the sedentary farming communities. Sedentary farming communities also have extended their use of lands beyond the traditional zones agreed to by national agriculture ministries, thereby reducing possible passage corridors that had previously served as safe spaces for transhumant communities.

A transnational political response to the conflicts currently facing the three States along the transhumance corridors is needed. At the same time, a localized approach is essential. Through its transition and recovery programmes, IOM supports a local conflict mitigation approach, and has developed data collection tools aiming at better understanding transhumance and supporting local pre-emptive responses.

In this context, IOM cooperates with the *Réseau Billital Maroobé*, the regional herders' federation of pastoralist associations of West and Central Africa, for the roll-out of an early warning “Transhumance Tracking Tool”. This tool is composed of two main data collection tools:

- (a) Flow registry: A data collection tool used in key seasonal transhumant movements locations (such as cattle markets and water points). The flow registry measures the volume of movements southward to coastal countries (such as Côte d'Ivoire, Benin and Togo) following rainfall, then back northward (for example, to Mali, Burkina Faso, the Niger and Mauritania) during the wet season (Plante et al., 2020). The tool counts the cattle and pastoralists in an attempt to quantify these movements and support early preparedness on key infrastructure, such as markets, transhumant corridors and grazing lands.

<sup>1</sup> IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, Regional Office, Dakar.



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# MIGRATION AND RISKS



Overworn shoes worn by migrants in their journeys. © IOM 2019/Alexander BEE

## Migration and Risks

### Introduction

Risk-taking is inherent to migration. Leaving one's home has inevitably something of venturing into unknown territory. The home one leaves can be inhospitable, yet it is a familiar place. A host country can seem a heaven from afar, yet a newcomer with no full citizenship rights may find it a hard place. Economic theories place risk-taking at the centre of the decision to migrate. Whether they expect to earn a higher income on the condition that they find employment at destination<sup>1</sup> or their household follows a strategy of diversifying sources of income to reduce the probability of not earning a sufficient livelihood,<sup>2</sup> migrants – whether consciously or not – incorporate a risk calculation into their decisions to move. While in the first instance migrants seeking international protection obey a non-economic rationality, they also follow a risk-reduction strategy: as difficult as it might be, forced migration takes place once staying at home has become the worst choice.

International migrants are often the most resourceful in their populations of origin, in terms of both financial and human capital (particularly health and education). Those who are able to travel long distances are typically those with means, since journeys can often only be undertaken through the payment of steep fees to smugglers. Once migrants depart from home, however, the circumstances they face during the journeys in places of transit and at destination may affect their exposure to risk and even turn their initial advantage into a handicap. Migration is at the same time a response to and a source of risks. Chapters in this section review individual and contextual risk factors, defined respectively as characteristics of the person and characteristics of their environment, found to be associated with an increased likelihood of negative outcomes for the migrant. They provide the four following kinds of findings.

Firstly, migrants moving along the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) can face specific risks because of the mere fact that they are on the move. Economic risks seem to come first. If the journey lasts longer than initially planned, migrants are at risk of destitution once their travel money dries up and they do not find a job in places of transit (Sattler and Cook, Chapter 11 of this volume). Social risks follow, as migrants without money cannot access basic services, starting with accommodation and health (Zenner and Wickramage, Chapter 20 of this volume), let alone education if they travel with their families. Moreover, people with no permits or visas to legally stay in the transit or destination countries risk arrest and detention with poor or no access to justice. Reports of migrants falling victims of rights violations of all kinds – abuse,

<sup>1</sup> Neoclassical economic theory of migration, developed, for example, by Todaro (1976).

<sup>2</sup> Theory developed by Stark and Bloom (1985).

exploitation, money extortion and robbery, forced labour, being abandoned in the desert or forced on a boat, attack, kidnapping, rape, and the list goes on until disappearance and death – are numerous and harrowing (Yuen, Chapter 13 of this volume; Nissling and Murphy-Teixidor, Chapter 14 of this volume).

But how many are victims of mistreatment in proportion to all migrants? In other words, what is the likelihood of these negative outcomes, or “risk” in the strict sense? The evidence gathered does not offer a definitive answer. In a context where representative samples cannot be constructed, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi) systems of observation often focus for operational reasons on particularly vulnerable groups who are overexposed to risks. Incidents recorded among these groups reveal the particular vulnerable situations they find themselves in, and call for action, but they do not necessarily reflect the overall situation of migrants.

Secondly, faced with the same situation, not all migrants are exposed to the same kinds and levels of risk. Individual factors also influence migrants’ vulnerability to risk. Intrinsic risk factors include, for example, sex, age and other characteristics, such as family status, country of origin, education and religion. Looking at migrants in Libya, men appear to be more exposed to risks of forced labour than women, on average, while women are more likely to suffer sexual violence and rape (Nissling and Murphy-Teixidor, Chapter 14 of this volume). Among those who arrived by sea to Italy, being young and male was also found to be more often associated with particularly high exposure to unpaid or forced labour, as well as to detention in Libya (Bartolini and Zakoska-Todorovska, Chapter 15 of this volume). The country of origin emerges as a risk factor in Libya, where migrants from East Africa are the most likely to suffer economic exploitation and money extortion (Nissling and Murphy-Teixidor, Chapter 14 of this volume). Among migrants travelling within West and Central Africa, being illiterate, divorced or widowed emerged as significant risk factors (Sattler and Cook, Chapter 11 of this volume); in other words, education and marriage would preserve travellers against hazards. The situation left behind is also susceptible to affecting migration and its related challenges. Among return female migrants assisted by IOM in Côte d’Ivoire, single mothers leaving their children behind in the home country were more likely to be vulnerable to various forms of exploitation during the journey and to abandon their migratory project. Moreover, back home after having abandoned difficult experiences abroad, these women lost the advantages they seemed to have before departing in terms of employment and income (Nanquette, Chapter 19 of this volume).

Thirdly, hazardous conditions under which many travel expose migrants to aggravated risks. Unsafe means of transportation and long waiting periods in difficult environments between successive steps of the journey can be extremely perilous. It was indeed found that the longer the journey, the higher the probability of experiencing serious incidents (Sattler and Cook, Chapter 11 of this volume). Due to their often undocumented status, migrants stay in limbo, where they hardly access any services, such as health care (Zenner and Wickramage, Chapter 20 of this volume). Perpetrators of violations are often those in charge of their victims’ travels – smugglers or simple facilitators according to situations and viewpoints – whose power over the migrants and knowledge of their personal situations place them in a position to mistreat them (Yuen, Chapter 13 of this volume). When resorting to smugglers, migrants expose themselves to uncontrolled agents operating outside the law. Meanwhile, smugglers play an ambivalent role. On one side, they provide migrants with support by organizing their journeys (at a high cost and high risk for the migrant); and, on the other, they are often perpetrators of abuse against the migrants alongside other actors, such as members of criminal networks, police or other migrants (Sanchez, Chapter 18 of this volume; Murphy-Teixidor, Bonfiglio and Leigh, Chapter 17 of this volume). Smugglers are often members of local communities in border areas, for whom smuggling migrants is a historically rooted, socially admitted, even respectable way to escape poverty (Sanchez, Chapter 18 of this volume). Arrangements between smugglers and migrants – such as payments in two halves, one before and the other after the completion of the journey – may increase migrants’ safety (Murphy-Teixidor, Bonfiglio and Leigh, Chapter 17 of this volume).

Fourthly, political factors create potentially acute contextual risks. Due to political instability, lawless zones have emerged across the Sahel, the Sahara and Libya, making the desert even more inhospitable than it is by nature. While no proper statistics of cases of disappearance and death in the desert exist, accounts of violence favoured by the lack of State control and rule of law are many (Black, Chapter 12 of this volume; Sattler and Cook, Chapter 11 of this volume; Bartolini and Zakoska-Todorovska, Chapter 15 of this volume). At the other end of the spectrum, State policies of tight border control in Europe, and increasingly in countries on the CMR, translate into serious dangers for migrants travelling across the Sahel and the Mediterranean Sea – the most lethal border in the world, based

on available evidence. Search and rescue activities at sea have been highly politicized. Search and rescue operations leading to disembarkation in Europe have been conducted by different actors in recent years, including merchant and fishing vessels, Italian and European security forces and humanitarian non-governmental organizations. They have played an important role in reducing the deadliness of sea crossings. The recent support provided by the European Union to the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy, which bring rescued migrants back to the Libyan shore, is, however, highly problematic, as it exposes migrants to arbitrary detention and deportation (Cusumano and Villa, Chapter 16 of this volume).

The urgent need to minimize risks for migrants strongly emerges from chapters in this section. Knowing dangers is a necessary step to better combat them. This applies to migration stakeholders as well as to would-be migrants. On the one hand, State and non-State institutions dealing with migration must gain an accurate knowledge of the dangers: of what nature, in what places, by what perpetrators, with what modus operandi, and what likelihood in particular from an age and gender perspective? These are key questions to document in order to design effective protection measures. On the other hand, improving awareness of would-be migrants about the risks irregular migration across the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea entail is necessary for them to make an informed choice, avoid exposure to dangers and be better prepared to deal with them.

Designing responses to “address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration” (Objective 7 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration) must be pursued in countries of West and North Africa, in particular action (b), to “provide migrants in a situation of vulnerability, regardless of their migration status, with necessary support at all stages of migration”; and action (c), to “address the particular needs and vulnerabilities of migrant women, girls and boys, which may include assistance, health care, psychological and other counselling services, as well as access to justice and effective remedies, especially in cases of sexual and gender-based violence, abuse and exploitation”. For this, evaluating and furthering programmes of prevention, care and assistance to migrants in the region is another indispensable step.

Finally, pursuing the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration’s Objective 8 to “save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants”, including “review[ing] the impacts of migration-related policies and laws to ensure that these do not raise or create the risk of migrants going missing”, is of the utmost relevance along the CMR.

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# 11.

## Challenges on migration routes within West and Central Africa

Verena Sattler,<sup>1</sup> Harry Cook<sup>1</sup>

GLOBAL COMPACT FOR  
MIGRATION OBJECTIVES



VULNERABILITIES



TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

**Abstract:** This chapter examines the challenges that migrants face while travelling within West and Central Africa on those routes intersecting with the Central Mediterranean Routes to Europe, and the risk factors that make them vulnerable. The findings show that the most frequently reported challenges were financial issues, hunger or thirst, and no shelter. Aggravating factors were: (a) lack of formal education (42–61%); (b) being divorced or widowed (55%); (c) leaving home country due to war, conflict, violence, persecution, or to gain access to services (60–63%); (d) intention to travel within West and Central Africa (41%); and (e) long journeys (53%). Finally, salient similarities were identified in the risk factors predicting challenges in West and Central Africa, with the risk factors predicting incidents indicating abuse, exploitation and human trafficking for migrants in Europe.

### 11.1. Introduction and research question

Since 2015, in particular, much has been written on the dangers and risks migrants face while travelling on the Mediterranean migration routes. The Central Mediterranean Route (CMR), with migrants transiting through Libya, is widely reported as one of the most dangerous migration routes worldwide (IOM, 2017, 2019a). Less well covered to date is the portion of those routes located in West and Central Africa, and the challenges migrants face, prior to travelling, in arriving into North Africa and Europe .

Within West and Central Africa, the routes to the Central Mediterranean significantly overlap with intraregional migration routes and routes to North Africa. Indeed, the vast majority of people travelling on these routes have destinations within the free movement area of the Economic Community of West African States. Also, the number of people reporting Europe as their intended final destination is also relatively small compared with those intending to migrate to North Africa (IOM, 2019b). These routes are relatively dynamic, with people making journeys for a wide variety of reasons, including search for work, opportunities and livelihoods; fleeing conflict, persecution, generalized violence and human rights violations; escaping environmental degradation and/or food and water insecurity; and joining family members. Regardless of their destinations or reasons for leaving, migrants will often be sharing the same

<sup>1</sup> IOM Migrant Protection and Assistance Division.

means and modes of travel, the same routes, and often travel in the same cohorts at these earlier stages of the journey (IOM, 2019c).

Bartolini and Zakoska-Todorovska (Chapter 15 of this volume) focus on experiences indicating abuse and exploitation of migrants who reached Italy. The majority of these experiences were reported to take place following arrival in or transit through North Africa.

This chapter aims to contribute to a relatively unexplored area of research by examining the challenges that migrants face while travelling within West and Central Africa on those routes intersecting with the CMR to Europe, in addition to the risk factors that make them vulnerable.

Section 11.3 describes the profile of interviewed migrants and different aspects of their journeys. Second, a multivariate analysis is conducted to estimate the association between different possible risk factors and the probability of respondents to report challenges.

Do the individual and journey-related risk factors that make migrants more likely to experience challenges upstream on the migration route in West and Central Africa make them more vulnerable to trafficking, abuse and exploitation downstream on the migration route, through North Africa and across the Mediterranean (ibid.)? Does experiencing challenges such as financial difficulties, hunger, thirst or being attacked upstream make migrants yet more vulnerable to trafficking, abuse and exploitation downstream on the migration route? Do risk factors “snowball” and accumulate as the journey continues, making migrants increasingly vulnerable and less able to protect themselves?

A lack of longitudinal data sets and directly comparable data makes it challenging to provide definitive answers to these questions. However, the final section of this chapter aims to shed some light on these questions through a comparison of individual and journey-related risk factors predicting challenges in West and Central Africa, on the one hand, with risk factors for migrants reporting incidents indicating abuse, exploitation and human trafficking in Europe, on the other. However, it should be noted that the two groups are different migrant cohorts who find themselves at different stages of their journeys. Furthermore, the structure and questions of the surveys conducted in West and Central Africa differ from the ones conducted in Europe.

## 11.2. Methodology

The data used in this analysis stem from flow monitoring surveys, one of IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) components.<sup>2</sup> Flow monitoring surveys are designed to capture the demographic and socioeconomic profiles of respondents, information on migration journeys, challenges and respondents’ needs. The surveys are structured interviews that are conducted with individual respondents at flow monitoring points (FMPs), which are set up in places of entry, transit or exit in each survey country.<sup>3</sup> Data on the CMR collected in West and Central Africa include information on migrants who reported their intended destinations lying within West and Central Africa, North Africa or Europe.

In this analysis, the main filter question is a binary variable indicating whether or not a migrant had experienced challenges throughout the journey. This binary variable is used as the dependent variable in the analysis. Migrants could also report on different types of challenges they were facing at the time of the interview by choosing from different answer options,<sup>4</sup> such as (a) hunger or thirst; (b) no shelter, or nowhere to sleep; (c) financial issues; (d) attacks or assaults; (e) held against will by persons other than the relevant government authorities; (f) injuries; (g) sickness; and (h) mental issues. All the standard demographic explanatory variables—age, sex, education and civil status – as well as journey-related aspects—such as length, intended destination and travel mode – were included in the regression model.

<sup>2</sup> Displacement Tracking Matrix. Available at <https://dtm.iom.int/about>.

<sup>3</sup> The surveys did not collect personally identifying information.

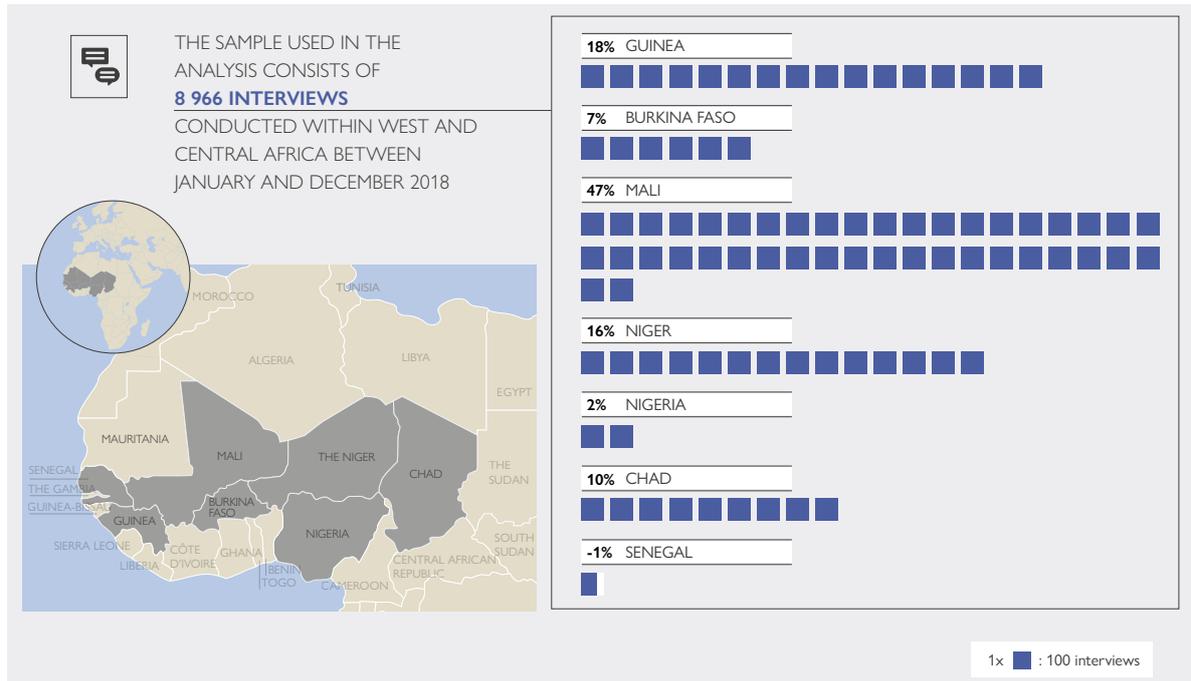
<sup>4</sup> Question: “What are the three main difficulties you are facing at the moment? (Three answers are possible)”

### Sampling limitations

Participation in the interviews was voluntary and respondents were approached in an ad hoc manner, creating possible selection bias. Population data are unavailable to determine the extent of this bias. In addition, data were collected in a dynamic and challenging environment, so it was not possible to obtain a probabilistic sample. This means that the assumptions of some tests of statistical confidence to facilitate generalization of findings from the sample to the population are not met. Nevertheless, the sample is relatively large, and some strong patterns are found within the data. This is also a relatively unique data source in its ability to shine a light on the issues explored in this chapter. The accuracy of respondents' answers cannot be verified; therefore, aspects such as self-reported nationality cannot be ascertained beyond doubt and may be a possible source of error. In some survey locations, migrants were not asked whether or not they were facing challenges at the time of the interview, which reduced the sample size considerably.<sup>5</sup> Women (11%) and children (2%) are underrepresented in the sample compared with average shares of interviewed women (23%) and children (14%) at FMPs within West and Central Africa.<sup>6</sup> If children travel with adults, IOM data collectors tend to interview the adult accompanying the child.<sup>7</sup> Due to ethical and practical reasons, children under 14 years of age were not interviewed. This means that children are likely to be significantly underrepresented in the sample. It may also lead to the underreporting of challenges experienced by children.

## 11.3. The sample and profiles of migrants interviewed

Figure 11.1. Survey countries



Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

<sup>5</sup> Questions on challenges were only asked if relevant protection and support services that migrants could be referred to were in place. A total of 33,823 migrants interviewed at FMPs did not answer the question on whether they had experienced challenges during their journeys. Nationals from Benin (32 observations), Mauritania (15 observations) and the Sudan (38 observations) had been excluded from the analysis as the number of observations on challenges was below 50 observations. Furthermore, respondents reporting challenges not directly related to basic needs or the involvement of a perpetrator have been excluded (1,993 observations). This includes those who reported (a) identify document issues, (b) lack of information, (c) arrest/detention by authorities, (d) deportation, and (e) troubles at sea.

<sup>6</sup> Displacement Tracking Matrix: DTM monthly regional update. West and Central Africa. Available at <https://displacement.iom.int/reports/west-and-central-africa-%E2%80%94-monthly-regional-update-september-2019?close=true>.

<sup>7</sup> Interviews with children from 14 to 17 years of age were conducted after obtaining permission from either the parents or the legal guardians or the manager of the reception facility whenever possible.

The sample used in this analysis consists of 8,966 interviews conducted within West and Central Africa between January and December 2018. Almost half of interviews were conducted in Mali (47%), and more than a third took place in Guinea (18%) and the Niger (16%).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, interviews were held in Chad (10%), Burkina Faso (7%), Nigeria (2%) and Senegal (<1%). Around two thirds of interviewed migrants were nationals from Guinea (32%), Mali (17%) and the Niger (11%).<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the sample included respondents from Chad (10%), Burkina Faso (6%), Senegal (5%), Nigeria (5%) and Côte d'Ivoire (5%).<sup>10</sup>

Around 89 per cent of respondents in the sample were male and 11 per cent were female. The average age of male respondents was 27 years and of female respondents 28 years. More than a third of the respondents had completed secondary education (37%), almost one third possessed a primary education degree (28%) and 5 per cent had completed a tertiary degree. Around one fifth of respondents did not receive any formal education (19%). Eight per cent went to Koranic Islamic school (4%) or completed other forms of education (4%). Three per cent said that they had completed professional training. Most of the respondents reported being single (67%) or married (31%). Women reported less often being single than their male counterparts.

The majority of respondents (80%) reported economic reasons as the main reason for their journeys, followed by family reunification (14%). Around 3 per cent of respondents stated that they had left their home countries due to targeted violence, persecution, war or conflict, and 2 per cent said that they travelled to gain access to services. Among women, family reunification (41%) and access to services (6%) were frequently reported as main reasons for their journeys. More than half of the overall sample (53%) and the vast majority of women (85%) reported West and Central Africa as their final intended destination. More than three quarters of respondents had been travelling for less than two weeks at the time of the interview; thus, most interviews were conducted quite recently after migrants had left their last place of residence.

## 11.4. Challenges along the journey

One third of respondents reported that they were facing challenges during their journeys. Among respondents who also reported the type of challenges that they experienced (N= 3,700 migrants),<sup>11</sup> financial issues (47%), hunger or thirst (41%) and no shelter (38%) were the most frequently reported challenges. Six per cent of respondents said that they experienced attacks and 2 per cent said that they were being held against their will during their journey<sup>12</sup> (Figure 11.2). The prevalence of these kinds of acts of violence during the journey is concerning and may be indicative of an environment where perpetrators can act with impunity and where other serious human rights violations may occur.

<sup>8</sup> Percentages throughout the analysis are rounded and do not always add up to 100 per cent.

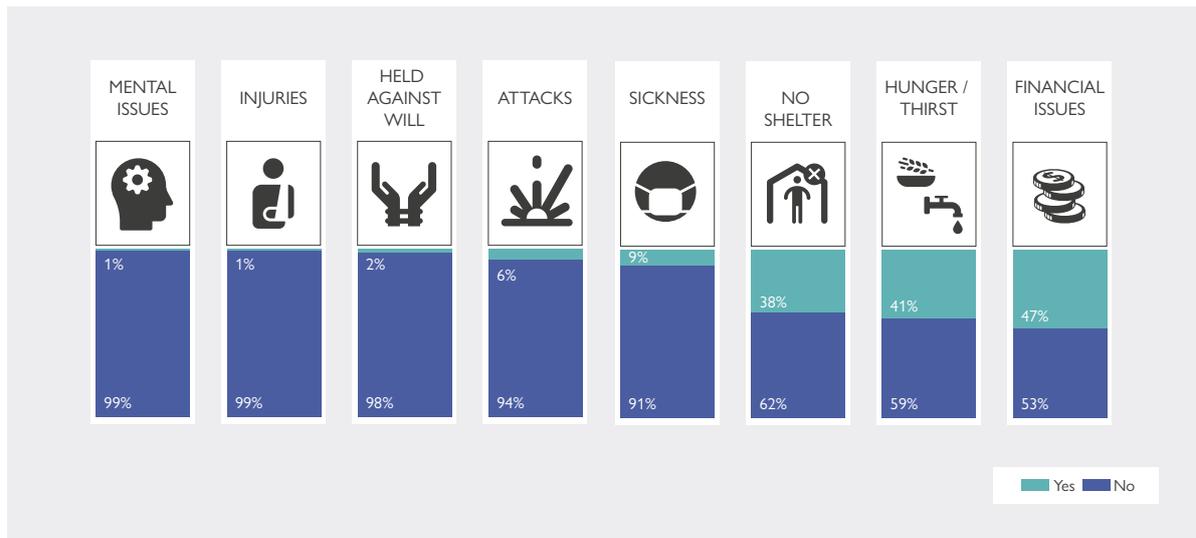
<sup>9</sup> The information on nationality is self-declared by respondents.

<sup>10</sup> Remaining respondents reported nationalities from one of the following: the Gambia (4%); Sierra Leone (2%); Liberia (1%); and Ghana, Cameroon, Togo and Guinea-Bissau (<1% each).

<sup>11</sup> Around 40 per cent of the respondents reported what type of challenge they experienced.

<sup>12</sup> By persons other than the relevant authorities. This definition applies throughout the analysis.

**Figure 11.2.** Share of different types of reported challenges by interviewees (N=3,700)



The descriptive findings of the different types of reported challenges suggest that some may constitute serious rights violations and that they occur early on migrants' journeys, taking place on parts of the CMR that still lie within the Economic Community of West African States area of free movement.

## 11.5. Risk factors associated with challenges reported on the route

This part of the chapter analyses the association between individual level and journey-related risk factors, and the probability to report experiencing challenges during the journey. A multivariate analysis was conducted to estimate the association between the different risk factors and the probability of reporting challenges<sup>13</sup> (see regression table in the Annex to this chapter). By holding the control variables constant, it is possible to estimate the effect of individual risk factors on the probability of reporting challenges. In the following, the average predicted marginal effects of the different independent variables on the dependent variable are presented by holding all other independent variables at their mean.

<sup>13</sup> Dependent variable: Experienced challenge? Yes/No; Independent variables: sex: male/female; age categories: 14–20 years/21–24 years/25–29 years/30–35 years/36–40 years/41–49 years/50+ years; educational level: none/primary/secondary/tertiary/Koranic-Islamic-school/professional training/other; civil status: divorced/widowed/do not want to answer/single/married; nationality: Burkina Faso/Côte d'Ivoire/Cameroon/Ghana/Guinea/the Gambia/Guinea-Bissau/Liberia/Mali/the Niger/Nigeria/Senegal/Sierra Leone/Chad/Togo; reason for migration: war\_conflict\_targeted violence\_persecution/economic reasons/rejoin family/access to services/other; length of travel: <2weeks/2 weeks–3 months/3–6 months/>6months; travel destination: West and Central Africa/ Europe/ North Africa; travel mode: alone/group.

### 11.5.1. Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics

Controlling for other possible risk factors, men and women were predicted to have the same probabilities to report challenges (33–34%).<sup>14</sup>

Migrants aged 30 to 40 years were predicted to have significantly higher probabilities than younger or older migrants to report challenges (41% versus 31–35%). No significant difference between other age groups was predicted. The model might be missing some relevant variables that play a significant role in determining whether age increases or decreases migrants' chances of experiencing challenges.<sup>15</sup>

Migrants with no formal education (42%) were predicted to report challenges more often compared with migrants with primary, secondary or tertiary degrees (28–32% each). Furthermore, migrants who said that they completed Koranic Islamic school (61%) and migrants with professional training (57%) had high chances of facing challenges during their journeys. It is likely that these two categories are also proxy categories of low levels of formal education. It is also possible that these two groups share other characteristics, not included in the model, that render them more likely to face challenges.

Respondents who were divorced, widowed or who did not want to indicate their civil status were predicted to have higher probabilities (55%) to report challenges than respondents who were married or of single status (32–37% each). These results align with findings of other analyses (Bartolini and Zakoska-Todorovska, 2020; Galos et al., 2017), but it is unclear what the underlying causes may be. Civil status could be a proxy for social status or possible societal stigmatization, which could co-vary with migrants having more limited means to cover their needs and to address their own vulnerabilities throughout their journeys. However, the data are not able to speak to this hypothesis, and further investigation is needed to examine possible explanations.

Respondents from Guinea-Bissau were predicted to have the highest probability to report challenges (85%). Furthermore, respondents from Ghana (59%), Liberia (56%), Nigeria (55%), Côte d'Ivoire (48%) and Burkina Faso (46%) had higher chances of experiencing challenges throughout their journeys than the sample average (43%).

Leaving the home country due to war, conflict, violence or targeted persecution (63%), and to gain access to services (60%), was associated with a higher predicted probability of experiencing challenges.

Crisis contexts such as war and conflict can exacerbate pre-existing risk factors to experience challenges and rights violations, as well as give rise to new ones. Travelling to access services might indicate migrants' inability to address their basic needs in their former places of residence, something that is often associated with increased protection risks and vulnerabilities. Migrants who travelled due to economic reasons (33%) or to rejoin their families (29%) had lower predicted probabilities to report challenges.

### 11.5.2. Journey characteristics

Migrants who intended to travel within West and Central Africa, or to North Africa, both had higher predicted probabilities to face some challenges during their journeys (38–41% each) compared with respondents planning to travel to Europe (21%). It has been shown that migrants interviewed in Europe often report high costs for their journeys (see, for example, IOM, 2018; Galos et al., 2017). These findings could then be indicative of the fact that migrants who intended to travel to Europe had more means to cover their basic needs and address their own vulnerabilities at the beginning of their journeys than respondents who intended to travel within the continent. If this is the case, it also suggests that migrants who did not intend to travel to Europe at the outset of their journeys but ended up travelling there may be particularly vulnerable. This might be the case, for example, for migrants who did not experience what they were expecting and hoping for at their destination, or who were pushed to migrate onwards but with limited means to cover their needs.

<sup>14</sup> Women (11%) are underrepresented in the sample compared with average shares of interviewed women (23%) at FMPs within West and Central Africa. Please refer to sampling limitations above.

<sup>15</sup> The assumptions of some tests of statistical confidence to facilitate generalization of findings from the sample to the population are not met. Please refer to sampling limitations above.

Migrants travelling between two weeks and three months, and between three months and six months or more, were more likely to report challenges than migrants who had been travelling for less than two weeks (49–57% versus 30%). The fact that the longer the travel period the more likely a challenging event is reported does not necessarily mean that the probability of any event at a given point in time is higher if the journey length is longer. Unfortunately, the ordinal nature of the variable does not allow us to look at whether or not the relationship is linear. However, migrants who report an inability to meet their most basic needs at early stages of their journeys may continue to struggle and may become more vulnerable and less able to protect themselves as the journey progresses.

Migrants who travelled in groups were more likely to report challenges (38%) than migrants who travelled alone (29%). This might seem surprising, as numerous analyses have shown that travelling alone increases migrants' vulnerability to abuse and exploitation (IOM, 2017; IOM and UNICEF, 2017). While the data cannot speak to the issue, one possible explanation could be that migrants who experienced a challenge during their journeys joined groups to protect themselves against further challenges, counting on each other's support to make the journey.<sup>16</sup>

### 11.5.3. Risk factors of migrants interviewed in West and Central Africa, and in Europe

As shown above, certain individual and journey-related risk factors are predicted to lead to higher probabilities to report challenges while travelling within West and Central Africa on those routes intersecting with the Central Mediterranean Routes to Europe. This section compares these findings and the findings in Bartolini and Zakoska-Todorovska (Chapter 15 of this volume) to shed light on whether individual and journey-related risk factors predicting challenges in West and Central Africa are similar to those of migrants reporting incidents indicating abuse, exploitation and human trafficking in Europe.

In both samples, respondents who were widowed, divorced or did not want to disclose their civil status were more likely to report challenges in West and Central Africa and incidents in Europe than respondents who were single or married.

Among migrants interviewed in both West and Central Africa and Europe, respondents travelling to rejoin their families were less likely to report challenges than migrants who did not have family members at the intended destinations.

In both samples, the length of the journey was positively associated with reporting risks and challenges. As mentioned above, the fact that the longer the travel period the more likely a challenging event is reported does not necessarily mean that the probability of any event at a given point in time is higher if the journey length is longer. However, the findings suggest that migrants who report an inability to meet their most basic needs at early stages of their journeys may continue to struggle and may become more vulnerable and less able to protect themselves as the journeys progress.

Among migrants interviewed in Europe, respondents from West Africa had high chances of reporting incidents. In the West and Central African sample, respondents from Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria had the highest predicted probabilities to give a positive answer to the question on challenges.

This comparison shows that certain individual and journey-related risk factors are common across the two data sets, predicting both reported challenges in West and Central Africa, and reported incidents indicating abuse, exploitation and human trafficking in Europe.

However, while the respondent's sex was an important risk factor in the European sample, it did not have predictive value in the West and Central African sample.<sup>17</sup>

In West and Central Africa, age had a predictive power for older age groups, while among respondents in Europe, young migrants (14–24 years of age) had higher chances of reporting incidents indicating abuse and exploitation.

<sup>16</sup> The data did not include information on coping or travel strategies; therefore, it is difficult to verify these assumptions.

<sup>17</sup> Being male was positively associated with reporting incidents in Europe.

Among respondents in Europe, there was no significant association between education and the probability to report incidents. In West and Central Africa, migrants without formal education were more likely to experience challenges throughout their journeys.

## 11.6. Conclusion

This chapter provides strong evidence of challenges that migrants face while travelling within West and Central Africa on those routes intersecting with the CMR to Europe.

The most frequently reported types of challenges were financial issues, hunger or thirst, and not having shelter. A considerable share of respondents also reported being attacked or held against their will. While the rates of reporting these kinds of incidents are lower than among migrants who have arrived in Europe having transited through North Africa, as detailed in Bartolini and Zakoska-Todorovska (Chapter 15 of this volume), the prevalence of these kinds of acts of violence during the journey is still relatively high and concerning. These findings may be indicative of an environment where perpetrators can act with impunity and where other serious human rights violations may occur, but which the survey was not able to capture for ethical and security reasons.

Furthermore, the analysis presented in this chapter provides strong evidence of the individual and journey-related risk factors that make migrants more likely to experience the kinds of challenges captured by the survey during their journeys.

Not having completed formal education, as well as being divorced or widowed, were found to be positively associated with migrants' probability of reporting challenges. Respondents originating from Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, Liberia or Nigeria were predicted to have high chances of reporting challenges. Migration drivers such as war, conflict and violence, and insufficient access to services, were associated with higher probabilities of reporting challenges. Migrants who reported their intended destinations to lie within West and Central Africa and North Africa were more likely to experience challenges than respondents who intended to travel to Europe. This might show that migrants who intended to travel to Europe had more means to cover their basic needs and address their own vulnerabilities at the beginning of their journeys than respondents who intended to travel within the continent. It can be assumed that migrants who report an inability to meet their most basic needs at early stages of their journeys may continue to struggle and may become more vulnerable and less able to protect themselves as the journeys progress. Some of these findings are intuitive and expected; others—such as why belonging to a certain nationality, or being divorced or widowed, is positively associated with experiencing challenges—require further exploration. This shows that early identification and support for migrants should not be prejudiced by assumptions that certain groups of individuals are always more vulnerable than others. As migration is a dynamic process, the journey itself may be a risk and migrants may find themselves in challenging situations regardless of their demographic profiles. Programmatic interventions should be age- and gender-sensitive, and consider different challenges and risks that men, boys, women and girls may face during their journeys.

Finally, the chapter has identified some salient similarities between the risk factors predicting challenges in West and Central Africa, and those predicting incidents indicating abuse, exploitation and human trafficking for migrants in Europe, as reported in Chapter 15 (Bartolini and Zakoska-Todorovska, 2020). This suggests that many migrants are already vulnerable upstream, at earlier stages in their journeys, and that their vulnerability may increase as they continue their journeys, as challenges and journey-related risk factors accumulate.

These findings demonstrate the importance of there being adequate capacity along the entire CMR to identify human rights violations and vulnerabilities early in the journeys and to provide support services for the most vulnerable and those with protection needs.

## 11.7. Annex

### Multivariate logistic regression

Variable	Odds ratio	Average predicted probabilities
<b>Sex</b> (Reference category female)		0.33 (0.29–0.37)
Male	1.04 (0.86–1.25)	0.34 (0.33–0.35)
<b>Age categories</b> (Reference category 14–20 years)		0.35 (0.31–0.34)
21–24 years	0.88 (0.73–1.05)	0.32 (0.30–0.34)
25–29 years	0.82** (0.68–0.99)	0.31 (0.29–0.33)
30–35 years	1.30** (1.04–1.62)	0.41 (0.38–0.44)
36–40 years	1.33* (0.99–1.77)	0.42 (0.36–0.47)
41–49 years	0.97 (0.68–1.38)	0.34 (0.27–0.41)
50+ years	1.63 (0.84–3.15)	0.47 (0.31–0.62)
<b>Civil status</b> (Reference category divorced/widowed/NA)		0.55 (0.46–0.63)
Married	0.48*** (0.34–0.68)	0.37 (0.34–0.39)
Single	0.40*** (0.28–0.57)	0.32 (0.31–0.34)
<b>Country of origin</b> (Reference category Burkina Faso)		0.46 (0.41–0.52)
Côte d'Ivoire	1.06 (0.78–1.45)	0.48 (0.42–0.54)
Cameroon	0.71 (0.37–1.37)	0.38 (0.24–0.53)
Ghana	1.63* (0.96–2.78)	0.59 (0.46–0.71)
Guinea	0.65*** (0.50–0.85)	0.36 (0.33–0.39)
Gambia	0.66** (0.47–0.93)	0.36 (0.30–0.42)
Guinea-Bissau	6.7*** (3.18–14.14)	0.85 (0.76–0.94)
Liberia	1.49 (0.88–2.54)	0.56 (0.44–0.68)

Variable	Odds ratio	Average predicted probabilities
Mali	0.34*** (0.26–0.44)	0.23 (0.20–0.25)
Niger	0.54*** (0.40–0.73)	0.32 (0.27–0.37)
Nigeria	1.40* (0.96–2.07)	0.55 (0.47–0.63)
Senegal	0.66** (0.48–0.91)	0.36 (0.31–0.42)
Sierra Leone	0.45*** (0.29–0.70)	0.28 (0.20–0.36)
Chad	0.34*** (0.18–0.66)	0.23 (0.13–0.33)
Togo	0.77 (0.43–1.41)	0.40 (0.27–0.54)
<b>Educational level</b> (Reference category none)		0.42 (0.39–0.45)
Primary	0.65*** (0.55–0.76)	0.32 (0.30–0.34)
Secondary	0.52*** (0.45–0.62)	0.28 (0.26–0.30)
Tertiary	0.66*** (0.50–0.87)	0.32 (0.27–0.38)
Koranic Islamic school	2.18*** (1.62–2.95)	0.61 (0.55–0.68)
Professional training	1.87*** (1.36–2.58)	0.57 (0.51–0.65)
Other	0.67 (0.50–0.90)	0.33 (0.27–0.39)
<b>Intended destination</b> (Reference category West and Central Africa)		0.41 (0.39–0.43)
Europe	0.38*** (0.32–0.45)	0.21 (0.19–0.23)
North Africa	0.87* (0.73–1.02)	0.38 (0.35–0.41)
<b>Length of travel</b> (Reference category < 2 weeks)		0.30 (0.29–0.31)
2 weeks–3 months	2.68*** (2.15–3.35)	0.54 (0.48–0.59)
3–6 months	3.09*** (2.32–4.11)	0.57 (0.50–0.64)
>6 months	2.21*** (1.76–2.78)	0.49 (0.43–0.54)
Unknown	2.16*** (1.46–3.18)	0.48 (0.39–0.58)

Variable	Odds ratio	Average predicted probabilities
<b>Travel mode</b> (Reference category alone)		0.29 (0.27–0.31)
Group	1.49*** (1.32–1.69)	0.38 (0.36–0.40)
<b>Reason for migration</b> (Reference category war/violence/ persecution)		0.63 (0.55–0.70)
Economic reasons	0.29*** (0.21–0.41)	0.33 (0.32–0.35)
Rejoin family	0.24*** (0.17–0.35)	0.29 (0.26–0.32)
Access to services	0.90 (0.56– 1.48)	0.60 (0.52–0.69)
Other	0.52** (0.31–0.87)	0.46 (0.36–0.57)
N	8,921	8,921
Fixed effects (survey country)	Yes	Yes

Notes:

1. Standard errors in parentheses.
2. The assumptions of the test of statistical confidence to facilitate generalization of findings from the sample to the population are not met (see above in sampling limitations).
3. \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.1$ .

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# 12.

## “No one talks about what it’s really like” – risks faced by migrants in the Sahara Desert<sup>1</sup>

Julia Black<sup>2</sup>

GLOBAL COMPACT FOR  
MIGRATION OBJECTIVES



VULNERABILITIES



MISSING MIGRANTS

**Abstract:** This chapter explores the risks that migrants face when crossing the Sahara Desert. While data sources on the experiences of migrants in the Sahara are scarce, this analysis relies on data from IOM and the Mixed Migration Centre. The chapter finds that trans-Saharan migration poses risks, both inherent to the desert and human-caused. The risks posed by the inhospitable terrain of the desert are complicated and exacerbated by instability and violence in the region, harmful smuggling practices and the securitization of borders in the Sahel. More data are needed to adequately understand the experiences of migrants in the Sahara Desert, so that effective policy and programming responses can combat the many risks. Potential migrants need better access to information about the risks of the Sahara crossing to make informed and safe choices.

In a workshop with Ghanaians who had lost family members during their migration abroad, one young man who had crossed the Sahara Desert spoke up: “No one talks about what it’s really like”, he said. Heads around the table nodded and returnees and family members began sharing stories of the terrible conditions they had faced in the desert crossing. One man spoke about adding gasoline to his water container before boarding the truck that would take him from the Niger to Libya, saying that it helped him feel less thirsty. Another said his smuggler abandoned 20 people in the desert after their truck ran out of fuel.

Experts have long agreed that the Sahara crossing is one of the most dangerous migration routes in the world, but evidence to support this claim is scarce. IOM’s Missing Migrants Project (IOM, 2019a) has recorded nearly 2,000 deaths in the Sahara Desert since 2014, though many more likely go unrecorded. Qualitative research and anecdotal reports indicate that migrants<sup>3</sup> face risks due to both the inherent danger of crossing this desert vastness, as well as human-caused risks<sup>4</sup> linked to regional insecurity and the irregular means by which people travel.

This chapter seeks to shed some light on what the Sahara crossing is really like, based on the limited evidence currently available. Trans-Saharan migration has primarily been studied after the fact, in “destination” countries in North Africa, but the conditions on the journey in the desert itself are less frequently researched. This is mainly due to the

<sup>1</sup> The author is grateful to Wilfried Coly and Mohamed El Sayeh for their assistance with the research for this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Missing Migrants Project, IOM’s Global Migration Data Analysis Centre.

<sup>3</sup> This chapter uses the term “migrant” to include asylum seekers and refugees. Although these two groups hold a particular set of rights under international law, they are generally exposed to similar risks as other migrants when transiting through the Sahara Desert.

<sup>4</sup> This chapter uses “human” risks to encompass factors migrants face during the Sahara crossing that are created by humans themselves.

difficulties of conducting empirical research on populations on the move through the desert's remote terrain, and partly to the simplification of migration routes into separate categories of departure, transit and arrival/destination. In the Sahara context, the delineation of "transit" becomes blurred, with many desert locales being simultaneously areas of origin, transit and destination, at least temporarily.

This chapter cannot claim to be a representative or comprehensive view of the risks faced by migrants: the political and geographical complexity of the enormous area covered means there is no one typical journey across the Sahara Desert. The lack of comprehensive data – or even much research examining the conditions migrants face on their journeys in the desert – necessitates reliance on small-scale research studies and eyewitness reports.

The main data set used in this chapter is on deaths and disappearances during migration across the Sahara, from the IOM's Missing Migrants Project. While deaths are a clear indicator of the risks migrants face – albeit the most "final, terrible indicator" (Singleton, 2018:339) – these data are highly incomplete due to the inaccessibility of the Sahara and a lack of reporting of migrant deaths.<sup>5</sup>

Data that could be used to quantify the non-fatal risks discussed in this chapter are largely unavailable. Most existing research focuses on trans-Saharan migration centres around the route between the Niger and Libya, meaning that this chapter will also primarily focus on this area. Both emerging routes, such as those to northern Chad's new gold mines, and shifts in established routes are reflected only insofar as these are covered by published research and data.

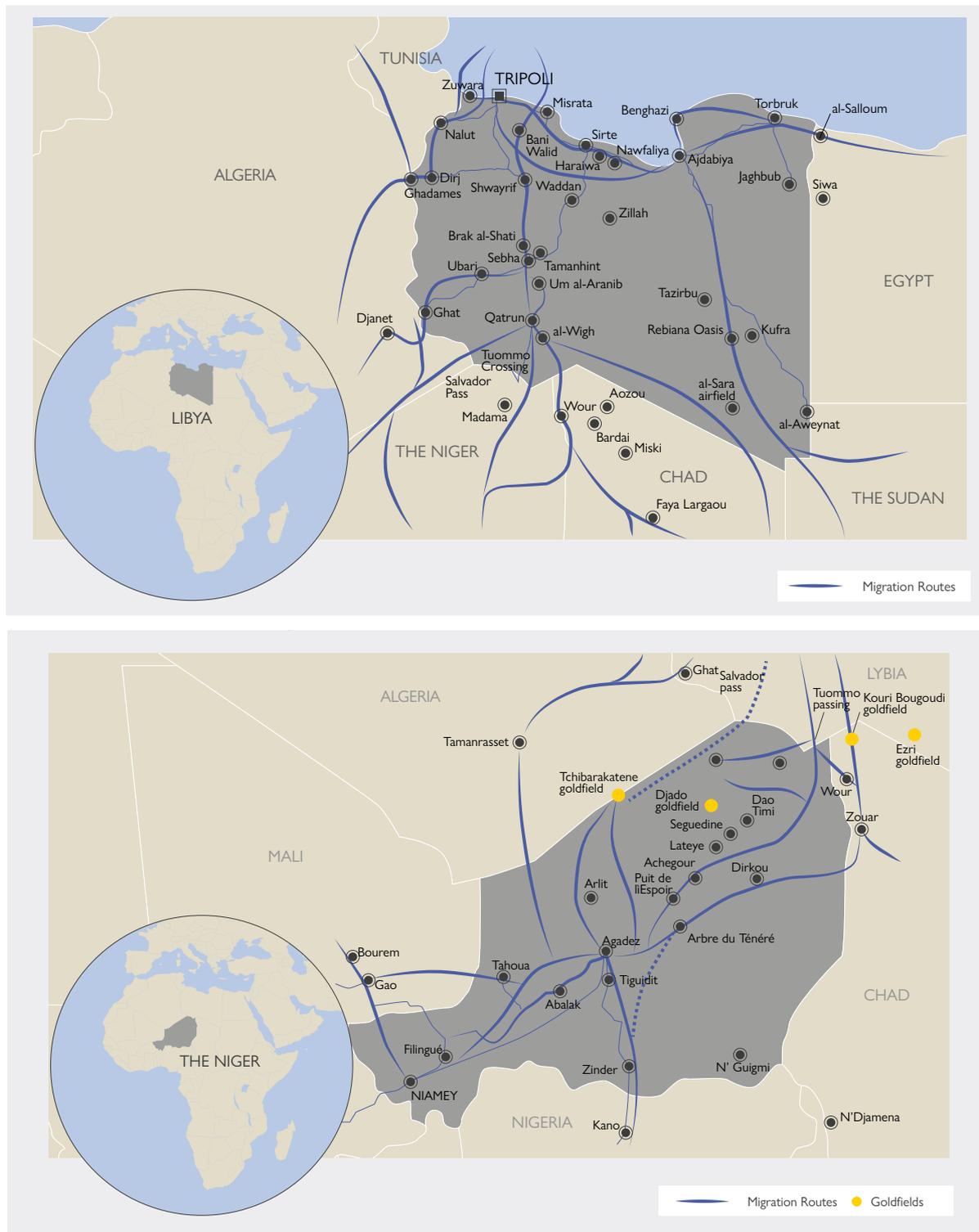
## 12.1. Trans-Saharan migration routes in brief

Trade and travel within and across the Sahara have existed for much of documented history, and the Central Sahara in particular has a long-standing history of migration, as well as nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyles. In the late 1950s, thousands migrated from the Sahel region to Northern Africa, seeking to fill Libya's and Algeria's need for labour after large-scale development policies were introduced for the southern regions of both countries (Brachet, 2011). These migration patterns were often short-term or circular in nature, as many migrants were employed in sectors affected by seasonal changes, such as agriculture or construction (*ibid*). While initially those who made the journey across the Sahara Desert were mostly younger men from the Sahel, in the 1980s and 1990s there was an increase in the number and diversity of migrants on trans-Saharan routes (Bredeloup and Pliez, 2011).

Since the mid-2000s, however, most migrants became increasingly unable to obtain the documents needed to enter Maghreb countries legally, due to changes in immigration policies (Brachet, 2011). Most countries in this region have long and porous borders that cross through remote areas of the desert, making it difficult to regulate transit. Therefore, migration has continued, albeit by irregular means (Awumbila et al., 2014). Available evidence points to the most-frequented route across the desert heading to Libya and, to a lesser degree, Algeria, via the northern part of the Niger (MMC, 2018; IOM, 2019b; Brachet, 2011). West African migrants also travel via Mali and Algeria (MMC, 2018) and those from both East and West Africa aiming to reach Libya also travel via the Sudan, and to a lesser extent via Egypt (Micallef, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> See Singleton et al. (2017) for a general discussion of the challenges of collecting data on migrant fatalities.

**Figure 12.1.** Maps of trans-Saharan migration routes through Libya and the Niger, December 2019



Source: Micallef, 2019.

Note: These maps are for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

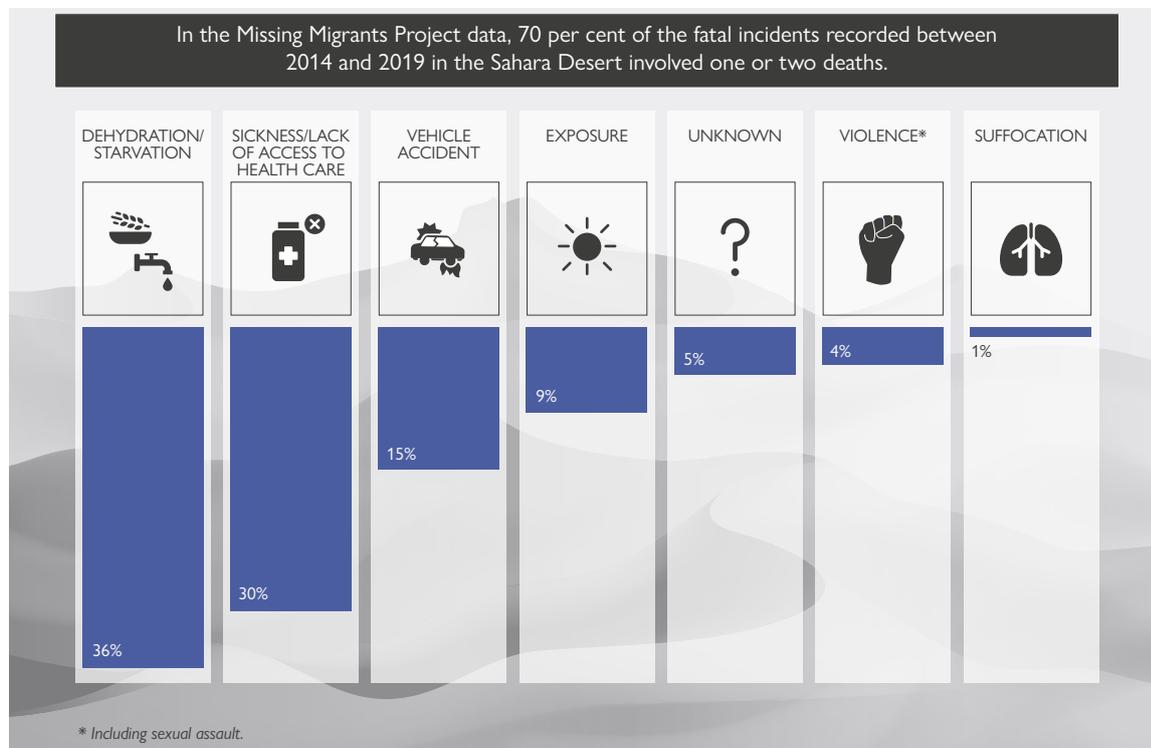
## 12.2. Risks of trans-Saharan migration

Several reports (MMC, 2014; UNHCR, 2019) have stated that more people die while crossing the Sahara Desert than in the Mediterranean Sea. However, while over 19,000 deaths have been recorded in the Mediterranean since 2014 (IOM, 2019a), far fewer fatalities have been documented in the Sahara. IOM (ibid.) has recorded 1,898 deaths across the desert since 2014, and the Sudanese Popular Congress, a Sudanese association based in Kufra, recorded 486 deaths on the journey from the Sudan to Libya between 1997 and 2004 (Hamood, 2006:47).

There are strong indications that data on migrant deaths in the Sahara are highly incomplete. Researchers consistently report that many interviewees witness people dying in the desert (see for example Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017; Reitano and Tinti, 2015; MHub, 2017). Almost every person interviewed reported having witnessed multiple deaths during the journey across the desert (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017:25).

In the Missing Migrants Project data, 70 per cent of the fatal incidents recorded between 2014 and 2019 in the Sahara Desert involved one or two deaths. Typically, deaths that occur in small numbers are less likely to be reported, and the converse is also true: of the deaths recorded by IOM in the Sahara based on reports from news agencies, non-governmental organizations or international agencies, two thirds (66%) involved 10 or more dead. The vast majority of data recorded by the Missing Migrants Project in the Sahara are based on interviews with survivors: 87 per cent of records come from interviews conducted by the Mixed Migration Centre's Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi), while another 11 per cent come from the Mixed Migration Hub (MHub) surveys.<sup>6</sup> Though non-representative and unverifiable, these testimonies provide one of the few quantitative sources of information on risks faced by migrants attempting to cross the Sahara Desert. Considering that samples of migrants in irregular situations are not representative, survey-based data also may present a biased picture of the risks migrants face in the Sahara, as different populations may be more or less likely to witness and/or report deaths.

**Figure 12.2.** Primary causes listed for migrant deaths recorded in the Sahara, 2014–2019



Source: IOM, 2019a.

<sup>6</sup> The lower proportion of fatal incidents recorded from MHub surveys is due in part to the fact that no surveys were conducted after September 2017.

Similarly, reports of harsh conditions, violence and neglect are all too common across the Sahara Desert. An IOM survey with returnees in the Niger found that 80 per cent of migrants reported suffering from abuse, violence and exploitation during their journeys (IOM, 2016). However, it is not clear where such incidents happened, and returnees may be more likely to report such incidents, for example, due to the length of their journeys. Similar reports have existed for at least a decade: based on one of the earliest studies on the topic (Khachani, 2008), more than 70 per cent of migrants interviewed in Morocco said they faced exhaustion, hunger, thirst, violence and lack of hygiene during the Sahara crossing.

### 12.2.1. Risks inherent to the Sahara Desert crossing

Many of the risks reported by migrants in the trans-Saharan passage are linked to the vast, inhospitable terrain that people must cross. High temperatures, scarcity of food and water, and the long distances to cover mean that any desert crossing – whether by regular or irregular means – will pose some risks to travellers. More than three in four deaths recorded by IOM (2019a) are linked to the remoteness of the trans-Saharan journey: these include those due primarily to dehydration and starvation (36%), sickness and lack of access to health-care facilities (31%) and exposure (9%).

Most journeys across the Sahara Desert occur in convoys of trucks, and breakdowns can be deadly (Brachet, 2011). The fact that most trans-Saharan migration has been irregularized<sup>7</sup> means that routes often pass far from inhabited areas, with little to no possibility of accessing health facilities or resupplying.

### 12.2.2. Human-caused risks of crossing the Sahara Desert

The risks inherent to making the Sahara crossing are exacerbated by human-caused factors. These are generally linked to the irregularization of migration in the Sahara context, but can also be caused by the political instability and violence present in several areas in countries bordering the Sahara.

#### Risks posed by instability and violence in the Sahara region

Many of the human-caused risks migrants face during trans-Saharan migration are not attributable to a single actor or factor. The violence, robbery, kidnapping and sexual assault that have become common on routes across the Sahara Desert are perpetrated by many actors, from smugglers and border guards to militias, roving gangs and migrants themselves.

For those who attempt to reach Maghreb countries, ongoing conflicts and instability pose serious dangers. In the desert regions across Libya's South, tribal rivalries, primarily between the Tebu and Tuareg tribes, have been marked by violence and general lawlessness, though smuggling remains prominent (Micallef, 2017). This instability has not only had direct consequences for migrants – who may be abducted by criminals and held for ransom, forced into labour, or kept in detention centres marked by incredibly dangerous conditions – it has also shifted routes to less well-established paths. For instance, Reitano and Tinti (2015) documented Tuareg smuggling networks shifting operations to remote areas of Algeria, due in large part to the Tebu consolidating control over southern Libya.

Other countries in the region – particularly Mali – are also marked by profound turbulence, which directly and indirectly poses risks to migrants in the Sahara, either through violent

*“To go to Djanet, in Algeria, you never go on your own: you go through the desert and if a truck on its own breaks down there you are going to die.”*

*Tuareg people smuggler,  
Agadez, November 2004  
(Brachet, 2011:63)*

<sup>7</sup> The term “irregularized” is used in this chapter instead of “irregular” to emphasize that, when it comes to migration, “irregularity” is determined by States. Irregularity refers to the legal status of a person at a certain point in time or during a certain period; the term does not refer to individuals themselves. Laws and policies determine the type of documentation required for migration and, as such, the status of migrants can change during their journeys and stays in the countries of transit/destination, as authorized by the State.

attacks or by forcing them to take more remote paths through the desert. Near Gao, a smuggling hub in Mali, Micallef (2019) noted the increasing frequency of so-called “taxation” by armed groups since the 2012 coup d’état in Mali, whereby convoys of migrants must pay a “tax” under the threat of violence. Such local bands are difficult to avoid near locations such as smuggling hubs, wells or restocking points, as local robbers know that migrants typically carry enough money to finance their trip and may even collude with smugglers to defraud their customers (Brachet, 2011). In Mali, the increased frequency of such robberies has displaced established routes, including difficult and lengthy desert crossings on foot, which pose risks “not normally associated with human smuggling” (Micallef, 2019).

Kidnapping, too, is unfortunately common for those who attempt to cross the Sahara Desert, particularly in the Sudan. Once kidnapped, migrants are typically either held for ransom or trafficked (MMC, 2018). The available evidence indicates that Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers are particularly vulnerable to kidnappers, as they are perceived as more likely to carry cash and to have wealthier connections abroad, with families in the diaspora asked to pay large sums in order to avoid or stop violence against the person held and to secure his or her release (Ayalew, 2016). One in seven East African migrants interviewed en route to Libya, Egypt or Europe between May 2017 and January 2019 said that they had been kidnapped, primarily in the Sudan (44.2%), but also Egypt (22.6%) and Libya (18.9%) (Horwood and Forin, 2019). According to Médecins Sans Frontières (2017), kidnapped women and girls may be forced into prostitution.

*“There is no one who will reach you at that desert area, so they can do whatever they like and want to do.”*

*26-year-old Ethiopian man interviewed in the Sudan, October 2016 (Horwood, 2018)*

While representative statistics are not available, sexual assault during trans-Saharan migration is frequent, and is particularly well-documented among those from Nigeria<sup>8</sup> and the Horn of Africa. Of 1,700 migrants of both sexes interviewed from the Horn of Africa, more than one in three (563) reported witnessing or experiencing incidents involving sexual and gender-based violence (Bartolini and Zakoska-Todorovska, Chapter 15 of this volume). Eritrean women interviewed by Médecins Sans Frontières (2017) reported seeking out injectable contraceptives prior to crossing the desert from the Sudan to Libya in order to prevent pregnancy due to the reported frequency of rape on this journey. A study by Human Rights Watch (2016) on the larger issue of the trafficking of Nigerian women made frequent reference to the sexual exploitation by traffickers on nearly every step of their journeys, including during the trans-Saharan crossing.

### Risks posed by smuggling practices in the Sahara Desert

Since at least the mid-2000s, migration from sub-Saharan countries to the Maghreb has been largely irregularized,<sup>9</sup> meaning that the vast majority of migrants transiting across the Sahara use the services of smugglers to reach their destinations (Brachet, 2011). Journeys across the desert typically last from three to seven days and are largely impossible to complete without someone who knows the terrain (Reitano and Tinti, 2015). Indeed, smugglers in the Sahara context traditionally belong to nomadic or semi-nomadic groups which have travelled in the desert for centuries (ibid.). While graphic narratives painting smugglers exclusively as perpetrators of crimes against migrants represent only a small part of the reality of migrant smuggling (Sanchez, Chapter 18 of this volume), the criminalization of trans-Saharan migration has been marked by an increase in the risks migrants and smugglers alike must take in order to make the crossing (Reitano and Tinti, 2015).

Many of the risks linked to migrant smuggling across the Sahara Desert are linked to the forms of transit themselves. Typically, migrants are crowded into the back of small or large trucks, with as many as 30 people in the back of a standard pickup truck (Brachet, 2011). In such circumstances, it has become common for people to fall off and be left behind in the desert (UNODC, 2010), a practice which is a death sentence in remote areas. Reitano and Tinti (2015) reported that “nearly all”<sup>10</sup> of interviewed migrants who had made the Saharan crossing from Agadez spoke in horror at the

<sup>8</sup> For more information on the trafficking of women from Nigeria, see Human Rights Watch (2016).

<sup>9</sup> For an overview of recent migration policy changes, see Micallef (2019).

<sup>10</sup> The specific number of interviewees is not mentioned.

number of people abandoned by smugglers, and the dead bodies they saw in the desert. Some interviewees reported that those who became ill were forced to disembark from the pickups by smugglers for fear of spreading disease in the crowded quarters (ibid.). One stark example of abandonment occurred after migrants reported smugglers had forced people off their truck: 24 bodies were ultimately found in the desert near the Algeria–the Niger border between 30 September and 2 October 2019 (IOM, 2019a). Those who are abandoned in smaller numbers may never be reported, and these bodies are unlikely to be found.

Even without being abandoned in the desert, current smuggling practices in the Sahara Desert mean that many migrants face the challenges of traversing the hazardous terrain by foot. With the increased securitization of borders – largely through the introduction of checkpoints and increased patrols – trucks carrying migrants typically stop a few kilometres away from the desert in order to avoid interception, meaning that passengers must complete the last distance in the desert on foot (Brachet, 2011). Getting lost, too, is not out of the question: to reduce the chance of detection, drivers rarely take the same route twice and cannot rely on rescue by another truck passing by should they get off track (ibid.).

### Risks caused by the securitization of Saharan borders

Since the mid-2000s, the tightening of immigration controls in Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia and the Niger have made travel to and residence in these countries more dangerous for migrants (see, for example, Micallef, 2019; Papademetriou and Hansen, 2014; Zaiotti, 2017; MMC, 2018; Brachet, 2011). Migrants and smugglers rightly fear detention and deportation, which have become increasingly frequent in Maghreb countries (Brachet, 2011). Arrest represents a major risk for migrants, as detention centres – particularly those in Libya<sup>11</sup> – are often marked by abuse and poor conditions. Multiple deaths have been reported in migrant detention centres in Libya, Morocco and Egypt in the past decade (Global Detention Project, 2019). Deportation, too, can pose a serious risk to migrants in Maghreb countries: Algeria has become notorious for its practice of mass expulsions into the desert, with 13,000 deportees abandoned on its southern border in 2017 and 2018 (Hinnant, 2019), and another 6,000 in 2019 (UNHCR, 2019; Alarm Phone Sahara, 2019).

Increased border controls tend to displace migration routes to less visible and therefore more dangerous areas. At these locations, the probability of receiving assistance in an emergency situation is slim, and the likelihood of becoming a victim of violence or other abuse increases (Sanchez, 2017). This is particularly true in the Sahara, where the terrain is generally flat and travellers can easily be spotted from monitored roads. Consequently, drivers in the Sahara prefer to avoid stopping even for food, water or rest (Brachet, 2011). In Libya, the increased securitization of the country's southern border has shifted smuggling routes to several miles away from established highways and into the desert, in order to reduce the likelihood of detection (Micallef, 2019).

One of the starkest examples of this is the shift in migration patterns from the northern part of the Niger since mid-2016, attributed by several researchers to the enforcement of Law 2015–36 criminalizing human smuggling (Micallef, 2019; MMC,

*“Witnessing the sexual violence done to our women and sisters was the worst. If you tell them to stop, they will kill you, or drop you off to die in the desert.”*

*Eritrean man speaking about the kidnapping of his entire convoy in the Sudanese desert (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017:26).*

*“You pray for death. You cry until you cannot cry any more. People die, faint, are beaten, raped. I would not advise even my worst enemy to travel by land.”*

*28-year-old Nigerian woman (Human Rights Watch, 2016).*

<sup>11</sup> The conditions of Libya's detention centres are discussed in greater length in Global Detention Project (2020).

2018; Xchange, 2019). Since the increased crackdown on smugglers primarily operating out of the Niger's Agadez region, the modus operandi of irregular migration across the Sahara has shifted to more dangerous patterns. Micallef (2019) reports that far few smugglers are now in operation in the northern part of the Niger, and that they transport fewer migrants (meaning that there is a greater risk of being stranded), are more likely to depart at night and avoid city centres (reducing the chance for resupplying and medical care), and travel along more remote routes (reducing the chance of rescue should things go wrong). The caravans of overloaded trucks have largely been replaced by single Jeeps that depart Agadez under cover of nightfall, meaning that drivers are less likely to be able to call for help should a breakdown occur (Lucht and Raineri, 2019). People attempting to leave from Agadez must now walk several kilometres through the desert in order to reach new, more remote departure points (MMC, 2018). Those moving away from city centres and outside of established pathways must rely on even scarcer infrastructures, potentially increasing the risk of getting lost or of other harm.

## 12.3. Conclusion

Though the risks of crossing the Sahara are clearly many, our understanding of the conditions on these journeys remains poor. Available data and research identify numerous risks, from those due to the natural hazards of the long and inhospitable desert crossing, which are exacerbated by smuggling practices, to instability and the securitization of borders in the Sahara context. Indeed, it can be (and has been) argued that a side effect of stricter immigration policies is to cause migrants to undertake such risky journeys (see, for example, Papademetriou and Hansen, 2014; Zaiotti, 2017), though this is outside of the scope of this chapter.

The risks inherent to the Sahara Desert and the “human” risks discussed above make for grim reading, but the context is important: we do not know how many people survive such experiences, nor do we know which areas and groups are most at risk. Without such information, protection measures cannot adequately address the many risks faced by migrants in the Sahara, including the terrors of dehydration, violence and death, nor can migrants adequately inform themselves of the safest ways to reach their intended destination. A Mixed Migration Centre (2019) survey of more than 4,500 migrants in Libya showed that the majority (62%) said they would not undertake the Sahara crossing if they knew what they know now: if no one talks about what it's really like, how can we make sure that those who most need this information have access?

There is an urgent need for better research into the experience of migrants in the Sahara Desert, including both monitoring the situation in the desert and understanding the experiences of those who have completed the crossing. More importantly, however, would-be migrants must have better access to information so that they can make informed, safe choices. Even so, the reality is that there are few safe options that migrants can choose: until States provide safe, legal pathways for migration, the Sahara Desert will continue to claim lives.

*“No food, no water and no good transportation. Around 18 migrants were loaded on a Toyota car. When three migrants fell from the car no one could get back to pick them up and they remained there in the desert.”*

*24-year-old Ethiopian female, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in the Sudan. December 2016 (MMC, 2018).*

*“They tossed us into the desert, without our telephones, without money. I couldn't even describe it to you... There were people who couldn't take it. They sat down and we left them. They were suffering too much.”*

*Senegalese man who was abandoned near the Algerian border with the Niger (Hinnant, 2019)*

### Impact of COVID-19 on the risks migrants face in the Sahara Desert

The emergence of COVID-19 and the ensuing mobility restrictions have had profound effects on trans-Saharan migration. Many countries with borders in the Sahara Desert have closed land borders or otherwise significantly tightened border controls, including the Niger, Mali, Chad, Mauritania, Algeria, the Sudan, Egypt and Morocco (IOM, 2020b). While it is too early to confirm trends, these changes have likely impacted the risks migrants face while crossing the Sahara in a number of ways:

- A decrease in flows across the Sahara has already been documented in West and North Africa (IOM, 2020c), though many migrants continue to pass through key transit points on a daily basis (IOM, 2020b).
- Given the irregular nature of many journeys, however, the increased border controls may serve to displace migrants to more remote, hazardous routes that are not monitored. For those who do cross the Sahara during the global health crisis, the cramped conditions in which they often travel puts them at heightened risk of contracting COVID-19. The lack of access to health facilities in the desert means that migrants who become ill are unlikely to be able to access adequate care.
- Border closures have stranded thousands of migrants across the Sahara, including at least 2,300 migrants in the northern part of the Niger (IOM, 2020d), 1,300 people at Mauritania's northern borders (IOM, 2020b), and hundreds of others in Chad and Mali (IOM, 2020a). Among them are many vulnerable individuals, including women, children and those with pre-existing health conditions (IOM, 2020d).
- Some incidents of forced returns have left migrants stranded in the desert, possibly linked to xenophobic notions of migrants as disease carriers. For example, 321 migrants were forcibly returned from Libya to northern Chad in April 2020 (IOM, 2020b).
- Migrants in destination countries, particularly those in irregular situations, may lose work due to mobility restrictions within countries or the associated economic downturn. Those who face a lack of income feel forced to return home and risk the trans-Saharan journey to do so.



*“The migrants are exposed to a danger of death, because nothing is clear anymore. So that’s what we’re trying to explain to the European Union, the real dangers it represents... The law has blocked the official circuit. But the clandestine circuit continues. It is more dangerous, there are more deaths.”*

*M. Anacko, President of the Regional Council of Agadez (Xchange, 2019)*

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## 13.

Overview of migrants in vulnerable situations assisted in the transit centres, the Niger<sup>1</sup>Lorelle Yuen<sup>2</sup>

VULNERABILITIES



TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

**Abstract:** This chapter provides an overview of the main vulnerabilities and risks faced by migrants assisted in the IOM transit centres in the Niger en route back to their countries of origin, and of changes to such risks observed over the past three years. These are also presented through migrants' personal stories. The clear pattern that emerges is an overrepresentation of certain nationalities and demographics among unaccompanied migrant children and victims of trafficking. The chapter recommends the utilization of an evidence-based approach in aligning programming with the main patterns observed among migrants in vulnerable situations, particularly victims of trafficking.

## 13.1. Overview

Migrants transiting through the Niger intending to return to their countries of origin or community of origin with the assistance of IOM temporarily stay in transit centres in Arlit, Agadez, Dirkou or Niamey (three centres) until their scheduled departures to their home countries or communities.<sup>3</sup> All migrants arriving at the transit centres do so on a voluntary basis and are registered and informed about their rights and the services provided by IOM.<sup>4</sup> Assistance in the centres includes accommodation, water, food, access to health care, preparation and facilitation of travel documents,<sup>5</sup> psychosocial support, protection screening and support to most vulnerable migrants, recreational activities and vocational trainings. In 2016 and 2017, most migrants arrived at the transit centres at their own initiative or by referral by one of IOM's community mobilizers. In 2018, this shifted to the highest

<sup>1</sup> This chapter was written with support from IOM Protection field staff in Niamey (Eva Pons, Nikolaas Swyngedouw, Harira Middah Darius, Halimatou Hassane Bolmey, Boube Cheffou, Balkissa Amoudou Souley, Rekia Sidibe), Agadez (Hawa Diallo, Abdoukader Djibir, Malika Ka Abdoulaye, Fatima Ibrahima Mohamat, Jamilou Hamza) and Arlit (Aichatou Abdou Nar).

<sup>2</sup> IOM Niger.

<sup>3</sup> The majority of migrants assisted in the transit centres are foreign, but there are also some assisted migrants from the Niger, who typically come to the transit centres on their own initiative. Foreign migrants are assisted to return to their countries of origin and migrants from the Niger to their communities of origin. These do not include those from the Niger who are repatriated from the official convoys (as they stay and receive assistance at a temporary site in Agadez managed by the Government of the Niger), but may include some people from the Niger expelled from Algeria or rescued through IOM's search and rescue operations conducted in the areas around Agadez, Arlit, Dirkou and Bilma.

<sup>4</sup> Most migrants arriving to the transit centres were expelled from Algeria, particularly in 2018 and 2019. Of those expelled from Algeria, the majority (95%) chose to opt into IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme at the transit centres. In some situations, migrants who originally arrived to the transit centres with the intention of participating in the AVRR programme changed their minds and chose to leave the transit centres for various reasons.

<sup>5</sup> As the majority of migrants do not have identification documents for various reasons (for example, being lost or confiscated), IOM Niger liaises with the relevant consulates and embassies in the Niger to issue travel documents for migrants, and also liaises with the Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire in the Niger to issue travel documents for migrants from countries without embassies or consulates in the Niger.

number of migrants (46%) arriving at transit centres after being expelled from Algeria, a significant increase from 2017, when only 4 per cent of migrants arrived with the assistance of IOM after being stranded in the desert.<sup>6</sup>

Most migrants in the transit centres in the Niger reported that they were staying in Algeria or Libya to seek economic opportunities. Their desire to voluntarily return to their countries of origin is usually marked by an unsuccessful migration experience. This may be due to being expelled, especially in 2018 and 2019, when expulsions from Algeria increased significantly (see Overview of Migration Trends in the Republic of the Niger: 2016–2019). In other, but fewer, cases, particularly for migrants who were previously staying in Libya, migrants, mainly foreign, made their own decisions to return to their countries of origin and sought the assistance of IOM at the transit centres. Their decisions were usually the result of a difficult experience or of hearing stories from other migrants, which included the common themes of torture, labour exploitation and sexual exploitation.

## 13.2. Migrants in vulnerable situations

Several factors make migrants vulnerable to being exploited during their migration journey or at the final destination. Migrants are vulnerable to abuses and exploitation, including trafficking in persons, as they are often undocumented, have limited financial means and work opportunities, and rely on third parties to organize their journeys (and sometimes stays). IOM data have consistently shown that women and children are more vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation, both in West Africa and globally (Sattler and Cook, Chapter 11 of this volume). In addition, IOM research along the Mediterranean routes has clearly demonstrated that travelling alone is a strong factor of vulnerability.

This overview focuses on the trends and patterns of two main categories of migrants in vulnerable situations: unaccompanied minor children (UMC) and victims of trafficking (VoTs). Both groups are identified and registered by IOM Niger staff within the scope of the direct assistance programme at the transit centres for migrants. UMC are children under the age of 18 years who have been separated from both parents and other relatives, and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so. VoTs are identified based on the definition set out in the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children<sup>7</sup> and in collaboration with the Government of the Niger. Case studies are also presented here to highlight the stories and risks faced by different migrants in vulnerable situations during their migration journeys. The IOM transit centre registration data from January 2017 to December 2019 are used for the analysis of the two groups; anonymized interviews conducted by IOM protection staff are used for the case studies.

## 13.3. Unaccompanied migrant children

UMC represent a small proportion of migrants staying in the transit centres. From January 2017 to December 2019, IOM assisted a total of 1,032 UMC. Over the years, IOM has noticed that the migration of UMC follows a specific dynamic, with some nationalities being consistently overrepresented. Unlike older migrant groups, UMC tend to declare having Europe as their final destination.<sup>8</sup> These children may migrate on their own initiative or with

<sup>6</sup> As a total of 20,056 migrants were assisted in the transit centres in 2018, this equates to around 9,200 migrants entering the transit centres with the assistance of IOM after being expelled from Algeria, which is comparable to the total number of migrants expelled from Algeria that were assisted by IOM in 2018 (9,031 migrants).

<sup>7</sup> According to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, “trafficking in persons” shall mean the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs... The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth [above] shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth [above] have been used.”

<sup>8</sup> A total of 360 UMC (35%) declared a country in Europe as their final destination from 2017 to 2019; 446 UMC (43%) Algeria; 113 UMC (11%) Libya; and 113 UMC (11%) other countries such as the Niger, Mali and Morocco, for example.

the support of their relatives, sometimes even of the whole community. Being children alone on perilous migration journeys, UMC are some of the most vulnerable migrants crossing the Sahel. Children have specific rights, which governments have a duty to protect under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

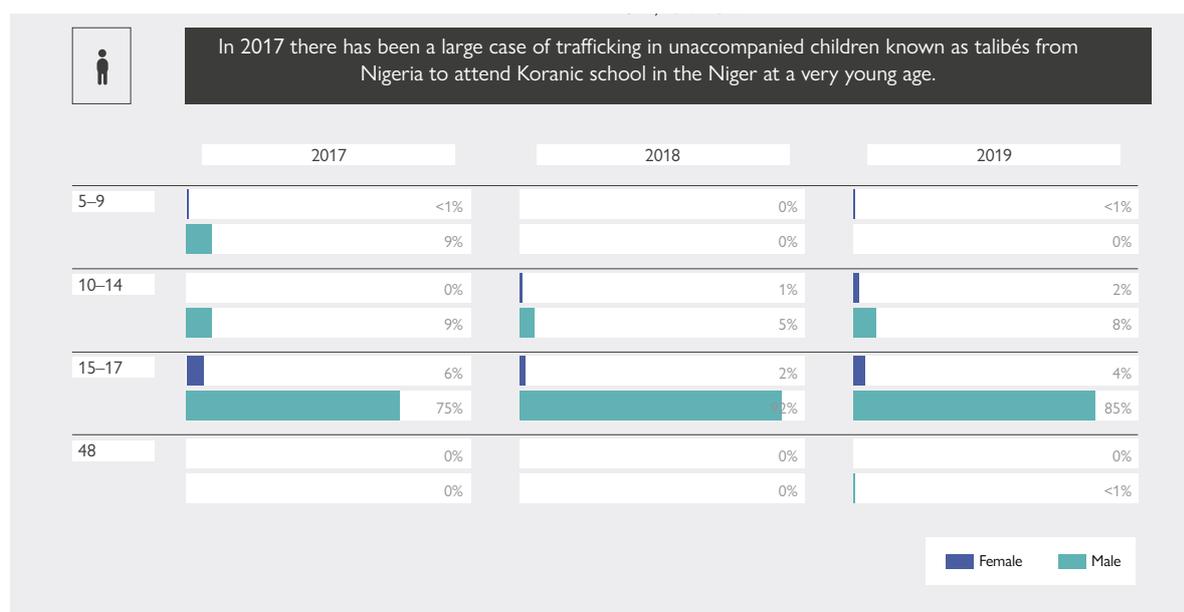
**Table 13.1.** Number and percentage of unaccompanied minors assisted, by sex, 2017–2019

Year	Female	Male	Total
2017	22 (7%)	302 (93%)	324 (100%)
2018	12 (3%)	334 (97%)	346 (100%)
2019	21 (7%)	341 (93%)	362 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>55 (6%)</b>	<b>977 (94%)</b>	<b>1 032 (100%)</b>

The great majority of UMC assisted were male (93–97%), while females represent 3 to 7 per cent of the total. This male-to-female ratio is similar to that of the overall migrant population in the transit centres from the main sending countries, such as Guinea and Mali, with 99 per cent male migrants. In addition, this is in line with regional and global trends, as the unaccompanied migration of children is a highly male-dominated phenomenon. This is linked to the perceived capacity of boys to manage migration alone and the risks faced along the migration route, as well as the role of men, including UMC, who are often the eldest boy of the family, as the main breadwinners for the family.

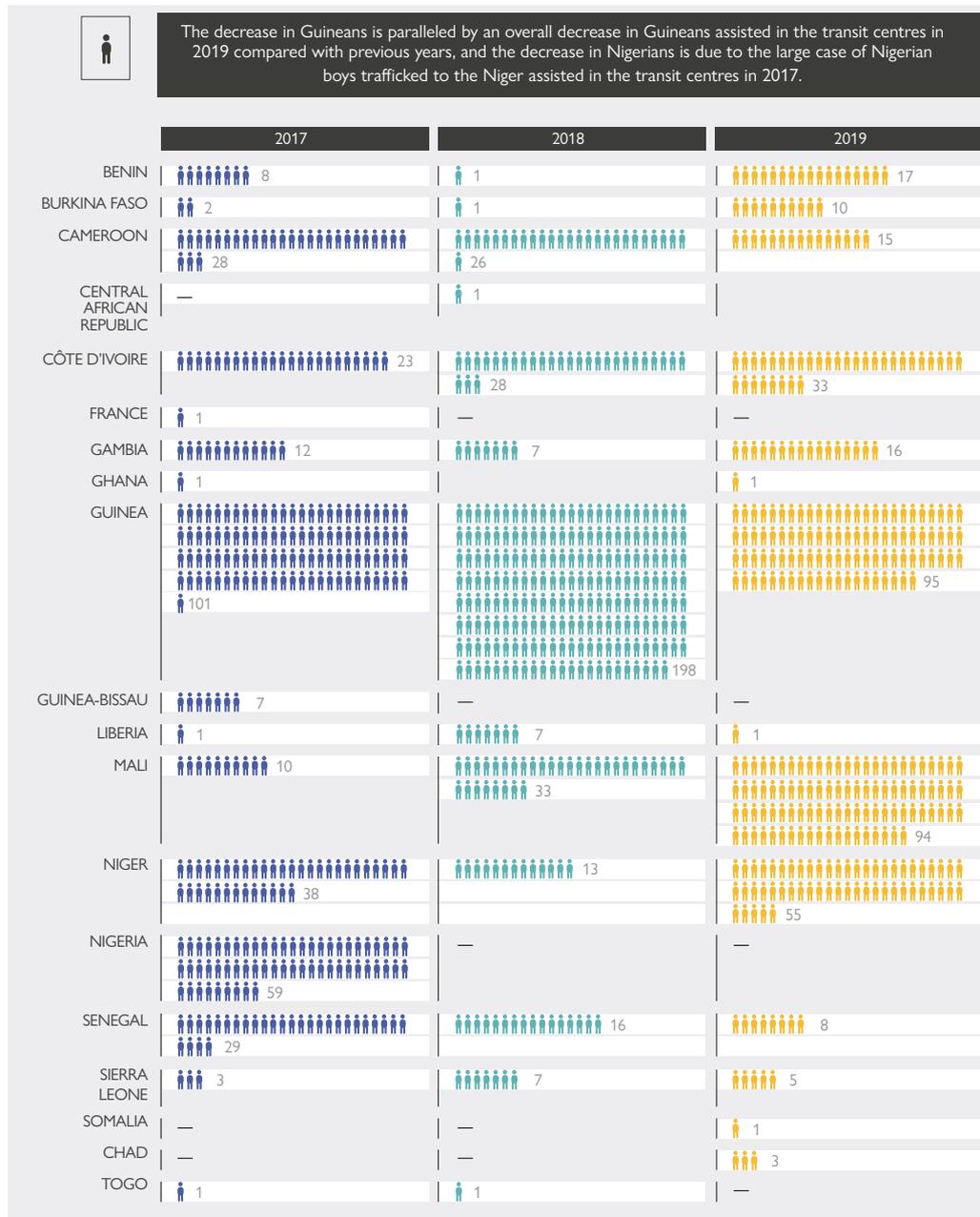
Most UMC assisted were between the ages of 15 to 17 years for both female (75% or 55 UMC females out of the total in 2017–2019) and males (84% or 977 UMC males in total). However, there was a significant number of male children between the ages of 5 to 9 years (29 UMCs or 9%) in 2017, most of whom were from Nigeria. This was due to a large case of trafficking in unaccompanied children known as talibés from Nigeria to attend Koranic school in the Niger at a very young age (see section IV – Victims of trafficking – below).

**Figure 13.1.** Sex–age distribution of unaccompanied migrant children in the transit centres, the Niger, 2017–2019



The vast majority of UMC were from Guinea, followed by Mali, the Niger and Nigeria. In 2018, the number of nationals of Nigeria decreased by 88 per cent compared with 2017, while in 2019, the number of Guinean nationals decreased by 52 per cent compared with 2018.<sup>9</sup> The decrease in Guineans is paralleled by an overall decrease in Guineans assisted in the transit centres in 2019 compared with previous years, and the decrease in Nigerians is due to the large case of Nigerian boys trafficked to the Niger assisted in the transit centres in 2017. Conversely, between 2018 and 2019, there was a 323 per cent and 184 per cent increase in UMC nationals from the Niger and Mali, respectively.<sup>10</sup> The spike in UMC from the Niger and Mali is probably linked to the increased number of migrants, including UMC, expelled from Algeria in 2018 and 2019.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 13.2.** Nationalities of unaccompanied migrant children in the IOM transit centres, the Niger, 2017–2019



<sup>9</sup> Nigeria: 59 UMC in 2017 to 7 UMC in 2018; Guinea: 198 UMC in 2018 to 95 UMC in 2019.

<sup>10</sup> The Niger: 13 UMC in 2018 to 55 UMC in 2019; Mali: 33 UMC in 2018 to 94 UMC in 2019.

<sup>11</sup> People from the Niger are also expelled among other foreign migrants from Algeria to the Niger; however, generally, most people from the Niger are repatriated through the Official Algerian Convoys organized between the Governments of the Niger and Algeria.

### Case Study 1. B., unaccompanied migrant child from Guinea

B. is a 16 year-old-boy from Guinea. Back home, he lived alone in a rental house. His family is poor and he lost both his parents at a very young age. B. has not attended school much. He left primary school in 2016 to start his migratory journey. His dream is to go to Europe, France specifically. He travelled alone, within a group of people from his village to whom he is not related. The group first crossed the border into Mali, then to the Niger, and finally reached Algeria. B. says he financed his travel himself. He says he faced a lot of suffering and difficulties during his travel, including an attack by a rebel group in the desert, torture, death threats, scams and physical abuse. B. stayed one year in Algeria working in a small business. From Algeria, he moved to Libya, where he spent one month, but soon decided to return to Algeria. After six difficult months in Algeria, he was expelled to the Niger by the Algerian authorities.

## 13.4. Victims of trafficking

IOM Niger assisted 333 VoTs from January 2017 to December 2019, with the largest caseload in 2017, partly due to the assistance of a large group of children trafficked from Nigeria to the Niger. The Niger is a transit country for the trafficking of foreign migrants from West and Central Africa who have fallen victim to traffickers while transiting through the Niger en route to Libya or Algeria or beyond. Victims may be transported within the Niger, to neighbouring West African countries, North Africa, the Middle East or Europe, where they are subjected to forced labour, sexual exploitation or domestic servitude. Foreign migrants are particularly vulnerable in the Niger, as they risk being stranded along their migratory routes after running out of financial means. This renders them vulnerable to false promises to move onward on their journeys. For nationals of the Niger, trafficking is more localized in the region of Kantché (Zinder) and tends to mostly target women and children, for the purpose of forced begging and sexual exploitation in the north of the Niger in the mining sites, or transportation centres, or in Algeria. However, men also fall prey to trafficking and exploitation.

Trafficking affects both men and women, but often in different ways, with men most often being victims of labour exploitation and women being targeted for sexual exploitation. Commonalities can generally be observed across both sexes, as reflected in the case studies below. Most victims assisted were either orphans or persons who were unexpectedly forced to bear the responsibility for providing for their families. This includes children and youth who have become the main breadwinners for their families at a young age due to their fathers passing away (see Case Studies 4 and 5), as well as women who become the sole breadwinners due to their husbands passing away or as a result of divorce. In both situations, there is immense pressure to provide for their families, a responsibility they may often have not had before.

The tactics used by traffickers to approach potential victims tended to differ by sex. Female victims of trafficking were often approached by traffickers in their home countries, either at their jobs or in their hometowns, with promises of high-paying jobs in Libya or other countries (see Case Study 3), while male victims of trafficking were deceived, oftentimes by their smugglers, at some point along their journeys, and sold into slavery, where they were forced to pay a ransom and/or work without any compensation (see Case Study 2).

**Table 13.2.** Number of victims of trafficking assisted, by sex, 2017–2019

Year	Female	Male	Total
2017	79 (51%)	75 (49%)	154 (100%)
2018	75 (95%)	4 (5%)	79 (100%)
2019	71 (71%)	29 (29%)	100 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>225 (68%)</b>	<b>108 (32%)</b>	<b>333 (100%)</b>

The majority of VoTs identified and assisted by IOM were females, reflecting the fact that trafficking in the Niger remains a strongly feminized phenomenon. This trend may also be generalized to the West and Central Africa region and the overall Central Mediterranean Route, where more female VoTs are identified. However, this may also be partly due to the difficulty in identifying male VoTs, as men tend to be less forthcoming and willing to disclose experiences of trafficking.

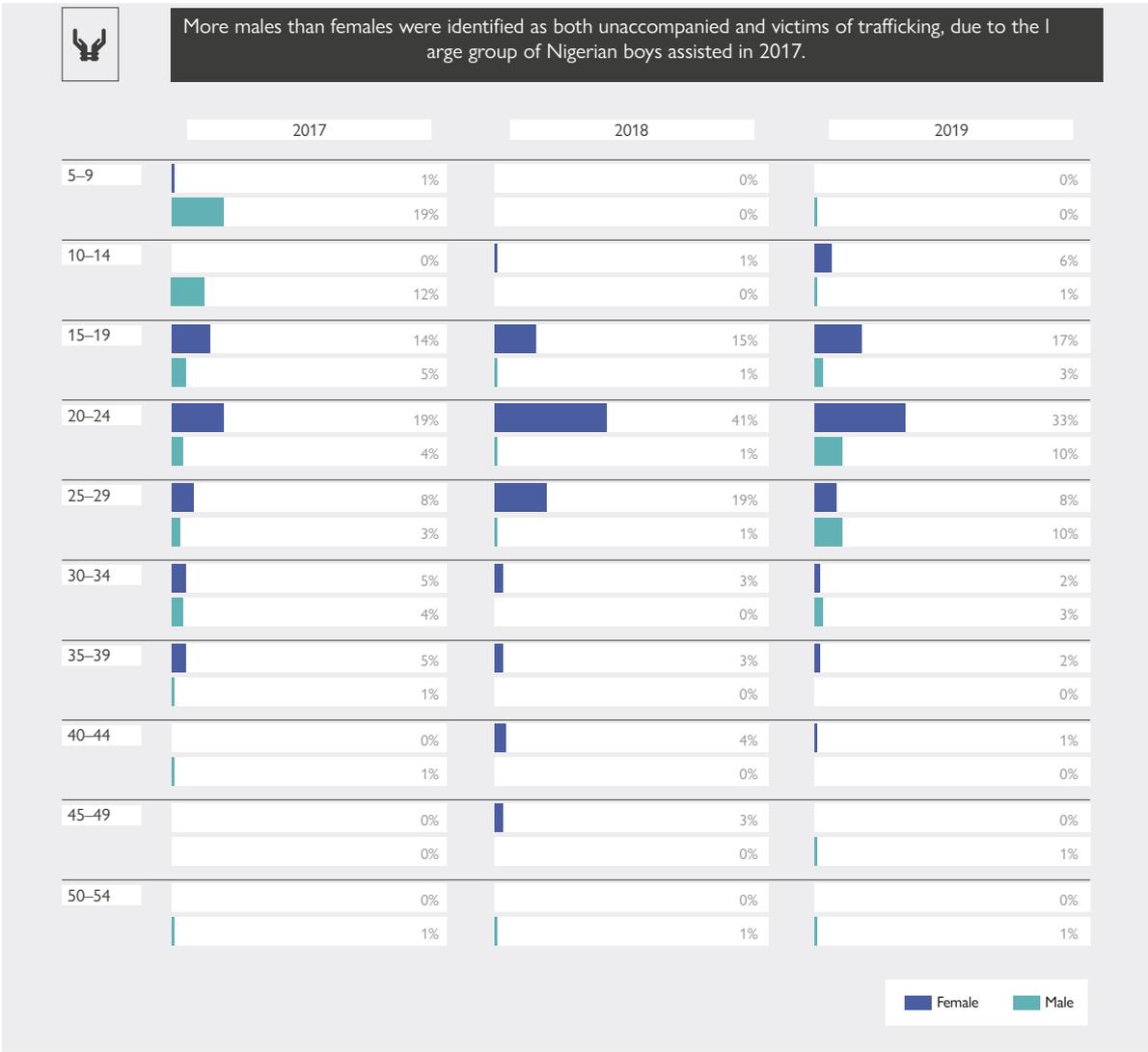
The female VoTs assisted by IOM were mainly between the ages of 20 and 24 years (19% in 2017, 41% in 2018, and 33% in 2019) and 15 to 19 years (14% in 2017, 15% in 2018, and 17% in 2019), primarily victims of sexual and labour exploitation. Meanwhile, the male VoTs assisted were younger (19% 5 to 9 years, 12% 10 to 14 years), particularly in 2017, and in 2019 more young men VoTs between the ages of 20 and 29 years (20%) were assisted.<sup>12</sup> The spike in the number of young male VoTs assisted in 2017 is due to the incoming caseload that year of 39 boys from Nigeria who were trafficked to the Niger to attend Koranic school.<sup>13</sup> It is traditional practice in the West and Central Africa region to send boys, also referred to as talibés, to Koranic schools. However, there are reports that boys are forced by their teachers (marabouts) to perform manual labour or beg on the streets. Male children are typically trafficked for the purpose of forced begging or labour exploitation, while young men are exploited in forced labour. For young men, migration often starts out through smuggling, but they may become victims of trafficking along the route, either as a consequence of running out of funds or due to the practices of combined deprivation of freedom and forced labour, particularly common in the areas of North Africa and the Middle East.

Between 2017 and 2019, about a quarter of the VoTs identified and assisted were also identified as unaccompanied minor children. More males than females were identified as both unaccompanied and VoTs, due to the large group of Nigerian boys assisted in 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Only four male VoTs were assisted in 2018, of various ages, ranging from 15 to 54 years.

<sup>13</sup> The boys were rescued by the police from the Niger and brought to child protection authorities, who contacted IOM for support.

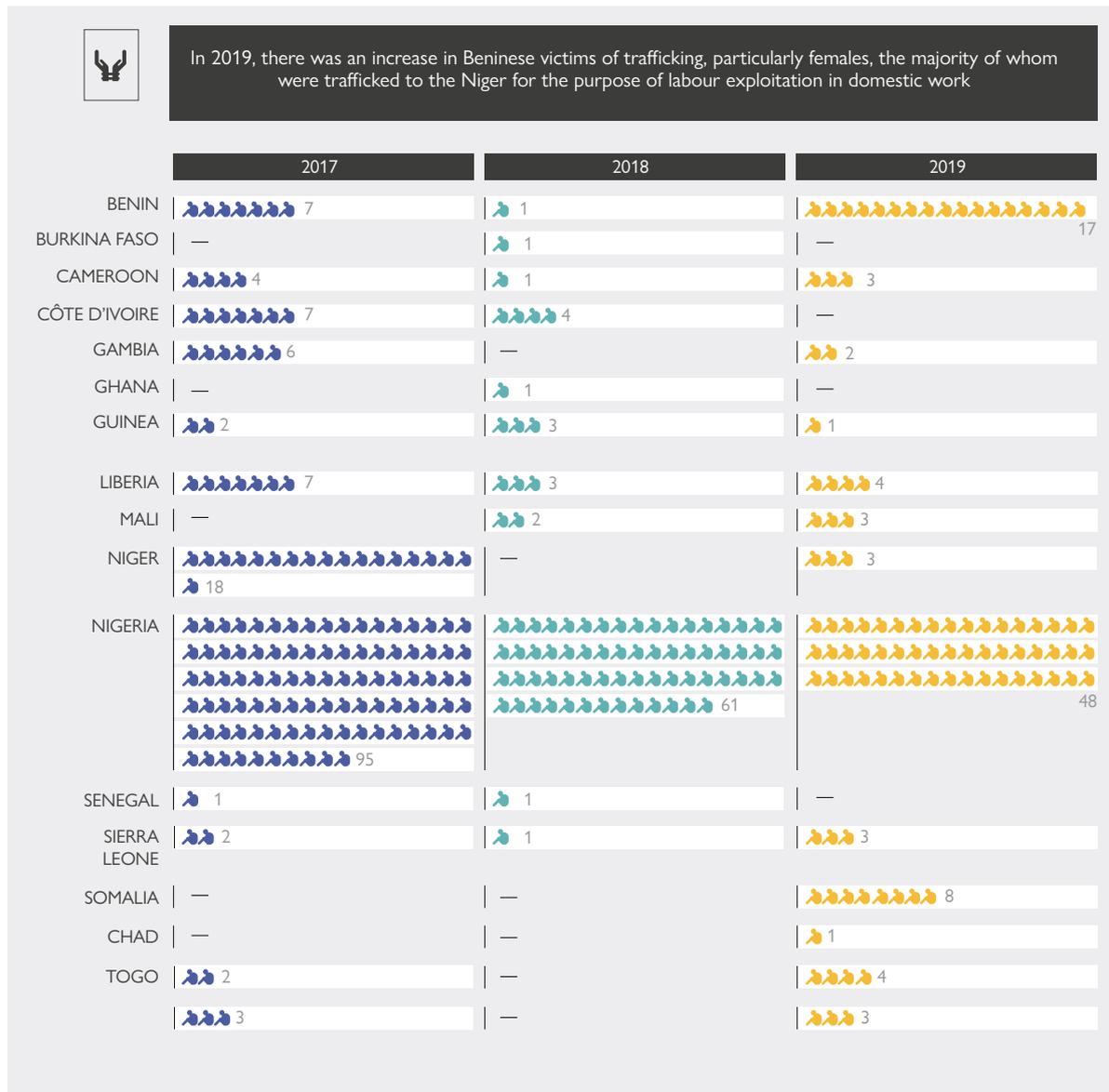
**Figure 13.3.** Sex–age distribution of victims of trafficking assisted in the transit centres in the Niger, 2017–2019



The majority of VoTs assisted were from Nigeria. There is a persisting trend of women from Nigeria being trafficked into prostitution, mostly to the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. In 2019, there was an increase in Beninese VoTs, particularly females, the majority of whom are trafficked to the Niger for the purpose of labour exploitation in domestic work (predominantly in Agadez).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Based on case work interviews with victims of trafficking identified and assisted in IOM Niger transit centres.

**Figure 13.4.** Nationalities of victims of trafficking assisted in the transit centres in the Niger, 2017–2019



The final destination countries of VoTs, as agreed upon between the trafficker and the victim, or decided upon by the trafficker, varied across the years. In 2017, the majority of VoTs reported the Niger and Libya as the main destination countries. In 2018 and 2019, the number of VoTs assisted reporting the Niger as the destination country dropped significantly (from 47 VoTs reporting the Niger as the main destination country in 2017 to 5 and 6 VoTs in 2018 and 2019, respectively); this decrease may be linked to the large caseload of boys trafficked to the Niger from Nigeria assisted in 2017. Increasing numbers of VoTs assisted in 2018 and 2019 reported Algeria as their final destination, which may be linked to the increased expulsions of migrants from Algeria during these years. Another trend observed was that more VoTs assisted in 2017 reported final destinations in countries beyond North Africa such as Italy, Spain, Kuwait and Mali, while in 2018 and 2019, only a handful of VoTs assisted reported destination countries outside of North Africa, which may indicate shifting migration patterns as a result of the enforcement of restrictive migration policies in the Niger and Algeria (see Overview of Migration Trends in the Republic of the Niger: 2016–2019).

Disaggregated by sex, most females reported Libya and Italy as their final destinations in 2017, while most males reported the Niger, Mali and Algeria as their final destinations. In 2018 and 2019, there were no clear patterns in differences in final destinations by sex, as was observed in 2017.<sup>15</sup>

## 13.5. Moving forward

This overview has presented the trends in the profiles of migrants in vulnerable situations, focusing on two main groups, UMC and VoTs, assisted in the transit centres from 2017 to 2019. Clear patterns can be discerned from the analysis which may inform programming in key areas along the migration route, targeting specific demographics and nationalities that have been consistently overrepresented among UMC and VoTs, or both. Preventative work such as information campaigns to increase awareness on the common tactics utilized by traffickers, for example, can be conducted in hot-spot communities, targeting profiles that are found to be typically targeted by traffickers, in efforts to empower communities to make informed decisions. It is equally essential to ensure that identification capacity exists among front-line actors, and appropriate specialized responses are designed to follow up on the needs of these particularly vulnerable groups. Both VoTs and UMC are entitled to specific rights and safeguards under international instruments, but effective implementation of such provisions requires commensurate human and financial resources from governmental authorities and their partners. This remains a challenge in a country with many competing humanitarian and development needs and scarce resources available.

### Case Study 2. M., a Guinean male victim of torture and labour exploitation in Libya

M. is a young university student. He is the only son and the main breadwinner for his family since his father died. Having completed his studies, M. had to defend his thesis in order to graduate. However, as M. had no means to pay for the costs related to his thesis presentation, he decided to go to France with the hope to earn enough money to complete his studies.

He started his journey by first going to Mali. There, he met a person at the bus station who promised to connect him with another person who could facilitate his trip to Algeria once M. paid him CFAF 150,000 (USD 250). M. paid him and embarked on a bus to Agadez, the Niger. Upon arrival in Agadez, M. was picked up by the smuggler and spent a week waiting at the smuggler's place. After they agreed on the transportation price to Algeria (CFAF 330,000 or USD 550), M. joined a group of about 152 persons at a meeting place, and they departed in pickup trucks or smaller vehicles around 2 a.m. The journey took about 12 days due to frequent vehicle breakdowns in the desert. Two Nigerian girls and one Ghanaian man in their group passed away during the journey due to lack of water.

When they finally reached a paved road, M. overheard someone mentioning Libya. At that point, M. understood that they had not been on the road to Algeria as he was initially promised, but to Libya. He had no other option but to continue.

<sup>15</sup> For final destination, 46 per cent of females and 13 per cent of males declared Libya, while 14 per cent of females and 36 per cent of males declared Algeria. However, we must consider that females accounted for only 22 of the 324 UMC in 2017.

Once the group reached Sabha, the driver brought them to a detention space in the desert where all of them were locked into a container until they were transferred to a prison controlled by bandits. The boss of the prison, a Ghanaian man, informed them that they had all been sold and that they must call their families or their smugglers to ask for money in order to be released. M. called his smuggler, who instructed him to call his family instead, claiming he had nothing to do with his situation.

M. was tortured regularly. He was beaten three times a day, and the group was not given food until the evening of the sixth day at the prison. M. sustained many injuries from the beatings and at one point was unable to walk for two weeks.

After three months in detention, M.'s family paid the ransom of CFAF 800,000 (USD 1,300 USD) by money transfer. However, the bandits still refused to release him.

One day, M. decided to escape after he was informed by another man who overheard a conversation between the prison boss and another person of their plans to sell M. When the gate was left open one day, M. ran away. He ran to a construction site where he was eventually helped by the Guinean community to go to the hospital in Murzuq to receive treatment for his injuries. During his recovery in Murzuq, a man from Guinea-Bissau helped M. to find transportation to Agadez. Upon arrival to Agadez, M. went to the IOM transit centre.

### Case Study 3. J., E. and P., victims of trafficking from Nigeria

J. comes from Nassarawa State in Nigeria, where she lives with her mother and her three little brothers. Her father died a long time ago and her mother is in poor health. She is the eldest of the family and shoulders the responsibility of feeding her family and providing for the schooling of her three younger brothers. J. worked at a small food retail business. One day at work, she was approached by a customer who offered her a job at a big company in Libya. J. refused at first, as she knew she could not leave her family unattended. The trafficker tried to persuade J. by telling her that the job was only for a short four-month contract, which would allow her to earn a lot of money to support herself and her family. Appealed by this prospect, J. agreed to the offer.

E. is from Jos, a town north of Abuja, where she works in hairdressing. An orphan of mother, she is the eldest of the family and has two younger sisters. E. is responsible for taking care of her younger sister who is sick, and pays for her treatments with her small savings. E. worked at a hairdressing salon in Jos. One day while she was at work, a lady approached E. with an offer to work for her in Kano, where she claimed to own a large hairdressing salon. She promised E. would earn a lot of money there.

P. is from Imo State, in the south of Nigeria. She lost her mother at birth and her father abandoned her. She was hosted by her aunt, but P. has been providing for herself since a young age. A woman approached her in her village, explaining that she assists girls to obtain work in Libya. She promised P. a very well-paid housekeeping job.

J., E. and P. travelled jointly, arranged for and paid by their trafficker. During their journey, a Nigerian woman – also in the same car – approached the young girls to ask what they were doing there by themselves as they were so young. They told the lady their stories and the lady explained to them what the true intentions of the trafficker were and warned them that these were false promises that would lead them to prostitution and exploitation without any salary.

When the car stopped, the three girls escaped and ran to the police. The police officer confirmed the allegation of the lady and referred them to IOM for assistance.

#### Case Study 4. O., Chadian male victim of torture and labour exploitation in Libya

O. left his country in late 2017 with the intention of going to Europe via Libya. Before leaving, he lived in the city of N'Djamena with his mother, three sisters and four nephews; he was the primary caretaker ever since his father passed away. In order to provide for his family, he traded motorbikes between Chad and Nigeria. This business also helped him to pay for his migration journey.

A Sudanese smuggler transported him from Sabha and sold him in Bani Walid to an armed group belonging to his network.

The armed group demanded the payment of a ransom from all the persons in the group that were sold to them. To intimidate them, they fired a bullet into the foot of a migrant to force others to accept paying the ransom. They asked O. to pay CFAF 2 million (USD 3,300), which neither he nor his family had.

The armed group members started torturing him when he refused to contact his family saying that he had no contact with them. He was stabbed in the thigh and locked naked in an air-conditioned room until the next morning when he was tortured again. This lasted a week.

Afterwards, O. was taken back to another cell where he received only one piece of bread a day and a few sips of water twice a day for two months. O. did not think he was going to survive. Unable to continue, he decided to call his mother. His mother ended up selling the family's home and sent CFAF 1,500,000 (2,500 USD) to the kidnappers in order to save O.'s life.

After his release, the same kidnappers took him to the city of Zawiyya in Tripoli, where he was taken to a camp with other migrants, including Sudanese and Chadians. One day, a Libyan man came to the camp to look for a person to work at his house for a salary. O. volunteered and left the camp with him. When O. arrived to his home, they agreed on a salary of 17,000 dinars (equivalent to CFAF 90,000 or USD 150) per month in exchange for O. taking care of his garden and cows.

After a month of work, when O. tried to claim his salary, his employer did not pay him. After three months, he still did not receive anything. At this point, O. realized that his employer did not have any intention of paying him. The employer also had no intention of letting him go, as O. was locked in the property at all times.

One day when his employer left the property, O. jumped the wall of the house and escaped. He returned to his fellows in the camp, who advised him against working for a monthly salary because no one would actually pay him. Subsequently, he started working as a day worker. After having saved a bit of money, he tried to cross the sea for Europe but was caught by the police and imprisoned for two months. After his release, he returned to continue working as a day worker.

After staying one more month in Libya, O. decided to move to Algeria due to the deteriorating security situation in Libya. After five days at the Algerian border, he was arrested by the police and subsequently deported to the Niger.

### Case Study 5. B., Cameroonian victim of torture and exploited in Algeria

B. is a single man and was orphaned at a young age. Back in Cameroon, he lost his mother at the age of two and his father, who did not recognize him at birth, died when he was six years old. B. did not meet his paternal side of the family and as such, he was raised by his maternal aunt, who treated him badly and never enrolled him in school, contrary to her own children. He was marginalized because of his status as an illegitimate child, orphan, illiterate and poor. When he grew up, he left his aunt's house and stayed with his friends. Being illiterate, the only work he could do was as a taxi-moto driver, a job he secured thanks to the support of a helping person.

His friends advised him to go to Algeria and continue to Europe in order to look for a better life there. His journey to Nigeria went well, but other passengers stronger than him hit him and stole his money.

B. stayed in Kano for six months, where he got a contract as a painter and for some other small construction jobs. With his small savings, he was able to pay his transport costs to Algeria. Once he arrived in Algeria, he settled in Tamanrasset with a group of compatriots.

An African migrant fluent in Arabic in charge of hiring African men to work on a construction site owned by an Arab recruited B. to work there for three months without being paid.

One day, one of the workers told B. that others had been working at the same site for six months without being paid. He told B. that it seemed that the boss had no intention to pay them and considered them as slaves. He also told B. that if he tried to claim his salary, he would likely either get killed or turned in to the police.

When B. decided to try to ask for his salary along with other migrant workers, the boss turned them into law enforcement. B. believed that this was all carried out with the complicity of their African recruiter as he was spared while all other African workers were rounded up and deported.

B. reported several instances of physical and psychological violence during the deportation. The group of deportees was thrown off at the Niger border in the middle of the desert, where a helpful person took them in his vehicle to Agadez. Thanks to the charity of the man and the selling of his personal items, B. managed to pay his transport costs to Niamey, where he was referred to IOM for AVRR. B. arrived with a wounded hand because of the violent beatings he had received.

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# 14.

## What makes refugees and migrants vulnerable to protection incidents in Libya? A microlevel study on the determinants of vulnerability<sup>1</sup>

Simon Nissling,<sup>2</sup> Ana-Maria Murphy-Teixidor<sup>2</sup>

GLOBAL COMPACT FOR  
MIGRATION OBJECTIVES



VULNERABILITIES



TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

**Abstract:** *The protection abuses and human rights violations faced by refugees and migrants along the journey to Libya and within the country are well documented by NGOs, human rights organizations and news outlets. Yet, little is understood about why certain people on the move are exposed to protection abuses, and the specific factors influencing their vulnerability. This chapter analyzes a unique dataset of more than 5,000 interviews with people on the move who have reached Libya from countries across the continent and attempts to analyze the demographic, social, and economic determinants of vulnerability to protection incidents.*

### 14.1. Introduction

Refugees and migrants who undertake the journey to and through Libya move in response to a diverse range of factors, including seeking refuge from war, conflict and crisis, and political oppression; seeking out a better future as part of a livelihood strategy; sending financial remittances to support their kin back home; and/or pursuing their aspirations.<sup>3</sup> Their mixed migration<sup>4</sup> journeys can be long and perilous and, over the past few years, news outlets, non-governmental organizations and watchdogs have extensively documented the dangers they face along the route and inside Libya.<sup>5</sup>

In 2018, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) published a detailed account of human rights abuses in Libya, including physical and sexual abuse, torture and unlawful killings, as well as arbitrary detention from criminal gangs, traffickers, armed groups, smugglers and State officials. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report *Desperate Journeys* (2018) found that “the vast majority of women and girls, as well as many men and boys had been victims of torture and sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual assault and rape, sometimes by multiple perpetrators”, during their journeys (UNHCR, 2018:19). UNSMIL reported serious violations within detention centres in

<sup>1</sup> Special thanks to Adam Lichtenheld, PhD, and Jean-Luc Jucker, PhD, for their inputs on the methodological design; Ayla Bonfiglio, PhD, for her review and feedback; and Imen Aouani, Maxime Giraudet and Amara Markous for implementing Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4M) data collection in Libya, and for data cleaning and validation.

<sup>2</sup> Mixed Migration Centre.

<sup>3</sup> More information can be found in Teppert, Cottone and Rossi, Chapter 5 of this volume, which outlines key migration trends in Libya.

<sup>4</sup> The [Mixed Migration Centre](#) defines mixed migration as cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have different legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Amnesty International (2018); OHCHR (2016); IOM (2019); or UNHCR and MMC (2020). See also Black, Chapter 12 of this volume; Bartolini and Zakoska-Todorovska, Chapter 15 of this volume; and Murphy-Teixidor, Bonfiglio and Leigh, Chapter 17 of this volume.

Libya, including poor sanitary conditions; overcrowding; lack of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities; denial of contact with the outside world and medical care; along with protection and human rights violations such as forced labour, sexual violence and physical violence, including torture (UNSMIL and OHCHR, 2018). Furthermore, several reports from United Nations (UN) organizations, as well as news media, have revealed migrants and refugees being sold and forced into slavery in Libya (IOM, 2017; CNN, 2017). These protection incidents were mapped along mixed migration routes to and through the country further highlighting the extent of human rights abuses in a 2020 UNHCR and MMC report *On this Journey, No One Cares if You Live or Die*.

While the above reports underscore that refugees and migrants face a variety of protection incidents and human rights abuses during their journeys to and through Libya, there is still limited understanding about the factors that determine vulnerability and why certain migrants are more likely to experience such abuses. IOM's (2019) migrant vulnerability model conceptualizes vulnerability as a function of individual, household, community, and macro-level factors. ICMPD (2019) similarly examines vulnerability in terms of personal, contextual, and situational factors, with vulnerability being equated with susceptibility to trafficking and other abuses. OHCHR (2017), by contrast, understands vulnerability as being unable to enjoy basic rights and being at risk of violations and abuse. A dearth of detailed, quantitative data has made it difficult to estimate the extent and the distribution of protection incidents in Libya. This chapter attempts to address this gap by analysing a unique data set with 5,659 interviews from refugees and migrants who have moved to Libya from countries in West, Central and East Africa. More specifically, it analyses the demographic, social and economic determinants of vulnerability to protection incidents within Libya for people moving along mixed migration routes, to learn what makes them more or less vulnerable. For the purposes of this study, protection incidents or violations<sup>6</sup> include physical abuse, sexual abuse, kidnapping, detention, robbery and witnessing another migrant's death.

This chapter provides a model to determine the likelihood of experiencing a protection incident across different socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of respondents sampled in Libya.<sup>7</sup> The analysis herein has implications for protection programming and other human rights stakeholders operating in Libya. This chapter is structured as follows: Section 14.2 presents an overview of the methodology and outlines the data used, the estimation strategy and methodological limitations. Section 14.3 illustrates some descriptive statistics of the data included in the analysis. Section 14.4 presents the results, drawing on quantitative data collected by the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi)<sup>8</sup> from refugees and migrants in Libya. After a discussion in Section 14.4, section 14.5 presents the implications of the research.

## 14.2. Methodology

### 14.2.1. Data, sampling and data collection

This chapter analyses quantitative data collected by the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) through its data collection project, 4Mi.<sup>9</sup> This project collects data on refugees and migrants while they are on the move. Surveys contain a series of structured questions related to the profiles of refugees and migrants, their routes, protection incidents along the route, the needs of migrants and assistance received, among other variables. In the protection module of the survey, respondents are asked about a series of protection incidents, including sexual abuse, physical abuse, kidnapping, robbery, detention and migrant deaths. When asked about sexual abuse on the journey, the number reported describes the number (or percentage, where applicable) of respondents who experienced or witnessed the incident. The decision was taken to phrase the question in this way to reduce potential harm posed by asking

<sup>6</sup> Sexual abuse reports the share of respondents having experienced or witnessed the incident – as opposed to only experience. Death reports the share of respondents who have witnessed a fellow migrant's death. Physical abuse, kidnapping, robberies and detention account for the direct experience of the migrant surveyed.

<sup>7</sup> The basis for this model is the study *What makes refugees and migrants vulnerable to detention in Libya? A microlevel study of the determinants of detention* (Mixed Migration Centre, 2019a). For the full report examining vulnerability to protection incidences in Libya, see *What makes refugees and migrants vulnerable to protection incidents in Libya* (MMC, 2020).

<sup>8</sup> For more information about 4Mi, visit [www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/](http://www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/) (accessed 1 April 2020).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

respondents directly if they have experienced sexual abuse. The variable on migrant deaths reports the number of respondents who have witnessed a fellow migrant's death, given that this figure cannot be reported directly. On the other hand, incidents of physical abuse, kidnapping, robberies and detention describe the direct experience of the migrant surveyed. Surveys also include an open-ended question in which many individuals report human rights abuses along their journey. The data set upon which this chapter is based includes 5,659 surveys with refugees and migrants<sup>10</sup> in Libya conducted from May 2017 to October 2019.

Given the difficulties in collecting data on people on the move, the sensitivity of the topic and security concerns in Libya, 4Mi employs a non-randomized, purposive sampling strategy. Survey respondents are primarily identified through snowball sampling, seeking respondents 18 years of age and older, a balance between the number of male and female respondents, as well as diversity in terms of origin country. No distinction is made in sampling between migrants in regular or irregular situations, asylum seekers and refugees, in an effort to include all groups in the sample. Moreover, because 4Mi focuses on refugees and migrants who are on the move, and not settled migrant communities, it excludes from the sample long-term migrants and/or those who have been continuously living in Libya for more than two years. Thus, the findings of this study are limited to this more mobile population and, when considering the start of 4Mi data collection, arrivals to Libya since 2015. More broadly, because of the non-randomized nature of sampling, the findings should be read with caution and not generalized beyond the sampled refugees and migrants.

Data for 4Mi are collected through enumerators who are refugees and migrants themselves, which enables unique access to migrant communities. Enumerators are chosen in part based on their country of origin being among the more represented refugee and migrant populations in the country and may be subject to change overtime. Enumerators are deployed to known migration “nodes” and “hotspots” – urban centres, border areas and along transit routes – where there is a large presence of people on the move. To improve the diversity of the sample, enumerators vary their contact points. Several measures are implemented to ensure data validity and quality. First, Project and Information Management Officers supervise the enumerators and hold monthly Skype calls to discuss quality and data collection issues. Second, the Information Management Officer review all survey data to ensure quality control, based on checking (a) the time taken to complete the survey, (b) the location where the survey was recorded, (c) the quality of the completed survey, and (d) identification of repetitive responses and outliers. Third, Project and Information Management Officers conduct ad hoc spot checks on enumerators to ensure compliance with data collection protocols. Any submitted questionnaire that does not meet the data quality requirements is discarded. Respondents are informed that their answers remain confidential; no information is collected on respondents' names and other personally identifying data. Participants are also informed that they can withdraw at any time during the interview. Fourth, enumerators receive extensive training before they begin data collection.

### 14.2.2. Estimation strategy

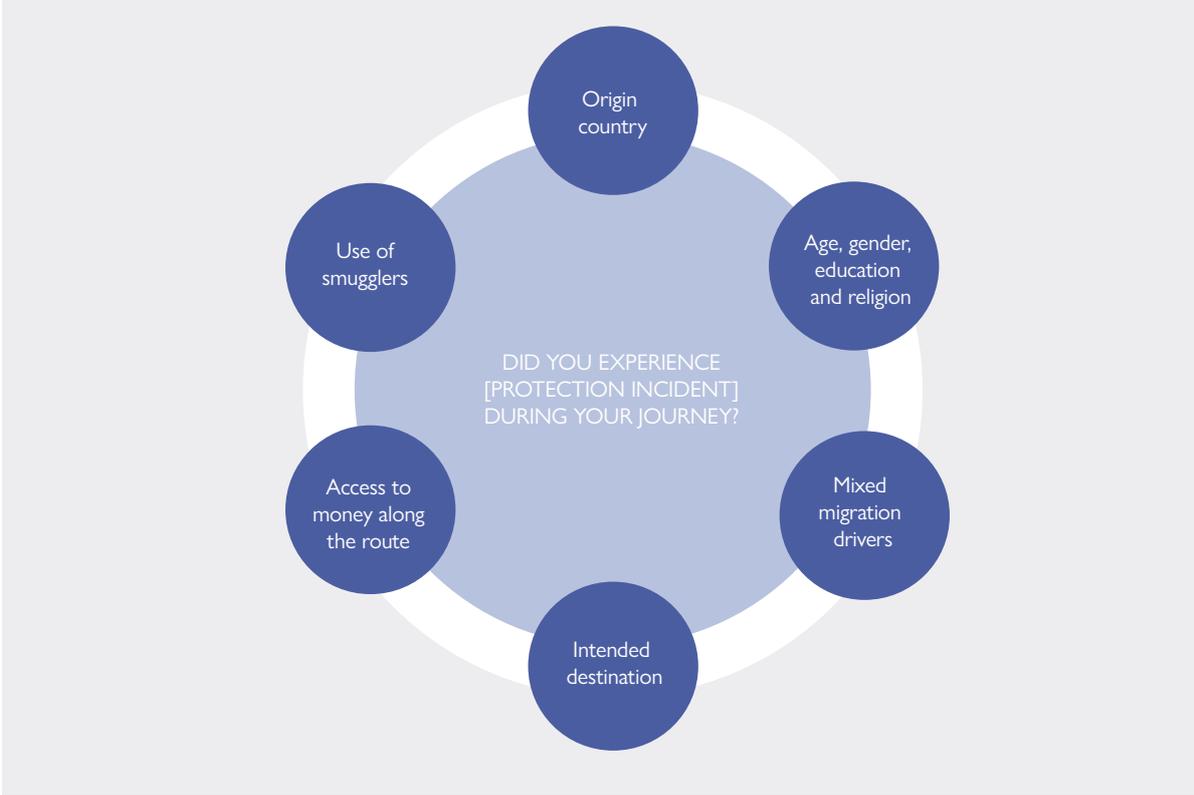
This chapter sets out to investigate the demographic and socioeconomic determinants of protection vulnerability. More specifically, it investigates the impact of a range of demographic, social, economic and political factors on people's likelihood to experience a protection incident. The main variable of interest is based on the question: Did you experience [protection incident] during your journey? The protection incidents analysed in this chapter are whether the respondent experienced physical abuse, robbery, kidnapping and detention, and whether they witnessed/experienced sexual abuse as well as witnessed another migrant's death.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Libya is neither a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention nor its 1967 Protocol, however, the country did ratify the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in 1985 and 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa in 1981, which recognize the right to seek and receive asylum while also prohibiting expulsions. In 2010, the government introduced Law No. 19, which marked a shift toward the criminalization of migration in Libya. Under Law No. 19, migrants who enter the country illegally – which includes refugees and asylum seekers – are at risk of detention and forced labor for an undefined period of time, after which they are expelled from the country. With Libya's domestic legislation focused on combatting “illegal migration” and its weak support of international asylum norms, every refugee and migrant who enters the country irregularly risks the violation of their rights to protection. Although UNHCR is not formally recognized by the Government, it has been allowed to register people of nine nationalities as persons of concerns.

<sup>11</sup> The exact questions asked were: (a) Did you experience any physical abuse or harassment (of a non-sexual nature) during your journey? (b) Have you been kidnapped or otherwise held against your will during your journey? (c) Have you ever been robbed during your journey? (d) Have you been detained by the police, military, militia or immigration officials during your journey? (e) Did you witness or experience any sexual assault or harassment during your journey? (f) Did you witness any migrant deaths during your journey?

To identify the effect of these variables on vulnerability to protection incidents, regression analysis was undertaken, which allows the researcher to hold confounding factors constant in the model. Estimations were conducted with several models to ensure robustness. The first model applied was a logistic regression model which considers the binary outcome variable (if the respondents have experienced any protection incident or not). Secondly, an ordinary least squares (OLS) model was estimated which considers the number of protection incidents respondents faced.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 14.1.** Analytical model



Source: 4Mi survey.

### 14.2.3. Predictors of vulnerability

We investigate whether demographics such as gender, age, religion, origin country<sup>13</sup> and education make refugees and migrants less or more vulnerable to protection incidents, as well as respondents' use of and interaction with smugglers<sup>14</sup> can potentially affect the likelihood of experiencing protection incidents. As shown in Chapter 17 of this of this volume (Murphy-Teixidor, Bonfiglio and Leigh), smugglers are the main cited perpetrators of protection incidents in Libya.<sup>15</sup> Since most respondents reported using smugglers to facilitate their journeys, we cannot investigate if the use of smugglers as such has an impact. However, we can investigate if the payment arrangements with smugglers affect the respondents' likelihood of experiencing protection incidents, which includes the timing of payments. More specifically, we investigate if paying one's smuggler on arrival, departure or by working along the journey (and paying-as-you-go)affects the likelihood of experiencing protection incidents. We also investigate if people who migrated due to factors related to violence, insecurity and persecution are more or less vulnerable to

<sup>12</sup> We also experiment by estimating Poisson models, to further assess the robustness of the result.  
<sup>13</sup> Here we use origin country and nationality interchangeably as respondents both started their journey and held the nationality of the specified country.  
<sup>14</sup> For the purpose of this work, the term "smuggler" refers to someone who is engaged in the smuggling sector, namely whoever facilitates the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident (Palermo Protocols of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime).  
<sup>15</sup> See, for example, MMC (2019b).

protection violations. The assumption here is that past experience with persecution and/or protection incidents may make refugees and migrants more likely to experience protection incidents in Libya. Finally, we analyse if refugees' and migrants' intended destinations, as well as as well as the way in which they accessed money along the route to and within Libya play a role.

#### 14.2.4. Control strategy

The 4Mi data set provides the basis for a rigorous regression model. Other than the independent variables of main interest stated above, the authors controlled for additional variables that might affect vulnerability to protection incidents. The researchers distinguished between given demographics versus family factors, as well as variables that are connected to social status. The estimated models incorporate these different sets of variables systematically to analyse the robustness of the result. "Given demographics" variables include nationality, gender, age and religion. "Family factors" include number of children and marital status of the respondent. "Social status" relates to the level of education obtained by the respondent, previous sector of employment (or unemployment), and the urban classification of the respondent's home in their origin country (rural, semi-urban or urban area). Lastly, each model controls for journey length<sup>16</sup> to account for differences in "exposure time" and location of interview within Libya to control for heterogeneity. Location of interview is important to control for since the different locations will capture differences in geographical places our respondents have visited.

This strategy enables the researchers to isolate the effect of the variables of interest, while holding other factors constant. For example, variables related to "social status" might simultaneously affect vulnerability and the independent variable under investigation, thus biasing the result if "social status" is not controlled for. The aforementioned control strategy will therefore enable us to investigate the relationship between the variables of interest, while holding factors related to given demographics, family factors and social status constant. However, as further discussed later in the chapter, when analysing phenomena as complex as mixed migration trends, there are potentially a great number of variables that can bias the result and cannot be controlled for. For example, in the case of "social status", one can imagine that wealth drives both vulnerability to protection incidents and education. Unfortunately, the 4Mi survey does not capture such information, and omitted variable bias cannot be excluded.

#### 14.2.5. Limitations

There are a number of potential biases in the presented analysis. Firstly, and most importantly, is the formulation of the survey questions surrounding protection. While accounts of physical abuse, kidnapping, robberies and detention account for the direct experience of the migrants surveyed, reports of sexual abuse and migrant death cannot be directly linked with respondents, given the nature of the question formulation.<sup>17</sup> It is therefore possible that the results of sexual abuse and death are slight overestimates (for example, if two migrants travelling together witnessed the same migrant death or instance of sexual exploitation). However, it is also likely that, given the stigma around experiencing abuse and an unwillingness to share experiences (or the witnessing) of abuse, the numbers reported through 4Mi are underestimates of actual rates of protection incidents.

Second, the 4Mi sample is not representative of the wider population of people on the move in Libya. Primarily, this is because the total population of irregular migrants is not known, and 4Mi cannot carry out random sampling. Instead, it must rely on snowball sampling and the networks of its enumerators. Comparing 4Mi data with those of IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM),<sup>18</sup> West Africans are overrepresented in the 4Mi data set, while people from North Africa and the Middle East are underrepresented. Non-representativity also stems from the fact that 4Mi has specific inclusion criteria. In particular, the 4Mi sample tries to understand the experiences of refugees and migrants while they are on the move, and so it includes only those who have been in Libya for less than two years. The non-representativeness of our sample has implications for the interpretation of results, and conclusions cannot be drawn about the larger population of people on the move. However, given the difficulties in collecting data of

<sup>16</sup> The log of the months is used in the control strategy.

<sup>17</sup> On sexual abuse, the survey asks whether respondents have witnessed or experienced such abuse, and on deaths, the survey asks whether respondents have witnessed another migrant's death.

<sup>18</sup> However, IOM-DTM data are not necessarily representative either.

people on the move, the 4Mi data set is one of the most rigorous databases which captures unique information of the experiences of refugees and migrants.

Additionally, various and overlapping factors affect the vulnerability of refugees and migrants in Libya, which are not wholly captured by the 4Mi survey. If such factors drive both vulnerability and the independent variables of interest, there is the potential for omitted variable bias. For example, wealth, social class and language might affect vulnerability and at the same time affect education and phone possession. However, while limited in some regards, the regression model controls for many factors related to demographics, family factors and social status. Furthermore, reporting bias, which stems from the fact that the protection incidents are self-reported and not observed, cannot be excluded. Respondents may be reluctant to share their experience of protection incidents with monitors and, therefore, 4Mi faces a risk of underreporting. However, 4Mi attempts to mitigate this risk by conducting the interview with monitors who are part of migrant communities themselves, thus potentially building a feeling of trust and rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee.

Despite the limitations of this analysis and the resulting need to treat results with caution, it is also important to acknowledge that the 4Mi survey is one of the few attempts to collect large quantitative data of people on the move in difficult-to-reach contexts. The survey enables researchers to build advanced regression models to analyse refugee and migrant vulnerability. It is important to highlight that, while the results presented here do not extend to larger refugee and migrant communities in Libya, they can still provide some basis for evidence-based programming for protection organizations in Libya.

## 14.3. Results

### 14.3.1. Prevalence of protection incidents by gender and nationality

Data from 4Mi reveal that 37 per cent of all surveyed individuals experienced one or more protection incidents within Libya (3,634 total incidences from May 2017 to October 2019).<sup>19</sup> This number is remarkably high, and it supports previous reports that suggest that the situation for refugees and migrants within Libya is acute. Physical abuse is the most prevalent protection incident reported by both men and women, with 21 per cent of the total sample answering “Yes” to the question “Did you experience any physical abuse or harassment (of a non-sexual nature) during your journey?” The second most-cited protection incident reported is robbery (14%) followed by detention, death and sexual abuse, each at 12 per cent. Respondents reported 542 incidents of detention, and 248 incidents of kidnapping. Some 450 individuals have witnessed a fellow migrant’s death during the reporting period.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, 5 per cent of the whole sample reported having been kidnapped.<sup>21</sup>

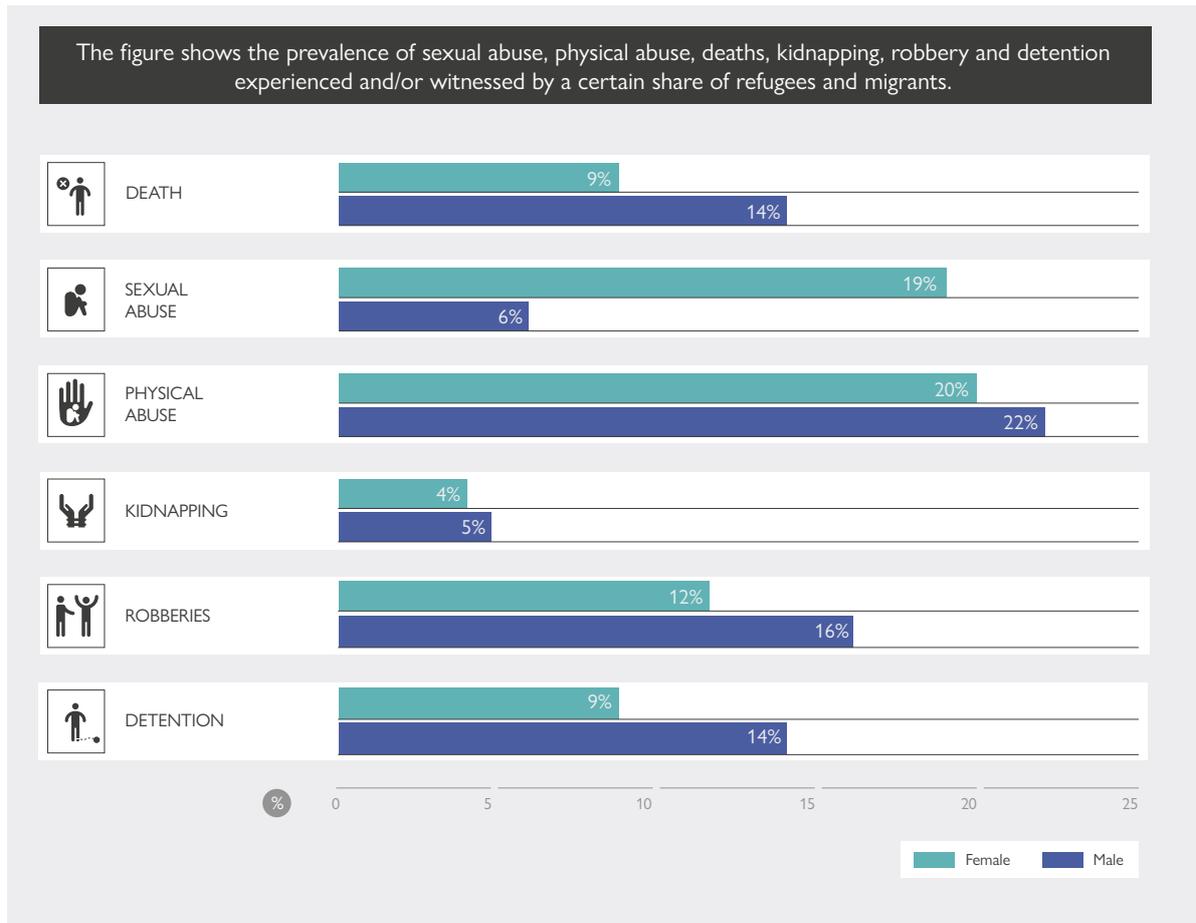
Figure 14.2 displays the share of refugees and migrants experiencing and/or witnessing different protection incidents, disaggregated by gender. More specifically, it shows the prevalence of sexual abuse, physical abuse, deaths, kidnapping, robbery and detention. When considering only the females in the sample, sexual abuse stands out, with 19 per cent of the female respondents having experienced/witnessed sexual abuse, compared with 6 per cent of their male counterparts.

<sup>19</sup> Overall in the 4Mi sample, 56 per cent of the respondents are men, while 44 per cent are women. The majority of the respondents originate from countries in West Africa (69%), while 19.5 per cent originate from East Africa and 11.5 per cent from Central Africa. The average age of our respondents is 30 years.

<sup>20</sup> The 4Mi data on deaths are used by IOM in the Missing Migrant Project.

<sup>21</sup> Sexual abuse reports the share of respondents having experienced or witnessed the incident – as opposed to only experience. Death reports the share of respondents who have witnessed a fellow migrant’s death.

**Figure 14.2.** Prevalence of protection incidents by gender (n=5,659)<sup>22</sup>



Source: 4Mi survey.

A few key trends emerge when analysing vulnerability to protection incidents across nationality.<sup>23</sup> Of all surveyed nationalities, Eritreans most commonly reported experiencing protection incidents at 70 per cent of 365 respondents. The particular vulnerability faced by Eritreans in Libya has been widely documented by human rights organizations ([Human Rights Watch, 2019](#); [Amnesty International, 2016](#)). Of the refugees and migrants coming from neighbouring countries, nearly half (49%) of surveyed Sudanese (n=627), 40 per cent of Chadian (n=312), and 30 per cent of Nigerian respondents (n=301) reported experiencing a protection incident in Libya.<sup>24</sup> Among West Africans, Nigerians (31%, n=2,107), Beninese (26%, n=134) and Cameroonians (21%, n=265) more often reported experiencing a protection incident in comparison to their Ivorian (18%, n=150), Burkinabe (16%, n=343), Malian (16%, n=147), and Ghanaian (15%, n=526) peers.

### 14.3.2. Prevalence of protection incidents by location

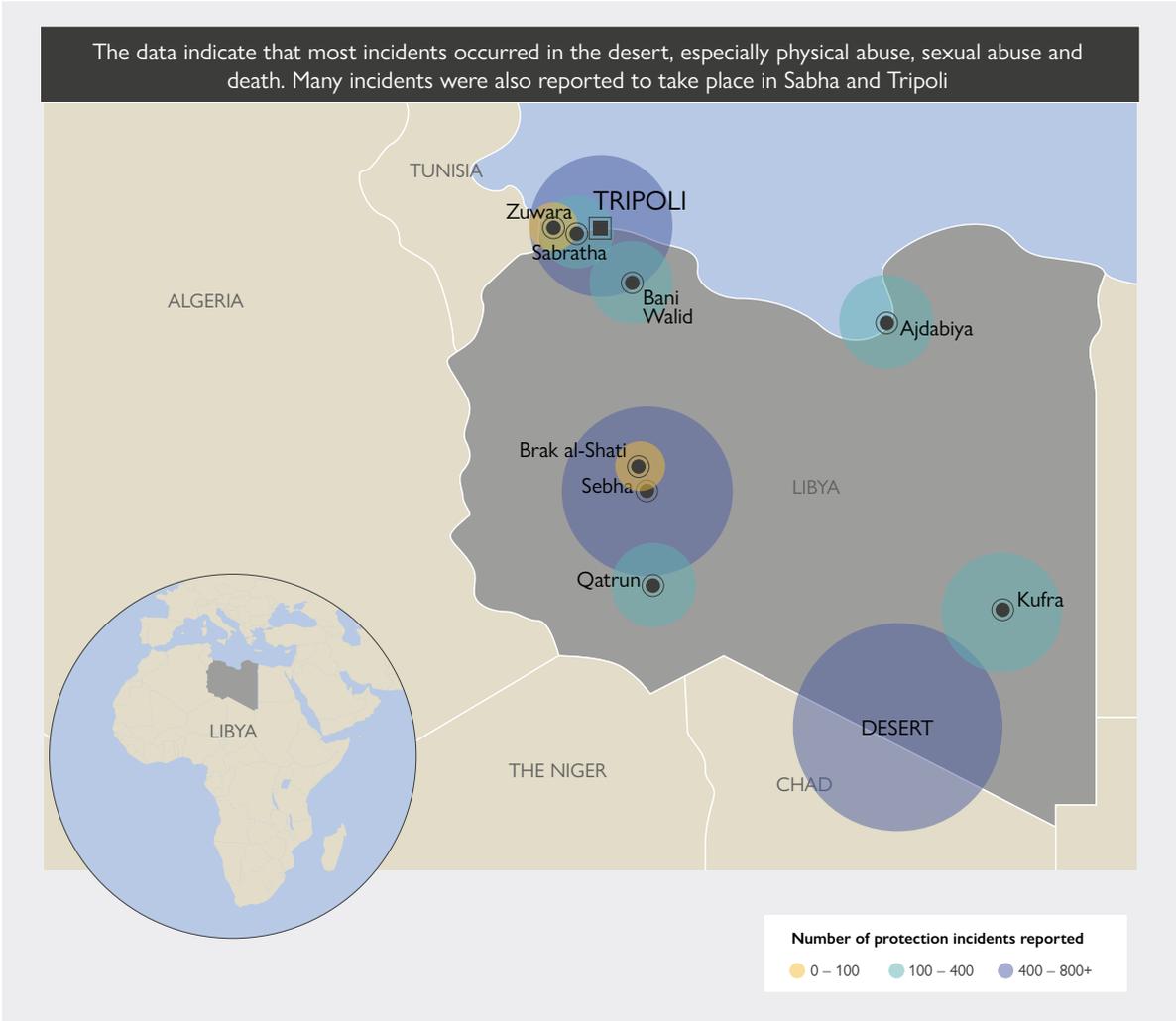
Figures 14.3 and 14.4 display where in Libya the protection incidents occurred for respondents, with the former mapping total incidents across Libya and the latter revealing the exact breakdown of type of protection incidents per location. It must be noted that where incidents are reported to occur is impacted by the location of interviews and the routes that respondent took to and through Libya.

<sup>22</sup> A total of 56 per cent of the respondents are men (n=3,169), while 44 per cent are women (n=2,490).

<sup>23</sup> Only nationalities with more than 100 respondents in the sample are included in the analysis.

<sup>24</sup> Ethiopian and Somali respondents were excluded from the analysis given their low sample size numbers. While results should be taken with caution, 46 of 63 surveyed Ethiopians and 17 of 21 surveyed Somalis cited experiencing a protection incident.

**Figure 14.3.** Map of incidents in Libya reported in the 4Mi survey



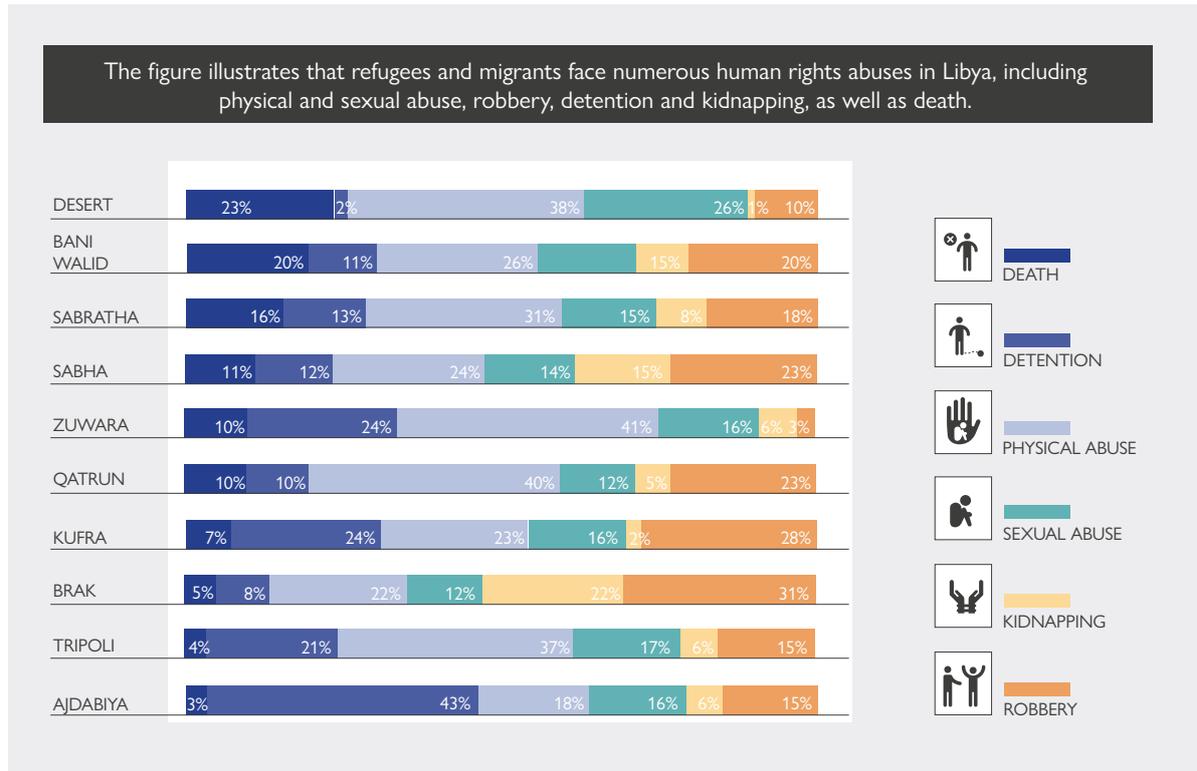
Source: 4Mi survey.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

The data indicate that most incidents occurred in the desert, especially physical abuse, sexual abuse and death. Many incidents were also reported to take place in Sabha and Tripoli.<sup>25</sup> This aligns with the findings of a recent reports (UNHCR, 2018; UNHCR and MMC, 2020), which suggests that the desert is a particularly dangerous place (see also Black, Chapter 12 of this volume).

<sup>25</sup> Note that the reported locations of incidents depend largely upon location of interview. Comparison between locations might therefore be misleading.

**Figure 14.4.** Type of incidents per city/location



Overall, the accounts above illustrate that refugees and migrants face numerous human rights abuses in Libya, including physical and sexual abuse, robbery, detention and kidnapping, as well as death. In the following section, we turn our focus to the main independent variables of interest to investigate what factors make people on the move vulnerable to protection incidents.

### 14.3.3. Results on the factors that impact protection vulnerability in Libya

Table 14.1 summarizes the main insights using different statistical estimations. The first column displays the variables we investigate, while the second column, “Association”, indicates the effect of that variable on the likelihood of experiencing protection incidents in Libya. A positive sign indicates an increased likelihood of experiencing protection incidents, while a negative sign suggests that the variable would likely make the respondent less vulnerable to the cited protection incidents. The third column provides a short narrative and potential explanation for the result.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> This is a shortened version of a longer analysis to be published by MMC in 2020.

**Table 14.1.** Factors that determine vulnerability to protection incidents

Variables	Association	Explanation
<b>Nationality</b>	Nigerian: Positive (***) Sudanese: ~ Ghanaian: Negative (**) Eritrean: Positive (***) Burkinabe: Negative (***)	When individually examining the five most prevalent nationalities of surveyed refugees and migrants vis-a-vis all other migrants within the sample, all models show a positive and highly significant coefficient on “Nigerian” and “Eritrean.” The specific vulnerability of Eritreans has often been suggested in the literature, and research undertaken by MMC also suggests that Nigerian women may be vulnerable to experiencing sexual abuse as numerous respondents have detailed experiences of international sex trafficking within Libya.
<b>Muslim</b>	~	We do not have a clear finding regarding religion, and we can therefore not claim that Christians are more vulnerable to experiencing protection incidents, as has often been suggested in the literature.
<b>Male</b>	Positive (***)	In all the regressions, the coefficient on male is positive and highly significant, which suggests that men are more vulnerable compared with women. However, women are considerably more likely to experience/witness sexual abuse compared with men.
<b>Age</b>	Negative (***)	The coefficient on age is negative and significant in all the models, which indicates that younger people are more vulnerable than older people.
<b>Education</b>	Positive (***)	In all the specified models, having an education – as opposed to having no education – seems to increase vulnerability to protection incidents, which is in contrast to the hypothesis. However, as more controls are incorporated, the effect seems to decrease, especially for vocational and tertiary education. The result should be treated with a high degree of caution, since there are several potential biases. For example, we are not able to control for wealth and other factors that could drive both vulnerability and education, which leads to an omitted variable bias. Secondly, educated respondents might be more inclined to report incidents compared with less educated respondents. Overall, it is plausible that people with education are more vulnerable – not necessarily because of education, but because of other factors that are correlated with both education and protection vulnerability. This might suggest that educated people are more vulnerable due to financial resources, rather than their education.
<b>Payment arrangement to smuggler</b> <i>Payment at departure</i> <i>Half at departure and half at arrival</i> <i>Payment at arrival</i>  <i>Payment through work</i>	~ Negative (***)  Negative (***) (loses significance in the OLS model) Positive (***)	The result clearly shows that: the timing of smuggler payment matters. The table suggests that refugees and migrants who pay their smuggler on arrival at the destination, or half on departure and half on arrival are less vulnerable as compared with those who pay up front. People who work throughout the journey to pay the smuggler seem to be particularly vulnerable. Paying the smuggler upon arrival or having agreed to pay half before and half after might therefore reduce vulnerability along the migration journey, as it gives the smuggler an economic incentive to facilitate a safe journey.
<b>Violence, war and a lack of rights as a migration driver</b>	Negative (***)	The result indicates, surprisingly, that people who cited war, violence or persecution as a mixed migration driver were significantly less vulnerable to experiencing protection incidents. We can therefore not say that people who migrated because of violence, insecurity and persecution are more vulnerable to protection abuses within Libya.

Variables	Association	Explanation
<b>Access to money</b>		The result illustrates that those who worked during their journey were considerably more vulnerable compared with those who did not. While this could also be due to linked socioeconomic factors, the data were not able to distinguish among these factors. Accordingly, those who used digital means of accessing money were less vulnerable compared with those who did not. The conclusion is therefore that people with secure ways of accessing money are less vulnerable compared with those who are working along the journey. The result is significant and holds when other factors are held constant.
<i>Carrying cash</i>	~	
<i>Work along the journey</i>	Positive (***)	
<i>Digital money transfer</i>	Negative (***)	

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\*p<0.05, \* p<0.1

## 14.4. Discussion

Data from 4Mi reveal that 37 per cent of all surveyed individuals experienced one or more protection incidents within Libya. The number is remarkably high and supports previous reports that suggest that the situation for refugees and migrants within Libya is critical. Physical abuse is the most prevalent protection incident reported by both men and women, experienced by 21 per cent of the respondents. The second most-cited protection incident reported is robbery (14%) followed by detention, death and sexual abuse, each at 12 per cent. A total of 5 per cent of the whole sample reported having been kidnapped. The data reveal specific gender dynamics in protection, in that sexual abuse is more prevalent for women, with 19 per cent of the female respondents having experienced/ witnessed sexual abuse, compared with 6 per cent for male respondents. Based on the fact that refugee and migrant respondents who are interviewed by 4Mi had been in Libya for less than two years, future research should determine whether short-term versus longer-term stay is itself a factor that determines vulnerability, as exploratory research does in Chapter 17 of this volume. It is possible that, given their short stay in Libya, 4Mi respondents are less integrated into Libyan communities, and therefore may be more vulnerable than migrants who have settled in Libya. Moreover, as protection may be linked with movement aspiration, future MMC work will examine how the effect of aspiring to onward movement from Libya impacts protection vulnerability, in comparison with refugees and migrants who intend to stay in Libya.

The regression analysis provides further insight into that factors that determine vulnerability. Nationality seems to play a large role in respondents' vulnerability to protection incidents. Respondents from Nigeria and Eritrea were significantly more vulnerable than their peers, even when a large number of control variables were considered. Additionally, men were overall found to be more vulnerable compared with women, except in relation to witnessing or experiencing abuse. The model, however, does not reveal that religion played a role in vulnerability, and thus we found no evidence that Christians were more vulnerable to experiencing protection incidents, as has often been highlighted in the literature. Moreover, respondents who migrated due to factors related to war, violence and a lack of rights were not found to be more vulnerable compared with those who migrated for other reasons (such as economic, familial and environmental, among others). Finally, the way in which refugees and migrants arranged payments to their smuggler, and how they accessed money along the journey matters. Specifically, those who worked along the journey to access money or to pay their smuggler fee were considerably more vulnerable, compared to those with secure ways of accessing money. Paying the smuggler upon arrival or having agreed to pay half at departure and half upon arrival decreased the vulnerability of our respondents. Such payment arrangements might therefore reduce vulnerability along the migration journey, as it gives the smuggler an economic incentive to facilitate a safe journey and might therefore be a strategy to mitigate protection vulnerabilities.

## 14.5. Implications

The results of this research have various implications for protection responses within Libya, both for programming and policy.

### 14.5.1. For programming

- **Use a route-based approach to develop and implement protection programming.** The research presented suggests that Eritreans and Nigerians are among the most vulnerable, and thus programming for these target groups should be undertaken in Libya, and in origin and transit countries (including Arabic language training or information campaigns on risks associated with carrying cash while migrating) to reduce refugees' and migrants' vulnerabilities before they arrive to Libya.
- **Provide gender-sensitive programming for both female and male refugees and migrants, particularly in regard to sexual exploitation and abuse.** Some 19 per cent of the female respondents experienced/witnessed sexual abuse.
- **Geographically tailor protection programming.** The findings suggest that the majority of incidents occurred in the desert (Kufra district), especially physical abuse, sexual abuse and witnessing migrant death. Many protection incidents were also reported in Sabha and Tripoli. Therefore, protection programming should specifically seek to work in these locations.
- **Expand research and data collection on refugee and migrant protection in Libya.** While this report contributes to understanding the potential factors that may influence refugees' and migrants' vulnerability to protection incidents, there is still a lack of data on protection in Libya. While 4Mi data seek to understand the protection risks of highly mobile populations, they do not account for refugees and migrants who are more settled in Libya and may have very different experiences with protection and human rights violations.

### 14.5.2. For policy

- **Engage local civil society actors and Libyan authorities to promote a domestic legal framework for refugees and migrants that focuses on protection, irrespective of legal status.**
- **Create complementary protection pathways to countries of intended destination through employment schemes and higher education, to create opportunities for safe routes out of Libya, for both migrants as well as refugees.**
- **Place human rights at the centre of all approaches.** The human rights of refugees and migrants should be at the centre of programming and support for Libya, taking into account the OHCHR Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders. These principles recommend that legislative provisions be proportionate and that criminal penalties be applied, where appropriate, for offenses committed against migrants at international borders.

#### Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 and the broader socioeconomic and political impacts of the pandemic have exacerbated the vulnerabilities of refugees and migrants to protection incidents within Libya. 4Mi COVID-19 surveys and key informant data reveal that people on the move are citing multiple and overlapping vulnerabilities due to mobility restrictions, limited access to work and the loss of income, and a perceived increase in discrimination and xenophobia. Refugees and migrants report discrimination both in access to health care and in day-to-day lives, including incidents such as forced detainment of housemaids by employers. Key informant interviews also suggest that within Libya, the impact of the pandemic is being exacerbated by conflict, particularly in Tripoli. A second phase of 4Mi data collection on the impact of COVID-19 on refugees and migrants focuses, among other things, on the extent to which various risks have been exacerbated by COVID-19.



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# 15.

## Vulnerability to exploitation and abuse along the Mediterranean migration routes to Italy

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VULNERABILITIES

**Abstract:** This chapter investigates whether migrants using different routes to reach Italy have different characteristics and what individual risk factors and aggravating contextual factors are associated with higher or lower vulnerability of migrants to a selected set of experiences of abuse, violence and exploitation that might amount to human trafficking. The chapter is based on IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix Flow Monitoring Surveys, conducted with approximately 12,000 migrants aged 14 years or older, who arrived in Italy through different migration routes across the Mediterranean from 2016 to 2018. The results show that age and sex affect the probability of experiencing abuse and exploitation, with younger and male respondents being more vulnerable to direct experiences of unpaid or forced work and of being held against their will.

### 15.1. Introduction and research questions

Migrants' exposure to abuse, exploitation, human trafficking and other human rights violations is well documented along many migration routes. When looking at the mixed migration flows (IOM, 2019) reaching Italy over the last decade, reports from the media, academia, international and civil society organizations, let alone many United Nations agencies, have highlighted an increase in the frequency and scale of violence and abuses suffered by migrants at various levels and points of the journey, and especially in Libya since 2011 (OHCHR and USMIL, 2016, 2018; IOM, 2017; UNHCR, 2018; Council of Europe, 2019; Amnesty International, 2016). With few exceptions, these focus on qualitative and in-depth accounts of violence and abuses, on describing the specific dynamics in a given location and period, or on looking into a selected group of migrants by nationality, age or sex.

<sup>1</sup> Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), IOM Italy, Rome.

<sup>2</sup> DTM, IOM Regional Office, Vienna.

This chapter offers a complementary analysis of migrants' vulnerabilities based mostly on quantitative interviews conducted<sup>3</sup> over three years (2016–2018) with about 12,000 migrant men, women, boys and girls of 55 different nationalities who reached Italy and shared diverse journeys and experiences along the Mediterranean migration routes. Building on existing literature on the topic (Brown, 2011; MMC, 2019), the chapter looks at the individual risk factors and contextual conditions in countries of origin, transit and destination which might determine higher levels of vulnerability of migrants along the journey. In particular, the chapter investigates (a) whether migrants using different routes to reach Italy have different characteristics; and (b) which are the individual risk factors and aggravating contextual factors that are associated with higher or lower levels of vulnerability of migrants to a selected set of experiences of abuse, violence and exploitation that might amount to human trafficking.

As it is based on microsurveys, the report does not factor in, in a quantitative manner, the impact of the many policy changes observed in the Mediterranean region and along the Central Mediterranean Route over the past years, nor can it represent all those who are travelling on that route but did not try to cross the Mediterranean Sea, those who have tried but failed to reach Europe, and those who arrived undetected. This analysis can only give an indication – most likely an underestimation – of vulnerability patterns of all those travelling along the same routes, including those who did not mean to reach Europe<sup>4</sup> and those who tried but did not survive the journey.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows. Section 15.2 describes the available data on the changing profiles of migrants interviewed in Italy between 2016 and 2018, showing how the sample relates to the reference population and its main characteristics in terms of origin, sex, age, migration reasons and intentions. Section 15.3 presents a descriptive and a multivariate analysis of the individual risk factors and journeys' characteristics that are associated with higher vulnerability to the individual experiences of abuse, exploitation and human trafficking included in the survey.

## 15.2. Changing profiles of migrants from 2016 to 2018

### 15.2.1. IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix data

Trends in irregular entries in Italy have been changing over the past years in terms of numbers, main nationalities, profiles and routes taken by those reaching the shores of southern Italy from Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Turkey or Greece, as well as by those entering via the north-eastern border with Slovenia (DTM, 2020).<sup>5</sup> The present analysis is based on IOM DTM's Flow Monitoring Surveys carried out between January 2016 and November 2018, with a total of 12,803 non-European adults and children between 14 and 17 years of age who arrived in Italy no more than one year prior to the survey.<sup>6</sup> The annual samples were adjusted each year to the trends in the reference population of arrivals by sea for which official data are available: 6,485 in 2016, or 4 per cent of arrivals by sea that year; 4,712 in 2017 (or 4% of arrivals); and 1,606 in 2018 (or 7% of arrivals by sea). About 3 per cent of the total sample entered by land via the Western Balkan route, and another 4 per cent arrived by sea departing from Turkey or Greece. The rest of the sample (93%) reported either Libya, Tunisia, Algeria or Egypt as last country of transit before Italy.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The Flow Monitoring Surveys are part of IOM's DTM activities in the Mediterranean region, started in October 2015. The surveys gather information on migrants' profiles, their journeys to Europe, their motivations and intended destinations. The questionnaire also has a module with a set of questions on exploitative practices and abuse personally lived or observed by respondents during the journey. More information can be accessed via DTM's Flow Monitoring Europe Geoportal, available at <https://migration.iom.int/europe?type=arrivals>.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, IOM and WFP (2019).

<sup>5</sup> For an overview of yearly trends on arrivals by sea, check the DTM reports for 2016, (<https://migration.iom.int/reports/europe-%E2%80%94-mixed-migration-flows-europe-mediterranean-digest-january-%E2%80%94-december-2016?close=true>), 2017 (<https://migration.iom.int/reports/europe-%E2%80%94-mixed-migration-flows-europe-yearly-overview-2017?close=true>) and 2018 (<https://migration.iom.int/reports/europe-%E2%80%94-summary-key-results-january-december-2018?close=true>); and the report for the fourth quarter of 2018 (<https://migration.iom.int/reports/europe-%E2%80%94-mixed-migration-flows-europe-quarterly-overview-october-december-2018?close=true>) with breakdown of departure points, and Chapter 4 of this volume (Fedorova and Shupert). Arrivals by land are reported in the media and are confirmed by IOM local presence and its counterparts (local institutions, reception centres and non-profit organizations), but no official data is provided by Italian authorities.

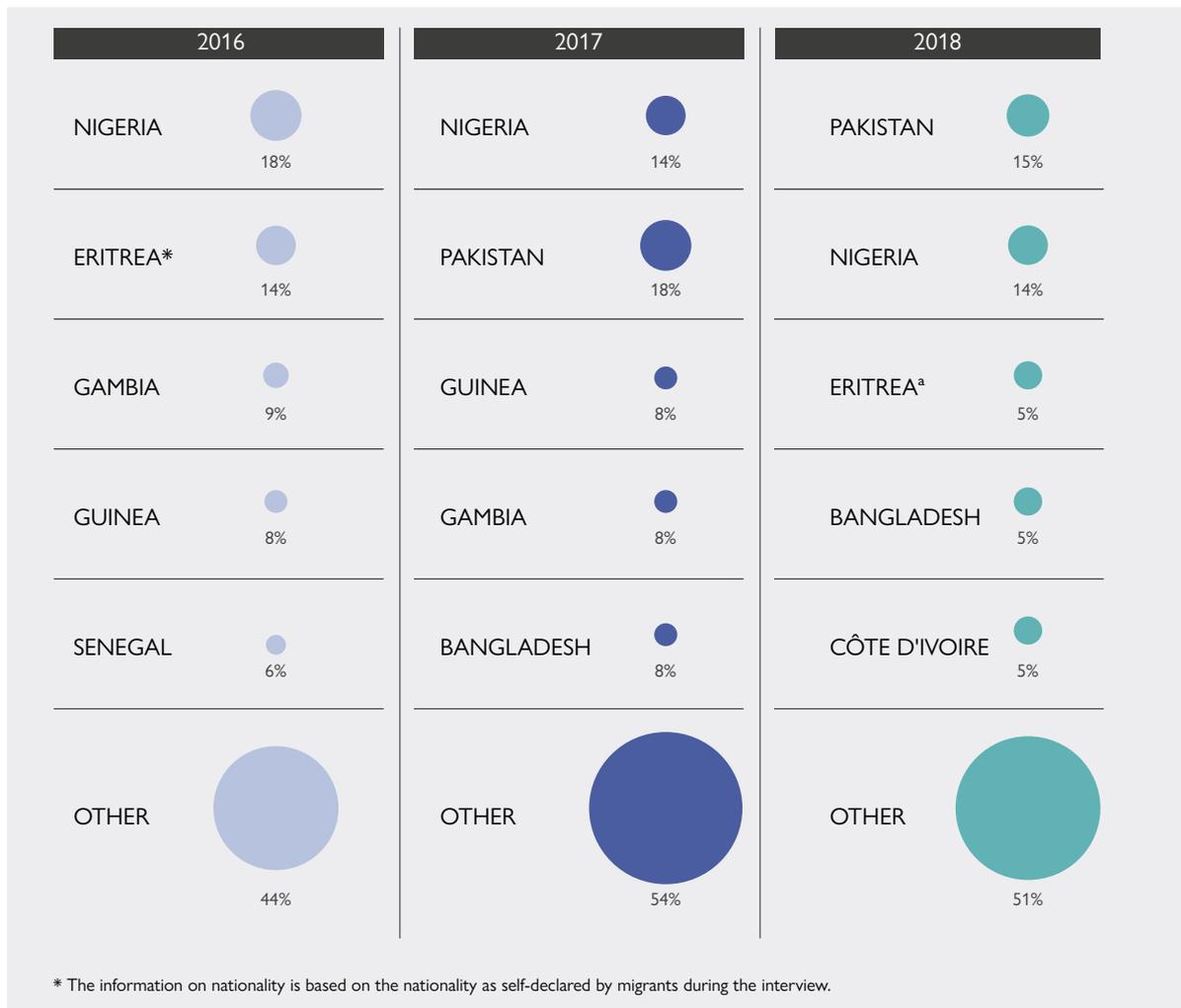
<sup>6</sup> Check Chapter 2 of Galos et al. (2017) for a deeper discussion on sampling criteria.

<sup>7</sup> In 2016, the data collection took place in southern regions only (Sicily, Calabria and Apulia), while in 2017 and 2018 surveys were also gathered in transit points in Lombardy (Milan and Como), Liguria (Ventimiglia) and Friuli Venezia Giulia (Trieste, Gorizia). In 2018, Lazio (Rome, Latina) too was added to account for the internal movements of migrants through Italy. Migrants who met in Friuli Venezia Giulia had often entered Italy by land via Slovenia.

## 15.2.2. Demographic and socioeconomic profiles

The composition of the sample each year by region and country of origin<sup>8</sup> fairly reflects the observed arrival trends in Italy from 2016 to 2018. Migrants and refugees originating from the West Africa region represent most of the sample in 2016 and 2017 (57% and 52%, respectively) and still the biggest group in the 2018 sample (38%), followed by respondents from North African, Southern Asian and Eastern African countries. Similarly, the top countries of origin of respondents change in parallel with changes of main nationalities of arrival by sea from 2016 to 2018, with the exception of an overrepresentation of Pakistani nationals and an underrepresentation of Tunisian nationals, due to fieldwork conditions.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 15.1.** Top 5 countries of origin and other, by year of the survey (%)

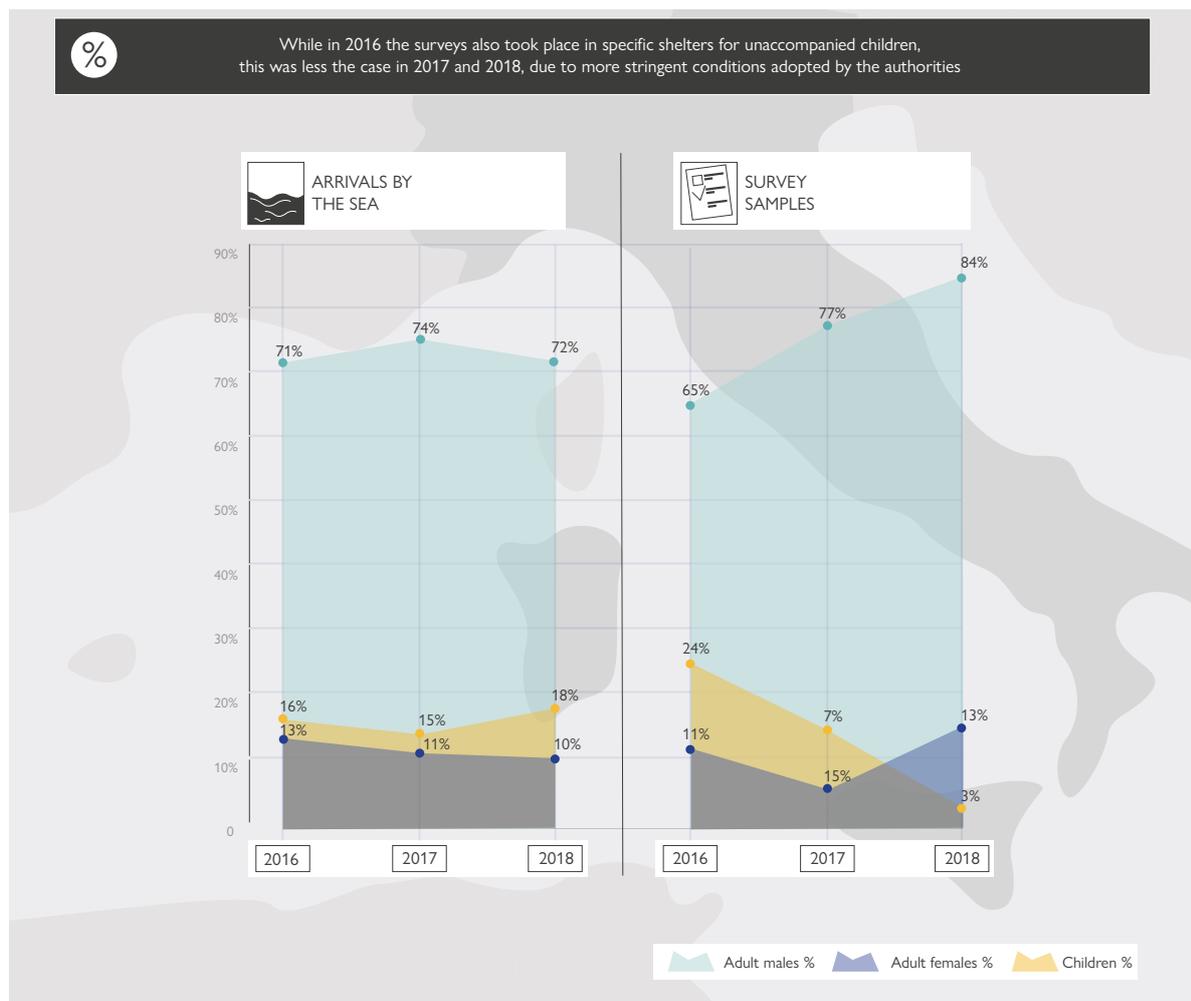


<sup>8</sup> Countries/areas of origin surveyed under each region (based upon the United Nations list of geographical regions) are as follows. Northern Africa: the Sudan, Morocco, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria; West Africa: Nigeria, the Gambia, Guinea, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, the Niger, Togo, Liberia, Benin, Mauritania; Eastern and Horn of Africa: Eritrea,\* Somalia, Ethiopia, the Comoros, South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe; Western Asia: Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic, Palestinian Territories, Turkey, Yemen, Armenia, Azerbaijan; Southern Asia: Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, India, Nepal; Other regions: the Central African Republic, China, Cameroon, the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Chad and Kosovo. (References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).)

<sup>9</sup> See above: Migrants (mostly Pakistanis) met in Friuli Venezia Giulia and often entered Italy via land (not included in statistics of arrival by sea). Also, although locations in Sicily have always been covered by the survey, Tunisians are underrepresented in the sample, as they are more likely to be put in detention centres upon arrival or returned, given the readmission agreement between Italy and Tunisia, and therefore less likely to be met by the data collectors.

Adult males constitute the majority of the sample each year, followed by adult women and children. Although this reflects the composition of arrivals by sea, the sample overrepresents children in 2016 and underrepresents them in 2018. This is mainly due to the uneven distribution of migrants by age and sex in different types of facilities; also, the possibility for interviewers to access centres for unaccompanied migrant children and shelters for women is lower overall than that of accessing shelters for adult men or families.<sup>10</sup> While in 2016 the surveys also took place in specific shelters for unaccompanied children, this was less the case in 2017 and 2018, due to more stringent conditions adopted by the authorities to interview unaccompanied children. Male respondents are slightly younger than female ones on average. Being single was the reported condition in most cases, although female respondents reported being married, divorced or widowed more frequently than their male counterparts.

**Figure 15.2.** Share of arrivals by sea and of DTM survey's respondents in Italy by sex and age, by year (%)



### 15.2.3. Motivations and intentions to migrate

Although DTM surveys have no relation with the determination of the legal status of those reaching Europe – and this is made clear to the respondents – answers on reasons for moving from origin and on the intended country of destination might be somewhat biased by migrants' own perception of what deserves to be declared (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas, 2014). Nevertheless, personal violence or the threat/fear of violence is the most frequently self-reported reason for leaving the origin country each year (between 50% and 60% for the whole sample), followed by war or conflict (around 20%), economic and other reasons (around 20%). Fieldwork notes

<sup>10</sup> Not only are women a minority of arrivals by sea, they are also more likely to be sent to medical centres upon arrival for health checks (for example, in case of pregnancies or miscarriages) and some are placed in specific protection centres for victims of trafficking, which were not covered by DTM surveys.

and comments by the respondents reveal a wide variation of motivations and personal circumstances behind the “personal violence” response. Family issues of various kinds are frequently reported: domestic violence by partners, siblings or other relatives; opposition of the family to interfaith marriages; intention to avoid female genital mutilation for the respondent or for the respondent’s daughter(s); and the need to escape persecution and punishment by the family or extended community caused by the respondent’s sexual orientation or gender identity. In addition, men reported the avoidance of indefinite military conscription and cases of fights over the inheritance of land for farming or animal husbandry, often after the death of the father, as main reasons to leave, indicating a mix of economic and survival reasons.

Italy is the most frequently reported country of intended destination, although it declined from 54 per cent in 2016 to 27 per cent in 2018 among males, and from 42 per cent in 2016 to 22 per cent in 2018 among females. It was followed by Europe as a whole (almost 10% for the whole sample) and by many other European countries (including Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Switzerland). Libya is also mentioned by a not negligible share of the sample as initial intended destination, especially among men (around 7%). Very few respondents declared having close relatives already residing in the intended country of destination (below 5% in the three years), while some others (15% in 2016, 7% in 2017 and 17% in 2018) reported to have non-first-line<sup>11</sup> relatives at destination.

#### 15.2.4. The journey

Most respondents each year reported having travelled alone, although women reported more frequently than men having travelled with at least one family member. The questionnaire gathered information on transit countries since departure from the origin country or the country where the respondent spent one year or more before resuming the journey towards Europe.

The time spent in transit<sup>12</sup> increased on average from 2016 to 2018 for all migrants, with very few migrants reporting journeys shorter than one month and increasingly higher shares reporting to have spent more than six months in transit.

Moreover, the number of those reporting having stopped for one year or more in a country different from theirs increased each year, to up to more than half of the sample in 2018. Again, this is mainly associated with the increased frequency of unforeseen and sometimes forced long stops in Libya, before embarking to cross the Mediterranean Sea, but long stays in Algeria, Ethiopia, the Sudan or Turkey were also reported.

The necessity of collecting money, either by working or by waiting for support from relatives to pay for further legs of the journey, being held by smugglers in hidden places, having been kidnapped or having been detained by different groups, are among the most cited reasons for long stops. From respondents’ accounts, the time spent in transit and the number of stops made during the journey can either be the cause or the effect of exploitative experiences lived during the journey.

#### 15.2.5. Reported experiences along the journey: trends in human trafficking, exploitation and abuse

Between 66 and 77 per cent of respondents each year answered “yes” to at least one of the four questions relative to direct experiences of exploitation and abuse included in the survey:<sup>13</sup> individual experiences of (a) work without payment, (b) forced work, (c) having been held against one’s will, and (d) having been offered an arranged marriage. This composite measure is used to show the overall level of vulnerability to abuse, exploitation and human trafficking expressed by respondents.

<sup>11</sup> First-line relatives include parents, siblings and children.

<sup>12</sup> This is a calculated variable, which is the sum of days spent in each of the reported transit countries, from departure to arrival in the survey country.

<sup>13</sup> Questions included in the DTM survey were formulated on the basis of IOM experience in protection activities with migrants along the migration routes to Europe as well as of numerous media and research reports. A question on direct experiences of physical violence was piloted in 2017 in Italy and then applied in all DTM Mediterranean countries from 2018. A question on sexual violence was also piloted in 2017 and formulated in a non-direct way in consideration of the sensitivity of the issue for survivors.

Moreover, more than two thirds of the sample in 2017 and 2018 reported having had direct experience of physical violence. Although physical violence as a single experience is not considered among the indicators of human trafficking or exploitation, its presence – in combination with other indicators – points to control mechanisms that are typical of individuals suffering from exploitation and are victims or at risk of human trafficking.

Finally, almost one third of the respondents in 2017 and 2018 reported that they had witnessed threats of sexual violence made to others during the journey. Especially in the case of Libya, respondents of both sexes reported experiences that involved male and female fellow migrants in a condition of detention: rapes and violence against women and men (including same-sex intercourse) by armed forces running detention centres or by smugglers running connection houses were sometimes committed in public as a form of control and humiliation of the whole group. Some respondents frequently connected incidents of sexual violence and abuse to women who became pregnant along the route (MMC, 2019; WRC, 2019).

## 15.3. What increases vulnerability to abuse, exploitation and human trafficking during the journey?

This section discusses which characteristics of the individual and of the journey are associated with greater vulnerability during the journey, or what differentiates the 9,371 migrants who responded positively to at least one of the four questions related to direct experiences of abuse, exploitation and human trafficking included in the survey, from the 3,432 who did not report any such incidents.

### 15.3.1. Descriptive evidence

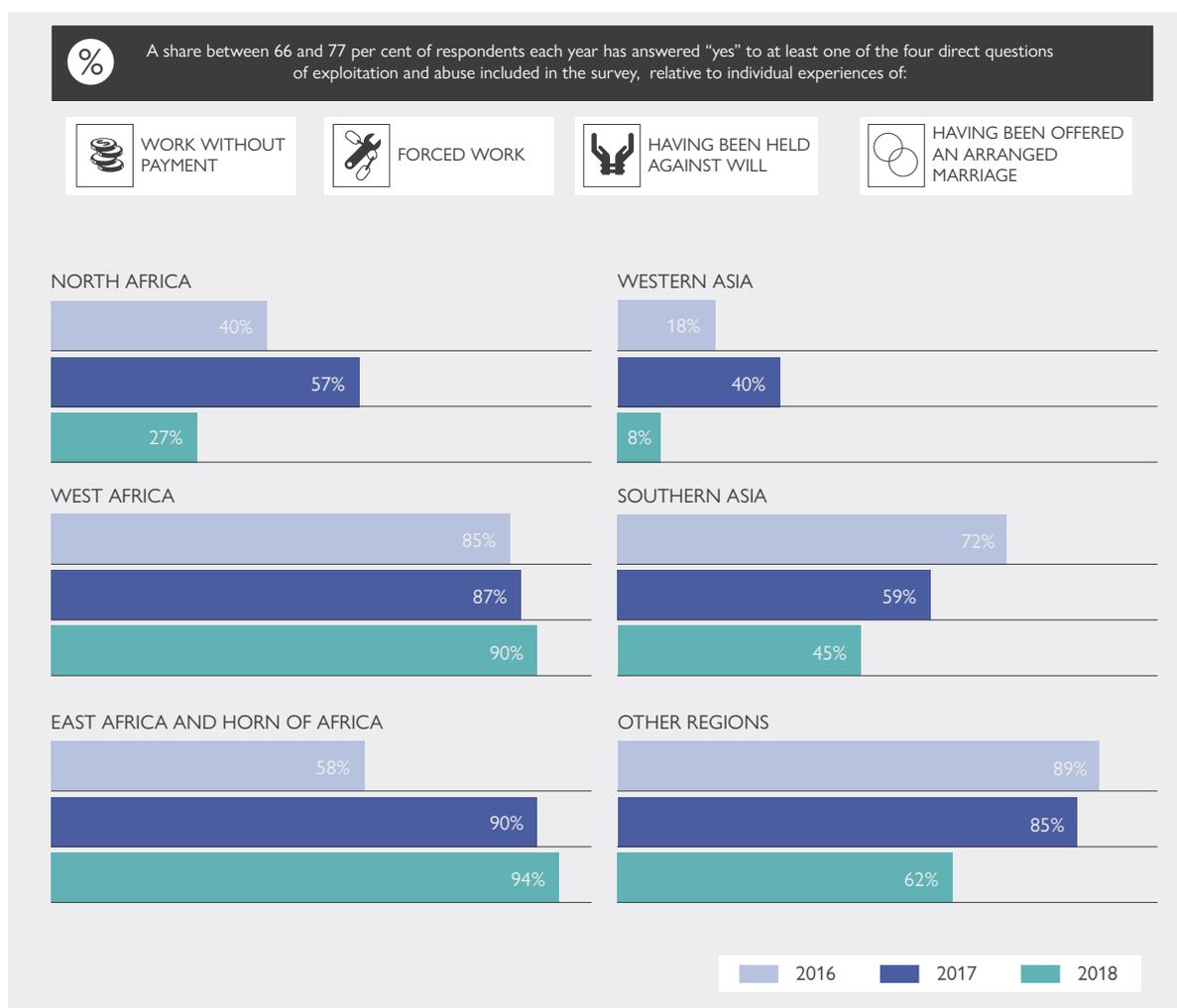
#### *Region of origin and nationality*

Migrants and refugees coming from East Africa, the Horn of Africa and West Africa have the highest and increasing shares of positive responses each year: in 2018, more than 90 per cent of them reported at least one of the four experiences of abuse, exploitation and human trafficking included in the survey.

Almost all the largest national groups in the sample<sup>14</sup> have an increasingly high share of positive responses each year. Migrants and refugees from the Gambia, Senegal and Guinea are those with the highest shares of positive responses on average, while respondents from the Sudan are those with the highest increase in positive responses from 2016 to 2018 (from 59% to 91%). The exception of migrants from Pakistan, for whom the share of positive responses in 2018 is lower than in 2016, can be explained with the diversification of routes to Italy of this group: some of the Pakistani nationals in the sample of 2017 and 2018 reported having arrived by sea from Turkey or Greece, or having entered by land from Slovenia, while in the 2016 sample, all of them reported to have crossed the Mediterranean from Libya.

<sup>14</sup> These are defined as those for which we have at least 500 interviews in total and at least 45 interviews each year.

**Figure 15.3.** Share of positive responses to at least 1 of 4 direct indicators, by region of origin and year of survey (%)



**Table 15.1.** Share of positive responses to at least 1 of 4 direct indicators for main nationalities in the sample, by year of survey (%)

	2016	2017	2018	Trend
Gambia	91	90	97	up
Senegal	90	92	96	up
Guinea	89	88	92	up/stable
Sudan	59	74	91	up
Nigeria	77	82	91	up
Côte d'Ivoire	90	88	87	down/stable
Bangladesh	86	96	83	down/stable
Pakistan	55	33	46	down

### *Demographic profile*

Each year, migrants and refugees who report at least one of four types of exploitative practices are younger on average than those who do not (23 and 25 years old on average, respectively). Contrasting trends by sex are observed over the three years: males responded positively more often than females in 2016 and 2017 (75% and 78% versus 52% and 67%, respectively), while females reported higher shares of positive responses than males in 2018 (75% versus 64%). Males reported more often than females instances of unpaid or forced work every year, while being kept against one's will was reported more frequently by males in 2016 and 2017 and by females in 2018. Finally, women reported more often than men direct offers of arranged marriage and observed experiences of threats of sexual violence both in 2017 (46% versus 28%) and in 2018 (53% versus 30%).

### *The journey*

Consistently in all years, respondents who travelled with at least one family member showed lower shares of positive responses compared with those who travelled alone or with a group of non-family members. The protective factor of travelling with family members is more evident among females. Female respondents travelling with family members reported the lowest shares of positive responses for the three years, lower than the shares of those travelling alone or with a group of non-family members.

Longer periods spent in transit are associated with higher shares of positive responses to at least one of the trafficking and exploitation indicators each year. Migrants and refugees who stayed for one year or more in a country different from that of origin before resuming the journey and those spending more time travelling (summing up the periods spending in each transit country since departure) are those with the highest shares of positive responses – above 80 per cent each year. On the contrary, the lowest share of positive responses is registered among those with journeys shorter than one month (27%, 36% and 17% in 2016, 2017 and 2018, respectively).

The length of the journey is clearly connected with the route taken and the number and type of countries crossed to reach Italy and Europe. Waiting for transportation often in collective houses, working or waiting to receive more money to pay for the next leg, waiting for other kind of arrangements or trying to overcome route disruptions or document problems to keep travelling were the most frequently reported reasons for migrants who had stopped for days or months in a single country. Also, being kidnapped for ransom or being detained by official or unofficial authorities forced many to stop for months in specific transit locations.

## 15.3.2. Factors associated with greater vulnerability: A summary

The paragraphs above have described the association between pairs of variables, presenting how the share of positive responses changes by respondents' sex, length of the journey and region of origin, among others. Nevertheless, each single variable does not vary independently from others, and the combination of different factors has an impact on the overall vulnerability of respondents to the direct experience of abuse, exploitation and human trafficking. A multivariate analysis of the probability of saying "yes" to at least one of the four indicators included in the survey was run to test how the described associations between pairs of variables hold when considering a set of individual and contextual variables at the same time. The test has been run on all three yearly subsamples and on the total sample.

Table 15.2 summarizes the main results,<sup>15</sup> highlighting the risk factors that increase the probability of responding "yes" to one of the four indicators of exploitation and abuse, together with the estimated strength and significance of the association keeping all other variables at their mean values.

<sup>15</sup> Different specifications of the probability model, list of variables and weights of the three yearly samples have been tested. Full tables of results of the tested models and of the estimated predicted probabilities are available upon request.

**Table 15.2.** Factors associated with the probability of responding “yes” to at least 1 of 4 indicators of abuse, exploitation and human trafficking, average sign, size and significance, DTM samples for 2016–2018

Risk factors	Association <sup>a</sup>	Short explanation
Male	↑↑(***)	Male respondents show higher shares of positive responses to the cumulative indicator of abuse, exploitation and human trafficking than females, on average.
Children or young adults below 25 years	↑(**)	There is no significant difference between children (14–17 years) and young adults (18–24 years); these two groups are associated with similar shares of positive responses, higher than those of older respondents.
Being widowed or divorced	↑↑(***)	Widowed or divorced respondents show higher shares of positive responses than the rest of the sample (single and married).
Travelling alone or with non-family group	↑(**)	No significant difference between those travelling alone and with non-family members. Respondents travelling with at least one family member show lower shares of positive respondents than the rest of the sample on average.
Having spent one year or more in a country different from origin	↑↑(***)	Departing from a country different from that of origin after having stopped there for one year or more is associated with higher shares of positive responses than departing from origin country.
Longer periods in transit	↑↑↑(***)	Longer periods spent in transit are associated with higher shares of positive responses. For example, those spending six months or more in transit are about 28 percentage points more likely than those with transit periods shorter than one month to report at least one of the four indicators of direct experience, on average.
Not having a family member at destination	↑(***)	Those who declared having at least one (first- or second-line) family member already in the intended destination country show a lower share of positive responses than those who don't, on average.
Having passed through Libya	↑↑↑ (***)	Respondents who have transited through Libya are associated with higher shares of positive responses, on average. Other variables being their mean values, this seems to be the most important factor associated with a positive response to at least one of the four indicators of abuse, exploitation and human trafficking.
Being from West Africa, East and Horn of Africa and South-East Asia	↑↑↑ (***)	Respondents originating from countries in West Africa, East and Horn of Africa or Southern East Asia are associated with higher shares of positive responses than respondents from countries in Northern Africa and Western Asia, on average.
Having arrived/ being interviewed more recently	↑(**)	The share of positive responses is higher, on average, for respondents in 2017 and 2018 than for those interviewed in 2016.

Note: There was no significant association with education level, cost of the journey, initial reason to move or length of stay in Italy at the time of the interview.

<sup>a</sup> The arrows show the direction and size of the difference between predicted probabilities of responding “yes” to at least one of four questions on indicators of abuse, exploitation and human trafficking (dependent variable) at different levels of each independent variable included in the model (sex: male/female; age: 14–17, 18–20, 21–24, 25–28, 29 and above; marital status: single, married, widowed/divorced; education level: none, primary, secondary, tertiary; travel: alone, with family, with non-family; onward migration: yes, no; days spent in transit: less than 1 month, 1–3 months, 3–6 months, 6 months–1 year, more than 1 year, no transit; cost of the journey: none, less than USD 1,000, USD 1,000–5,000, more than USD 5,000, unknown; main reason to leave origin country: war, personal violence, other; family member at destination: yes, no; transit through Libya: yes/no; origin region: Northern Africa, West Africa, Eastern and Horn of Africa, Western Asia, South-Eastern Asia, Other); interview year: 2016, 2017, 2018; length of stay in Italy at time of the interview. The table summarizes multiple logistic regressions run for each of the three yearly subsamples and for the total sample. The table shows only the sign and size of significant associations predicted with at least a 95 per cent level of confidence.

Results are overall in line with previous DTM analyses and other studies (IOM, 2017; Galos et al., 2017; MMC, 2019) that suggested strong differences in the type of experiences reported by male and female respondents: male respondents are more prone to the kind of direct abuses and exploitative practices covered by the DTM surveys in Europe (unpaid and forced work, offers of arranged marriage, being held against their will). Nevertheless, results relative to indirect experiences of sexual violence with accounts of observed threats and perpetrated violence on others suggest not overlooking the specific types of violence and abuse most commonly reported by women and girls.

Moreover, the results confirm a significant similarity between adolescents and youth respondents (14–17 and 18–24 years of age) in terms of their greater vulnerability to abuse and exploitation compared with older respondents (see, for example UNICEF and IOM, 2017). Also, migrants and refugees transiting through Libya are more exposed to various forms of violence, abuses and human rights violations, including the experiences captured by the survey's indicators. Findings from the DTM surveys provide further evidence on the intricate relation between routes taken, travel arrangements and experiences of exploitation and abuse, and signal the greater risk associated with transiting through Libya to cross the Mediterranean, compared with risks experienced by those reaching Italy from Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt or Turkey, and the Balkan route.

Time spent travelling is furthermore both cause and consequence of higher risks; the need to earn and save money along the journey puts migrants at risk of becoming victims of exploitative labour conditions and of having more dangerous travel arrangements, especially in countries bordering Europe. Time spent in travel also depends on unforeseen stops, such as various forms of detention-like conditions, being forced to stay in a confined space to extract labour or money before being allowed to move again, which increases vulnerabilities of migrants travelling to Europe through the Central Mediterranean Route.

Even without considering existing evidence of migrants' deaths along the journey (see Black, Chapter 12 of this volume), this chapter shows how irregular migration has become increasingly risky for those travelling to Italy and Europe. Quantitative results show how the levels of reported abuse, exploitation and experiences that might amount to human trafficking have increased between 2016 and 2018, especially for those who travel through Libya and for those who originate in certain regions (West Africa and East and Horn of Africa). More evidence is needed on how these vulnerabilities are affected by recent policy changes in numerous countries of origin, transit and destination along the Mediterranean routes (Tinti and Reitano, 2017). Also, initial reasons for departure do not seem to significantly affect the individual vulnerability to the surveyed types of abuse and exploitation for those travelling along the Central Mediterranean Route. Irrespective of the initial reasons for moving, the high frequency of specific and painful experiences during the journey gives arguments for a more comprehensive protection system for all those reaching Italy through irregular means and along dangerous routes.

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## INTERVIEW WITH MICHELE LEVOY, Director of the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)<sup>1</sup>

### What are PICUM's objectives?

PICUM is a network of 160 organizations working directly with undocumented migrants, mostly in Europe, but also in other countries, such as Morocco. We also conduct advocacy activities towards the European Union and the United Nations. We focus on a range of challenges experienced by undocumented migrants in their daily lives, such as access to health care and justice, fair working conditions and return.

### How do undocumented migrants experience access to services?

By mapping laws and practice in European countries, we have found that, in most European Union member States, undocumented migrants have difficulties in accessing health-care services. Even where relevant laws are in place, a major barrier may be the fear that undocumented migrants' personal data may be transmitted to immigration authorities, for example by health-care providers.

### What sectors are the most challenging?

Undocumented workers are exposed to different forms of exploitation and may be unable to request assistance from institutions, also due to the lack of firewalls between labour inspectors, immigration enforcement officials and the police. Undocumented migrants have difficulties in accessing justice, as the police are likely to inform immigration authorities if they come to the police to report a crime. Mental health care is a key issue, including for children, who often experience prolonged anxiety and stress due to their or their parents' irregular status, which can follow them in their young adult years and beyond. Other challenges are linked to immigration enforcement policies, such as the conditions of immigration detention (including of children and their families) and return proceedings.

### Do you observe differences among undocumented migrants with different characteristics?

Undocumented women experience challenges due to their irregular status, which have so far not yet been adequately recognized in broader gender strategies towards all women. Children face challenges accessing basic services, also due to the impact of their irregular status on their psychosocial development, and due to the violence they may have experienced during deportation or detention.

### Do migrants from North and West Africa face specific challenges?

There are very few regular channels for people to migrate and migrants from these regions are often relegated to travelling on unsafe boats across the Mediterranean. They most likely also experience racial discrimination in the workforce, for example by employers who profit from their irregular condition to pay them less than regular workers.

### Is PICUM also active in North and West Africa?

In Morocco, we have a member organization working with migrants from sub-Saharan countries and, in recent years, some of our members in Europe have also cooperated with civil society actors in Morocco advocating for regularization policies.

### What recommendations do you have for research, programming and policymaking?

We need to improve the evidence base on undocumented migrants in Europe, and North and West Africa. Comprehensive and methodologically sound estimates are still not available. The policy discourse is mainly centred on return policies and prevention of irregular migration, usually with no real consideration for the situation on the ground of people living in irregularity. This has many effects: for example, city-level administrators say that the absence of this evidence hinders the support they can provide to undocumented migrants. We need to put in place firewalls between immigration authorities and services, in order to allow undocumented migrants to report crimes, go to the doctor or register for school without risking deportation. In Europe, we observe a criminalization of people who are helping undocumented migrants, be it through sea rescue or offering shelter, food or any form of humanitarian assistance. Civil society actors stress that humanitarian assistance to undocumented migrants should never be criminalized.

<sup>1</sup> Interview conducted by Irene Schöfberger, IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre.

## 16.

## Over troubled waters: maritime rescue operations in the Central Mediterranean Route

Eugenio Cusumano,<sup>1</sup> Matteo Villa<sup>2</sup>

VULNERABILITIES



MISSING MIGRANTS

**Abstract:** In this chapter, we investigate the shifting role played by Italian and European security forces, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy (LCGN) in the conduct of search and rescue (SAR) and border enforcement operations in the Central Mediterranean corridor connecting Libya to Malta and Italy. By doing so, we explore the relationship between the evolution of SAR operations, the number of irregular migrant departures from Libya and fatalities at sea. Our findings suggest that SAR operations conducted by European authorities and NGOs have played an important role in reducing the deadliness of sea crossings without significantly contributing to incentivizing irregular migration.

With over 15,000 reported fatalities from 2014 to 2019, the Central Mediterranean corridor connecting Libya to Malta and Italy is the deadliest border worldwide. The large number of casualties at sea has compelled States and non-State actors to launch several ad hoc maritime search and rescue (SAR) missions. These efforts, however, vary significantly in scope, intensity and implications. This chapter provides a short overview of SAR operations in the Central Mediterranean corridor between Libya, Malta and Italy from 2013 to January 2020. To this end, section 16.1 identifies four key phases in the evolution of the policies devised to both rescue lives and manage irregular migration from Libya to Europe over the last decade. Section 16.2 to 16.6 examine each phase in detail. Section 16.7 and the ensuing conclusions analyse the relationship between SAR operations, human mobility and human security, investigating the interplay between rescue operations, the magnitude of maritime migratory flows and casualties at sea.

## 16.1. The evolution of maritime rescue in the Central Mediterranean

The uneasy relationship between the attempt to contain irregular migration to Europe and the moral imperative to reduce casualties at sea has generated a complex array of maritime border control measures and humanitarian policies. Examining each in detail is beyond the scope of this chapter. Broadly speaking, however, four different phases can be identified.

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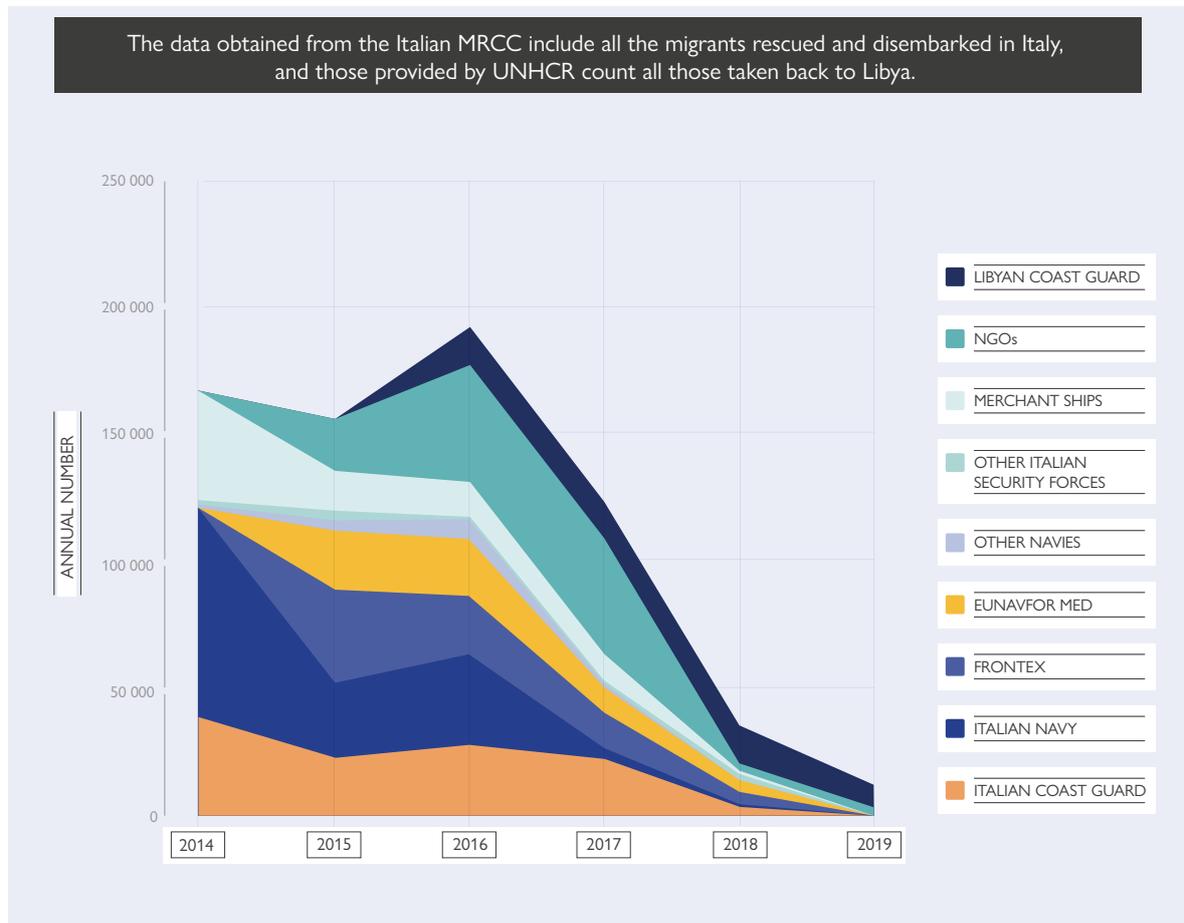
In the first phase, which took place until late 2013, no naval assets specifically dedicated to SAR were present in the Central Mediterranean. Rescue operations were occasionally conducted by Italian and Maltese authorities, as well as by merchant and fishing vessels.

In the second phase, State military and law enforcement assets directly conducted proactive SAR. In October 2013, Italy launched operation *Mare Nostrum*, rescuing all migrants in distress found in the Italian, Maltese and Libyan Maritime Rescue Regions (MRRs). Even though *Mare Nostrum* was suspended after one year, European Union missions, as well as the Italian Navy and Coast Guard, continued to rescue a large number of migrants throughout 2015 and 2016.

The third phase, roughly corresponding to 2016 and 2017, saw civil society play a key role in SAR. In response to the growing disengagement of European Union naval assets from the Central Mediterranean, a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) started conducting SAR under the coordination of the Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC). Overall, NGO ships rescued 111,478 migrants from 2014 to 2017 (Guardia Costiera, 2019).

In the fourth phase, spanning 2018 to early 2020, most migrants crossing the Central Mediterranean – whose numbers have shrunk to pre-2013 levels – were intercepted in Libyan waters and returned to Libya by Tripoli’s Government of National Accord Libyan Coast Guard and Navy (LCGN). This was due to the Government’s willingness to declare and take responsibility for its own MRR, but also to Italy’s decision to restrain the activities of NGOs operating at sea, and no longer serve as a place of disembarkation for the migrants rescued in the Southern Mediterranean.

**Figure 16.1.** Number of migrants rescued per organization, 2014–2019



Source: Elaboration from Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

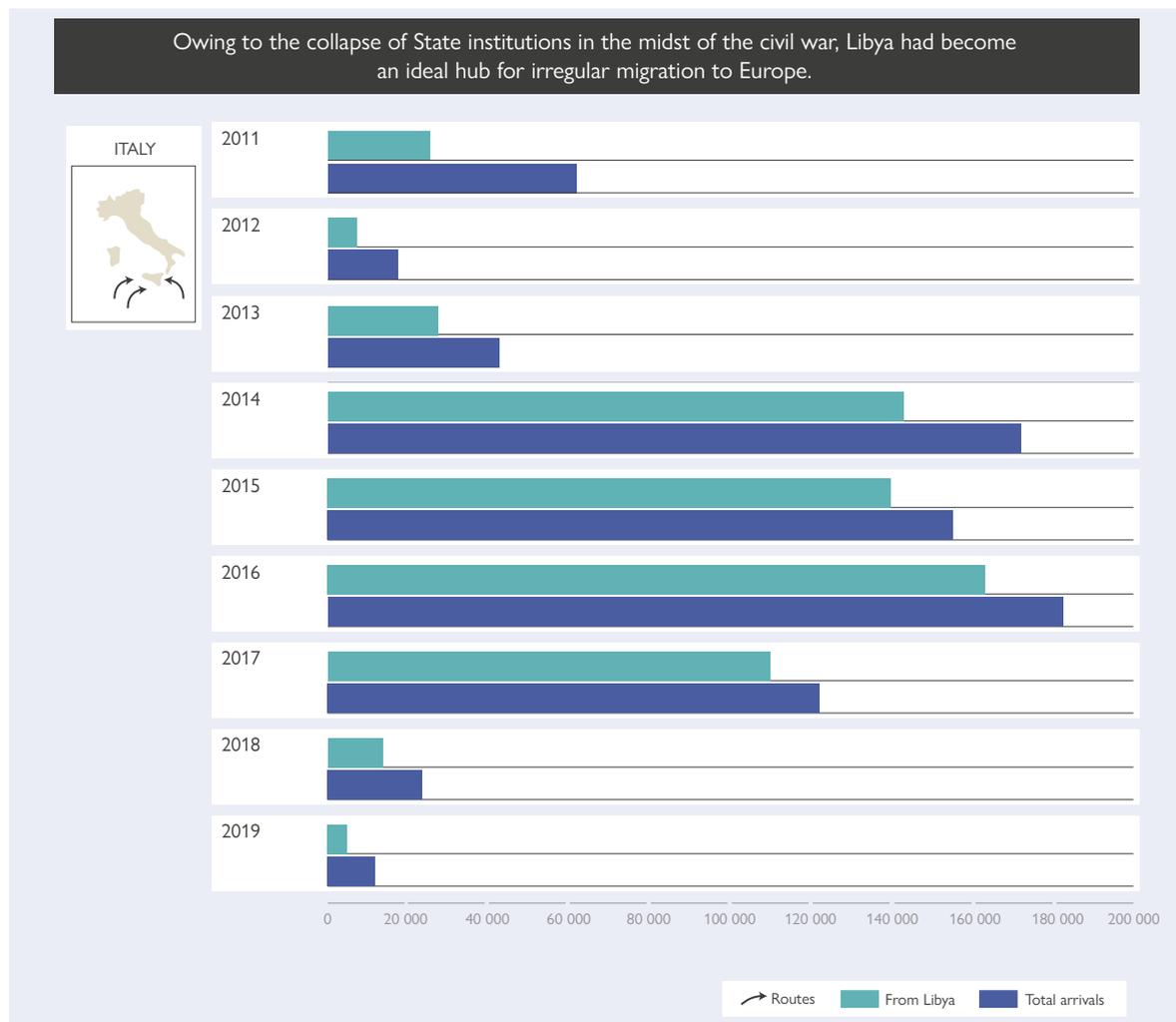
Figure 16.1 shows the shift in the total number of people rescued by European State assets, civil society, merchant vessels and the LCGN off the coast of Libya from 2014 to the end of 2019. As Tunisia and Malta engaged in a very small number of SAR operations (only 2,142 were disembarked in Malta from 2014 to 2019), we rely on the data we obtained from the Italian MRCC – which include all the migrants rescued and disembarked in Italy – and those provided by UNHCR – counting all those taken back to Libya.

The policies enacted during each of the above-mentioned phases have come under scrutiny. The arguments deployed are manifold, including the claim that the European Union failed to act in response to casualties at sea; the concern that SAR operations disembarking migrants in Europe serve as a pull factor of migration; and the accusation that the activities of the LCGN conflate rescue and interception, violating migrants' right to apply for international protection as well as the fundamental freedoms of all those returned to arbitrary detention. The following sections provide a more systematic appraisal of these rescue efforts by examining each phase in detail.

## 16.2. From the fall of Gaddafi to *Mare Nostrum*

Irregular departures across the Central Mediterranean did not immediately skyrocket in the wake of the Arab uprisings and the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in Libya. While a first spike of irregular crossings from Tunisia had already occurred in 2011, crossings dropped again in 2012 and then dramatically increased from mid-2013 (Fargues, 2017). Owing to the collapse of State institutions in the midst of the civil war, Libya had become an ideal transit country for irregular migration to Europe (Al Arabi, 2018).

**Figure 16.2.** Irregular sea arrivals to Italy (2011–2019)



Source: Italian Ministry of the Interior, IOM.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

In the meantime, the policies devised by Italy to deter irregular migration from Libya had not only been nullified by the collapse of Gaddafi's regime, but also challenged on legal grounds by the European Court of Human Rights. Cooperation on migration management featured prominently in the 2008 Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation between Italy and Libya, where the two parties committed to patrolling Libyan shores through boats provided by Italy and manned by joint crews. In its 2012 *Hirsi Jamaa and Others v. Italy* decision, however, the European Court of Human Rights found that, by returning rescued migrants to Libya, the Italian Navy had violated the non-refoulement principle, which prevents pushing back migrants and refugees where their fundamental rights would be threatened (Moreno-Lax and Papastavridis, 2016:4).

Since then, Italian authorities disembarked all those rescued at sea on Italian territory. SAR operations, however, remained sporadic and largely confined to the Italian MRR. Malta, too, refrained from proactively assisting migrants in distress at sea, letting most boats proceed north and limiting SAR operations to situations of "clear and imminent danger" (Klepp, 2011:550). In this context, many rescue operations were conducted by merchant and fishing vessels. Most boats independently reached the Italian island of Lampedusa, or even the coasts of Sicily. The surge in Mediterranean crossings, however, dramatically increased the magnitude and visibility of casualties at sea. The two large shipwrecks that occurred in October 2013 compelled the Italian Government to launch more proactive rescue missions closer to Libyan waters (Baldwin-Edwards and Lutterbeck, 2019; Steinhilper and Gruijter, 2018).

## 16.3. State-led maritime rescue: *Mare Nostrum* and beyond

Italy's attempt to simultaneously prevent casualties at sea, reduce undetected irregular arrivals and apprehend human smugglers translated into the launch of *Mare Nostrum*. The mission, which covered an operational area including the Libyan, Maltese and Italian MRRs, involved 34 Navy warships and 900 sailors, who assisted over 156,000 migrants during its year of activity. A significant number of SAR operations, however, continued to be conducted by merchant vessels, which assisted over 40,000 migrants in 2014 alone (Cusumano, 2019a).

Eventually, *Mare Nostrum* became increasingly criticized as a "bridge to Europe" and an "unintended pull factor [for irregular migration], encouraging more migrants to attempt the dangerous sea crossing" (House of Lords, 2016:5). In November 2014, the European Union Council agreed on replacing the Italian Navy mission with an operation conducted by the European Border and Coast Guard (better known as Frontex), named *Triton*. In April 2015, the European Union Joint Foreign and Home Affairs Council tripled Triton's budget and expanded its operational area to 138 miles off the Italian coast. The mission, however, remained primarily focused on border control rather than SAR operations. In June that year, the European Union also launched a Common Security and Defence Policy military mission called EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia, tasked with disrupting migrant smuggling. While neither Triton nor EUNAVFOR Med included SAR operations in their mandate, they duly complied with the moral and legal obligation to rescue those in distress, assisting over 106,000 migrants in 2015 and 2016. In the same period, the Italian Navy and Coast Guard also continued to independently conduct SAR operations, assisting over 110,000 people (Cusumano, 2019b).

## 16.4. Non-governmental SAR initiatives: the rise and decline of sea rescue NGOs

The shortage of rescue assets arising from the discontinuation of *Mare Nostrum* encouraged several humanitarian NGOs to step in, chartering or purchasing boats to assist migrants in distress and disembark them in Europe. From 2015 until 2017, all migrants rescued by NGOs were disembarked in Italy. NGO ships were authorized to disembark migrants in Malta on only four occasions in 2018 and 2019. Non-governmental SAR operations started in September 2014 with the creation of the Maltese charity known as Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS). In 2015,

MOAS' example was replicated by Sea-Watch and the Brussels and Barcelona branches of *Médecins Sans Frontières*. By 2016, 10 different NGOs were operating at sea. Table 16.1 provides a list of all the NGOs operating at sea and the ships they used at different moments in time. Only MOAS and *Médecins Sans Frontières* simultaneously operated two ships in 2015 and 2016.

**Table 16.1.** Sea rescue NGOs in the Central Mediterranean

NGO	Capabilities	Operational time frame
MOAS	40 m <i>Phoenix</i>	September 2014–September 2017
	51 m <i>Responder</i>	
Médecins Sans Frontières	50 m <i>Dignity 1</i>	March 2015–ongoing
	68 m <i>Bourbon Argos</i>	
	77 m <i>Prudence</i>	
	69 m <i>Ocean Viking</i>	
Sea-Watch	27 m <i>Sea-Watch1</i>	April 2015–ongoing
	33 m <i>Sea-Watch2</i>	
	50 m <i>Sea-Watch3</i>	
Sea-Eye	23 m <i>Sea-Eye</i>	May 2016–ongoing
	26 m <i>Seefuchs</i>	
LifeBoat Project	23 m <i>Minden</i>	June–September 2016
ProActiva	30 m <i>Astral</i>	June 2016–ongoing
	37 m <i>Golfo Azzurro</i>	
	37 m <i>Open Arms</i>	
SOS-Méditerranée	77 m <i>Aquarius</i>	February 2016–ongoing
	69 m <i>Ocean Viking</i>	
Jugend Rettet	37 m <i>Iuventa</i>	July–September 2016
Boat Refugee Foundation	37 m <i>Golfo Azzurro</i>	September–October 2016
Save the Children	57 m <i>Vos Hestia</i>	September 2016–September 2017
Mission Lifeline	33 m <i>Lifeline</i>	June 2017–ongoing
	20 m <i>Eleonore</i>	
Mediterranea Saving Humans	37 m <i>Mare Jonio</i>	October 2018–ongoing
	20 m <i>Alex</i>	
Aita Mari	32 m <i>Aita Mari</i>	November 2019–ongoing

Despite the limited size of most organizations' ships, NGOs performed most SAR operations, assisting over 40,000 migrants per year in both 2016 and 2017. Operating under the coordination of the Italian MRCC, NGOs would disembark migrants in the port indicated by Italian authorities or simply assist those in distress until a larger vessel would transport them to Italy (Cusumano, 2019b; Cuttitta, 2018).

Non-governmental sea rescue, however, eventually became the target of heated criticism. The concern that NGOs served as a pull factor of irregular migration, first raised by Frontex (2017) and then forcefully reiterated by Italian opposition leaders, prosecutors and media, urged Italian authorities to increasingly restrict or discourage their activities. Many of these measures, such as the 2017 Code of Conduct on maritime rescue, were backed by the European Council (Rettman, 2017). Since 2017, the suspicion that NGOs were aiding and abetting irregular immigration prompted Italian and Maltese courts to impound various ships. In June 2018, all foreign-flagged rescue vessels were explicitly prohibited from entering Italian waters. Deprived of the possibility to disembark migrants in nearby ports and facing a growing risk of criminalization, NGOs drastically reduced their operations. From January to October 2019, NGOs only maintained a presence at sea for 85 days, often limited to just one ship (Cusumano and Villa, 2019).

## 16.5. The Libyan Coast Guard and Navy: rescue or interception?

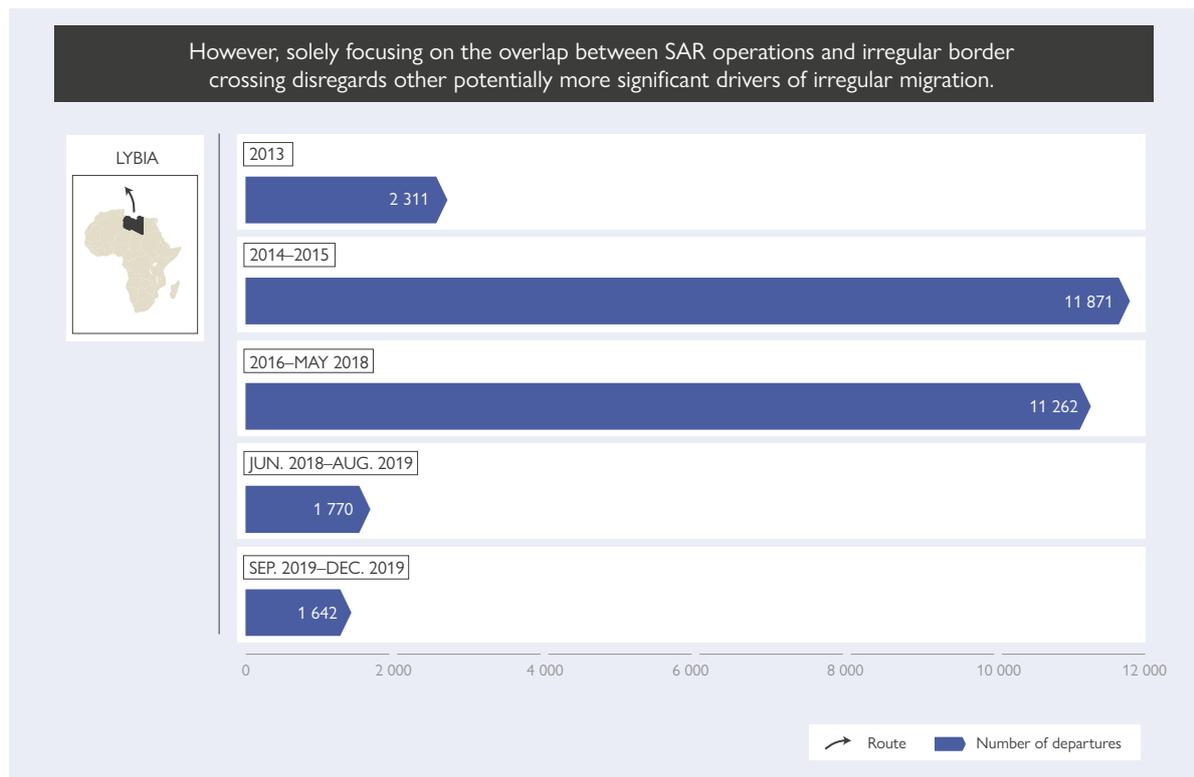
Italian and European authorities took a number of actions to build the capacity of Libya's Government of National Accord law enforcement institutions, focusing on training and funding the LCGN. Since late 2017, Italy increasingly handed over formal responsibility for rescue operations in Libya's SRR to Tripoli's authorities, despite concerns that its newly formed Coast Guard and Navy was not yet able to effectively conduct SAR operations. This tendency has gained momentum since December 2017, when Tripoli's authorities officially declared responsibility over their own MRR before the International Maritime Organization (Baldwin-Edwards and Lutterbeck, 2019).

As shown in Figure 16.1, the LCGN was already operational in 2016. While the number of migrants rescued or intercepted by Libyan authorities did not significantly change in absolute terms, these figures acquired new significance since late 2017. Due to the plummeting number of departures and the reduced presence at sea of both NGOs and European State assets mentioned in the previous sections, the LCGN has now become by far the largest provider of SAR activities in the Southern Mediterranean. The role played by this organization has raised serious concerns ((IOM and UNHCR, 2020; UNHCR, 2018). Specifically, evidence shows that the LCGN has often failed to answer SOS calls, promptly dispatch patrols to conduct SAR operations, or recover all people found in distress at sea. The fact that migrants often resist being taken back to Libya – where they are likely to face abuse in detention centres – has prompted the LCGN to repeatedly use force during their operations (UNHCR, 2018). As illustrated below, this is likely to have caused a significant increase in the number of fatalities.<sup>3</sup>

## 16.6. The implications of maritime rescue operations

This section examines the implications of the evolution of SAR operations outlined above by examining two contentious relationships: the interplay between maritime rescue and the magnitude of migratory flows, as well as the effect of SAR missions on fatalities at sea.

<sup>3</sup> IOM has called on the international community for urgent action to find alternatives to disembarkation in Libya (IOM, 2020).

**Figure 16.3.** Average monthly attempted crossings from Libya

Source: Authors' elaborations on UNHCR and IOM data.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

Since 2014, both public and private actors performing maritime SAR operations have been accused of incentivizing more departures from the Southern Mediterranean coasts, indirectly increasing crossings and fatalities by acting as a “pull factor” of irregular migration (Frontex, 2017; House of Lords, 2016). At first glance, figures on monthly departures from Libya seem to support this argument: from late 2013 to 2017, when proactive SAR operations were conducted, irregular crossings were five times higher than either before or after. However, solely focusing on the overlap between SAR operations and irregular maritime border crossing disregards the effects of other potentially more significant drivers of irregular migration. Moreover, this correspondence is biased by reverse causality: rather than simply “causing” irregular migration, proactive SAR operations were themselves an effect of growing departures from Africa, as they were launched in response to the rising number of casualties attached to irregular crossings. In the four months before the launch of *Mare Nostrum*, attempted crossings from Libya had reached levels that were already three to eight times higher than in 2012. In September 2013, for instance, estimated departures had already peaked at 9,757, increasing eightfold relative to the 1,272 crossings that occurred in September 2012. As *Mare Nostrum* got underway, the civil war in Libya escalated, making it even harder to understand whether Italian Navy rescue operations were serving as an incentive for migrants to reach Europe or whether smugglers were simply taking advantage of the power vacuum in the country.

NGOs' activities provide more evidence questioning the significance of this alleged pull effect. As they operated closer to Libyan coasts than any other assets, non-governmental rescuers were considered especially likely to serve as a pull factor of irregular migration (Frontex, 2017). However, our test using a multivariate regression model (Table 16.2) shows that the varying share of rescue operations conducted by NGOs had no significant effect on

the number of migrants departing from Libya in the period from January 2014 to September 2019.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the only variables strongly correlated with migrant departures from Libya were monthly controls (departures tend to display a strong seasonal trend, sharply decreasing in months with rougher weather conditions) as well as the policies of onshore containment devised by Italy since July 2017 under Interior Minister Minniti, when Italy obtained the cooperation of Libya's tribes and militias in curbing irregular departures. By contrast, the restrictions on NGOs' activities enacted when Interior Minister Salvini was in office (June 2018–August 2019) do not appear to have played a large role in curbing irregular departures.

The lack of any significant pull effect has been especially visible since 2019. In that period, NGO ships were the only ones performing SAR operations disembarking migrants in Europe. This allows for a second test, looking at whether any correlation exists between the number of daily attempted crossings from Libya and the presence or absence of NGOs off Libya's coast. In this period, the number of migrant departures from Libya on days when NGOs were at sea was no higher than when no NGO was present. Only weather conditions appear to have significantly increased the likelihood of maritime crossings (Cusumano and Villa, 2019).

**Table 16.2.** Results of robust linear regression<sup>a</sup>

	DV: Monthly migrant departures from Libya
DV t-1	0.330 (.127)**
NGOs t-1	2 726 (5 246)
NGOs t-2	-4 308 (5 201)
NGOs t-3	-3 842 (5 416)
Italy's maritime migration policies under Interior Minister Minniti (onshore containment)	-7 949 (3 002)**
Italy's maritime migration policies under Interior Minister Salvini (closure of ports to NGO ships)	-2 330 (2 230)
<i>Mare Nostrum</i>	2 502 (2 178)
Political stability in Libya	1 857 (3 949)
(constant)	4 766 (2 656)
Monthly controls <sup>b</sup>	YES***
N	66
R <sup>2</sup>	0.82

<sup>a</sup> Robust standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>b</sup> Significance tested through a Wald test of joint significance.

Significance levels: \*\*\* = .01; \*\* = .05; \* = .10.

Ultimately, our tests suggest that proactive SAR operations did not significantly affect either the initial rise in departures since mid-2013, or their drastic drop after July 2017. Other scholars' work, however – while not directly testing the relationship between migrant departures and SAR operations – suggests that rescue missions encourage sea crossings in worse weather conditions and with increasingly rickety boats (Deiana et. al, 2019). For this reason,

<sup>4</sup> To test for the effect of NGOs' SAR activity on irregular migrant departures from Libya, we include three lags in NGOs' SAR activity, a lag in migrant departures, and two dummies accounting for key changes in Italian migration policies, namely the deal with Libyan militias signed by Interior Minister Minniti in July 2017 to contain irregular departures, and the announcement that Italian ports would be closed to rescue ships made by Interior Minister Salvini in June 2018. We also include a dummy for Operation Mare Nostrum (October 2013–October 2014), and a proxy for political stability in Libya based on oil production in the country. Finally, we include monthly controls to account for seasonality.

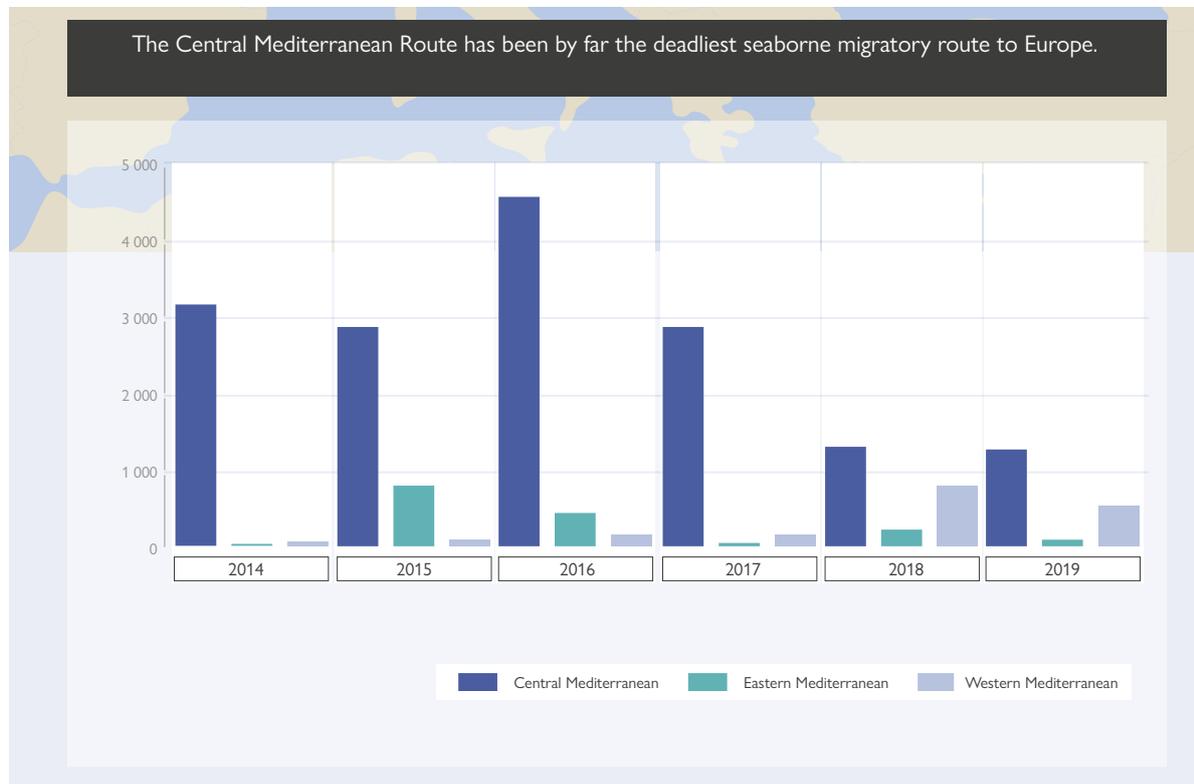
Even if nearly all non-governmental rescue operations were suspended in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, when Italy and Malta declared that their ports would no longer serve as places of safety, irregular departures from Libya from January to May 2020 more than doubled compared with the first five months of 2019.



more research is needed to disprove or support the existence and significance of a pull effect for irregular migration. Data on irregular crossings over the first few months of 2020, however, provide additional support to the argument that SAR operations do not significantly incentivize irregular departures. Even if nearly all non-governmental rescue operations were suspended in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, when Italy and Malta declared that their ports would no longer serve as places of safety, irregular departures from Libya and Tunisia from January to May 2020 more than doubled compared with the first five months of 2019.

The relationship between SAR operations and the risks of irregular crossings is also worth examining.<sup>5</sup> As shown by Figure 16.4, the Central Mediterranean Route has been by far the deadliest seaborne migratory route to Europe.

**Figure 16.4.** Reported casualties along seaborne migratory routes to Europe



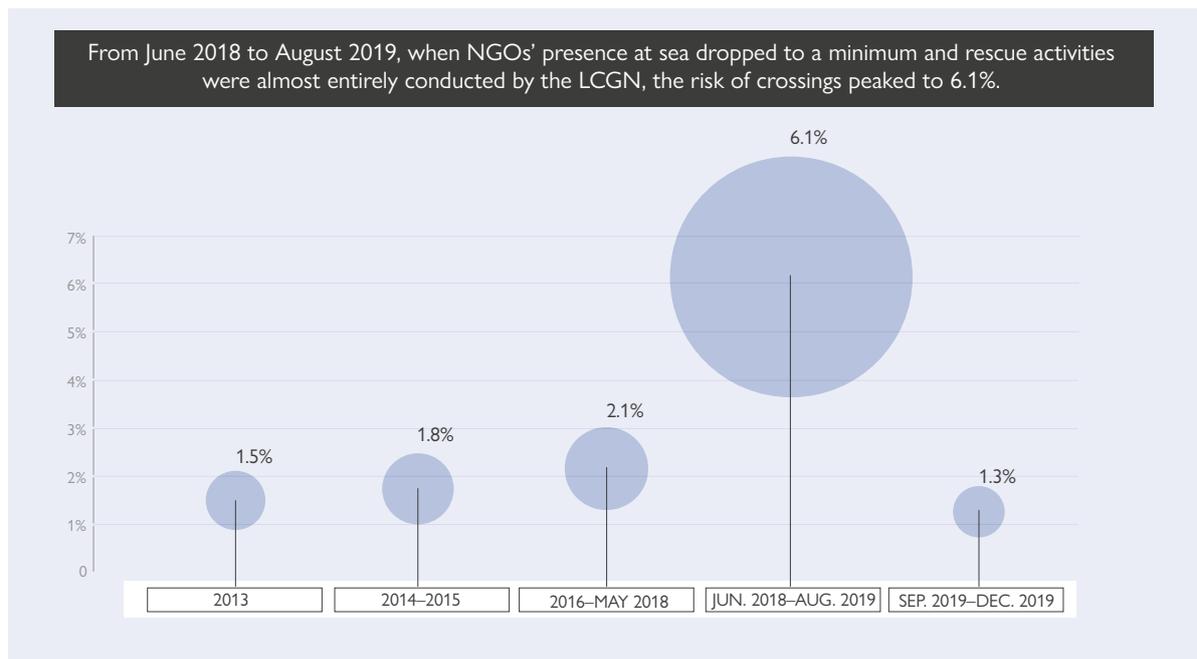
Source: IOM Missing Migrants Project.

As shown in Figure 16.5, while the number of irregular departures varied significantly over time, the deadliness of the maritime border crossing remained quite stable at around 1.5–2 per cent throughout most of the period considered. Therefore, the risk of dying at sea did not decrease even as non-governmental rescuers intensified their activities and moved closer to the Libyan coast. This has elicited a debate on whether rescue missions really help save lives, lending support to the argument that such humanitarian efforts are nullified by smugglers' ability to exploit SAR operations by relying on increasingly unseaworthy boats (Deiana et al., 2019).

<sup>5</sup> We calculate the risk of crossing as the share of persons estimated to have died or gone missing over total attempted crossings. Attempted crossings are calculated as the sum of three variables: (a) migrants who reached Europe (Italy, Malta or, exceptionally, Spain) from Libya; (b) migrants who are brought back to Libya, generally but not solely by the LCGN; and (c) migrants who die or go missing.

However, available figures may themselves be biased by the greater awareness of fatalities at sea attached to the very presence of SAR assets. Moreover, the increased risk of crossing may be an unintended effect of States' efforts to combat migrant smugglers. Most notably, European navies sought to disrupt smuggling networks by destroying at least 545 boats (European Council, 2018). This activity is likely to have significantly encouraged the resort to rickety dinghies, thereby indirectly increasing the deadliness of the sea crossing (Heller and Pezzani, 2017). As stated in a confidential report by the head of the European Union mission EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia, published by Wikileaks, "Wooden boats... can be re-used if recovered by smugglers. However, following Operation Sophia entering into Phase 2A (High Seas), smugglers can no longer recover smuggling vessels on the high seas, effectively rendering them [wooden boats] a less economic option... and thereby hampering it" (EEAS, 2015:7).

**Figure 16.5.** Death rate for migrants departing from Libya



Source: Authors' elaborations on UNHCR and IOM data.

Furthermore, casualties increased sharply in the period we identified as the fourth phase of Central Mediterranean SAR operations. From June 2018 to August 2019, when NGOs' presence at sea dropped to a minimum due to their criminalization by Italian authorities and only the LCGN was almost entirely responsible for conducting interceptions and rescue operations, the risk of crossings peaked at 6.1 per cent. Since September 2019, when a newly-formed Italian Government loosened the restrictions on sea rescue NGOs, the deadliness of the route dropped again to previous levels (1.3%), even as weather conditions worsened at the end of the summer. Available data on the first few months of 2020 suggest that fatality rates have only slightly increased in the first few months of 2020, despite the reduced presence of SAR assets. The possibility that fatalities have gone increasingly underreported in the wake of this crisis, however, suggests handling these figures with caution (Sanchez and Achilli, 2020).

Overall, the evidence presented above suggests that European Union and NGO SAR operations are unable to eradicate the risk of irregular crossings, but are crucial in preventing such a risk from escalating. As European State and civil society assets generally refrained from operating too close to Tripoli's territorial waters, the creation of an LCGN patrolling Libyan coasts may fill an important gap in rescue capabilities and indirectly reduce fatalities by deterring irregular departures. This organ, however, is still not fully prepared to provide adequate assistance and is struggling to return migrants to Libya against their will. In this context, relying on the LCGN seems to have only increased fatality rates at sea.

## 16.7. Conclusions

Maritime rescue operations along the Central Mediterranean Route have evolved through four phases. After an initial period when the gap in rescue capabilities left by the collapse of Libya's institutions was only sporadically filled by Italian and Maltese forces as well as merchant vessels, Italy and the European Union launched military and law enforcement missions that carried out a large number of SAR operations. Their gradual disengagement from the Mediterranean resulted in an increasing role for civil society. As NGOs' presence also shrank due to the increasing difficulties and risks of criminalization attached to disembarking migrants in Italy, the newly formed LCGN has become by far the largest provider of SAR operations. Accordingly, Libyan territory is now used as the main disembarkation venue for migrants rescued in the Southern Mediterranean, even if it does not amount to a place of safety under international law.

This chapter briefly explored the relationship between the evolution of SAR operations off the coast of Libya, and the number of irregular maritime crossing and fatalities at sea.

The complexity of these dynamics belies the possibility to draw robust conclusions, warranting additional research. Our preliminary findings, however, illustrate the enduring importance of rescue operations conducted by both public and private European assets. These SAR missions appear to have played an important (although not decisive) role in reducing the deadliness of sea crossings without significantly contributing to incentivizing seaborne migration. The suspension of rescue missions that has occurred in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis is therefore threatening severe humanitarian implications, further exacerbating the risks posed by irregular migration across the Central Mediterranean Route.

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Unaccompanied minor returns to home country. © IOM 2018/Sibylle DESJARDINS



9  
SMUGGLING  
OF MIGRANTS

# 17.

## Migration and risks: smuggling networks and dynamics on the Central Mediterranean Route<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This chapter seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the profiles and network characteristics of smugglers, how they support or facilitate people's journeys, as well as the role they play in protection incidents experienced by people on the move. The data analysed originate from the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi) of the Mixed Migration Centre across North and West Africa. Some of the main findings are: (a) more than two thirds of the migrants surveyed in Libya and half of those in West Africa reported using smugglers on their journeys to/out of Libya; (b) in North Africa, smugglers were cited as the main providers of support (53.6%), and in West Africa they were the second most cited providers (23.5%); however, (c) smugglers are often cited as perpetrators of physical abuse, particularly in North Africa.

### 17.1. Background

Since mid-2017, the numbers of refugees and migrants departing from Libya's shores for Europe have decreased dramatically. Yet, efforts by European policymakers to curb irregular migration through externalizing their borders and dismantling "criminal" smuggling networks<sup>3</sup> has led to increased competition for control of lucrative human smuggling routes. As policies become more stringent, making profits more elusive, smugglers are choosing more perilous routes, increasing their fees, and resorting to new ways to exploit refugees and migrants attempting to travel along the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR). These factors are increasing protection incidents and human rights violations faced by people on the move (Tubiana et al., 2018). Additionally, European policies focusing on the criminalization of smuggling and trafficking do not sufficiently distinguish between the two types of crime, which may further exacerbate risks for people on the move.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Special thanks to Roberto Forin and Bram Frouws for their review and feedback; and to the entire MMC/4Mi teams in North and West Africa for the direction and overall implementation of 4Mi, without which studies like this would not be possible. For further information about 4Mi and its methodology, visit [www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/](http://www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/).

<sup>2</sup> Mixed Migration Centre (MMC).

<sup>3</sup> For a review of these policies, see Golovko (2018); and MMC (forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> To describe the journeys of people on the move, this chapter draws upon the concept of mixed migration, defined in the terminology box, developed by the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC).



### Box 17.1. Terminology

**Human smuggling** is defined as “the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident” (Article 3, Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air). According to the 2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Convention) and its associated Protocols, the central features distinguishing smuggling from trafficking are those of consent, exploitation and transnationality. Of course, consent is not a permanent state and can change over the course of refugees’ and migrants’ journeys, underscoring the blurred lines between smuggling and trafficking. For instance, someone may experience abuse or be coerced into an exploitive labour arrangement along their journey at the hands of their smuggler.

**Refugees and migrants** refer to people on the move in mixed migration flows. While Libya is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, there are, nevertheless, people in Libya who have fled their countries because of persecution, generalized violence and conflict. The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been authorized to conduct Refugee Status Determinations in Libya since 1991 under an informal mandate that allows it to issue asylum seekers with letters of attestation and register them as “Persons of Concern” (POCs). POCs are people coming from eight specific countries/ethnic groups who are in need of international protection, including Eritreans, Ethiopians of Oromo ethnicity, Iraqis, Palestinians, Somalis, Syrians, non-Arab Sudanese, and Yemenis. The “POC” status, however, is not always recognized by Libyan authorities. In this chapter, the term “refugees and migrants” encompasses POCs.

**Mixed migration** refers to cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking, and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have different legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journeys. Those in mixed migration flows travel along similar routes, using similar means of travel – often travelling irregularly and wholly or partially assisted by migrant smugglers.

Principally, smuggling of refugees and migrants to and through Libya takes place along two routes. The western route is used predominantly by West Africans, most often through the northern part of the Niger, but also through Mali and southern Algeria, to Libya’s south-western border. The eastern route is used predominantly by East Africans via the Sudan and Chad to Libya’s south-eastern border. In all cases, smuggling corridors contain a series of subroutes that rapidly adapt to the changing risks and economic costs. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) 1979 Protocol Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment in theory allows citizens of the 15 Member States of ECOWAS to freely move within the bloc’s territory; however, in practice, border crossings involve numerous difficulties. Riskier routes have made smugglers more essential to refugees and migrants attempting the journey. According to a 2016 joint EUROPOL–INTERPOL report (EUROPOL, 2016), it is almost compulsory to use smugglers to travel along the CMR to Europe. There are some reports of refugees and migrants increasingly choosing smugglers over regular public transport, particularly due to the enforcement of measures to counter irregular migration (such as Law 2015-36 against smuggling adopted in 2015 in the Niger). While such migration is not technically irregular within the ECOWAS bloc, movement in the region often happens in an undocumented fashion, as migrants do not cross borders at official crossing points, or because they do not have the required travel documents.

Although research is available on the dangerous journeys that refugees and migrants undertake to move along the Central Mediterranean Route, as well as on the protection incidents they face along the way, particularly in Libya (see Sanchez, Chapter 18 of this volume), little is understood about the role of smugglers who facilitate these crossings (UNHCR and MMC, 2020). Moreover, few accounts are available from smugglers' own perspectives. Using data from the Mixed Migration Centre's (MMC's) Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi),<sup>5</sup> this chapter sets out to provide a deeper understanding of the profiles and network characteristics of smugglers, how they support or facilitate people's journeys, as well as the role they play in protection incidents experienced by people on the move. By providing some insight on the smuggling sector, this chapter seeks to inform broader policy responses, beyond the current focus on criminal justice, aimed at better upholding the human rights of people on the move.



### Box 17.2. Data

Data from this study come from 4Mi, which is MMC's flagship data collection project. The 4Mi project comprises a unique network of field monitors situated along frequently used routes and in major migratory hubs, and aims to offer a regular, standardized, quantitative and globalized system of collecting primary data on mixed migration. 4Mi monitors conduct in-depth surveys with men and women over 18 years of age, on the move, as well with smugglers. The data they collect provide insight into the roles played by smugglers in movement decision-making processes and along the mixed migration journey. It is important to note that 4Mi is based on non-randomized sampling, and as such cannot be considered statistically representative of all smugglers and all people moving within, to and through North and West Africa. Moreover, smuggling activities by their nature are difficult to document, and understanding the scale of the irregular movement of people is therefore a challenge. In particular, the clandestine and irregular nature of population movements, the sensitivity of information shared by the smugglers, and the possible involvement of government officials, non-State actors and armed groups are some factors that contribute to the complexity of analysing smuggling activities. Thus, MMC does not attempt to provide estimates of refugee, migrant or smuggler stocks. Rather, the aim is to complement existing stock data from IOM and UNHCR with more in-depth information on the profiles and experiences of refugees, migrants and smugglers.

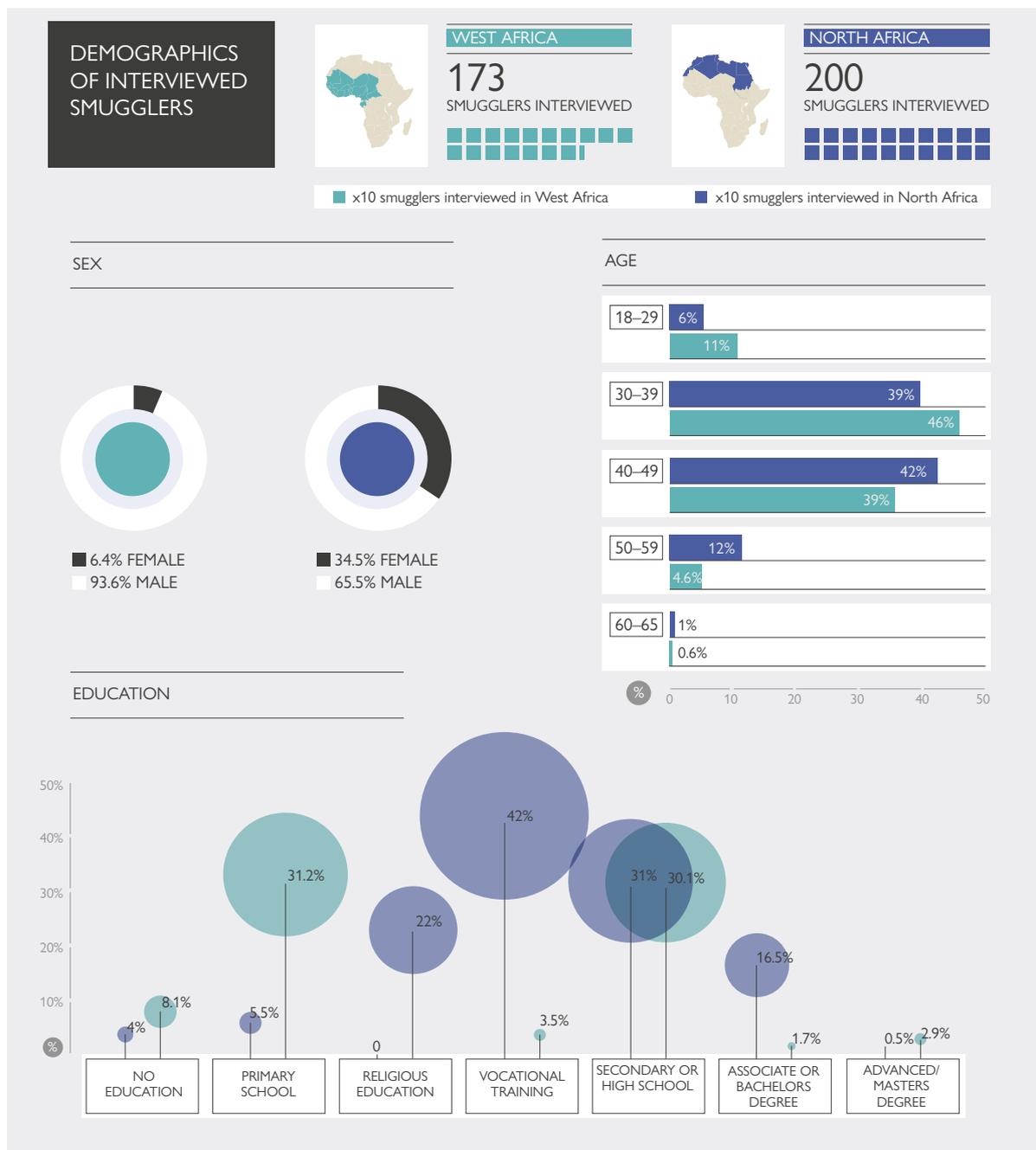
Across the two regions, 4Mi implemented two surveys – one with smugglers on their profiles, networks, and activities; and one with refugees and migrants – on their experiences with smugglers, how smugglers impacted their journeys, and whether and which protection incidents they faced were perpetrated by smugglers. The 4Mi project carried out a total of 373 interviews with smugglers in West and North Africa, including 102 in Mali, 69 in the Niger and 202 in Libya, between May 2017 and September 2019, in a 70-question survey. Such smugglers were primarily from East, Central and West African origin countries. Thus, while smugglers in West Africa were predominantly nationals of the country in which they operated and were surveyed, the smugglers surveyed in Libya are refugees and migrants, just like the people whose movement they are facilitating. This is a key distinction as smugglers with a migrant background are likely to perceive and describe their work differently than non-migrants. These data are complemented by the 4Mi migrant survey, carried out with 13,564 refugees and migrants over the same time period in the two regions: 5,159 interviews with refugees and migrants in Libya and 8,405 interviews with refugees and migrants in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger. Data were triangulated by comparing the responses of smugglers with those of refugees and migrants, as well as examining the extent to which the insights obtained from the data aligned or contrasted with findings from other studies.

<sup>5</sup> For further information about 4Mi and its methodology, visit [www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/](http://www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/).

## 17.2. Profiles of smugglers and smuggler networks

The sample of smugglers is comprised of 80 women and 293 men. The smugglers ranged in age from 21 to 65 years, with a mean of 39.5 years and a median of 39 years. Smugglers from North Africa had higher levels of education attainment than their West African counterparts on average, with 42 per cent having achieved vocational education and 17 per cent a tertiary degree, as compared with approximately 3 per cent and 5 per cent, respectively, for West Africa.

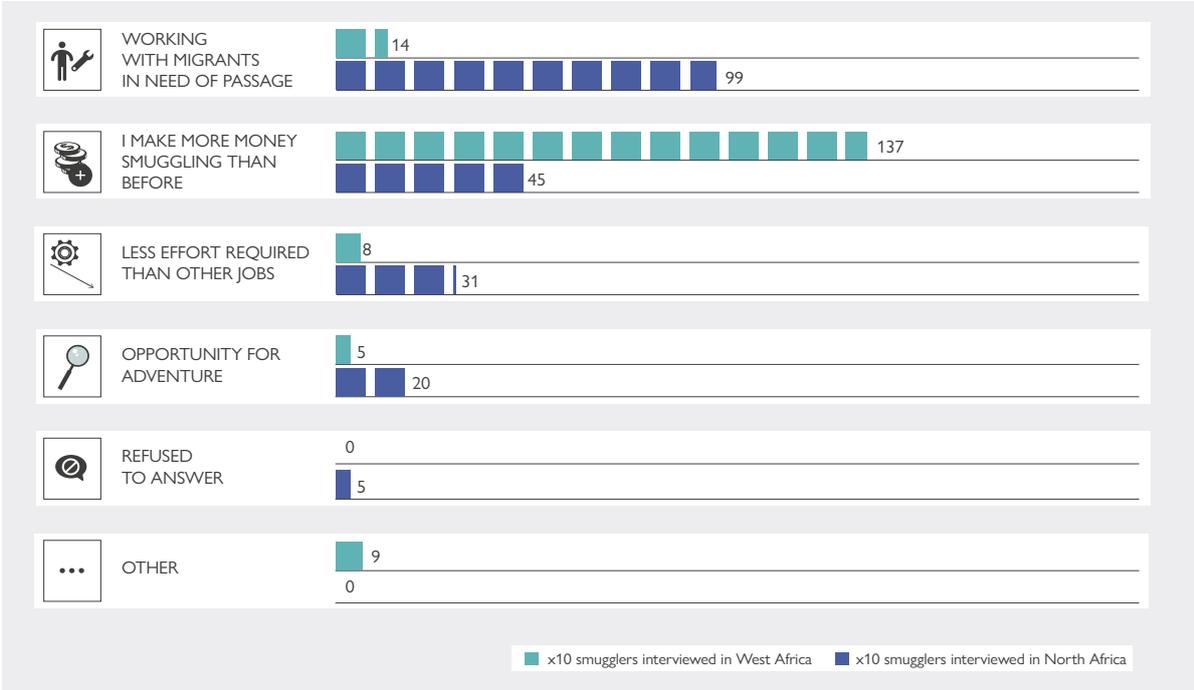
### Demographics of interviewed smugglers



Note: These maps are for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

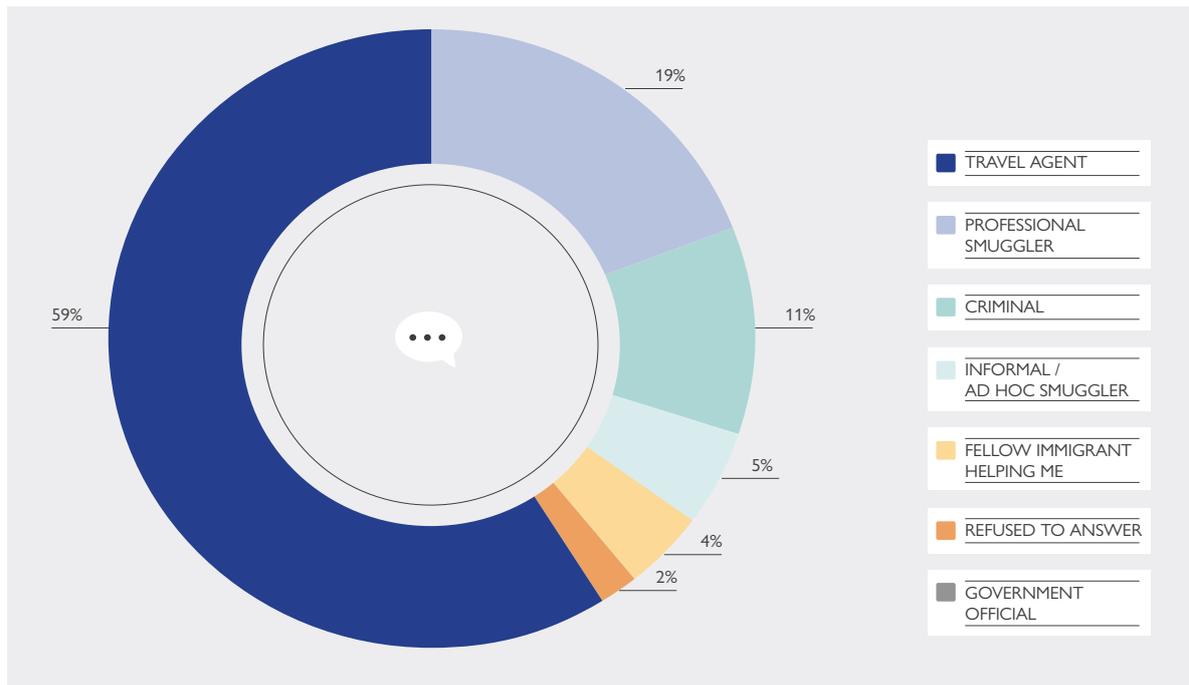
The reasons that smugglers cited for engaging in the sector differed between smugglers interviewed in West and North Africa. While those in North Africa cited “working with migrants in need of passage” as their primary reason (49.5%), West African respondents largely cited the opportunity to make more money than in their previous employment (79.2%). Smugglers surveyed in North Africa are to a large extent comprised of refugees and migrants themselves, who have undoubtedly experienced the difficulties of the journey, and they may be more likely to perceive or frame their motivations in terms of responding to the needs of other people on the move. The motivation emphasized by smugglers operating in Libya aligns with the fact that they self-identify as “providers of a service to people who wish to travel”. Moreover, such smugglers described themselves as “transporters” and “connecting men and women”. When referring to those who used their services, smugglers in West Africa used language such as “clients” or “passengers”. While smugglers emphasize the services they provide, it can, however, not be neglected that refugees and migrants surveyed Libya cited smugglers as the most frequent perpetrators of physical and sexual abuse.

**Figure 17.1.** What was the primary reason you started smuggling?



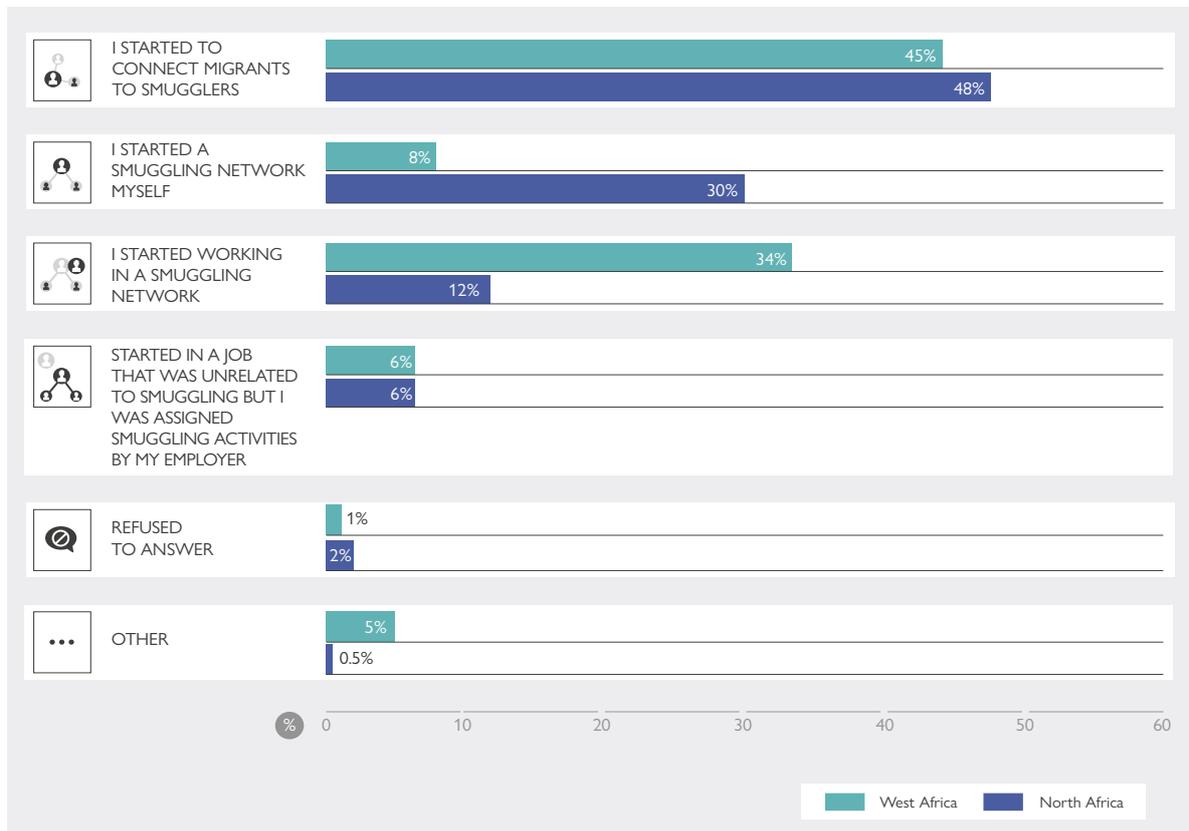
The motivation emphasized by smugglers operating in Libya as “providers of a service to people who wish to travel” aligns with refugee and migrant perceptions of smugglers in Libya. When surveyed refugees and migrants in Libya were asked how they would describe their smugglers, 58.7 per cent described smugglers as a “travel agent”, while only 11 per cent of respondents described their smugglers as a “criminal” (Figure 17.2). These perceptions may also be linked to the varying terminology for smugglers differing across countries (*passeurs* in West Africa, and *muhareb* (مُهارب) in Libya). Such terminology used across the regions may be less indicative of refugees’ and migrants’ perceptions of smugglers and more linked to the structure of the smuggling networks themselves. For instance, *passeurs* connotes migrants being passed from one smuggler to the next, where *muhareb* connotes a smuggler of goods and people, and suggests a more organized structure of smuggling communities.

**Figure 17.2.** How would you describe your smuggler?



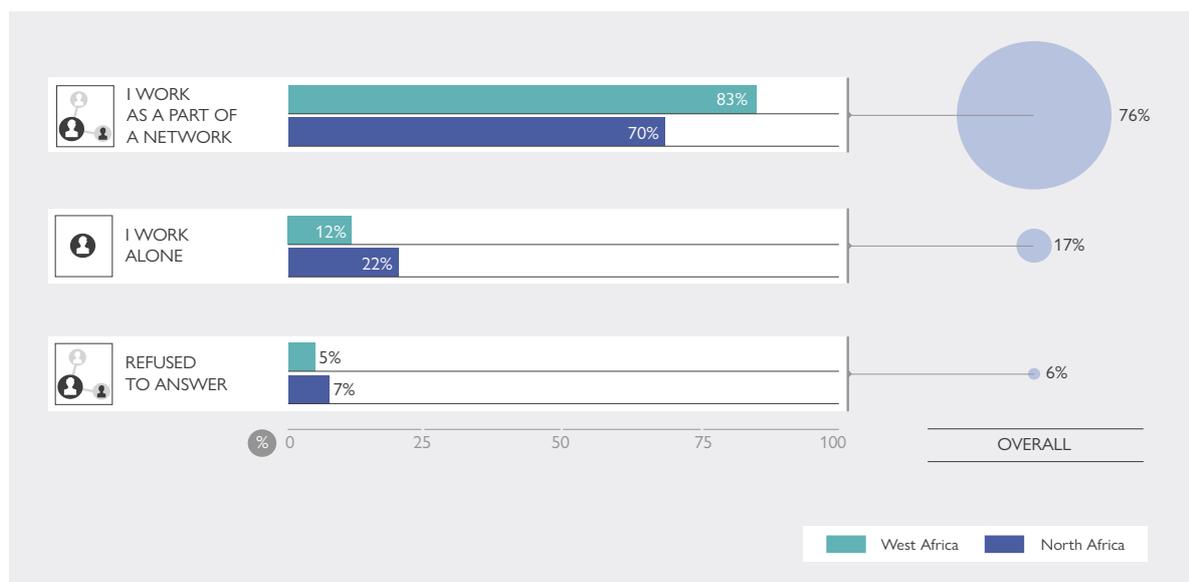
In both West and North Africa, smugglers primarily started their work after they began to connect refugees and migrants to other smugglers (45.1% and 48.5%, respectively). However, smugglers interviewed in North Africa were more likely to start their own smuggling network (30.5% versus 8.1%), and smugglers in West Africa were more likely to start working within an existing smuggling network (34.1% versus 12%).

**Figure 17.3.** How did you start working in migrant smuggling?



Most smugglers (70.5% for North Africa and 83.2% for West Africa) worked as part of a network, but the size and strength of these networks vary. While some smugglers noted being part of a relatively close-knit network that could coordinate travel from point of origin all the way to Europe, others highlighted reliable connections with other smugglers, but noted that they often had relatively limited knowledge of these partners. In explaining how the connections between smugglers functioned, a number of smugglers described their activities as “sort of a chain movement from one hand, one person, to the other”.<sup>6</sup> When analysing network dynamics, however, it is important to note that the smugglers surveyed in Libya are predominantly from West and Central Africa. Consequently, they often have more intermediary roles within their larger networks, which would vary significantly from their local counterparts, who would have greater responsibility and influence in smuggling operations.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 17.4.** Do you work as part of a smuggling network or alone?



### 17.3. Refugee and migrant perceptions of smugglers

Of the 5,159 refugees and migrants surveyed in Libya, 32 per cent reported not using any smuggler (1,638), while approximately 37 per cent (1,896) used one smuggler, and 31 per cent (1,592) used several smugglers along their journey to Libya. Of the 8,329 refugees and migrants surveyed in West Africa, approximately 46 per cent reported not using any smuggler (3,896), while 25 per cent (2,100) used one smuggler, and 26 per cent (2,180) used several smugglers along their journeys. However, these numbers are not representative and do not reveal trends over time. As border controls get stricter, particularly in Sudan and the Niger, smuggling activities evolve. It is noteworthy that almost a third of surveyed smugglers (76 of 245) cited stricter border measures as a factor in increasing demand for smuggling services from the refugees and migrants they transport.

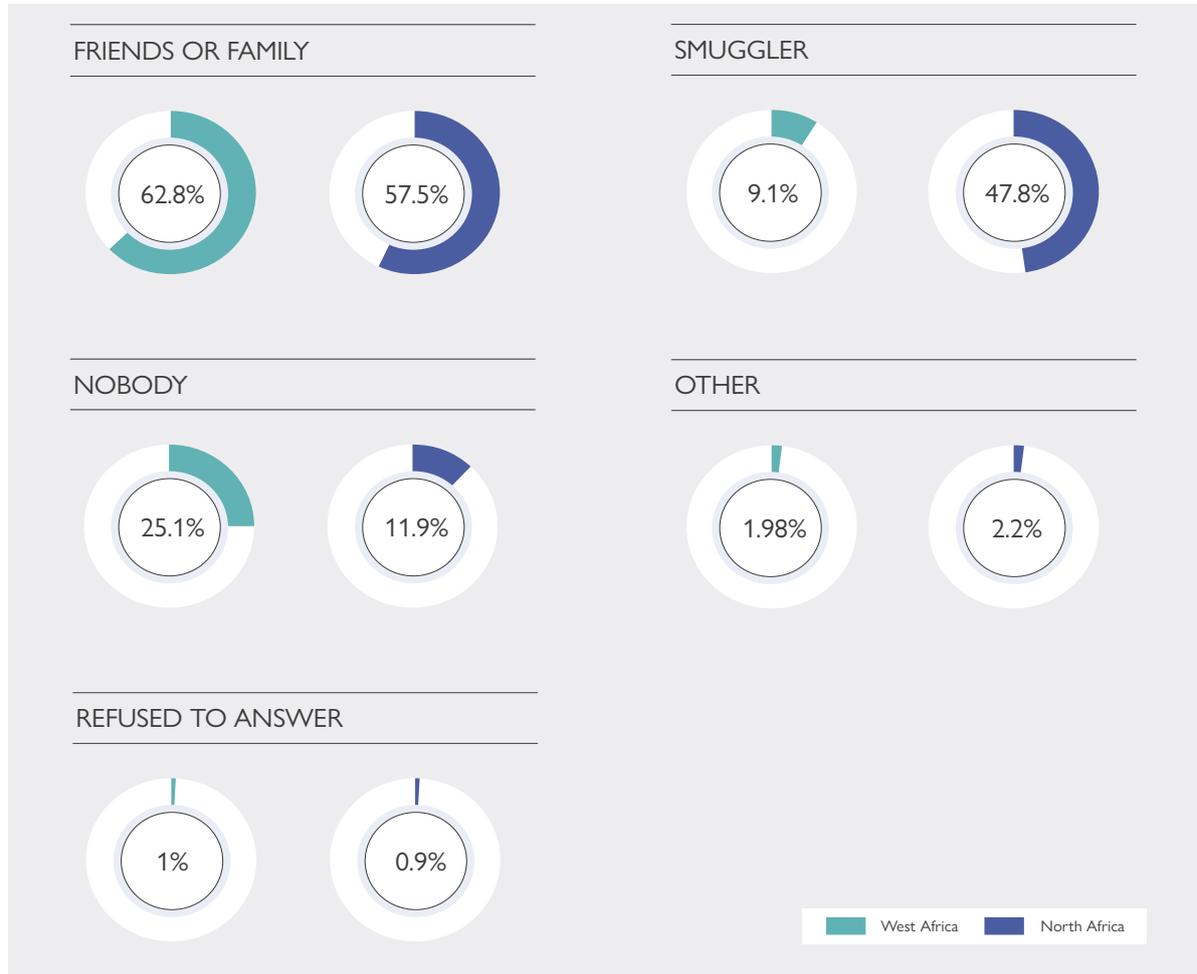
When respondents were queried about who encouraged them to migrate, those in North Africa were more often (48%) encouraged to move by a smuggler than those interviewed in West Africa (9%), who were more often encouraged to move by friends or family. Considering that the majority of respondents interviewed in Libya are West African, this difference could be attributed to a few different factors. Respondents interviewed in West Africa are more likely to include people intending to move just within the region and not requiring the services of

<sup>6</sup> Interview with (male) Nigerian smuggler based in Sabha, December 2018.

<sup>7</sup> See for example MMC (2020).

a smuggler, while those intending to move to Libya or onward to Europe knew from the onset they would likely need a smuggler at some point. Indeed, of the West African respondents who said that a smuggler encouraged their movement, 71 per cent reported an intended destination of Libya and/or a European country.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 17.5.** Who encouraged you to start your migration journey?

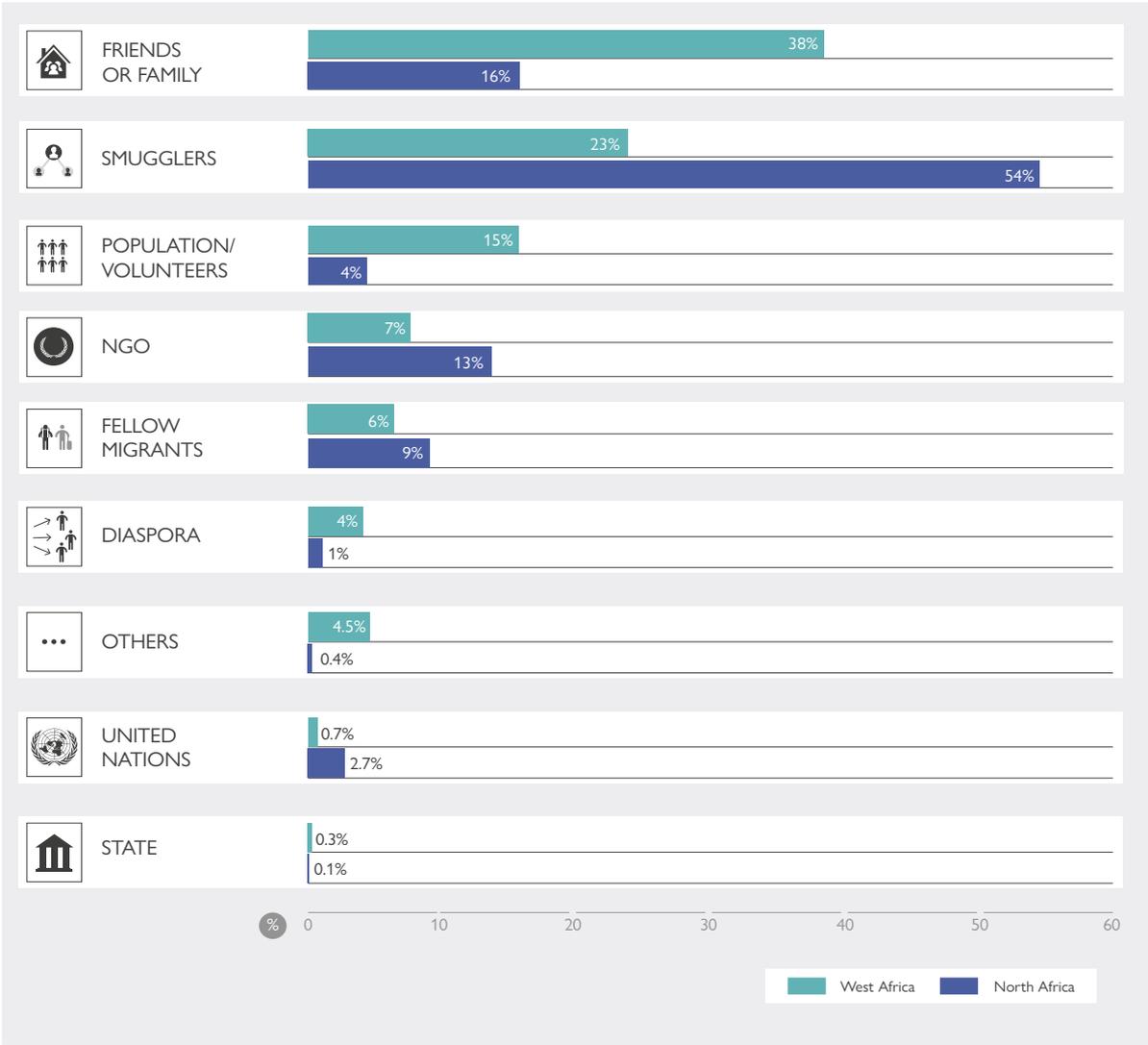


When asked about the main providers of “services”<sup>9</sup> along their journeys, refugees and migrants surveyed in North Africa reported that smugglers were their main providers of services (53.6%). Smugglers were the second most cited providers of services in West Africa (23.5%), after friends and family (37.7%). It should be noted, however, that such assistance was not provided freely, but was often included in the cost of the smugglers’ fees. The high score for smugglers may be partly explained by the unauthorized nature of smuggling, which means that few if any other actors have access to these people on the move in certain locations along the route. This fact in itself contributes to the increased vulnerability of refugees and migrants during the journey.

<sup>8</sup> On the West Africa 4Mi survey, this is a multiple choice question.

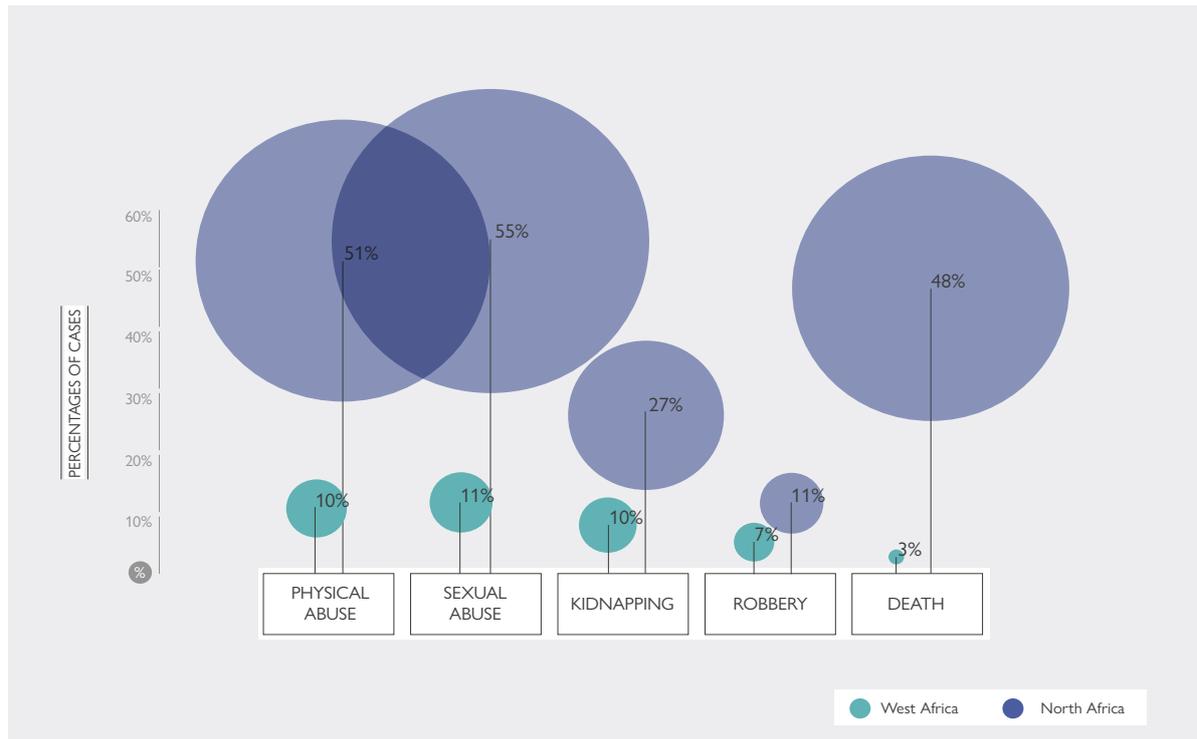
<sup>9</sup> Services includes shelter, food, water, washing facilities, clothes and shoes, medical assistance, psychosocial support, legal assistance, help to access money transfer services, blankets and sleeping bags.

**Figure 17.6.** Who was the main provider of the assistance?



That refugees and migrants cite smugglers as main providers of services is not to say that smugglers can be compared with other actors whose mandate is to provide support to people on the move, or that smugglers do no harm to refugees and migrants. When examining perpetrators of abuse (sexual/physical abuse, robbery, kidnapping or detention) along a migrant’s journey, smugglers are often cited as one of the main actors in North Africa (41%). The share is lower in West Africa (9%), although it is important to note that there is a great regional variance in the proportion of overall protection incidents attributed to smugglers (45% for the Niger versus 6% for Mali). Other reported perpetrators include groups of criminals, police and other migrants, among others. Thus, refugee and migrant data nuance smugglers’ stated motivations for participating in the sector – helping refugees and migrants in need of passage. Figure 17.7 provides the full breakdown of protection incidents reported to have been perpetrated by smugglers.

**Figure 17.7.** Breakdown of protection incidents reported to be perpetrated by smugglers



Additionally, as mentioned at the start of this chapter, MMC research surrounding protection incidents highlights the sometimes blurred lines between smuggling and trafficking. In some instances, when discussing their experiences with smugglers, respondents described situations of exploitation and situations in which respondents' consent was violated, which more nearly describes situations of trafficking. For instance, findings from Libya detail situations in which young women cite being forced into prostitution by their smugglers. A Nigerian woman stated:

Before we left Sabha, one of the smugglers carried us to his house to sleep till the second day. As we got [there], the man started behaving abnormally. He locked four of us ladies in one room and told us to remove all our clothes for him to see our naked bodies so that he can choose the best among us. He was using pistol gun to harass us violently (MMC, 2019).

Similar cases have been noted in certain regions of West Africa. For example, in Gao (central Mali), findings from focus group discussions revealed that some refugees and migrants are confined to ghettos, with their identities or travel documents seized and their journeys to other destinations systematically delayed, indicating a clear trafficking network where the document seizure is used to exercise control over the refugees and migrants (Golovko, 2018). An Ivorian woman interviewed in Gao reported:

I have heard that women are raped in the houses where smugglers shut migrants. I did not go through that personally. However, the smugglers took my money away by force, they took everything I had... Even if we complain to the police, there will be no follow-up, because the smugglers work with the security forces.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Interview with migrant, Gao drawn from Mixed Migration Centre's *Navigating borderlands in the Sahel* (2019).

## 17.4. Implications for programming

- International non-governmental organizations focused on migration can identify and strengthen local civic initiatives that work towards shifting their communities away from smuggling activities. The provision of alternative livelihood activities for smugglers may reduce their involvement in the sector.
- Improve monitoring and accountability for migration programming: Continuous and ex-ante human rights impact assessments are necessary for all policies, programmes, and technical assistance measures aimed at addressing irregular migration and dismantling smuggling and trafficking networks as recommended by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders (OHCHR, n.d.). Additionally, in the absence of an agreement for a national unity Government based in Tripoli, the European Union and its member States should support international and Libyan organizations that are working to monitor human rights violations on the ground, including those perpetrated by smugglers.

## 17.5. Implications for policy

- Move away from security and containment-focused policies: As almost a third of surveyed smugglers (76 of 245) cited stricter border measures as a factor in increasing demand for smuggling. Such policies not only increase the number of refugees and migrants using smugglers, but also may increase their exposure to protection incidents.
- Move towards increasing legal pathways for movement: Criminalizing smuggling without increasing legal pathways for mobility overlooks the fact that the demand for mobility will continue to exist. Legal channels for movement include: expanding options for circular labour mobility at all skill levels, granting humanitarian visas, creating humanitarian corridors between transit countries and Europe, increasing family reunification programmes, and developing complementary protection pathways through higher education.

## 17.6. Implications for both programming and policy

- Acknowledge shifting identities: The distinction between people on the move and their smugglers is less clear cut than the way it is often portrayed in public discourse and anti-smuggling policies. Smugglers surveyed in Libya are migrants, themselves, and some reported engaging in the sector as a means of funding their own travel. Additionally, smugglers have different profiles, which warrants a more nuanced policy approach that moves beyond criminalization (while some smugglers are committing sanctionable abuses, not all smugglers are reported to be committing abuses) (MMC, 2018).
- Increase data availability, access and detail: Policy and programming responses to mixed migration need to account for the complex and nuanced nature of movement processes. To date, data on migrant and smuggler interactions are not representative or exhaustive of the many and varied contexts. International agencies monitoring migration still largely collect stock data, without accounting for many of the experiences and risks of refugees and migrants on the move, particularly those who move with smugglers. More qualitative instruments should be deployed to further understand the complexity of the many facets of migration journeys. Specific thematic data gaps requiring additional qualitative and quantitative data collection include: protection concerns on shifting routes, vulnerabilities of women and children, protection incidents in the desert, discriminatory legislative frameworks and practices in countries along the route, and effects of European policies on migration in transit countries.
- Place human rights at the centre of all approaches: The human rights of refugees and migrants should be at the centre of legal practices and policy measures on smuggling, taking into account the OHCHR Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders (OHCHR, n.d.). These principles recommend that legislative provisions be proportionate and that criminal penalties be applied, where appropriate, for offences committed against migrants at international borders.

### Impact of COVID-19

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, border closures were enacted globally. Since mid-March, land borders between North African countries have been closed in an effort to contain the spread of COVID-19, also further constraining movements along the CMR. [Global Initiative](#) reported that these new border closures had specific challenges for people on the move, prompting involuntary immobility and increasing vulnerability as refugees and migrants are forced to use more precarious routes. Recent [MMC key informant interviews](#) with refugees and migrants in Tunisia's coastal city of Sfax revealed that smugglers continued to be operational during the pandemic, although the frequency of their activities declined. [4Mi data](#) collected in West and North Africa further reinforces that some refugees and migrants likely experienced involuntary immobility during the pandemic, as it became increasingly difficult to access smugglers, particularly in coastal Tunisian and Libyan cities. Future research and data collection by MMC and 4Mi will be carried out to better understand the changing nature of smuggling activities along the CMR in relation to COVID-19.



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SMUGGLING  
OF MIGRANTS

## 18.

Migrant smuggling in the Libyan  
context: re-examining the evidenceGabriella Sanchez<sup>1</sup>

***Abstract:** This chapter examines the interactions between migrants and the facilitators of their journeys. It argues that European Union-centric concerns over irregular migration that attribute smuggling to organized criminal networks alone have led to simplistic views of mobility facilitation processes in Libya and beyond. The findings show that people behind migrants' journeys are most often men, women and children from marginalized and impoverished communities, who have historically relied on the provision of mobility and transportation services to generate income, and they do so to achieve their own mobility and/or migratory goals and to reduce the impact of poverty and disenfranchisement. Yet stricter border controls and migration enforcement efforts, coupled with the shortage of legal, safe and dignified paths for mobility, have led to the emergence of unequal, abusive and violent interactions between migrants and facilitators.*

## 18.1. Introduction

Migrant smugglers figure prominently in the European Union's irregular migration discourse. References to their organization, activities, reach and callousness are also common in the migration literature, particularly in the case of Libya, commonly considered ground zero of the so-called European Union "migration crisis" and, until recently, one of the Mediterranean's main hubs for irregular departures into Europe.

Migrant smugglers operating in Libya have been depicted as members of transnationally organized crime networks, set up into militias and tribes scattered across the country. They are said to profit financially from the desperation of migrants eager to reach Europe, and to subject them to heinous exploitation and abuse. There are also claims of smugglers' involvement in other criminal activities, ranging from terrorism and jihadism to organ and drug trafficking.

The violence faced by migrants in transit through Libya must not be underestimated. There is abundant evidence on the specific crimes they endure (ranging from kidnapping for ransom to forced labour and human trafficking). However, there is limited empirical evidence specific to migrant smuggling facilitation. Despite the abundant references to smugglers' activities, only a few researchers have been able to carry out research within Libya over the years. Furthermore, most literature on smuggling endorses European Union perspectives on law enforcement and migratory control and focuses

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on containing irregular migration, constructed as a threat to the security of the European Union. This has led to the proliferation of a characterization of smuggling and its actors which is more reflective of European concerns over irregular migration, rather than those of the people who are forced to rely on smuggling, both as a mobility strategy and as an income-generating mechanism.

This contribution summarizes some of the findings of a case study on the dynamics of migrant smuggling in Libya post-Gaddafi. It argues that European Union-focused concerns over irregular migration that attribute smuggling facilitation to organized criminal networks alone have led to the proliferation of simplistic insights into mobility processes in Libya and beyond. Data show that the people behind migrants' journeys are most often men, women and children from marginalized and impoverished communities across Libya (including migrants themselves) who rely on the provision of mobility and transportation services to generate income. Also, they aim to achieve their own mobility and/or migratory goals, to reduce the impact of the growing inequality that afflicts them.

The facilitation of mobility in Libya is deeply and historically rooted in socioeconomic community life. For generations, it has been facilitated by transporters and traders of migrant, tribal or pastoral origin. Yet stricter border controls and migration enforcement efforts from the European Union, and the virtual absence of legal, safe and dignified paths for mobility, have led to the emergence of often unequal, abusive and violent interactions between migrants and those behind their journeys. This contribution sheds light on some of these interactions, their roots and implications.

## 18.2. Defining smuggling

Transporters and traders of migrant, tribal or pastoral origin have facilitated human mobility across the Maghreb, the Sahara and beyond for generations (Bredeloup and Pliez, 2011). However, growing concerns over irregular migration into the European Union have led to these services being considered as conducive to irregular migration to Europe, and in turn to be conceptualized as smuggling of migrants by a growing number of nation-States (Brachet, 2018).

A relatively new concept – it was articulated as such only in the year 2000 – smuggling of migrants designates “the procurement of the irregular, unofficial or undeclared entry of a person into a country different from his or her own for a material benefit” (UNODC, 2000). Its facilitators are described in the criminal justice literature almost singularly as smugglers, further showcasing the way the activities they perform are constructed as almost inherently illicit and/or criminal (Baird and Van Liempt, 2016; Van Liempt and Sersli, 2013).

The European Union literature on irregular migration generally describes smuggling facilitators as “criminal networks [which] organise the journeys of large numbers of migrants desperate to reach the EU” (European Commission, 2015) and as “unscrupulous smugglers who seek to benefit from the desperation of the vulnerable” (European Commission, 2016). They are also depicted as people who engage in “callous and inhuman business” (EMSC, 2019:27), through “closed [groups] only accessible through trusted partners and associates” (Frontex, 2019:29).

The victimization migrants face in their journeys is documented by numerous sources, in the form of media coverage, reports from intergovernmental organizations and academic research, and is almost singlehandedly attributed to smuggling facilitators. In Libya, this violence is often reported as procured by militias and tribes who prey on migrants' desperation (Bocchi, 2018; Reitano and Tinti, 2015). However, there is growing consensus that the demand for smuggling services emerges from the systematic decrease of paths for legal, safe and dignified mechanisms allowing people to move (Zhang, Sanchez and Achilli, 2018; Ayalew, 2018a). In other words, neither smuggling nor its facilitators are inherently violent. However, empirical research on the facilitation of migration and its actors is limited, as is our understanding of the migrant–facilitator dynamics, especially from the perspective of the actors themselves.

## 18.3. Facilitation of migration in Libya: the literature

The available literature shows that the facilitation of irregular migration across the Mediterranean is not a recent practice. In fact, the nature of Libya as an important smuggling hub had already been identified during the time of Gaddafi (Monzini, Pastore and Sciortino, 2004; Monzini, 2007). Researchers argued smuggling facilitators were organized into “a complex network of small- and medium-sized organisations... [operating] on a short time-scale, responding to changing problems with flexible solutions... aware of moving on unstable territory and in a situation of continuous change” (Monzini, 2007).

Recruiters or “go-betweens” were largely from the same countries as migrants, as Libyans were perceived as prone to engage in abuses and scams. Sara Hamood described how tasks were split along nationality lines, with Libyans being in charge of the boat journey itself, while non-Libyans were facilitated the contact between the non-Libyan “clients” and the Libyan “smuggler” (Hamood, 2006:60).

Hans Lucht also found that Ghanaian migrants departing from Libya often performed the role of boat captains to offset their fees, relying on their seafaring experience. “For this effort [migrants] are paid in the form of a ride for themselves as well as seats they can sell to friends or relatives at a reduced price. The appeal of this deal, however, is not financial. Most are themselves migrants en route and view the captaincy primarily as a means to reach Europe” (Lucht, 2012:131).

Abuse was also identified as commonplace, and was often traced to authorities, and not to smuggling facilitators alone. Hamood, for example, explained how migrants often had no option but to accept abusive financial terms on the part of authorities that yet afforded the possibility of continuing moving onward.

The end of the Gaddafi regime in 2011 and the start of a series of attempts of a military nature by actors seeking to gain control over the country (including the European Union) have had devastating impacts on the people who call Libya home. Civil war, continued political division and widespread insecurity have contributed to societal tensions, economic challenges, significant loss of life and population displacement, further straining public services and social cohesion (Fitzgerald, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2019). United Nations data, however, indicate that none of these factors has stopped migration into Libya (UNHCR, 2019). However the end of the regime marked the beginning of a new series of attempts to control irregular migration and for Libya to regain visibility as a migrant smuggling hub, primarily as a result of its proximity to Italy. The persona of the smuggler, however, emerged in the literature with a new face. References to militias and tribes – comprising both tribal leaders and members, and local councils and armed groups established primarily after the fall of the regime, and seeking to protect their families and interests (Governments of Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, 2014) – as having taken over Libya’s smuggling market began to emerge in policy reports and journalistic content. Here militias and tribes were not depicted as the traditional traders and transporters, but instead as having violently taken over both migrant smuggling and trafficking activities in Libya, posing a serious threat to the European Union’s security, given their ability to facilitate the arrival of irregular migrants across the Mediterranean (Bocchi, 2018; Reitano and Tinti, 2015).

Today, most publications on the facilitation of irregular migration take as a fact the claim that smuggling has given place to “domestic servitude and sexual exploitation” (Reitano and Tinti, 2015:13), controlled by militias and tribes that “mushroomed” after the end of the regime. This claim is simplistic at best. Not only does it reveal the European Union’s attempts to construct irregular migration from Africa as a security threat. It is also ahistorical, for it fails to recognize the long-standing and extremely diverse practices of mobility facilitation that have existed across Africa and Libya itself. It also criminalizes socially embedded practices of fundamental importance for the survival of migrant, tribal and pastoral communities in the region, conflating long-standing trade and mobility strategies, with the criminal designation of migrant smuggling. This in turn has systematically justified European Union-funded measures to control and criminalize irregular migration and its facilitation. The designation of the tasks that facilitators perform under the blanket designation of migrant smuggling has certainly impacted their lives, those of their communities and the people who rely on the services they provide. Yet this characterization is based on scant if any empirical insights into the dynamics of mobility facilitation and its actors.

## 18.4. Smuggling of migrants in Libya: Re-examining the evidence

The contribution to this publication is an effort to provide grounded, empirically informed insights into the facilitation of migrant smuggling in and out of Libya. It is part of a larger case study carried out from 2017 to 2019 on the trajectories of migrants from Libya into the European Union and the interactions with the facilitators of their journeys (Sanchez, 2020). The study involved semi-structured, face-to-face individual interviews with 25 migrants, and three focus groups with an additional 14 migrants who lived in Libya from 2011 to 2017. The interviewees were all men, 18 to 45 years of age, who had relied on the services of a facilitator to transit through or leave Libya. They were from Ghana (4), Nigeria (4), Senegal (2) and Bangladesh (29). Fieldwork was conducted in the metropolitan area of Rome, Italy, and along the Tunisia–Libya border in communities known for their ties to migrant smuggling from Libya (Medenine, Ben Gardane, Zarzis and the checkpoint of Ra's Ajdir). This second part of the research involved 21 interviews with law enforcement officers, staff from intergovernmental organizations and civil society, and was supplemented with field observations and unstructured interviews with local informants to gain further insights on local migrant smuggling activities connected to Libya.

There are limitations to this research, starting with the number of interviewees. However, as a qualitative and ethnographic exercise, the research seeks, rather than to examine frequency patterns, to interrogate the relationships that emerge among actors – specifically, those related to power differentials – between migrants and the facilitators of their journeys. Another limitation is the fact that the interviews involve the perspectives of male migrants only. No contacts were made among female migrants who could describe their experiences in Libya. Future research must examine the dynamics of smuggling facilitation as experienced by women, through the lens of gender. While attempts were made to conduct research in Libya, institutional authorization was denied, given the security conditions. This challenge was ameliorated by carrying out supplemental work along the Tunisia–Libya border (where smuggling activities tied to Libya were known to take place). The security conditions and the increasing criminalization of migration facilitation prevented the researcher from openly contacting smuggling facilitators. As in prior work documenting other smuggling markets in North Africa, the researcher overcame this limitation by asking migrants questions not about the contacts or identities of smuggling facilitators, but about the nature of the interactions they had as migrants with the people behind their journeys. This strategy generated abundant information on facilitators and the strategies they relied upon to carry out their business, as well as those of the migrants at securing services conducive to mobility. Several of the people interviewed had themselves performed smuggling-related tasks in exchange for services, and openly discussed their experiences. As other researchers carrying out research in the Sahara and the Maghreb have noted, the deeply embedded and non-stigmatized nature of migration facilitation also allowed for information to be shared openly (Ayalew, 2018b; Richter, 2019). The sections below summarize some of the case study findings.

### 18.4.1. Smuggling and its actors

Facilitators of migration were ordinary people, living in border areas along migration pathways and in migrant enclaves in coastal towns and cities. They provided both mobility and/or smuggling services to either generate an income or to offset the costs of their own migratory journeys. They were both Libyans and nationals of other countries. Facilitators did not openly identify themselves as members of particular militias or groups. They were for the most part adult men, young men seeking to offset their smuggling fees and, reportedly, women on occasion.

Migrants who lived in Tripolitania stated that the people behind their journeys were often migrants who, lacking financial resources to reach Europe, worked for facilitators recruiting other migrants, acting as lookouts or guards at safe houses, bringing food or water to migrants as they waited, or performing general chores. Interviews with stakeholders and site visits helped confirm that facilitators were for the most part residents from communities with high levels of marginalization.

### 18.4.2. Motivations of smugglers

Most facilitators work in smuggling seeking a financial return. Transporting migrants across long distances or from remote locations for a fee was in this sample socially perceived as a legitimate form of labour without the stigma and risk present in other forms of smuggling, such as drugs or weapons. For some young people, it was also a source of visibility and status amid a widespread lack of employment opportunities. Young people often performed smuggling-related activities to offset the costs of their own journeys, given their families' or their own inability to cover costs.<sup>2</sup>

### 18.4.3. Migrants' perspective: Most migrants wanted to remain in Libya

Most migrants interviewed had no aspirations to reach Europe.<sup>3</sup> They arrived in Libya with the intention of staying there, having learned from their peers that jobs were available despite the conflict. Their goal was to earn money and pay off any debt incurred as a result of their journeys. Many encountered relatively stable jobs that allowed them to support their families back home and themselves.

### 18.4.4. Conflict, violence and abuse were widespread

Living conditions were manageable, yet not optimal. Migrants reported often being the target of verbal abuse, scams, robberies and assaults – often racially motivated. Several lost their employment in the aftermath of the war and found themselves without a place to go. Libyan and non-Libyan facilitators were also known to engage in abusive behaviours. Once they accessed migrants' information, facilitators often followed, threatened or assaulted migrants to convince them to opt for their services. Scam artists would also pretend to be facilitators to then steal migrants' money without providing any mobility or smuggling services. Several migrants stated that facilitators and scammers observed and profiled migrants and their habits in order to target them without fail.

### 18.4.5. The decision of migrants to leave Libya for Europe was often the outcome of a series of violent acts, the overall sense of insecurity and its implications

An interviewee who was abducted four times decided he could no longer remain in Libya, not only because of the insecurity but also because of the financial toll that ransoms had on his family. Family pressures were often cited as a reason to cross the Mediterranean. Having lost their livelihoods and being unable to send remittances, migrants faced high levels of stress given their families' financial needs and the demands for payment of previously acquired debt by creditors.

### 18.4.6. The risks inherent to the migrant-facilitator relationship were ameliorated by social networks

Contact details for reliable, trusted facilitators were available through migrants' own social networks. Facilitators were also known to frequent cafes, restaurants or other places where migrants congregated to recruit potential customers. Most migrants were aware of the widespread nature of scams, extortion and theft, which led them to proceed with caution. Referrals and recommendations reduced to a degree the likelihood of abuse. In other words, migrants were aware of the risks related to travelling clandestinely, and sought support from others like themselves.

### 18.4.7. There is not a specific “smuggling business model”

Smuggling fees varied widely and were almost invariably negotiated. It was common to find two migrants who, having travelled on the same boat, had paid significantly different amounts. Facilitators also had to work hard to generate their own income. They provided room and board; acted as security guards or lookouts; and served as guides, drivers, or performed other transportation-related roles. The data suggest their profits were slim given the variation

<sup>2</sup> On children in the facilitation of trans-Mediterranean migrations, see IOM (2015).

<sup>3</sup> Only 2 of 29 Bangladeshi migrants had heard of the possibility of heading to Europe; only 1 had planned to reach the continent from the onset.

in prices and the number of people among whom fees were often split. There is no indication that facilitators thrived financially and in fact most continued to live in their communities. This suggests limited social mobility, if any. Participation in smuggling was always an attempt to reduce precarity.

The facilitation of migrant journeys benefited many other people in the communities where it took place – for example, taxi drivers transported migrants to meeting or departure points, and shopkeepers sold food and water while they waited for their boats to depart. Many communities depended financially on the profits derived from migrants' journeys. This includes not only those concerning smuggling, but also other forms of mobility.

#### 18.4.8. Departures and journeys were stressful

Payment terms were for the most part clear. Travel arrangements, on the other hand, were hardly ever shared with migrants. Uncertainty was high. Facilitators never provided specific departure dates, since the likelihood of leaving depended on multiple variables – for example, weather, a confirmed number of paying passengers, the ability to transport them without detection, the availability of a working vessel, the prepayment of bribes to local authorities or other State actors, the presence of authorities and other facilitator groups who could be attempting to “steal” clients and by so doing charge separate and/or additional fees. Several migrants reported having waited at safe houses for days before being allowed to board a boat. Facilitators would often join forces and bring together groups of migrants to maximize profits, but coordination was difficult. Overcrowding, limited availability of food or water, absence of restrooms, and migrants' inability to contact their families caused tension in safe houses. Interactions among anxious, tired and hungry people meant facilitators often relied on threats or physical displays of violence to regain control or establish order. Many migrants also opted to escape, or to abandon the places where they waited once conditions worsened or when they lost hope that the journey would take place.

### 18.5. Conclusions

This contribution aimed to shed light on some poorly understood dynamics present in smuggling facilitation. It does not intend to capture or summarize all interactions between migrants and those who facilitate their migration in the Libyan context. Neither does it suggest the findings and observations made by other researchers on the topic are inaccurate or wrong. Its goal is to provide a grounded lecture of the dynamics of the migrant–facilitation interaction.

The limitations of this study are recognizably plenty. Travel to Libya was denied given security conditions. While many migrants performed smuggling-conducive activities, interviews with people systematically involved in the facilitation of migration were scant. The lack of female participants who could provide insights into the gender dynamics present in the facilitation of mobility is another significant and unfortunate gap (it is likely that significant numbers of women participate in smuggling, yet the gendering of the tasks they perform may imply they are not seen or perceived as relevant). An extended and detailed examination of young people and children as facilitators of mobility, based on their experiences and perceptions, is also much needed.

While labelled as migrant smuggling by the European Union, the facilitation of migrant journeys in and out of Libya must be recognized as part of a vast continuum of mobility strategies that throughout history have been practiced throughout North Africa by migrants, tribes and pastoral groups. The facilitation of mobility constitutes the livelihood of many communities in the region, which perform these tasks along with trade activities. They are, however, far from constituting smuggling alone, and they should not be referred to or described monolithically as such. Therefore, solutions to counter predatory, abusive migration facilitation must include initiatives to reduce the precarity faced not only by migrants, but by the facilitators of migrants' journeys and their communities, whose livelihoods have been impacted by the labelling of their labour as a form of organized crime by the international community in an attempt to control migration.

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# 19. Irregular migration and vulnerability of Ivorian women returnees<sup>1</sup>

Aude Nanquette<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** *This chapter describes the migration journey of Ivorian female returnees assisted by IOM, from the time they start preparing for the trip until their return to Côte d'Ivoire. It draws on a participatory study conducted in 2018 and 2019 in Côte d'Ivoire, during which a mixed qualitative and quantitative methodology was adopted. It finds that – whereas broader female migration can be beneficial for the women themselves, their circles and society – women returnees experience additional challenges. In their case, migration has tended to reinforce their economic precarity and psychosocial vulnerability. The various forms of exploitation they suffered en route, the fact that they left their children behind, and the stigma attached to their return without having fulfilled their migration ambitions, are all elements that can make long-term economic and social reintegration more complex.*

## 19.1. The migration context in Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire, which is a Member State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), is a country of destination for many West African migrants. It has more than 5 million foreign inhabitants – about 25 per cent of the country's total population (Côte d'Ivoire Institut National de la Statistique, 2014) – primarily from ECOWAS countries.

For many years, Ivorians only rarely resorted to irregular migration, as the domestic economy was booming.<sup>3</sup> In 2016, however, the number of people claiming to be Ivorian citizens and arriving on the coast of Italy leapt to 13,000, an increase of almost 230 per cent over 2015, placing Côte d'Ivoire in fourth position among countries of origin in West and Central Africa. That trend was confirmed in 2017, when nearly 10,000 migrants claiming to be Ivorian nationals arrived on the coast of Italy, placing Côte d'Ivoire third, after Nigeria and Guinea, among the top West and Central African countries of origin (IOM, 2018). In 2018, while the number of irregular migrants arriving in Italy by sea fell overall, Ivorian migrants remained in the “top 10” of nationalities

<sup>1</sup> Geographic scope: Côte d'Ivoire, transit and destination countries (Tunisia, Morocco and Libya).

<sup>2</sup> IOM Côte d'Ivoire.

<sup>3</sup> Real gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 7.4 per cent in 2018, compared with 7.7 per cent in 2017. The economic outlook remains favourable, with real GDP growth of 7.0 per cent in 2019 and as yet unknown for 2020. See African Development Bank (n.d.), available at [www.afdb.org/fr/countries/west-africa/cote-d%E2%80%99ivoire/cote-divoire-economic-outlook/](http://www.afdb.org/fr/countries/west-africa/cote-d%E2%80%99ivoire/cote-divoire-economic-outlook/) (accessed 26 May 2020).

arriving by that route, accounting for 5 per cent of all arrivals and representing the second-largest West and Central African contingent, after Nigerian migrants. At the same time, Ivorian migrants represented the third largest West and Central African contingent arriving irregularly in Spain, accounting for 4 per cent out of about 3,000 declared arrivals (IOM, 2019:14, 19).

According to information provided by the Italian and Spanish Interior Ministries for the period January–April 2019 (IOM, 2020:14–20), Côte d'Ivoire remained among the top 10 countries of origin declared by migrants registered on the Italian and Spanish coasts: it ranked ninth in Italy, with 3 per cent; and fourth in Spain, with 13 per cent of total arrivals from every region in the world; it ranked third in Italy (after Guinea and Senegal); and third in Spain (behind Guinea and Mali) of total arrivals from West and Central Africa.

The Central Mediterranean Route taken by the Ivorians is one the world's most dangerous. Many migrants die in the desert or drown at sea, and there is a high risk of exploitation: 69 per cent of migrants aged 25 years or over surveyed for a study (IOM and UNICEF, 2017) reported treatment akin to human trafficking. That figure rose to 77 per cent for young people under the age of 25 years. The study specifically considered migrants still on the move and victims of human trafficking, and is therefore not representative of all migrants.

## 19.2. Methodology

The information presented in this chapter was collected and analysed as part of a study conducted in 2018 and 2019 in Côte d'Ivoire, "Migration féminine en Côte d'Ivoire: Le parcours des migrantes de retour" (Women's migration in Côte d'Ivoire: The journey of returning migrants), under the project Safety, Support and Solutions Business Case in the Central Mediterranean Route. As it considers only women returnees receiving assistance from IOM – people who for the most part had given up on their migration projects – it is not representative of all women migrants from Côte d'Ivoire. The experiences recounted by the women returnees are generally more negative than those of women who migrated successfully and who are not covered by this chapter.

A collaborative approach was adopted, in order to involve all migration stakeholders in Côte d'Ivoire in the research process (government, donors, migration research and data-collection institutions, United Nations agencies, civil society and returning migrants).

The research was structured using a mixed methodology (qualitative and quantitative) with a four-stage data-collection process: (a) exploratory interviews (seven) with returning women migrants; (b) focus group discussions (four) with returning men and women migrants (selection criteria: age and last country reached before their return to Côte d'Ivoire representative of migrants benefiting from return assistance from IOM Côte d'Ivoire) and their families and friends; (c) telephone survey to profile migrants having returned at least six months previously (104 interviews with women returnees selected at random after having applied the criteria of age and last country reached); (d) field survey in Abidjan and Daloa on the perception of women's migration in Côte d'Ivoire (168 interviews with 84 women and 84 men selected at random from the community). Abidjan (six communes chosen for their high migration potential) and Daloa both have the potential to generate high levels of migration, and were identified thanks to the information collected from the returnees.

## 19.3. Pre-departure profile of women returnees

Seventy-five per cent of the women interviewed lived in Abidjan in the six months before their departures and 69 per cent currently lived there, but only 37 per cent were born there. The country's economic capital is a transit, departure and destination urban centre. The fact that it is easy to operate small informal businesses in Abidjan draws women wanting to settle there in better economic situations and/or to finance their journeys. Settling in Abidjan is thus one step in the search for higher incomes and greater opportunities, as is migration abroad: they are stages towards the same goal. If conditions in Abidjan are not favourable, then the search will be continued abroad.

Of the women who participated in the phone survey, 81 per cent were 35 or younger. In terms of marital status, most of the returning women were single (65%) and 10 per cent were married. Before their departure, 75 per cent of the women were providing for at least one child; that figure rose to 85 per cent at least six months after their return, including those who became pregnant during the trip. In most cases, the women did not travel with their children, leaving them instead in the care of others in Côte d'Ivoire. In 75 per cent of cases, the women migrated alone. Forty-eight per cent had at least a secondary school education.

Before their departure, 79 per cent of the women had jobs. Most of those interviewed worked in trade (66%), but others worked in services (21%) or the food business (11%). Before departure, 53 per cent of the women earned a monthly income of over CFAF 50,000 (USD 86), bearing in mind that the minimum income in Côte d'Ivoire is about 60,000 CFAF (USD 103). In addition, 57 per cent said that they were receiving financial aid from their families (25% from their friends) before departure.

## 19.4. Economic migration in the hope of more stable living conditions

The majority of the people interviewed (92%) in places with a high migration potential during the field survey of perceptions considered that women were migrating more than before. During the same survey, 72 per cent of those interviewed said that they knew at least one woman in their circle who had migrated regularly or irregularly. In 75 per cent of those cases, that woman had migrated alone; 64 per cent had migrated for economic reasons; and 19 per cent for family reasons. In Côte d'Ivoire, single mothers are subject to huge economic and social pressure, and this can compel them to take to the road and run the risks along the Central Mediterranean Route.

According to the women returnees, they had left Côte d'Ivoire in search of jobs that would enable them to attain better living conditions than those currently available in Côte d'Ivoire. The returning women (in particular those providing for children) seemed to present economic migration as a necessity to achieve satisfactory financial independence.

In order to have some level of comfort and safety compared with the overland route – which men have a greater tendency to take – the women preferred to fly to countries with no entry visa requirement, in particular Tunisia and Morocco. The women interviewed headed for two main geographical areas when leaving Côte d'Ivoire: Europe (in 53% of cases, especially France, Italy and Spain) and North Africa (in 39% of cases, especially Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria).

Most of the women had taken less than three months to decide to leave. In addition, 44 per cent had preferred not to inform their families and friends of their migration plans, mainly out of fear that they would try to dissuade them – they had planned to inform their entourage of their departures once they had reached a country of transit or final destination.

*“Life is more difficult now: more expensive, less work. The way things are in our country, we don’t feel like staying in Côte d’Ivoire. There’s no point in studying because no one’s going to look at your diplomas and experience. That’s what pushes us to leave.”*

*Focus group discussion with women from among the returnees’ families and friends*

Sixty-one per cent of the women spent CFAF 1 million (about USD 1,686) or less to finance the trip out of Côte d'Ivoire, the amount fluctuating depending on the destination. According to the statements of the women interviewed, 44 per cent financed their journeys using only their own funds, while 56 per cent also drew on funds from families and friends, without necessarily saying what the money would be used for. The initial cost of the journey was increased by additional costs such as unpaid forced labour, usually as cleaning women (domestic work), or ransom, in particular for those detained in Libya and whose families back home were asked to pay. When a ransom is demanded, the migration of a family member can have a socioeconomic impact on the entire family.



### **Box 19.1.** From final destination to transit country – the case of Tunisia

Most of the women interviewed for this study had experienced Tunisia either as a country of transit on the way to Libya and Europe or as their final destination. Since Ivorians do not require an entry visa (they need a work certificate if they want to work regularly as soon as they arrive and, after 90 days, a resident permit, failing which they will find themselves in an even more vulnerable situation and be forced to stay in the country if they are unable to pay the fine), they often travel first to Tunisia, to work and save to send money back home, then leave once they have saved enough. Some women use a middleman to buy the plane ticket (about CFAF 500,000, or roughly USD 823) and especially to have a first contact on arrival and find a job, usually as a domestic employee. They admit that they could buy the plane ticket themselves but say that they need a middleman, as they know no one locally who could house them on arrival and help them find work. What many of them do not know is that they were “placed under contract” before leaving Côte d'Ivoire, that their passports will be confiscated and that they will not be paid during the “first five months” in Tunisia. Their wages will be paid to the person who facilitated the trip and helped them find work, even though most of them thought that the middleman had been paid with the money they had handed over in Côte d'Ivoire. What usually happens is that the new employers have paid a sum to the smugglers, and that is the “debt” that the migrant must reimburse to her new employer by working for free for five months. Those five months, during which the woman receives no money, are assessed, according to what we were told, at about CFAF 650,000 (about USD 1,120).

The women described situations akin to human trafficking: 18 hours of work per day, 7 days a week, without seeing the light of day or getting enough to eat. It is not easy to leave this first job, without a passport, without any connections who may be able to provide aid. In addition, most of the women do not know that, although they entered the country legally, they have to pay a fine if they leave after three months. The migrants have no choice but to accept their working conditions, as they know no one on the spot and benefit from little protection because of their irregular situation and lack of a valid resident permit. Because of this precarious situation, some of them are tempted to continue the journey on to Europe via Libya. Some of them, unable to pay the fine, have found themselves unable to return home.

## 19.5. Deteriorating and increasingly precarious economic situation of women returnees

Before leaving, 79 per cent of the women had jobs; six months after their return, only 53 per cent did. In addition, 87 per cent worked in trade, in small, relatively unstable businesses, in order to meet the family's daily needs, and rarely recovered the level of income they had before leaving. According to their statements, the monthly income of the returning women surveyed dropped sharply after migration. Before their departure, 53 per cent earned a monthly income in excess of CFAF 50,000 (USD 86); at the time of the survey, only 20 per cent were earning that amount.

Most (70%) of the women returnees worked during the journey, in order to pay their way but also to be able to continue onwards. The working conditions they described were very harsh (physically exhausting work causing sickness, ill-treatment at the hands of their employers and no pay, among other things). Almost all the women (95%) having found work laboured in the service sector (domestic work). In 43 per cent of cases, the work was unpaid, and in 25 per cent of cases, it was forced, most often to pay back the people who had "facilitated" their trips, or who were members of human trafficking and smuggling networks.

In addition, the financial aid provided by their families to the returning migrants had decreased, from 57 per cent before departure to 38 per cent after their return, even though the women earned more from their economic activities before departure. One explanation for the decrease, which was also observed for the aid provided by friends (dropping from 25% to 17%), could be the worsening social ties between the migrant and her family. Some families were asked to pay during the migration, lowering their capacity to save. Thanks to the amount they received as reintegration support from IOM in the context of the joint IOM/European Union Emergency Trust Fund project,<sup>4</sup> returning migrants are able to meet their basic needs during the first few weeks and months following their return.

Among the very few women who were able to save some money during their migration, only 21 per cent managed to save more than CFAF 1 million, or barely enough to cover the costs of the journey.

The decision to abandon a migration plan while in an irregular situation resulted in a worse and more precarious economic situation for the women returnees (and their children). The difficulty of economic and social reintegration has prompted some returning women to think about migrating again, in the belief that, this time, they will be luckier in terms of both working conditions and their ability to reach Europe, if that is their plan.

## 19.6. Irregular migration and the risks of human trafficking and smuggling

Of the women who said that they had left Côte d'Ivoire as regular migrants, most left for countries that did not require entry visas from Ivorian citizens, such as Tunisia and Morocco. They did not, however, have the papers they needed to work legally in those countries on arrival or to stay beyond the 90 days of a tourist visit. Migration is not necessarily irregular from the outset, but rather becomes so during the journey (notably owing to the inability to obtain a resident permit, the fact of being unable to apply for one or to pay the fines to leave the country), exposing the women to serious risks.

Of the 48 per cent of the women who said that they had migrated irregularly, 59 per cent said that the decision had been influenced by their families and friends. It would appear that, before leaving, most of the people interviewed had a fairly good idea of the risks associated with irregular migration, but were not fully aware of the consequences. When they were (although the information provided by acquaintances on the spot may not be reliable), the risks appeared to be offset by the idea that luck might accompany them on their journey.

<sup>4</sup> The amount provided for reintegration in the context of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund project to migrants receiving assistance for their return to Côte d'Ivoire is CFAF 165,000 (USD 281) for an adult and CFAF 140,000 (USD 238) for a child.

The women returnees could not define, and did not have a clear understanding of, what a smuggler was, and they tended to conflate facilitator or travel agent, smuggler and trafficker. The study revealed that 38 per cent of the women surveyed had contacted a *coxeur* (a middleman) or a smuggler when they left Côte d'Ivoire (with whom they had been put in touch by a relative or friend in 67% of cases), who facilitated the trip (production of travel documents, job search and such). Those planning to migrate were placed “under contract” when they left, putting them in situations akin to human trafficking (confiscation of passport, and forced and unpaid labour to pay back a “debt” that the migrant was not even aware of).

## 19.7. The psychosocial impact of migration

Most of the women said that, throughout the migration journey, they had been victims of various forms of human exploitation, such as forced labour, sexual violence or prostitution. Most of the abuse occurred in the workplace (58%), showing how difficult it is to integrate socially in the country of transit or on the road (39%). The abuse often affected the migrants' physical health.

Most of the women met with spoke of times when they had to use their bodies, voluntarily or by force, to stay alive and continue on their way, as they had no aid. The experience left serious psychosocial scars that were difficult to share with friends and family on their return.

*“I left for Tunisia alone. I did it to help my brothers. But things went wrong: the work was hard and after I fell ill. A friend suggested that I leave for Europe via Libya. We were in the desert and we spent two months in this place surrounded by garbage. They sold us, me and the other Congolese girls. Our Ivorian brothers told us to wait before going to Italy. They sold us to the Nigerians, to guys in prison. It was clearly prostitution. They beat me, really hard, I thought I was going to die. I did not want to be a prostitute. I jumped from the second storey and fled. In the meantime, my mom had died and I had no one who could send me money. That’s how I got to know the father of my child and he helped me.”*

*Focus group discussion with returning women*



### Box 19.2. From the dream of Europe to the nightmare of sexual slavery in a Libyan campo

"In the campo in Libya, in Sabratha, food was a problem. So I went to see Mélissa (an Ivorian coxeur). She said, 'My sister, my brother-in-law wants you. Think about it.' I was really angry. Her brother-in-law, a Malian, sent his bodyguards to get me. They said, 'It's the law of the jungle here, who do you think you are?' He took out his weapon and said, 'You want to die?' ... He hit me and abused me. He told me that if I continued to resist, I would never leave for Italy. I tried to flee and they came looking for me. He wanted to get me pregnant. After a month, I wasn't pregnant, he thought I was taking medication not to become pregnant. He couldn't understand because the daughter of his friend has become pregnant. I told him that I was sterile, so he hit me with a gas pipe. He said, 'So all the work I did, for nothing?' It was my own Ivorian sisters who came and told him that I was joking, that I wasn't sterile. He hit me again. He was obsessed with me. This went on for about three months. I became pregnant. Then the Libyan police attacked the campo. They didn't want to end up in prison. Since I was pregnant, they wanted to flee with me. Everyone was sick, we walked, we wanted to give ourselves up to the police, we were afraid of the rebels. That's when I found myself in prison, pregnant... I had pains, and since the baby's father had hit me a lot, they did an ultrasound and told me, 'The baby is dead in your stomach.' I count myself lucky that I didn't catch AIDS."

Exploratory interview with a woman migrant returning from Libya

## 19.8. Twice stigmatized: as women and as returning migrants

On their return to Côte d'Ivoire, the women can face double discrimination, as women and as returning migrants (who gave up on their plans to migrate). The statements collected show that returning migrants are stigmatized, by their friends and family, and by society (especially in the case of women, if they become pregnant en route, either voluntarily or by force – for example, if they were raped).

In addition, the fact that the returning women migrated irregularly may have had a negative effect on the family and social unit. For those who travelled as a family, several said that their husbands disappeared (in particular when the campos were attacked); for those travelling alone, having left their children in Côte d'Ivoire, the shame of having turned back can make them put off getting back in touch with their children, prolonging the children's precarious situation, notably in terms of access to school and health care.

For over half the returning women interviewed, their migration saga lasted between six months and two years (52%) and, for 36 per cent, it lasted more than two years. Some women did not want to leave for any length of time; their goal was to migrate (usually regularly) to work and save enough to engage in an income-generating activity in Côte d'Ivoire. Their migration tended to be lengthened by their encounters with networks of smugglers and traffickers, the difficulties of migrating regularly, the harsh living and working conditions, and their irregular status.

*“The return and the difficulties of return, more than the migration itself, made me regret the decision to leave: I should have known that if I stayed home, I would still have my money. I would have savings whereas now I have nothing. As a result, I have two problems: the fatigue caused by what I experienced in Algeria, and the disappointment of realizing that I’ve lost everything. When I got back to my village, all my friends were better dressed than me: I went to Algeria to earn a living and I came home with nothing.”*

*Focus group discussion with returning women*

## 19.9. Conclusion and recommendations

This study covers exclusively women migrants returning to their countries after having given up on their migration project; it is therefore not representative of the cases (possibly more frequent) of successful migration. Irregular migration along the Central Mediterranean Route has tended to heighten the economic and social vulnerability of women migrants returning to Côte d’Ivoire. In the context of this study, recommendations were formulated with a view to drawing up policies and establishing programmes adapted to the specific migration experience of women returnees.

Those recommendations are to:

- (a) **Heighten awareness**, so as to promote safe and orderly migration, by informing people about the dangers of and alternatives to irregular migration;
- (b) **Ensure the long-term economic reintegration of women returnees**, by, for example, inviting all stakeholders to offer services adapted to women whose economic situation has been weakened by migration, and by identifying structures that can work with the women in a structured project;
- (c) **Deal with the psychosocial impact of migration**, by identifying needs and the national response in the sector.

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## 20.



DATA



VULNERABILITIES



BASIC SERVICES

## Health information management in the context of forced migration in Europe

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**Abstract:** This chapter provides an overview of health data among migrants on the Central Mediterranean Route, using a case-based approach. It outlines how data are currently collected and what are the strengths and weaknesses of these health information systems. Examples from Libya, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom and a transnational electronic health record system show the variety of systems in place. Current health information systems that capture migrant health are very heterogenous, often not harmonized and sometimes time-limited. As a result, information on migrant health is limited. Better recording of migration-relevant information in routine systems, access of migrants to routine care and collection of their data, as well as harmonization of variables and systems, are needed to inform public health policy and health-care delivery.

### 20.1. Introduction – The challenge of health information in the context of migration

Good population-based and service-based health information is one of the foundations of public health practice. It is the basis of evidence-informed policy and of quality service delivery. In the field of migration, the need for good data, clear and measurable indicators and accurate reporting has been recognized in numerous international key documents, including the World Health Organization (WHO) European Action Plan (WHO, 2016) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (United Nations General Assembly, 2018). Good health data for migrants are also needed to monitor progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goals 3 and 10.7, on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all (United Nations, n.d.; Ghebreyesus et al., 2018).

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Yet several factors can make the systematic collection, collation, analysis and reporting of migrant health data particularly challenging, especially in the context of forced migration. These include, for example: barriers in access to mainstream health services (preventing recording); concerns about information governance among providers (preventing sharing, for example, for fear of information being used for purposes other than health); or the fact that multiple organizations can be involved in care and data collection in the context of forced migration (a barrier to harmonization). These factors are more pronounced for persons with less secure settlement status, but affect all types of migrants.

As a result of these barriers, described further below – and despite multiple efforts to harmonize definitions, variables or formats – current health information management systems for these populations are often disparate and heterogenous. This means that information on health status, health determinants and access to and costs of health care for these populations is often not readily available, and can be contradictory. Such information gaps can lead to incorrect assumptions or even misconceptions about the need and demand for health care among migrants, which risks causing inadequate preparation, suboptimal health service planning and delivery, and a failure to adequately inform the public debate. This is especially relevant if there are sudden changes in demography or health needs.

This chapter is set in the context of the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR), one of the main routes for mixed migration flows to Europe. Between 2014 and mid-2019, it is estimated that just over 2 million migrants arrived through the Mediterranean, with 82,872 arrivals in 2019 alone (UNHCR, 2018). The vast majority of these arrived via sea and cumulatively almost one third of these via the CMR, between North Africa and Italy (648,117). The route is one of the deadliest, with around 4,100 deaths in 2017–2018, representing almost 77 per cent of total deaths in the Mediterranean.

The current landscape to capture migrants' individual health information and population-based information on migration health is highly heterogenous, particularly in the context of migration along the CMR, making a comprehensive overview of health information systems (HISs)<sup>7</sup> or the health situation of migrants themselves a challenging task. Therefore, this chapter uses a case study approach to (a) outline the data collection initiatives on migrants' access to health care and health status, (b) describe the practical and ethical barriers these initiatives face, and (c) summarize some generic health status findings.

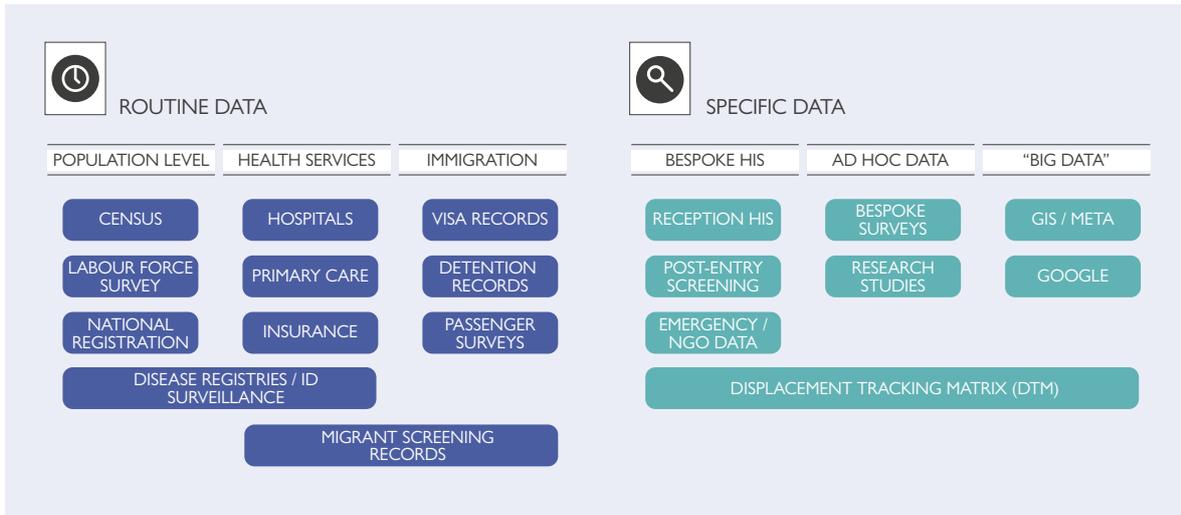
Most HISs are stand-alone systems, although significant attempts have been made to harmonize health information management and improve interoperability between systems in the European Union (European Commission, 2015). The chapter does not aim to promote one approach over another, nor call for a universal HIS, but rather to improve understanding of existing HISs to promote greater harmonization and more efficient data sharing between providers, as well as more efficient analytical use of data while maintaining or even enhancing individual data security.

## 20.2. Overview of data sources

Figures 20.1 and 20.2 outline the main data sources available. Broadly, one can distinguish routine sources, such as hospital health records, from dedicated data collection systems, often established for specific operational or sometimes research purposes. Each of these has its own strengths and limitations, often inherent to the purpose of collection or the population in question.

<sup>7</sup> Defined as any system which allows management of data collected in health care: this can be electronic or paper-based.

**Figure 20.1.** Potential data sources which either alone or through data linkage can be used to provide insights on migrant health



**Figure 20.2.** Detailed schematic on health data sources



Quantitative health data of migrants who travel along the CMR are often collected through health assessments in reception and detention centres en route or at destination (see Case Studies 1 and 2). The setting and context of these centres means that information recorded in these HISs cannot be seen as representative of migrants along this route (see Case Study 1). These health assessment data are often collected as part of border screening procedures and aimed at detection of public health-relevant diseases or of vulnerabilities, in keeping with respective European Union directives (European Commission, 2016).

One of the most sustainable solutions to ensuring good data on migrant health is to include them in the mainstream health system, but the feasibility of this depends on the setting and on migrants' status. For instance, this can be difficult in less stable settings, such as temporary shelters or reception centres, humanitarian crisis situations, or among migrants who have temporary or no recognized status. A key exercise is therefore to understand why this can be challenging and why data from mainstream health information systems are not routinely available or analysable. The issues are specific to each step of the data cycle – collection, collation, analysis and dissemination.

Reproducible, routine data capture and collation require accessible health-care services and standardized entry of health-care information. A key barrier to data collection on migrants in routine HISs noted above is related to migrants' access to the mainstream health system in countries of transit or destination. Such barriers can include eligibility restrictions, or lack of ability to navigate information needed to access care (IOM, 2017). In addition, existing disease prevention and control programmes at the national level are sometimes restricted or retracted for some migrant groups, particularly those in detention facilities. In Libya, for instance, detention centre management regularly refuses referral of tuberculosis cases to other medical service providers and transport of children to health centres for health-care provisions such as vaccinations (Health Cluster, 2019). Such measures either impede access altogether or prompt consultations with non-State providers. In both cases, records will not be available in the routine system.

New arrivals in Europe may be initially cared for in specialized settings – for example, reception centres, as described in the examples from Italy and Germany (Case Studies 1 and 3). These reception centres can be organized by European Union member States or – particularly in the case of large numbers of irregular arrivals, which may stretch or overwhelm local response capabilities – by humanitarian actors, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or United Nations agencies. Sometimes such a reception centre model runs in parallel with the mainstream health-care system, and actors may utilize paper records or stand-alone electronic systems, which are rarely linked to mainstream health information systems. Some humanitarian agencies may prefer separate HISs and restricted data sharing with authorities as a result of practical, humanitarian or ethical reasons.

At the level of analysis and dissemination, issues can be related to poor data quality resulting from the above challenges, or a lack of coordination between actors, particularly between national institutions and others, including NGOs and academia, to the perceived or actual temporary nature of these data collection activities or funding opportunities.

A recent, mostly European-anchored systematic review of health records for migrants and refugees retrieved 33 relevant papers, describing 20 different databases globally. Of these, at least 13 are partially from Europe (Chiesa et al., 2019). The review found a highly heterogeneous field in terms of data collection type, scope, target population and variables of mostly stand-alone health information systems. Only a minority (5 out of 33) could be described as electronic personal health record systems, and interoperability of the systems was limited. Some of the systems had even ceased to exist at the time of writing the review.

Another review performed for the WHO Health Evidence Network (Bozorgmehr et al., 2019) found that data on migrant and refugee health were available in 25 of 53 member States of the WHO European region. The review retrieved 696 studies which used migration health data from routine HISs, but many stemmed from specific disease surveillance systems (often infectious diseases) and from few countries. Systems are highly heterogeneous and often provide patchy insights into migrant health. The issues are well recognized, and recommendations for greater collaboration and harmonization of data collection have been issued (University of Pécs Medical School and WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2019).

Given the complexity of health services in arrival situations, and the fact that newly arriving migrants are initially cared for in specific centres and therefore are less likely to be integrated into routine health-care systems, health data are also much scarcer for people experiencing forced migration. Disjointed health-care and health information situations may persist for years, making routine data collection very challenging.

## 20.3. Current health information approaches along the Central Mediterranean Route

As outlined in recent systematic reviews (Chiesa et al., 2019; Bozorgmehr et al., 2019), comprehensive, systematic and available routine health information data systems with records on migrant health are not common, and the landscape is dominated by a multitude of stand-alone bespoke systems, often used ad hoc (such as surveys), or in the context of pre- or post-arrival assessments. They vary significantly in nature and scope, and are therefore outlined in a series of “real-life” case studies below.

### Case Study 1. Italy – Information systems and arrival screening

In 2018, there were 53,586 asylum seekers in Italy, 3,676 of whom were unaccompanied minors (a 59% reduction since 2017). In the same year, international protection was offered to 31,429 people: 7,096 grants of asylum (7%), 4,319 subsidiary protection (5%), and 20,014 humanitarian protection (21%) (Ministero dell'Interno, Italy, 2018). The number of accepted requests for each form of grant decreased since 2017, and they will probably continue to decrease because of the reduced number of arrivals, demographical changes (different countries of origin) and changes in legal provisions occurring at the end of 2018.

The majority of people who apply for international protection in Italy have crossed borders irregularly (either by sea or through the Balkan route), as humanitarian corridors are a pilot project and accounted for about 2,500 arrivals since 2015 (UNHCR, 2019). For those entering by sea, a systematic health assessment is performed on boats at landing and immediately afterwards in hotspots, which are designated areas where migrants are hosted and undergo security procedures, and where they can start their application for international protection. Health assessments include syndromic surveillance, to identify symptoms and diseases of public health concern (Napoli et al., 2015). These data are transmitted through a web-based platform to the central and national level, from hotspots and selected hosting centres throughout the country, while other records are also kept at local level and paper-printed clinical cards travel together with asylum seekers.

A key challenge to health data management is to establish a verifiable identity, as passports are missing for the majority of asylum seekers. Although identification numbers are assigned to migrants at landings, changes in personal data can lead to difficulties in acquiring previous health records. This can lead to an incomplete health picture for the migrant, and may potentially lead to adverse outcomes – for example, if important medication allergies are missing. Some local, stand-alone HISs were used by agencies working within centres, but data transfer is usually limited to the same provider. Temporary projects tried to improve health data management – including the CARE project, which ended in 2017 (Care for Migrants, n.d.); and the EDETECT-TB project for tuberculosis (Abubakar et al., 2018) – but no systematic implementation is currently ongoing for these two systems (USB flash drive-based and App-based, respectively).

Asylum seekers can ask for temporary access to the Italian National Health System (by using a numeric or alphanumeric code), also granted to irregular migrants in case of health emergency or life-threatening conditions. A firewall from the immigration enforcement system is granted by law, as irregular migrants can be reported to legal authorities only in cases of some criminal offences, similarly to Italians (Ministero dell'Interno, Italy, 2009). In emergencies, this code can be assigned upon landing, in order to allow for health assistance that exceeds the one available at hotspots. After resettlement, migrants receive a medical evaluation to assess health needs, immunization and screening for active and latent tuberculosis. Data are registered at the local level. Once a residence permit is received, asylum seekers can regularly be added to the National Health System, with a new permanent alphanumeric code. Inscription needs to be renewed periodically until international protection is obtained. Minors are directly added to the National Health System.

The Italian Health System is organized regionally, and this makes the establishment of a single national data collection system difficult. Several local or regional initiatives have been established to provide better health information, thanks to the work of several NGOs and non-profit migrant medical centres in collaboration with local health systems, either at district or regional level. However, no national system has been developed to date, and data are therefore scarce, especially for non-communicable diseases. At first arrival, from syndromic surveillance and analyses of agencies working in hotspots/harbours in Sicily, the most frequent diagnoses are parasite skin infections, febrile syndromes with rash (mainly chickenpox), respiratory tract infections and trauma-related conditions (Di Meco et al., 2018).

### Case Study 2. Libya – Rapid surveys

In 2018, the Libyan health authorities undertook a rapid situational assessment to explore the health status of migrants in 16 detention centres in Libya, in order to provide evidence-based essential health care to detained migrants. A survey was undertaken by a multidisciplinary team, which included medical specialists and public health researchers of the Ministry of Health of Libya, with the aim of surveying self-reported disease conditions and factors affecting the well-being of detainees who lived for at least six months in the detention facilities.

At the time of writing, the survey results were still being finalized and thus data presented here were extracted from a draft report. A total of 427 detainees provided consent to participate in the survey, with only 37 female respondents. Over half of the detainees (62.2%) reported having spent more than one year in the detention centres. One hundred and fifty detainees (35.1%) reported that they were exposed to some form of physical violence, such as physical abuse/ beating. Two fifths reported acute diarrhoea in the six months preceding the survey, and 7 per cent had food poisoning during the same period. One third, 142 (33%) had skin diseases, mainly scabies and/or pediculosis; 14.7 per cent had respiratory infections; and 3 per cent reported snake/scorpion bites. Seventy-three detainees (17.1%) reported having chronic diseases such as hypertension or diabetes mellitus.

Despite methodological and sampling issues, the survey report highlighted that, among other exposures, the migrant journeys and detentions can be fundamental determinants of ill health and disease progression. Ensuring timely and dignified health care to migrants in detention centres is critical. International guidelines and general standards with regard to public health conditions in detention centres need careful consideration, including the rationale for detention (IOM, 2010; United Nations Human Rights Council, 2008). Along with the need for improved health-care services for detainees, the report also highlighted the need to improve disease surveillance and basic HISs in order to better capture and identify disease trends within these settings.

### Case Study 3. Germany – Information systems for asylum seeker health in the context of secondary migrations

The health system in Germany is decentralized and fragmented between different sectors of care (primary and tertiary sectors) and levels of governance (local, state and national). The situation is even more complex for asylum seekers, with special considerations of reception, accommodation and entitlements to health care (Bozorgmehr et al., 2018a). Reliable data on health and primary care among asylum seekers in reception centres are an essential prerequisite for the planning and provision of appropriate and needs-based medical services to this vulnerable population.

However, health-care provision in reception centres is often haphazard due to the lack of national standards regarding the infrastructure, equipment, or workforce composition in such settings (Bozorgmehr et al., 2016). As a consequence of decentralization and lack of standardization, HISs in reception centres are either paper-based, improvised and/or incompatible across centres, even in the same federal state. Some centres even use multiple (incompatible) HISs, due to different care providers under contract of the state authority in charge of the facility. These factors significantly preclude routine health monitoring and – while health monitoring for regular migrants is fairly decent – data availability is particularly patchy for asylum seekers (Bozorgmehr et al., 2017). Furthermore, health-care entitlements for asylum seekers in reception centres in Germany are restricted, and only a few federal states issue electronic health cards to newly arrived asylum seekers (Bozorgmehr and Razum, 2019). This means that health data of asylum seekers in the initial 15 to 18 months, even if electronically recorded, are often not accessible through the HIS of the regular health system. All of the above-mentioned barriers apply to the population in these settings and result in information not being recorded, shared or harmonized.

In order to improve the availability of timely and reliable data, an electronic medical record (Refugee Care Manager, or RefCare©) was iteratively developed in 2016, and since then tested and implemented in German reception centres with financial support by the German Federal Ministry of Health (Bozorgmehr et al., 2018b). Continuous surveillance in this system is realized through a tailored information technology infrastructure for routine recording of medical care in primary care clinics in reception centres, and through a research network (PRICARE, available at [www.pri.care](http://www.pri.care)) as a formal framework for sustaining surveillance based on such routinely collected medical records data.

Within the network, 64 health and health-care indicators covering morbidity, care processes, quality of care and syndromic surveillance have been developed. The system builds on a decentralized, harmonized, anonymous and automated analysis of medical records data, which allows the analysis of data without central storage of personal data (Nöst et al., 2019). In November 2019, the network covered 21 reception centres in three federal states, with over 30,000 patients and more than 120,000 patient contacts. The surveillance approach allows calculating single-centre prevalence for 29 morbidity indicators based on individual-level data, and pooled estimates across centres stratified by age and sex. Preliminary data show that the morbidities with the highest prevalence were respiratory, digestive and infectious diseases, followed by trauma and accidents, musculoskeletal and mental health conditions. Furthermore, the system allows the electronic and encrypted exchange of patient records and files between reception centres (upon informed consent of the patient) to ensure continuity of care and medical treatment after transfer.

Experience shows that the system helps professionals to manage their clinical data and provide care to asylum seekers in fragile contexts with repeat contacts and dynamic changes in the population. The approach may inform the development of similar networks in other reception countries, in particular where strict data protection regulations preclude others – for example, cloud-based, health surveillance systems – among migrant populations.

#### Case Study 4. United Kingdom – Health information in the context of diverse arrivals – resettlement and asylum seekers

The United Kingdom offered protection to 20,703 people in 2019 in the form of 12,565 grants of asylum, 1,241 grants of humanitarian protection, 1,285 grants of an alternative form of protection and 5,612 for refugee resettlement (United Kingdom Home Office, 2019).

Resettlement accounted for just over one quarter (27%) of the people granted humanitarian protection in the United Kingdom between 2013 and 2018. Most resettled refugees to the United Kingdom have escaped the Syrian conflict. Resettled refugees are offered a comprehensive health assessment before they travel to the United Kingdom. The health assessment is commissioned by the United Kingdom Home Office and provided by IOM, and follows guidance agreed between the two organizations and Public Health England, an executive agency of the United Kingdom Government. The health assessment aims to protect and promote the health of the refugee and wider public health before, during and after travel to the United Kingdom. A key aim is to support integration in the United Kingdom, by ensuring the refugee's health needs are appropriately identified and met when he or she arrives to the United Kingdom. Another important aim is to monitor the health of this population. For example, analysis of the yields of infectious diseases among refugees showed that these are strongly associated with epidemiology of the infection in country of origin (Crawshaw et al., 2018). A recent pilot of a mental health assessment tool in the pre-entry health assessment showed fairly low prevalence of mental health issues, but design of the pilot means this was not a representative sample of the population (United Kingdom Home Office, Public Health England, 2019).

People who apply for asylum and other forms of protection within United Kingdom borders face a range of different circumstances: some have been in the United Kingdom for a considerable period, while others have recently arrived; some travel on a visa, while others may have crossed the border irregularly; some have a place to live, while others are destitute. There is no systematic health assessment of all asylum applicants in the United Kingdom; however, those who are destitute and apply for asylum may be offered accommodation in an Initial Accommodation Centre (IAC) by the Home Office. Almost all of those who move into an Initial Accommodation Centre are offered an initial health assessment. These records are kept locally by the health-care team. Asylum seekers may move between Initial Accommodation Centres, but there are challenges in sharing the health data, as health-care teams are commissioned locally and information technology systems may vary.

The United Kingdom Government has mechanisms in place that allow health services (through NHS Digital) to share information with the immigration agency (the Home Office) for immigration enforcement purposes. This has raised concerns – especially among health-care workers, Members of Parliament and third-sector organizations – that migrants would avoid accessing health care for fear of immigration enforcement. These concerns have led the United Kingdom Government to substantially reduce the circumstances under which these data are shared, although sharing still takes place.

### Case Study 5. The IOM electronic personal health record

Based on local needs assessments, prompted by larger numbers of arrivals to Europe in 2015 and 2016 and with co-funding from the European Commission (DG SANTE), a structured health record was developed to support health assessments for newly arriving migrants at points of arrival, including in reception centres in Europe. Subsequently, the system has been developed into a full electronic personal health record system hosted within IOM, which allows recording and secure transfer of this information between health providers in different centres and even between countries. This is important because migrants may be moved between different facilities or may choose to continue their journeys. Currently the system is available in reception facilities of seven countries – including Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Serbia and Slovenia – and there are plans to expand the information system to further sites and countries. With support of the Italian Government, the electronic Personal Health Record has been further developed and tailored to local needs in the Italian region of Sicily. The system has a user-friendly front-end, uses smart technology and easy drop-down menus to support coding (ICD-10), and minimizes manual data entry. It has a back-end business analysis tool, which visualizes the health status and disease categories along with demographic data in real time, and it is highly interoperable by complying with the recommended European exchange format. The system has a business intelligence tool dashboard, which is important to inform health service provision, as well as monitor illness and disease, and allowing it to report according to the International Health Regulations.

Between its inception in January 2017 and July 2019, the system captured 19,733 records of 14,440 individuals, including follow-up records. About half of the records are from Greece, reflecting both the usage of the system as well as arrival numbers. The majority of persons are young (mean age of 27 years) and almost 78 per cent are males. Almost three quarters of individuals did not have any ICD-10 recorded illnesses. Most commonly ICD-10 coded disease categories included respiratory disease (18.7%) and common infections (6.6%), often respiratory tract infections. About 11 per cent of individuals were recorded as having a mental illness in this cohort. This seems to reflect a young, mostly healthy population, who has been exposed to adverse circumstances and overcrowding in reception conditions, and a significant minority who experienced some recent psychological trauma.

From available data, it appears that the majority of migrants following this route are often young and physically healthy, although this varies significantly by setting and many are exposed to significant risks along their journeys, often over a prolonged time. This increases risks of psychological trauma and of diseases of overcrowding, such as some infections, including scabies or more severe ones, such as tuberculosis. The correlation between poor living conditions and certain infections is well established (Chang and Fuller, 2018; Grange and Flynn, 2018; Dhavan et al., 2017).

## 20.4. Ethical considerations

HISs for migrants raise several ethical considerations. Fundamental to any health intervention, including the storage and transfer of clinical data, is that the patient is provided with appropriate, specific and clear information about his/her records and can freely decide whether or not to have them stored in the system, transferred to others, and for what purposes (informed consent). Health records should serve the interest of the individual, as they facilitate communication between health-care providers, supporting the provision of high-quality care and avoiding clinical risks created by lack of information. However, in the case of migrants, health records are sometimes used for immigration enforcement purposes, as illustrated by the United Kingdom in Case Study 4. This can act as a barrier

in access to health-care services, as migrants may want to avoid immigration enforcement. This can also raise complicated moral dilemmas among front-line health-care practitioners, who want to build trust with their patients and ensure they receive the highest quality care, but also not break the law (by not actively reporting patients to enforcement agencies or by not recording data in clinical records). This has led some organizations and European Union member States to argue for and implement a “firewall” (PICUM, n.d.): a separation between immigration enforcement and the provision of essential services, which allows migrants to access these services without fear.

An important consideration in this area is the balance of data security as an individual right versus the security needs of a society, where some may argue that using data for law enforcement purposes could be acceptable in certain extreme situations, such as prevention of terrorist activity. Conversely, it has been argued that data protection processes created barriers to swift action in humanitarian theatres and may even cause harm. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data protection principles are seeking to balance robust data protection principles with flexibility in specific situations (UNHCR, 2015). A recent review acknowledged the significant and evident benefits of electronic personal health records for personal and public health, but pointed out some key considerations regarding restricting the type of information that should be stored and who has access to this information to prevent potential misuse of such information (Feeney et al., 2019).

Data from HISs are also often used, at a population level, to plan services and inform policies. This requires collection, analysis and dissemination of data, which can raise several ethical issues with regard to migrants. Particularly in humanitarian situations, data and information can be a key resource, and decision-making and funding can depend on whether data are available and what they show. However, positive uses of data cannot be seen in isolation, and in some contexts, the availability and sharing of such information can have an adverse effect on migrant populations by increasing stigmatization – for example, by selectively reporting high incidences of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis or HIV. The link between donors, humanitarian actors and data collection systems could lead to conflicts of interest, and can also raise ethical issues.

A number of HISs are established mainly or exclusively to support member States' border health assessment efforts, often for infectious diseases. Such screening, often done for health security reasons (such as to avoid importation or transmission of infectious diseases), can be beneficial for the recipient in terms of early disease recognition and treatment. However, because many of these activities are not entirely voluntary – sometimes mandated, sometimes linked to benefits or at least perceived to be linked to benefits – such systems can create moral dilemmas (Beeres et al., 2018), and this may be aggravated if providers have mixed or dual accountabilities (to the patient and the member State). It is sometimes not clear whether and to what extent such screenings benefit the individual, and how outcomes (or declining screenings) may interact with their migration status. The absence of such clarity would counter any notion of informed consent (Pacheco et al., 2016).

## 20.5. Way forward

The case studies illustrate that, while some migration health data are collected in many places, there are vast differences in what is collected, how it is collected and how it is used. Significant work needs to be done if we are to harmonize collection processes and variables, and optimize use of data (Santo Tomas et al., 2009). The Center for Global Development has issued five key steps to improve data collection, and while these are generic, they are highly applicable to migrant health data along the CMR. These steps, adapted to migration health data, would include:

- (a) Introducing key variables such as country of birth or nationality and residence status into routine datasets;
- (b) Maximizing the use of such routine data, while being aware of their limitations;
- (c) Collecting and harmonizing cross-country data;
- (d) Making aggregate data widely available; and
- (e) Encouraging the inclusion of specific standardized migration-related questions in household and population surveys.

In addition, and for migrant groups in vulnerable situations, improving coordination of care, especially upon arrival, and coordination of information of care – through systems such as the IOM electronic Personal Health Record – will be vital to addressing the current heterogeneity of systems.

## 20.6. Conclusions

This chapter provided an overview of some of the existing data collection systems on migrant health and their findings. These health records show a young, predominantly male and mostly healthy population with an infrequent but expected distribution of diseases (Aldridge et al., 2018). In keeping with the literature (Kien et al., 2019), there is a setting-specific higher rate of common mental illness, such as post-traumatic stress, depression and anxiety. Prevalence can be increased by aggravating circumstances, such as detention (von Werthert et al., 2018) and obviously may be related to previous trauma or current experiences of uncertainty. In specific settings, there is also a higher prevalence of specific infectious diseases, some of which as previously described could be related to mass accommodation, encampment and overcrowding.

This chapter also showed that health data for recently arrived migrants and refugees in Europe are highly heterogeneous and sources are mostly not linked, making it difficult to produce a comprehensive and generalizable overview of the topic. A more coordinated approach to HISs among migrants, mapping and harmonization of variables and definitions and reliable modes for comparison, including to routine HISs, is needed. Significant challenges in doing so persist, given the context of current health data collection for these populations.

Since HISs are usually accompanying health care, much of the variation in the former can be explained by variation of the latter. Access to care can be dependent on legal status, and data on some of the most vulnerable migrants, including those with no legal status, can be scarce, as they may not access care, or may access parallel systems – for example, through NGO providers (Médecins du Monde, 2019). Many data collection systems on arrival are set up to record health assessment data and may be restricted in scope to disease areas of interest. Lastly, the mobility aspect also impedes good data collection; migrants may move or be moved, or may change status (for example, becoming irregular). While progress has been made to mitigate against these aspects, specific migrant cohorts and specific diseases (such as chronic diseases) are likely to be missed.

Recent efforts have been made to improve the collection, collation, analysis and dissemination of migrant health data. These include initiatives to set up monitoring systems (WHO, 2016), create consensus regarding the collection and harmonization of variables (University of Pécs Medical School and WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2019), and training workshops for European Union member States. While these initiatives go in the right direction, more is needed to tackle the acute lack of these important data.

Collecting and sharing migrant health data have serious ethical implications, not least the individual right to privacy (Article 17, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) and the balance with security issues. New systems or harmonized systems may be powerful tools to get a better picture of migration and migrant health. Considering the severe protection risks, implementation must be carefully monitored to ensure that all data are anonymized and shared in secure ways across different entities. The issue of interoperability among national and regional databases containing information on migrants is another key consideration in driving action toward better information systems.

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# MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT



.....  
Young Senegalese returnee from Libya.  
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# Migration and Development

## Introduction

The relationship between migration and development is complex. While rich regions tend to attract immigrants, the poorest regions are not those with the highest emigration. Indeed, individuals need to own a certain degree of resources to finance international migration and a certain level of education to access labour markets in countries of destination. The short-term impact of economic growth in poor areas is generally an increase in emigration (de Haas, 2007). Second, migration is a potential driver of development both in destination and origin countries. Migrants bring their productive contribution to the economy at destination. They remit money and ideas that are resources for families and communities in countries of origin. Moreover, social capital can be expanded through migration and transnational connections between places of origin and destination, connecting distant regions and communities. However, some questions arise with regard to migration in North and West Africa, and along the CMR.

To begin, what are the factors that hinder or support migrants' ability to contribute to development? In particular, what is the impact of an irregular status in countries of transit and destination? In countries of transit, irregularity can expose migrants to uncertainty and to higher vulnerability. In countries of destination, it often leads them to experience worse access to basic services, take up poorly paid jobs and be unable to make longer-term plans. All these factors can hinder migrants' ability to contribute to development in countries of origin, transit and destination. They can also have an impact on the local labour market in countries of destination, in particular through wage dumping.

In addition, current policy efforts, especially in the European Union, to address irregular migration are largely based on the assumption that development programmes will reduce emigration by addressing its "root causes". This approach is in contrast with empirical findings that development may, on the contrary, increase emigration from lower-income countries and that migration can constitute a very important contribution to development and resilience, if adequate policies are in place (Clemens, 2014). The question is what the longer-term impact of current policy approaches will be on migration and development in African countries.

In West Africa, long-standing transnational links, nowadays fostered by new communication technologies and the engagement of diaspora associations with home countries are factors that make migration work for development (Quartey, Addoquaye Tagoe and Boatemaa Setrana, Chapter 21 of this volume). The links transnational migrants establish between various communities – such as their villages of origin, the

neighbourhoods of the capital cities of their home countries where they first migrated, and the diasporas they joined in the foreign countries where they now live – create a “multi-sited village” with its own economy. Migrants consider themselves successful once they can provide support to economic initiatives in the village of origin (Dia, Chapter 22 of this volume).

An overlooked aspect of migration is that it can bolster local development in receiving areas inside Africa, which in turn calls for more migrants and triggers a virtuous circle of migration and development. In the regions of Mali and Burkina Faso where gold mining has attracted migrants from within the country or its neighbours, the prosperity mining brings has fostered the emergence of numerous service and production activities not directly linked to mining, themselves attracting migrant workers. Positive side effects this has had is to divert migratory flows and slow down the pace of rural-to-urban migration (Boukare, Chapter 23 of this volume).

Libya has historically been a major destination country for foreign workers from across sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia, who have significantly contributed to the local economies. Migrants’ integration in the Libyan labour market has economic outcomes for migrant and Libyan communities alike (Borqnäs, Cottone and Teppert, Chapter 24 of this volume).

At the margins and in the heart of the Sahara Desert, countries along the CMR face acute environmental threats in relation to extreme heat and drought, unstable precipitation, land degradation and desertification. Climate change will only make uninhabitable areas increase throughout the region (Sultan, Chapter 25 of this volume).

Important as they are, adaptation and resilience strategies may have limits. The geographic extension of contexts hostile to human settlement should therefore incite States and international agencies to rethink the simplistic binary vision opposing jobseekers and asylum seekers, according to which migrants who do not meet the criteria that international refugee law uses to define a refugee are “economic” migrants, supposedly set on the move by a desire to improve their economic situations. The time has arrived to move beyond the dichotomy of “voluntary” versus “forced” migrants, and to recognize the complexity of migration decisions in international law and policy instruments.

Meanwhile, States and international agencies must design concrete strategies to tackle land degradation and slow down the impact of climate change in sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb. The Initiative on Sustainability, Stability and Security (3S Initiative), which has succeeded in bringing together 14 African countries<sup>1</sup> to increase arable land and create rural jobs to counter forced migration, is an example of such strategies (Bendandi, Chapter 26 of this volume).

Return migration is a sizeable phenomenon in West Africa. It can be part of an initial plan of temporary migration, or the unexpected outcome of a migratory project. In either case, it has an impact on the families and communities migrants return to, and on local development. With laws on entry and stay being increasingly enforced along the entire CMR, the category of migrants returned from a country where they were staying, and often working, with an irregular status is growing in numbers. How to transform their failed migration projects into successes is a challenge. When Algeria started to tighten expulsion measures against undocumented migrants, the Niger became a country of transit for tens of thousands of foreign migrants deported from Algeria. The Niger responded to this phenomenon by establishing – with the support of IOM – transit centres to train migrants for economic reintegration and to assist them with voluntary return to their homes. The sustainability of microbusinesses set up by return migrants who benefitted from business management trainings in the Niger is still to be monitored (Yuen, Chapter 27 of this volume). Building on previous work on the conceptualization and measurement of the “sustainability” of reintegration for migrants returning home, IOM has also piloted a mentoring approach in Guinea, Senegal and Morocco, to step up dedicated support to returnees (Paone, Chapter 29 of this volume).

The overall effect of voluntary return migration to Senegal seems positive, as the rise of return migration has been paralleled by an upsurge in the creation of micro-businesses and technological change due to expertise and skills acquired by migrants during their experience abroad (Tandian, Chapter 28 of this volume).

<sup>1</sup> Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Morocco, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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## 21.

Migration across West Africa:  
development-related aspectsPeter Quartey,<sup>1</sup> Mary Boatemaa Setrana,<sup>2</sup>  
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MIGRANT AND DIASPORA  
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REMITTANCES AND  
FINANCIAL INCLUSION

**Abstract:** This chapter investigates the linkages between migration and development in West Africa. The Economic Community of West African States Protocol relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment of 1979 aims at promoting development through the free movement of persons, goods and services. Since its implementation, the region has witnessed increasing labour migration due to infrastructural development, increasing production of cash crops, the development of the mining sectors, and oil discovery. Contemporary migration trends, including the feminization of migration and transnationalism, contribute to development across West Africa. With the effective implementation of migration policy frameworks, developmental benefits – such as brain circulation, investment in different sectors of the home countries' economies and remittances – can be maximized.

## 21.1. Introduction

The phenomenon of migration brings development through the benefits accruing to the migrant sending and receiving countries as well as social and economic costs (IOM, 2009). With the appropriate policies in place, these benefits are maximized and the cost minimized to the development of both countries of origin and of destination. For instance, some emigrants have later either returned with higher dividends from their stay abroad or maintained their contacts with the origin countries. This has allowed them to bring their expertise to bear on the development of their countries of origin in various ways. This paper focuses on the linkages between migration and development in the West African context.

## 21.2. Migration and development

One key point of the discourse on migration and development is the fact that the impact of migration is felt at different levels of development. The migration hump theory, for instance, suggests that migration will increase rapidly as the level of

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development increases, because people want to migrate in order to better their lives and have greater capabilities to move; however, at more advanced stages of development, immigration is usually greater than emigration (Martin and Taylor, 1996; de Haas, 2010). It is therefore prudent to interrogate the West African migration discourse with the view that, no matter the level of development countries could reach, their citizens will still migrate, although with different motives, impact and volumes.

Another factor that has significant impact on the migration and development nexus is the internal and international migration dynamics. The predominant narrative focuses on international migration, despite the high numbers of people moving internally. For example, international migration and development was very much highlighted in the outcomes of the United Nations Global Commission (2003), in Stephen Castles and Mark Miller's *Age of Migration* (1998), and in Tonah and Setrana's *Migration and Development in Africa* (1997), among others. Yet, the creation (in 1975) and institution (1979) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the adoption of its Protocol Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment, all aimed at promoting development and exchange among Member States. Since the implementation of this Protocol, the region has witnessed increasing labour migration, also due to infrastructural development and increasing production of cash crops (coffee, cocoa and groundnut), the development of the mining sectors and oil discovery. For example, many labour migrants moved from the Sahelian countries – in some instances, with families – to the plantations in Ghana, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria (Addoquaye Tagoe, 2013; Adepoju, 2005). While Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire mainly attracted labour migrants from Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso and the Niger to their cocoa farms, Senegal and the Gambia provided work on their cotton and groundnut farms for migrants from the rest of the continent. Nigeria's oil discovery and exploration also made the country attractive for many West African migrants (Adepoju, 2005; Arthur, 1991). Citizens of ECOWAS are able to move, reside and work in other ECOWAS countries, although they are confronted with challenges (ICMPD and IOM, 2016). Some Member States have worked or are working on migration policies to have a holistic approach to managing migration.

Initial discourses linking migration and development did so with a unidirectional idea (either pessimistic or optimistic), with the linkages between “here” and “there” not being considered within these discourses. The discourses were also related strongly to the ideas of development as an economic measurement, without considering the welfare and social dimensions of development (Stark, 1960) and migration as having either negative or positive impacts. Contemporary migration discourses argue beyond the extreme positions to more sophisticated arguments that reflect the trends, patterns and complexities of current migration, which culminate in development from brain gain, brain circulation, transnational businesses and return migration (de Haas, 2007; Tonah and Setrana, 2017). These patterns are further discussed below.

### 21.2.1. Brain drain, brain gain and brain circulation

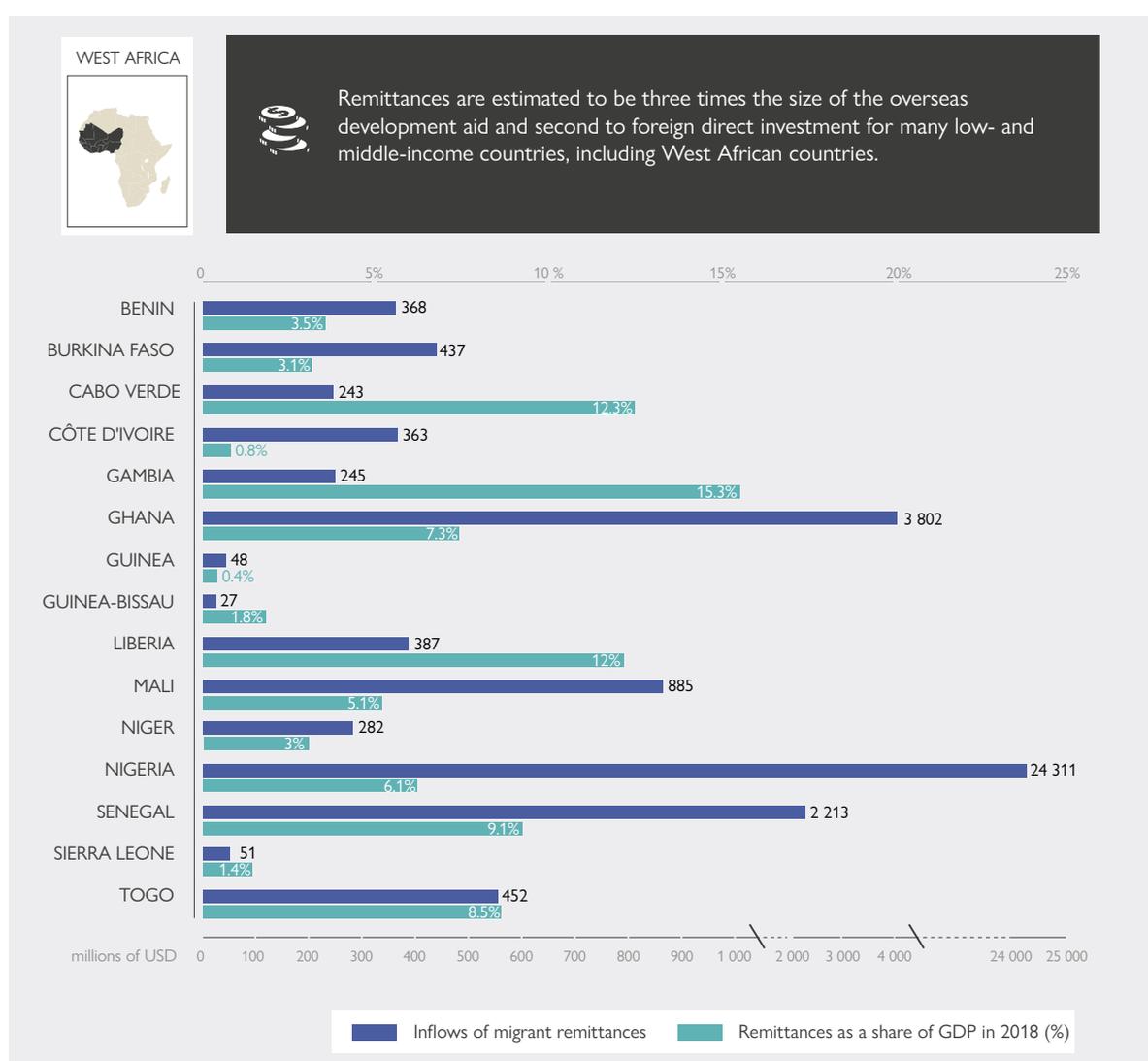
In some cases, the negative perception of migration stems from the fear that it may deprive developing countries of their brightest and best brains, and further deepen the inequality gap between the Global North and Global South, or between urban and rural contexts (Castles, 2001, 2010). In the agricultural sector, concerns have been raised regarding the migration of the young and energetic persons, who happen to be the stronghold of farm production. In the education sector, the government spends USD 4 million every year on hiring consultants and expatriates to fill national vacant positions due to the emigration of its professionals (Oduba, 2000; Benedict and Ukpere, 2012). In the case of Sierra Leone and Togo, women with tertiary education living outside these countries were as high as 10 per cent in 2010/2011 (OECD and UN DESA, 2013). Within the sub-Saharan African region, the West African countries have the highest emigration of health professionals compared with other regions, although the sector has the greatest need of personnel (WHO, 2006; Teye et al., 2014). About 30,000 nurses and midwives educated within West Africa and sub-Saharan Africa work in the Global North (WHO, 2006).

However, migrants abroad acquire new skills, knowledge, norms and values, which help them to contribute to development in various capacities (Setrana and Tonah, 2016). These benefits of emigration support the optimistic views of Easterly and Nyarko (2008) and Clemens (2015), considering that benefits of migration to the home region are greater than the costs therein. West African returnees who are highly skilled can be useful for the development agendas of their respective countries. Women, who increasingly migrate independently to further their education or work, can become economically independent to support themselves and their households.

## 21.2.2. Impact of remittances on development

Remittances represent significant contributions to development and a source of foreign exchange, supplementing household income for purchasing basic needs. Remittances are estimated to be three times the size of the overseas development aid and second to foreign direct investment for many low- and middle-income countries, including West African countries (World Bank, 2016). In 2019, the amount of remittance inflows to West Africa was USD 35.6 billion an increase from USD 31.439 billion.<sup>3</sup> A majority of the top 10 recipient countries of remittances were in West Africa, with Nigeria as the top recipient country, with USD 24.3 billion (World Bank Group and KNOMAD, 2019). In West Africa, remittances represent a greater share of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the following countries: Cabo Verde (12.3%), Liberia (12.0%), Senegal (9.1%), Togo (8.5%), Ghana (7.3%) and Nigeria (6.1%).<sup>4</sup> In more than half of the countries in the subregion, remittances represent at least 5 per cent of their GDP (World Bank, 2019). The 2018 figures notes Nigeria as the country with the highest remittance inflow (USD 24311million) (see figure 21.1).

**Figure 21.1.** Migrant remittances in West Africa



Source: World Bank Data Sheet, 2019.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

<sup>3</sup> Figures represented as at October 2019.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank Data Sheet for remittance inflows April 2019.

Remittances sent to West Africa are mostly invested in accommodation, health, education, businesses, farming and agricultural equipment, purchasing of land, and as a form of insurance for unforeseen circumstances in migrant households. Quartey (2006) and Mohapatra and Ratha (2011) recognized that migrant households make savings with financial institutions as an insurance strategy. Remittance inflows to international migrant households are higher than internal migrant households, although internal remittances are more frequent. Similarly, male migrants remit higher amounts than their female counterparts (Adepoju and van der Wiel, 2010), although women appear to remit more frequently than men.

The high cost of transferring remittances limits the actual amount sent to the household, while also encouraging the use of informal channels, which are relatively cheaper and have better exchange rates. These challenges have received attention at the global policy level through indicator 17.3.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which focuses on increasing the volume of remittances; and SDG indicator 10.1, on reducing the cost of sending remittances.

### 21.2.3. Migrant associations and development

West Africa is known for its diaspora associations and internal migrant associations, which are often formed along the lines of ethnicity, religion or profession, and aim at supporting development in origin communities, including through return migration. These associations contribute both in cash and in kind to their countries and communities of origin. They contribute towards infrastructural development such as schools, hospitals and community centres, among others. An example of such associations is the Senegalese Diaspora Association in France, which has supported vocational training through the establishment of vocational training centres in Senegal – for instance, for carpentry and bakery – providing young people with entrepreneurial skills and creating jobs for the communities, which have ripple effects on the country as a whole (Moser, 2018). Another prominent association is the Council of Ewe Associations of North America, which aims to promote the socioeconomic and cultural development of countries of origin, namely Benin, Togo and Ghana (Kothior, 2013). In the educational sector, scholars based in the Global North transfer their knowledge to the home country on a more short-term basis.

Beyond the international migrant associations of West African origin, internal migrants' associations are mostly formed in urban centres across the region, and contribute to development in the communities of origin. In Ghana, the Kwahuman Association in Accra mobilizes resources for the development of Kwahuman in the Eastern Region of Ghana (Okyerefo and Setrana, 2018).

### 21.2.4. Transnational linkages, return migration and development

West African migrants connect with their home countries in various ways. Social remittances including “democratic remittances” are major means of ensuring their continuous and constant link with the home countries. For instance, migrants often support the strengthening of democracy in the countries of origin through the formation of external party branches of the home country political parties, campaigning, resource mobilization and sometimes returning to occupy certain political positions once their parties are in power (Setrana and Kyei, 2015). In Sierra Leone, diaspora associations intensified campaigns for the amendment of their Citizenship Law to allow for dual citizenship (Heath, 2009). Migrants have also created transnational businesses in the home countries, creating jobs and paying taxes in the country (see, for instance, Setrana and Tonah, 2016; and Smith, 2007). To maximize these benefits, many governments in West Africa have implemented policies to ensure greater engagement with their citizens abroad, as well as those who make the decision to finally return home, in order to maximize the developmental benefits of migration.

International organizations also fund the temporary return and engagement of West African migrants to contribute to development in the region. For instance, IOM, through the Migration and Development for Africa Project, collaborated with the Ministries of Health in Ghana and Nigeria to engage their countries' diaspora in the health sector to contribute to filling the skills gap in this sector. The Centre for International Migration and Development collaborates with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) and the German Federal

Employment Agency to run the diaspora and return experts programme in several other African countries, including Nigeria and Ghana<sup>5</sup> (Setrana, 2019).

Although return migration can be beneficial, it is unfortunate that some highly educated West African migrants at destination find jobs only at the periphery of the labour market with low pay, and this stalls their potential contributions to national development upon eventual return.

### 21.2.5. Migrants' contribution to development of destination countries

Contributions of migrants to the development of their host countries come in different forms and are seen in the economy and cultural sectors in particular. Businesses created and operated by migrants in their host communities provide job opportunities for the unemployed, and also allow them to maintain a cultural connection with their home countries. These businesses include restaurants that provide employment and cater to the migrant communities' identification with their home countries in the form of special native cuisines, among others (Sassen-Koob, 1985). This role contributes to migrants' integration into the host countries with "a taste of both worlds". These businesses have related activities that necessitate the connection to both the host and origin communities, such as the import-export business, shipping, air cargo, travel and tourism companies, and money transfer businesses. Migrants get to be "cultural brokers" and contribute to the cultural diversity of their host nations (Glick Schiller et al., 1995).

## 21.3. Conclusion

Migration across the West African subregion brings enormous benefits to both the sending and receiving countries. Some of the gains include brain gain or brain circulation, remittances, transnational linkages and development, as well as investments in health, education and housing, to mention but a few.

Recognizing the changing face of migration in West Africa, the transnational nature that allows for engagement with West African migrants, irrespective of where they are and the benefits for development, many governments have put in place migration policies to better engage with their citizens abroad and to create the enabling environment for their successful return and integration.

Efforts towards addressing challenges associated with migration either to or from the subregion and intraregional migration are key to promoting the interlinkages between migration and development. Governments have put in place various measures, such as national migration policies, dual citizenship laws and diaspora engagement policies for effective migration management broadly, which have been successful to varying degrees (ICMPD and IOM, 2016). Additionally, Governments are encouraged under the SDGs to increase the volume of remittances (SDG indicator 17.3.2) and reduce the cost of sending remittances (SDG indicator 10.1). The global average cost of sending remittances is USD 200 which is still high for West African countries and can be reduced further.<sup>6</sup> Given the importance of the diaspora in national development across the region, it is suggested that governments harmonize policies across the subregion to address the benefits and challenges associated with regular and irregular migration. Finally, national governments should deepen their engagements with the diaspora through homecoming visits and fundraising activities such as diaspora bonds (eg. Mangala, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Some relevant links are: (a) Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN); Bringing Talents Home to help in Liberia's Reconstruction, available at [www.undp.org/content/dam/liberia/docs/docs/Transfer%20of%20Knowledge%20through%20Expatriate%20Nationals%20Report.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/liberia/docs/docs/Transfer%20of%20Knowledge%20through%20Expatriate%20Nationals%20Report.pdf); (b) MIDA Ghana Health project, available at [www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/MIDA-Ghana-Health-Project-2012.pdf](http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/MIDA-Ghana-Health-Project-2012.pdf). Centre for migration and development (2019). Employers – Placement of returning experts. Retrieved on [30th September, 2019] from [www.cimonline.de/en/html/fur-arbeitgeber\\_rf.html](http://www.cimonline.de/en/html/fur-arbeitgeber_rf.html); [www.cimonline.de/en/html/returning-experts.html](http://www.cimonline.de/en/html/returning-experts.html).

<sup>6</sup> See [www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/22/world-bank-predicts-sharpest-decline-of-remittances-in-recent-history](http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/22/world-bank-predicts-sharpest-decline-of-remittances-in-recent-history).

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MIGRANT AND DIASPORA  
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# 22.

## Senegalese migratory strategies: adapting to changing socioeconomic conditions in the long term<sup>1</sup>

Hamidou Dia<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** This chapter analyses the reasons given by Senegalese migrants for their decisions to emigrate, through personal life histories. It is based on the author's research since 2003 on the migrant networks formed through what he calls "multi-sited villages", social units comprising both the inhabitants of a rural site and the members of their families living in different places. The reasons for leaving are mostly linked to essentially economic contextual factors: financial considerations, the rural exodus, a slump in urban areas and educational aspirations.

### 22.1. Introduction

Senegal is one of West Africa's largest contributors to international migration: according to official statistics, about 533,000 of its citizens have emigrated (UN DESA, 2013) out of a population currently estimated at 16,209,125.<sup>3</sup>

The emigrants' destinations vary widely.<sup>4</sup> In Africa, they have travelled to countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Morocco, Egypt, Cameroon, Gabon, the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (and, to a lesser extent, to Angola). In Europe, for many years until the mid-1980s, most Senegalese settled in France. Later, they started to settle in countries in Southern Europe, in particular Italy and Spain, and to a lesser extent Portugal and Germany. Some have moved to the Americas: the United States of America, Canada, Brazil and Argentina. Recently, a fair number have migrated to Asia, notably China. The Arab countries have also long been a destination (Fall, 2016; Dia, 2015b).

Most Senegalese migration is for labour, and for many years it was a male phenomenon.<sup>5</sup> A small proportion is nonetheless qualified, comprising students migrating to Europe and North America, the countries of the Maghreb and the Gulf States, occasionally the countries of the former Soviet Union, and increasingly China (Kane, 2019; Dia, 2015b; Bredeloup, 2014).

<sup>1</sup> The phrase "in the long term" refers to the time markers defined for this text, from the end of the colonial period to the present day.

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<sup>3</sup> See the website of the Senegalese national statistics office, the *Agence nationale de la statistique et de la démographie*. Available at [www.ansd.sn](http://www.ansd.sn) (accessed 21 April 2020).

<sup>4</sup> According to UN DESA (2013), 49 per cent of Senegalese emigrants have settled in Europe, 47 per cent in Africa, 3 per cent in North America, and 0.6 per cent in other parts of the world.

<sup>5</sup> According to UN DESA (2013), 63 per cent of Senegalese emigrants are men.

Emigration from Senegal has regional (Manjacks from southern Senegal, Soninke and Haalpulaar from the river valley) and religious specificities,<sup>6</sup> and is structured by the brotherhoods: (a) the Mouride Brotherhood, founded by Sheikh Ahmadou Bamba Mbacké; (b) the followers of Sheikh Ibrahima Niass, a branch of the Tijāniyyah order founded by Sheikh Ahmad al-Tijani and present in other Senegalese urban centres; (c) the Omarian disciples of Sheikh Omar Al Foutiyou Tall; and (d) the epigones of Seydi El Hadji Malick Sy in Tivaouane and of Sheikh Mamadu Saidu Ba in Médina Gounass, founded in 1936. Today the phenomenon has spread to all parts of Senegal, including the capital, Dakar (Beauchemin et al., 2013; Kane, 2019).

This chapter explores the reasons given by Senegalese migrants for leaving. It is based on the ethnographic research I have conducted since 2013 among the networks of acquaintances spawned by what I call “multi-sited Senegalese villages”,<sup>7</sup> networks established through migration and spread over several national, continental and international areas, involving several generations of individuals sharing the same area of origin, in this case a rural site (Dia, 2013 ; 2015b). It uses four case studies to show how the socioeconomic situation has driven individuals and areas permanently to reinvent themselves through migration, for want of domestic solutions.

## 22.2. Monetization

The multi-sited villages discussed here have emerged over time in the Senegal River Middle Valley, an area currently divided between the Saint-Louis and Matam Regions. They are populated for the most part by Haalpulaaren, and their economy was long based on agriculture in what is fertile terrain (Kane, 2004). As a result, the region was relatively self-contained. Colonial hegemony (1850–1960) led to a paradigm shift in economic exchanges: recourse was increasingly had to an external currency, possession of which was required due to the changes in the economy (Manchuelle, 2004). It is from that point on that increasingly large waves of young people started leaving the villages to work in the major towns at the time and in other agrarian regions. The idea was to work for a brief period in order to save money and return to the village, using the savings to pay taxes and finance a marriage or the constitution of a herd, to name but the most common events. At the time, rural families were not entirely dependent on migration. They considered it important to honour the obligations imposed by the colonial administration and then to enter the commercial circuit arising from new needs that altered consumption patterns in the broad sense: food, clothing, ceremonial expectations, new ways of building that led to a change in architecture overall, and the technological innovations revolutionizing the domestic space.

Demba is a former migrant, now retired. He was born in 1940 and still lives in the village of his birth. He recounts that he started going to the city to look for work in the 1950s. He is one of seven siblings (four brothers and three sisters). His father was the village chief and in charge of collecting taxes. It was he who asked Demba to go to Dakar to work for four months, giving him money for the journey, and to bring back cash. In the capital, Demba was taken in by an uncle who was in business and who helped him find work as a day labourer in a cement factory. He returned home with what was a considerable sum at the time, enabling him to honour his father’s wishes and to meet other needs: he bought livestock, built a house with a zinc roof – they were popular at the time – and helped two of his brothers buy light agricultural implements, so that they could grow millet and maize, in addition to vegetables, for the family’s food needs.

For four years in a row, Demba travelled back and forth between Dakar and his village of origin in present-day Matam. He emigrated to France in 1961, where he lived until his retirement in the early 2000s, and returned to the village. There, he is looked on as a respected elder providing counsel to all, in particular one of his younger brothers, who is currently the village chief. The role played by Demba in his family in the late 1950s – the wage earner, in particular to pay taxes and other expenses – was not unusual. Many people of his generation from the Middle Valley had the same experience at the same time. It was the context back then – monetization and the obligation to meet

<sup>6</sup> Manjack emigration dates from after the mobilization of the colonies during the First World War: soldiers who had left to fight in France stayed there. Emigration by Soninkes and Haapulaar was more closely related to the need for wage-earning workers during the *Trente Glorieuses* in France. Religious migration, for its part, occurred, in a manner of speaking, concomitant with trade and entrepreneurship.

<sup>7</sup> The multi-sited village encompasses a social scene embodying practices and representations, thus precluding an approach via the concept of transnationalism.

the requirements of the modern administration – that prompted the inhabitants to adapt their economic behaviour and change their mobility habits, which had previously been shaped by their ties to animal husbandry.

## 22.3. Rural exodus

The Senegal River Middle Valley and its villages have long been associated with the land, home to both rain-based and flood plain agriculture. That picture was shattered by the droughts of the 1970s, which destroyed farms and damaged the local economy (Lavigne-Delville, 1991). Livestock, the region's other source of food, suffered collateral damage: the locals tell of daily discoveries of the corpses of cows, bulls, sheep and goats on the tracks and fields, dead of starvation. Several families lost all their possessions and were forced to find other solutions and above all to profoundly change a number of economic habits. The State reacted, adopting new measures for the agriculture sector: mechanization, subsidies and loans. However, the extreme politicization of the process by which farmers were selected meant that those with the least support in the higher echelons of the clientelistic regimes that successively governed Senegal – the majority – found themselves swept aside by this new, biased form of modernizing agriculture (Diop, 2008). In fact, it was during the 1990s that departures for places near – the countries of the subregion – and far – the countries of Europe in particular – picked up pace, ingraining modern migration in the social and economic mores of the region's inhabitants.

Djibel has four sisters and two brothers, and was born in 1953. He is retired, and currently divides his time between France and Senegal. He has an apartment in a public housing unit in a Paris banlieue, two houses on the outskirts of Dakar – one of which he rents out – and a third house in the village of his birth. In the late 1970s, both his parents were old and his sisters were still minors and living at home. With his younger brother, he tried to make a go of farming, but they were unable to hire enough men to work the family field and did not have the capital to buy the agricultural implements needed to increase their yields, at a time when the river failed to flood, leading to water shortages. With the agreement of the members of his family, Djibel sold two sheep from what little remained of the family herd and went to Dakar. He was taken in by a paternal uncle, a cook in a restaurant of the Senegalese administration. He said of this time:

The 1970s were very difficult years. It was hard to find food. People wore the same clothes for several days, even more than a week. We rarely ate more than once a day. It was very hot in our homes, but even hotter outside. It was unbearable; I had to talk to the family. I couldn't take it anymore. I decided to leave. Papa, Maman and the whole family prayed for me. I left.<sup>8</sup>

Djibel worked as a street vendor in Dakar before deciding to leave for France, having realized that his earnings would not allow him to build himself a house, provide for his family back in the village and meet his basic needs in the Senegalese capital in the long run. He arrived in Yvelines, a department near Paris, in 1983. A short time later, he found a job in a car factory, guided and led by members of the multi-sited village who had travelled to France before him. He would continue to provide for his family back in the village; he also took advantage of his stay in France to buy the properties mentioned above. He is very proud of what he has accomplished; while very critical of some aspects of migration, he is overall satisfied with what it has brought him at the end of his working life:

I had a house built in the village, I have two here near Dakar. I helped all my sisters until they got married. I no longer had to support them, because they married people from the village living here in France. Three of them live in the Paris area with their children. The fourth is married to a cousin, a wealthy businessman, who emigrated to Gabon. He takes good care of her, so no worries. If I hadn't left, maybe things wouldn't have turned out this way.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Djibel at his home in Pikine, on the outskirts of Dakar, 14 March 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Consequently, it was in reaction to a situation spawned by agricultural crises that Djibel, with his family's agreement, gradually became part of an emigration strategy that took him from Dakar to the Paris region and that led him to take charge of the house on the original site of his multi-situated village, and to make investments that give him financial and material security today as a retiree in France and Senegal.

## 22.4. A slump in urban areas

The multi-sited village also has an urban component, made up of some of the inhabitants who left the original site and settled in Dakar, where they raised families, in the late 1950s. Today, some multi-sited villages from the Senegal River Middle Valley have no fewer than four urbanized generations: the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the original settlers put down roots and reproduced the multi-sited villages as places of meaning (Dia, 2013 and 2015a). The first arrivals settled on the outskirts of Dakar, in particular in Pikine. Over time, some of them became socially mobile, notably thanks to trade and study. In the 1980s, however, Senegal was convulsed by a multifaceted crisis and had to turn to donors, who would impose draconian structural adjustment policies that resulted in the dismissal of civil servants and cuts in the education budget; the newly urbanized families from the multi-sited villages entered a cycle of tension, their difficulties compounded by the arrival of relatives from the original site and by the fact that some of their children were unable to complete their studies, which were financially onerous and for which the public authorities offered no scholarships.

Ramata was born in 1980 in Dakar to parents who had arrived from the Middle Valley in the mid-1970s. She is the oldest of three sisters and three brothers. Her father started out as a street vendor before opening a fabric stall in a large market on the outskirts of Dakar. Her mother stayed at home, raising the children and looking after the household. All the children went to school, an outcome of their father's desire to see his children move up the social ladder. His business allowed him to feed the family, consisting of his wife and children and relatives arriving from the village. Ramata stayed in school until eighth grade, but encountered difficulties in obtaining the diploma that would have enabled her to continue on to secondary school. The two brothers following her in age both dropped out, one after the *baccalauréat*, the other after two unsuccessful years at university. In 1999, Ramata married a cousin in France who was originally from the same village but whom her parents had housed during his years in Dakar as a carpenter. In 2001, she benefited from the family reunification procedure and joined her husband in the Paris *banlieue*. She took advantage of the fact that she could speak some French to take courses, and found a job in a restaurant. Two years later, she brought the brother who had dropped out of university to France; he married a French-born cousin a year later. Later, Ramata and her brother brought over the second brother, who had not started university in Dakar for want of a scholarship, his parents being unable to cover the cost of his studies. Ramata and her two brothers subsequently paid for the two youngest sisters to study at private universities. The sisters found work in Senegal in the private sector, and are now married to managers. The youngest brother successfully completed medical studies financed by Ramata and her brothers, and is currently practicing in a public hospital.

The story of Ramata and her siblings is illustrative of a mobility that is both geographical and social, attributable in part to migration, to active solidarity between brothers and sisters, and to the creation of conditions enabling the youngest among them to complete their studies and find local middle-class jobs. Here again, thanks to migration, the family was able to stave off a decline in the father's activity and scholastic failure. Ultimately, within this multi-sited village, this family is among the most respected, because its members demonstrated great solidarity and a capacity to face up to events that could have had a lasting damaging impact.

## 22.5. Mobility for education

The first schools were opened fairly early in Senegal, as of the nineteenth century, initially by Christian missions, before later following the spread of the colonial administration (Bouche, 1975; Dia, 2018). It was some time, however, before schools covered the entire national territory. This is why, for a long time, they were reserved for the elites, especially in the Senegal River Middle Valley. As the schools showed that they could lead to upward social mobility in some situations, they started to become attractive for people in general, including those farthest from them. When the droughts wreaked havoc on agricultural structures and the inhabitants were driven from the land because they lacked the capital needed to buy agricultural material, some played the education card, if not for all, at least for some of their children.

Seydel was born in the Senegal River Middle Valley in 1985 to parents who were earning a sporadic living from agriculture. He attended classes there until his final year of secondary school. In 2007, a *baccalauréat* in hand, he was oriented towards law school, where he obtained a master's degree in 2012. From 2012 to 2014, he looked for an internship and sat several competitive exams, to no avail, despite having good academic transcripts. A former classmate who had settled in Nice suggested that he try to register at a French university. Seydel arrived in France in 2016 to do a master's, found work as a legal adviser and married a Senegalese woman who had also come to France to study – she had studied marketing and was working for a large corporation. Seydel looks on the change in his life as follows:

It was my friend's idea that saved me. In Senegal, it's very difficult, unless you have a networks Skills don't count. I knocked on every door in Dakar. I didn't give up, but nothing doing... Now I'm happy. I'm earning a living and I'm helping my family back in the village. I'm also helping my younger brother, who's at university. I hope to help him come here as well, because I don't believe in their emerging Senegal. They may be emerging, but not people like us.<sup>10</sup>

Seydel's journey shows that education is one door to professional integration, such openings being few and far between in Senegal. Leaving becomes a solution when the local situation appears to be at an impasse. The result is an exit towards social emancipation and the acquisition of a status that would be much more difficult to acquire locally, in a country riddled with political–business clientelism.

## 22.6. Conclusion

One form of academic constructivism – the product of an overview – tends to focus on the miserable or degrading nature of migration (Lagrange, 2013). Generally speaking, it takes no notice of how the migrants themselves represent their practices, and makes no effort fully to assess the contexts of departure and what they tell us about blood ties, the economy, politics, the social majority and respectability. A long-term relationship, forged in 2003 and consolidated as part of a periodic survey, reveals other ways of looking at migration. The Senegalese from the Middle Valley we met generally consider that they are successful once they are able to meet a number of basic needs and support their next of kin by funding a trip, studies, daily food or health. The cases considered in this chapter also show that it is often the socioeconomic situation that prompts a person to consider emigration as an alternative to what can be termed social death – a life without work, with no income or status – or as a strategy for diversifying revenues, or as a means of gradually working one's way up the ladder, for one's own sake or for the sake of one's relatives, when possible. This is why migration remains, especially in the Senegalese context, an eminently economic affair.

<sup>10</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Seydel in Dakar, during a vacation there in April 2019.

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## INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL ADEKEYE, President of Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation (NIDO) Europe, Belgium and Luxembourg Chapter<sup>1</sup>

### What are NIDO's objectives?

NIDO Europe is the European arm of a global Nigerian diaspora network, and acts as an umbrella organization of different country chapters. As the Belgium and Luxembourg chapter, we mainly aim at harnessing professional talents among the Nigerian community in the diaspora and facilitating the transfer of skills back home. We focus on skills, because we consider them more effective than financial remittances.

### How does this work in practice?

We work, for example, with doctors, IT (information technology) professionals or financial consultants here in Belgium or Luxembourg, and look at how their skills can be transmitted back home. We put together resources from Europe and Nigeria. Every year, the company I work for gives me free laptops and desktops. We use them for trainings for schools and individuals in local communities in Nigeria, where IT skills are still low. We also give them out to people who cannot buy them. Then, we organize visits in Nigeria for other friends who would like to help. We also receive the support of young volunteers, through the Nigerian National Volunteer Service. Other NIDO organizations in Europe implement other projects to help our communities back home. Our sister organization in Germany was able to build a vocational skills training centre in Nigeria with the help of local councils, and NIDO Ireland built an anaemia screening centre in Nigeria.

### What contribution can the diaspora offer to Nigeria and to countries of destination?

What we can give back home are skills, skills, skills. As the popular saying goes, we need to teach people to fish. In Nigeria, we have a big young population, but we need to improve education. We focus too much on products and neglect the service sector, which is where the future of Nigeria's economy lies. And we can help countries of destination understand where they should be helping. Now they are giving a lot of aid to Nigeria, but this rarely goes to the area of skills and vocational training. Development aid usually funds the construction of buildings and routes and water supply, but does not focus enough on underlying problems and skills needed to render progress sustainable. Governments of destination countries are also mostly working directly with origin country Governments and often not reaching the grass roots. The Nigerian diaspora has a role to play there, and should be included in talks between the Nigerian and European Governments.

### What challenges do you encounter?

As NIDO aims at harnessing skills rather than money, some Nigerians in the diaspora look at us as an elitist organization. But I think that we would need the participation of all professionals here, including factory workers. They had trainings, know about health and safety standards, and could help us change the way we work in Nigeria. Together, we have the numbers to generate a little change. Some also consider NIDO an extension of the Government, because we were founded by a former Nigerian President. But even if we are a channel that the Government uses to talk to the diaspora, we do not receive much support from it.

### What recommendations do you have for research, policy and programming?

First off, get Nigerians in the diaspora on board whenever talking to the Nigerian Government about trade, migration or other topics. We know why we left home and what is needed to improve the situation back home. Then, European countries need to focus more on education in Nigeria, starting from primary school and including informal training. We also need professional trainings, such as on electronics, mechanics and engineering. And we need to improve skills for the agricultural sector – such as on crops diversity, distribution and selling, in order to encourage young people to become farmers. This can also offer them alternatives to unsafe migration. And we observe that highly skilled migrants have more opportunities to migrate legally and integrate in destination countries. People who are suffering the most are those with less skills or formal education.

<sup>1</sup> Interview conducted by Irene Schöfberger, IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre.

# 23.

## The development impact of “gold rushes” in Mali and Burkina Faso: the multifaceted effects of migration on artisanal gold mining sites

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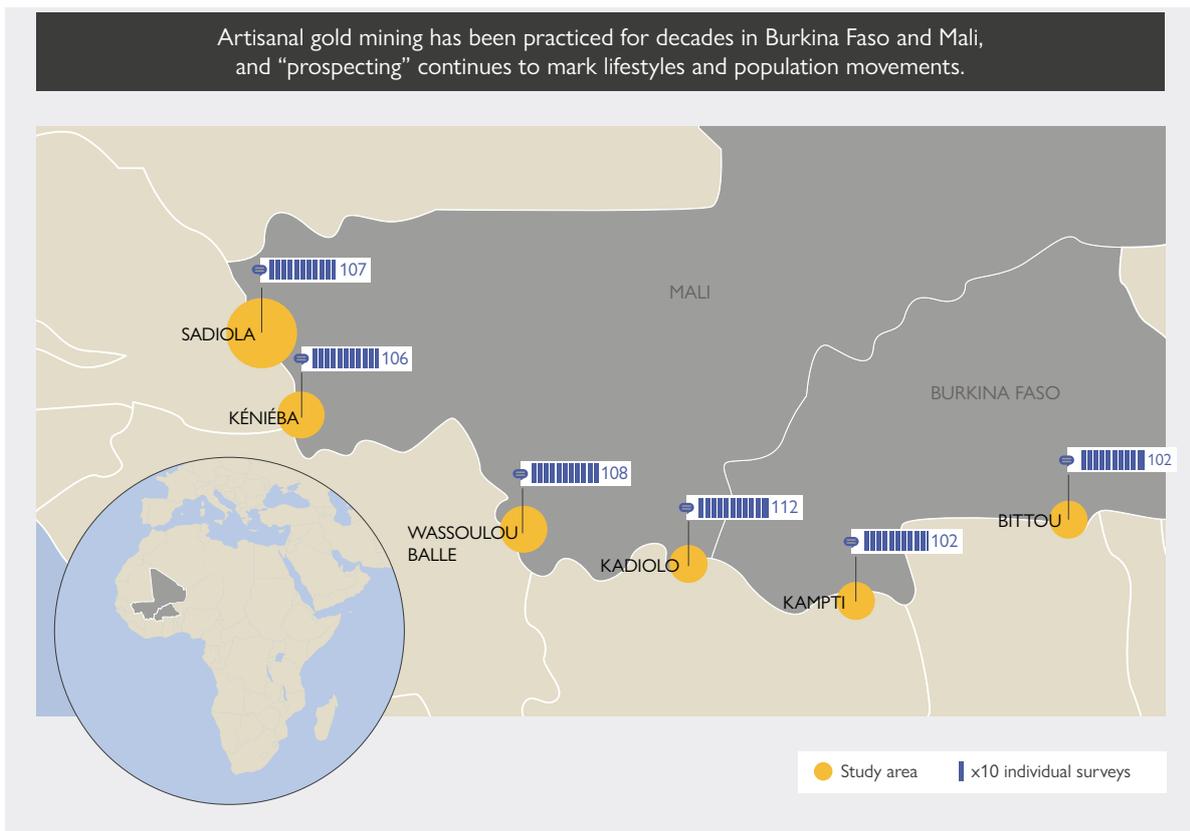
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***Abstract:** This chapter analyses migration to small-scale gold mining sites in Mali and Burkina Faso. It investigates the extent to which these promote development in communities of destination, and examines migrants' profiles and reasons to migrate. It finds that gold mining sites draw considerable flows of internal and cross-border migrants, which have intensified in the past 10 years. Whereas artisanal gold mining previously attracted temporary migrants, it now appears to have established itself as an economic activity leading to long-term settlement on the sites. Artisanal gold mining promotes economic development, attracts secondary migration through new businesses and services, and represents an alternative to agriculture, absorbing youth unemployment and providing an alternative to migration to cities for young people.*

### 23.1. Introduction

Burkina Faso and Mali, two Sahelian countries with a shared border, are located in the same geographical space, along West Africa's Gold Belt (see Figure 23.1). Artisanal gold mining has been practiced there for decades, and “prospecting” continues to mark lifestyles and population movements. In Burkina Faso, the first gold rushes occurred after the droughts in the 1970s and 1980s: a substantial number of migrants, in particular the Mossi from the Plateau-Central Region, set out for the country's southern regions. According to a national survey of the sector (Burkina Faso, 2017), 140,196 workers were active at nearly 448 artisanal gold mining sites in 2016, and the sites had an annual output estimated at 9.5 tons of gold worth CFAF 232.2 billion. In Mali, artisanal gold mining dates to the thirteenth century and the Mandinka Empire. It is practiced chiefly in the gold mining areas of Kayes, Koulikoro and Sikasso regions. Mali is the third-largest gold producer in Africa, after South Africa and Ghana, with an annual output estimated at 60 tons in 2018 (Faujas, 2019). It is estimated that the 300 to 350 artisanal gold mining sites in Mali employ nearly 400,000 men and women workers (EcofinHebdo, 2018).

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**Figure 23.1.** Map of West Africa's gold belt (Burkina Faso and Mali)

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

Gold rushes spawn expectations, fears, frustrations and conflicts. They prompt entire families or localities to move, eager to try their luck and make a quick killing. All too often, migrant and local gold miners do not emerge alive from the deep, hand-dug galleries, which can reach depths of 100 metres in Burkina Faso. The miners' living and working conditions on the sites are especially precarious, characterized by squalor and lack of access to water, social services, education and protection in areas often neglected by governments. In recent years, notably since 2012, the discovery of a new seam in the central Sahel has led to a surge in cross-border mobility between gold mines and in migration to sites within countries (International Crisis Group, 2019). Migration flows have accelerated, at the same time upsetting the social and environmental equilibrium in the mining areas. In this article, we endeavour to describe the multiple migrations flows to the gold mines and to understand the various effects of gold migration in Mali and Burkina Faso on development in the host areas, working chiefly with the primary data collected by IOM teams and the literature available.

## 23.2. Methodology

The results presented were collected in the context of regional research on migration flows to artisanal gold mining sites in West Africa, coordinated by the IOM Regional Office in Dakar and covering Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Senegal.<sup>2</sup> The research was carried out between February and July 2019, and endeavoured to draw up a detailed

<sup>2</sup> In Senegal and Guinea, the research was financed by the United States State Department Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. In Mali and Burkina Faso, it was funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development.

profile of artisanal gold miners (men and women), to understand the migration flows to and from the gold mining sites studied<sup>3</sup> and to assess the challenges relating to the protection of vulnerable people around the sites.

This article refers only to the findings for Mali and Burkina Faso, where field surveys were conducted by IOM teams with the support of government partners and local researchers. A mixed research methodology (quantitative and qualitative) was used. The quantitative survey comprised 436 individual surveys of gold miners in Mali and 209 in Burkina Faso. In-depth interviews and discussion groups were organized with various members of the gold mining communities.<sup>4</sup>

For the entire document, the findings are representative only of the sites visited by the IOM teams. The sites were selected on the basis of several criteria shared by the countries covered by the study. First, they had to be informal, artisanal sites that were not managed by mining companies. The teams also gave precedence to sites of intense artisanal mining activity employing different types of worker (haulers, diggers and crushers, among others). The sites also had to be points of destination and transit for migrants.

The research team in Burkina Faso thus studied two major sites employing several thousand workers: the Galgouli site in Poni Province, in Sud-Ouest Region; and the Warwéogo site in Bittou Department, in Centre-Est Region. The research team in Mali opted to work on sites grouped in two regions: Kayes in the north-east, on the border with Senegal (Sadiola and Kéniéba *cercles*); and Sikasso in the south-west, on the border with Guinea (Kadiolo and Wassilou Balle *cercles*), for a total of 12 sites. Specifically, in Kayes Region, the teams covered the Djingoulou, Brogoné, Kakadjan, Sanougou, Sinseko and Sansanto sites; in the Sikasso Region, they covered the Badalabougou, Alhamdoulila-Dadian, Massiogo-Courani, Kabaya, Kodiaran and Solona sites.

The main research limitations included difficulties accessing the sites and certain groups of people, and the absence of reliable and recent statistical data on migration flows<sup>5</sup> in the areas concerned (Fargues, Chapter 1 of this volume). Lastly, the aim of the study was not to obtain representative estimates of the number of miners at national level. The data collected therefore do not claim to fill the gaps in that respect.<sup>6</sup>

## 23.3. The many types of migration flow to the gold mining sites

Until the 1990s, many citizens of Mali and Burkina Faso left for Côte d'Ivoire. According to the Côte d'Ivoire 1998 general population and housing census, 56 per cent of foreign migrants in Côte d'Ivoire were from Burkina Faso and 19.8 per cent were from Mali (Merabet, 2006:18). That trend was sharply reversed in the wake of the economic and political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002, with many migrants returning home and people moving within the country (Coutin et al., 2010). The return of thousands of people from Côte d'Ivoire to Burkina Faso changed the composition of migrant flows, with some, presumably including the "gold migration" flows, directed towards the south-west of the country.<sup>7</sup>

The "gold rushes" in Mali and Burkina Faso thus represent another major channel of mobility in the region. In Burkina Faso, the artisanal mining sites attract almost exclusively workers of Burkina Faso nationality (98%), whereas those in Mali appear to generate larger cross-border migration flows, even though most of the workers on the sites are

<sup>3</sup> For the World Bank definition of artisanal and small-scale mining, see [www.worldbank.org/en/topic/extractiveindustries/brief/artisanal-and-small-scale-mining](http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/extractiveindustries/brief/artisanal-and-small-scale-mining).

<sup>4</sup> In terms of the profiles surveyed during the study, the teams held group discussions with miners (men and women), chefs de trou, sex workers, minors between 14 and 17 years of age, members of the host community and people engaged in economic activity on the site. Semi-structured interviews were held with key players, such as site managers, traditional and/or administrative authorities, site owners and representatives of organizations of miners or trade unions. Some of the authorities were identified in the light of their level of authority at the site and their availability for interviews.

<sup>5</sup> In the areas surveyed for the study, there were no mechanisms for monitoring migrant flows or counting migrant arrivals. It is therefore not possible to furnish detailed information on the number of internal and international migrants arriving in the localities. The Governments concerned had only recently started to develop national migration strategies (Burkina Faso adopted a national migration strategy in 2016, Mali a national migration policy in 2014), underscoring the need for more systematic collection and publication of migration data in their respective national spaces.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion on data gaps and challenges in countries in the region, see Chapters 1 and 2 of this volume (Fargues).

<sup>7</sup> Coutin et al. (2010) uphold the idea that the returnees from Côte d'Ivoire turned to other areas for labour migration, but that does not suffice to confirm that all the migrant gold miners at national level migrated in response to the closure of the Côte d'Ivoire corridor.

Malian. On all the sites studied in Mali, people from Burkina Faso accounted for 32 per cent of the sample of artisanal miners, and Guineans 13 per cent.<sup>8</sup> These findings confirm that, in the case of Mali, migration to gold mining sites is regional in nature.

At the two sites selected in Burkina Faso, internal migration was a major component of migration flows. For example, at the Galgouli site, in Sud-Ouest Region, the internal migrants were chiefly from three different regions: Nord, Centre-Nord and Plateau-Central. As they have a reputation for digging good galleries, many gold miners from Burkina Faso also migrate beyond their borders and are present in large numbers at other mining sites in West Africa. According to the results of the study, they were the second-largest group in Mali, and accounted for 27 per cent of the sample in Guinea, and 13 per cent in Senegal. The migration of workers from Burkina Faso to those three countries in the subregion is a perfect example of the creation of new communities of mobile miners, moving as opportunities arise and new seams are discovered, and further evidence of considerable cross-border and regional mobility.<sup>9</sup> The freedom of movement guaranteed by the Protocol relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment, which was adopted by the Economic Community of West African States in 1979, provides a legal framework for this strong cross-border migration flow.

### 23.3.1. The determinants of gold rush migration

Within this common mining area, artisanal gold miners tend to have a fairly low level of education: over 40 per cent have on average no education at all.<sup>10</sup> They are also an extremely young group: in Mali, 50 per cent were between 25 and 35 years of age. In the countries selected for the study, traditional gold mining appeared to be a strategy used by poor households with unstable income streams, most of them farmers, to diversify their incomes. The same person can alternate between the two activities, digging for gold on a seasonal basis, especially during the dry season (October and November). In some places, for example in Burkina Faso, the mines attract fewer foreign workers. They tend to draw people from neighbouring villages or regions who once lived off the land but now have to find a supplementary activity to buy material or livestock.

In Mali, 92 per cent of artisanal gold miners said that it was job opportunities that drew them to the sites. Only 4 per cent said that they had come to join a family member, and 1 per cent said that they were at the mine as one stage in an international migration plan.

In addition, the sector's great appeal is explained by the "myth", particularly widespread among young people, that gold mining and prospecting for gold are strongly related to success and upward social mobility (Grätz, 2004; Cros and Mégret, 2009, 2014). The stories of fortunes made overnight have a strong impact on the collective imagination in the gold mining regions. In national contexts that remain deeply affected by rural unemployment, the promise of rapid earnings from the discovery of new seams appears to hold the same potential as migration to the city or abroad.

### 23.3.2. Prospecting for gold: The appeal of a long-standing tradition

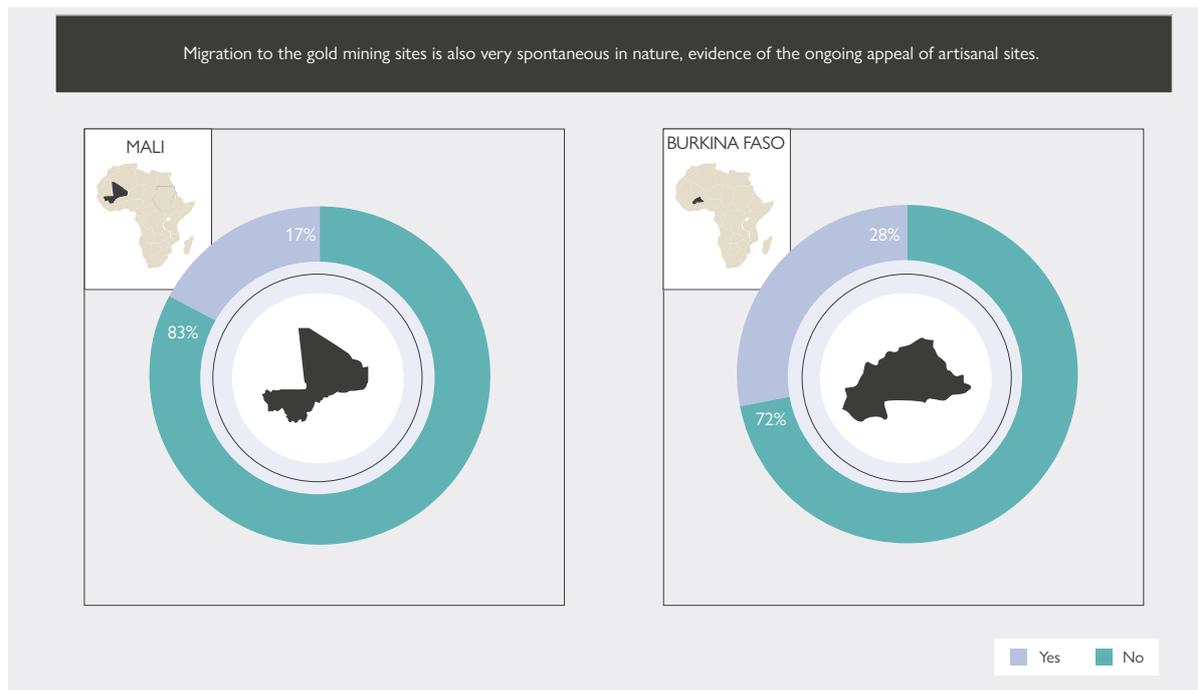
Migration to the gold mining sites is also very spontaneous in nature, evidence of the ongoing appeal of artisanal sites. Indeed, most of the gold miners (72% in Burkina Faso and 83% in Mali) left their places of origin and migrated to the sites even if they had no confirmation that they would find work there (see Figure 23.2).

<sup>8</sup> These figures are representative of the sites selected for the study, and not of all active artisanal gold mining sites in Mali and Burkina Faso.

<sup>9</sup> Grätz (2004), in his study of artisanal gold mining sites in Mali, Benin and Burkina Faso, speaks of the "porous borders" brought about by the fact that artisanal gold mining, through the successive waves of migration it has generated, has redefined the geographic and administrative concept of borders in West Africa.

<sup>10</sup> In Burkina Faso, 53 per cent of miners said that they had had no schooling.

**Figure 23.2.** Employment offer received before arrival on site



Note: These maps are for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

In Burkina Faso, the population appears to be divided between those who have worked on a limited number of sites and those who have moved extensively between sites, both within the country and at regional level, with 33 per cent having already worked at more than four sites (see Figure 23.3).

**Figure 23.3.** Number of gold mining sites on which the person surveyed had worked in Mali and Burkina Faso



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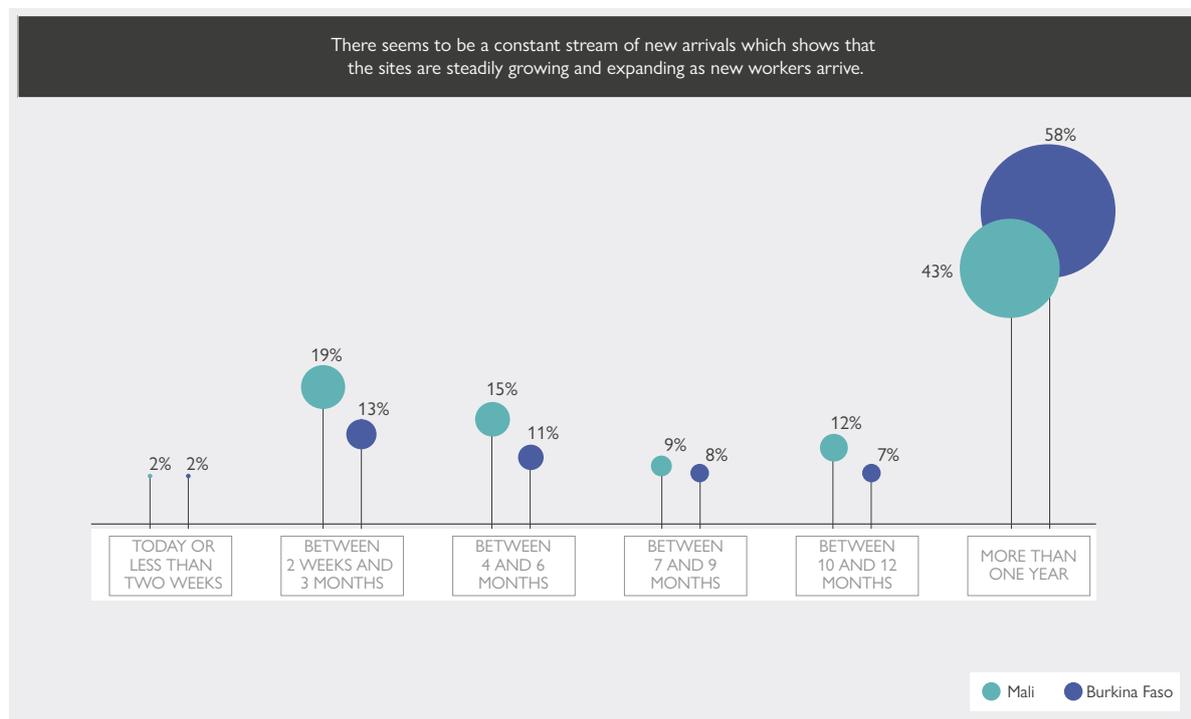
In Mali, most of the gold miners (62%) had worked on one or two sites. Those figures also show that prospecting for gold is not considered just a supplementary activity, and has in some cases become the primary economic activity.

The large proportions of gold miners having worked on a limited number of sites – about one third in both Mali and Burkina Faso – also appear to indicate that the sector has no difficulty recruiting new workers. Artisanal gold mining remains attractive and prompts migration among those who have already worked in the sector and those hoping to do so for the first time.

In addition, according to the data collected from the gold miners, they migrated for the long term: most of the miners surveyed (58% in Burkina Faso and 43% in Mali) tended to remain on the job at the same site for over one year. The difference between the two countries can be explained by the differences in the types of site selected. In Burkina Faso, the sites have long been operational (the Galgouli site has existed since 2003 and the first gold diggers arrived at the Warwéogo site around 1998<sup>11</sup>) and are starting to look like real towns, with workers having access to all services. It would appear that the workers migrating to these two sites have settled there over the years.<sup>12</sup> In Mali, on the other hand, some of the sites selected were much further away from a village, smaller and only recently excavated. The workers had therefore not settled there for any length of time, and appeared more likely to migrate between sites on a temporary basis.

Interestingly, there seems to be a constant stream of new arrivals: at the various sites visited in Mali, 19 per cent of the miners on average had started working there between two weeks and three months previously (see Figure 23.4). Despite the lack of regular statistical data on the arrival of workers, this shows that the sites are steadily growing and expanding as new workers arrive.

**Figure 23.4.** Date of arrival at the sites in Mali and Burkina Faso



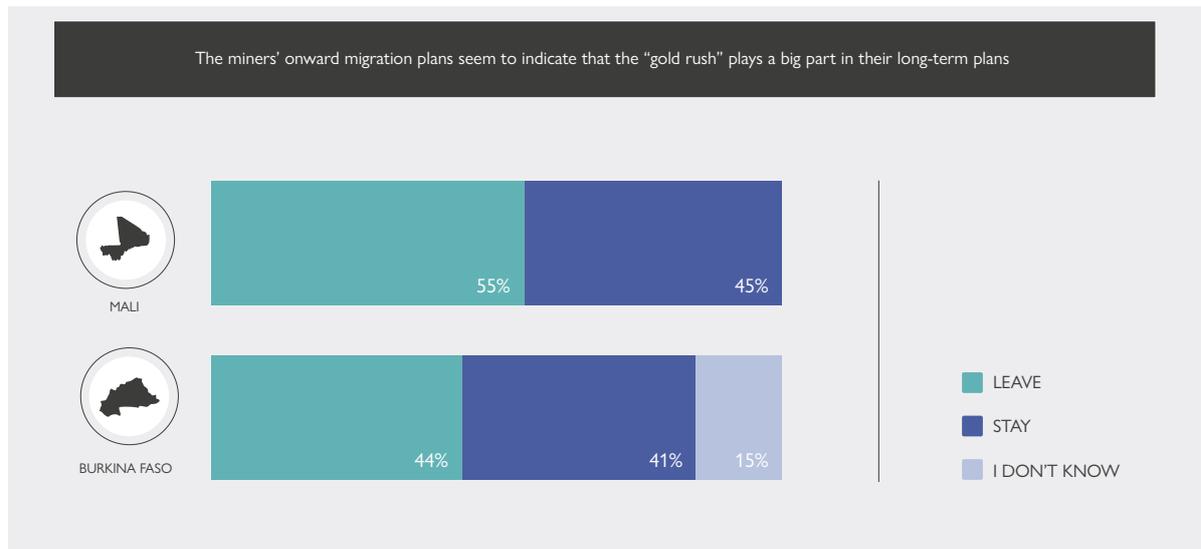
<sup>11</sup> According to the information collected by the IOM teams during interviews with key stakeholders in April 2019: interview with a site head near Galgouli site and with a local official at Warwéogo.

<sup>12</sup> This was confirmed in discussions with key stakeholders, who described the encounter between groups of Mossi migrants from Plateau-Central with groups of Lobi established in Sud-Ouest. Although the arrival of the Mossi workers originally sparked conflicts, relations between the two ethnic groups are now good, evidence of a shift in social and cultural norms over time.

### 23.3.3. Onward migration plans

The miners' onward migration plans seem to indicate that the "gold rush" plays a big part in their long-term plans: 41 per cent of miners in Burkina Faso and 45 per cent in Mali wanted to stay on the site (see Figure 23.5). Among those wishing to leave their current site, 88 per cent planned to return to their place of origin; only 4 per cent planned to migrate on to Europe; 4 per cent planned to work at other sites in West Africa. The hypothesis according to which the gold mining sites are transit points for migrants wishing to migrate internationally to Europe is therefore not borne out by the data collected in Mali and Burkina Faso. It is also invalidated by the wide gap in level of education between the migrant gold miners and migrants wishing to reach Europe through irregular channels, who tend to have much higher levels of education.<sup>13</sup>

**Figure 23.5.** Gold miners' onward migration plans, by country



Note: These maps are for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

In addition, many of the workers travel with their families to the sites: in Burkina Faso, 72 per cent of the miners surveyed had travelled to the sites accompanied by their next of kin.

Furthermore, an average of nearly 90 per cent of the miners in both countries said that they did not use social networks to obtain information on their place of destination, how the site worked and how much it produced, or whether there were any jobs to be had; they preferred to communicate by word of mouth, even about sites that were very distant from their places of origin. This appears to show yet again that the migration flows related to "gold rushes" are different from those to Europe, which rely heavily on new technologies, in particular digital technology and modern means of communication (Diminescu, 2008). The profile of migrant miners is different from that of irregular migrants headed for Europe, who do not equip and prepare themselves in the same way for their migration plan.

<sup>13</sup> According to UNDP (2019), migrants from sub-Saharan Africa taking the Central Mediterranean Route to Northern Europe generally have a relatively high level of education.

## 23.4. Migration to gold mining sites: socioeconomic development opportunities and challenges

### 23.4.1. “Gold rushes” as development factors

In the group discussions in both countries covered by the study, the local authorities all confirmed that migration to the gold mining sites contributed strongly to the development of the migrants’ host localities. In rural areas, in both Mali and Burkina Faso, the inhabitants observed an increase in services, trade and infrastructure at and around the sites, thanks to artisanal mining and the arrival of numerous artisanal miners.

Artisanal mining also represents the possibility to live in a larger dwelling, to help one’s family in the host community<sup>14</sup> and the community of origin,<sup>15</sup> and to have access to better nutrition, showing that the development impact is felt at both individual and family levels. Some sites had even recently installed service stations, to meet the growing demand for fuel from miners and those selling the gold, who travel by motorcycle.

Gold-related migration creates waves of “secondary migrants”, in which various categories of workers – restaurateurs, drivers, vendors or shop owners – migrate to the gold mines to support the workers there. A genuine network of businesses springs up to meet the miners’ new and growing demands. Hairdresser salons, outdoor cinemas and shops of all kind are built around the sites, generating a true “economic boom”. “Gold rushes” are indeed factors of development, increasing the services available and drawing new businesses and services to areas left behind by urban development.

In Mali and Burkina Faso, artisanal mining is also directly related to higher individual incomes. Despite the difficult working conditions and competition, 66 per cent of the miners surveyed in Mali and 80 per cent in Burkina Faso confirmed that their living conditions had improved since their arrival at the site. What is more, 66 per cent of the miners in Mali and 84 per cent in Burkina Faso also confirmed that they had sent money to their families and relatives in their communities of origin, at more or less regular intervals.<sup>16</sup>

### 23.4.2. Migration to gold mining sites as a means of enabling women to be independent

Migration to the gold mining sites is also seen by some West African women as a strategy to gain independence. Among the Lobi people in Burkina Faso’s Sud-Ouest Region, a territory situated between Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire, work in the gold mines was historically reserved for women (Jeune Afrique, 2005), the Lobi culture being different from that of other ethnic groups, in that women play an important role in society.

The group discussions with women miners at the Galgouli site revealed that, for women, “gold rushes” were the driving force leading to greater independence and transforming their role and social status in the household in a way that was beneficial for both the families themselves and the community as a whole.<sup>17</sup> Several women said that they had decided on and organized their journeys alone, following the death of a spouse, a break-up or marital strife. Those were not the only reasons for the women’s internal migration; rather, when compounded by the employment crisis, the drop in agricultural revenues and economic instability, they were a triggering factor in some cases. In the face of a worsening economic situation, artisanal gold mining, even if it meant uprooting the family to settle in a place several hundred kilometres distant, in a different cultural and linguistic context, appeared to be the most accessible solution for these women, widows or mothers in search of independence and economic stability. In Burkina Faso, nearly 74 per cent of the women surveyed individually had no occupational training. This makes the work at the artisanal gold mines all the more attractive, as they need no prior training.

<sup>14</sup> For example, according to the study’s findings, nearly 72 per cent of the workers surveyed in Burkina Faso lived with their families in the host locality.

<sup>15</sup> Some of the workers were able to send money back home.

<sup>16</sup> Of the 66 per cent in Mali, 49 per cent managed to send money every month to their families. In Burkina Faso, according to the sample results, among the miners managing to support their families in their communities of origin, roughly 30 per cent sent less than CFAF 50,000 and 23 per cent between CFAF 50,000 and 100,000. In addition, over 32 per cent of the workers concerned sent money every month, and 22 per cent every three months.

<sup>17</sup> Nanquette, Chapter 19 of this volume, provides information on the vulnerability of Ivorian female returnees.

### 23.4.3. Challenges related to the delicate balance between mining and development

The positive effects notwithstanding, the interviews also brought to light a different reality, highlighting the limits to local development within gold mining societies and the weak points of a sector expanding too quickly, at the cost of its players (Sangaré et al., 2016). The intensification of gold mining in the various regions studied has spawned genuine social problems in the host communities, in particular lower school attendance in villages near the sites.

Mining operations – a key economic sector in Mali and Burkina Faso, and a particularly important activity in border regions– is at the crux of conflicts at various levels (OECD, 2018). According to interviews with local authorities, they sometimes lead to deteriorations in social relations between the migrants and their host communities. Indeed, tensions can emerge between migrants and the local population following disagreement over ownership of the land and the gold that will be extracted from it. In addition, gold prospecting in these regions has also been tied to human rights violations such as forced prostitution and child labour. Several women sex workers encountered near the sites in Mali and Burkina Faso spoke of living and working conditions akin to human trafficking.<sup>18</sup>

The steady arrival of new miners and the lack of infrastructure to receive them result in difficult and dangerous living and working conditions for migrants. Living far from an urban centre, in areas where the State presence is negligible, the migrants generally benefit from no measures of workplace protection. This is even more problematic for pregnant women and young children of miners, who are equally active in the mines.<sup>19</sup> In the event of illness or accident, it is difficult to obtain treatment or care, given the distance to hospital and the state of the roads. The hostile and precarious living conditions nevertheless do not stop the miners from settling at the sites.

## 23.5. Conclusions and recommendations

Migration for gold in the central Sahel comes in various forms, and the impact on development in the areas concerned is mixed. In Mali and Burkina Faso, artisanal gold mining appears to act as a catalyst in places where young people face high unemployment rates, have few prospects, and find it difficult to go back to the land because of successive agricultural crises. The steady arrival of new migrants to the sites brings to light gaps in the systems of protection in place, it being difficult for the miners to obtain access to health care and basic infrastructure.

Suitable protection mechanisms and health-care facilities should be established to meet the needs of artisanal gold miners at cross-border mining sites, and the local authorities should be invited to pay closer attention to miners' rights and needs.

In addition, given the growing situation of insecurity in the Sahel (International Crisis Group, 2019), notably in northern Burkina Faso, it is important to reinforce the State's presence at artisanal mining sites and to promote cooperation with the traditional authorities on the management and organization of the sites and migrant flows.

<sup>18</sup> Although the study conditions preclude drawing conclusions, the discussions with sex workers – notably from the Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso – point to the existence of trafficking networks within West and Central Africa.

<sup>19</sup> According to field observations, some children work on the sites with their parents, who are also miners. Others seem to have migrated independently, in order to join an uncle, a parent or another relative. Child labour is prohibited in the gold mines of Mali and Burkina Faso, and the authorities at the sites were reluctant to talk about the issue; it was therefore very hard to obtain information on the problem of child labour during the study.

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## 24.

## Labour migration dynamics in Libya

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DECENT WORK

**Abstract:** Libya has historically been a major destination country for foreign workers from across sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia, who have significantly contributed to the local economy. This analysis provides an overview of the evidence regarding the integration of migrants in the Libyan labour market and its impact on economic outcomes for migrant and Libyan communities alike. It does so by drawing on preliminary findings from dedicated labour market studies on migrant workers and employers conducted by IOM in 2019–2020. This chapter includes recommendations that have emerged from these studies to increase labour market participation of migrants and Libyans alike, and to contribute to overall socioeconomic and cultural growth. It concludes with some of the latest policy developments in the country, and a discussion of the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including on the labour market.

## 24.1 Introduction

Libya's geographic position makes it a key location for both transit migration along the Central Mediterranean Route as well as labour migration to Libya. The country shares more than 4,000 km of borders with six countries – Egypt, the Sudan, Chad, the Niger, Algeria and Tunisia – altogether counting a population of roughly 200 million, of whom just over 6 million are in Libya, according to the last census, in 2006.

Libya has historically been a major destination country for foreign workers from across sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Notably, almost two thirds (64%) of migrants in Libya are from Libya's neighbouring countries, particularly Chad, Egypt, the Niger and the Sudan. They contribute to the local economy through important intraregional labour migration movements. In fact, migrants in Libya have diverse experiences, aspirations, migration histories and livelihood situations. Most of them are driven by labour migration opportunities. Some intend to transit to Europe, a journey that involves crossing the Mediterranean Sea and which in recent years has attracted much political and media attention. However, onward irregular migration to Europe is one small piece of a larger story of migration to Libya.

While arrivals of migrants to Europe through the Central Mediterranean Route have dropped – from 119,369 in 2017 to 23,370 and 11,471 in 2018 and 2019, respectively –

<sup>1</sup> IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre.

<sup>2</sup> IOM Libya.

<sup>3</sup> IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, Libya.

large numbers of international migrants remain in Libya, with the total migrant population currently estimated by IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) at over 653,800 (IOM, 2020a), both irregular and regular. Moreover, migrants continue to arrive in Libya, as the country still attracts large numbers of migrants seeking economic opportunities. Against this backdrop, understanding labour migration dynamics in Libya through dedicated data collection and research emerges as critical to informing comprehensive migration management and policy.

This analysis provides an overview of current evidence regarding the integration of migrants in the Libyan labour market and its impact on economic outcomes for migrant and host communities alike. It does so by drawing on preliminary findings from dedicated labour market studies on migrant workers and employers conducted by IOM in 2019–2020. This chapter includes recommendations that have emerged from these studies to increase labour market participation of migrants and Libyans alike, and to contribute to overall socioeconomic and cultural growth. It concludes with some of the latest policy developments in the country, and a discussion of the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including on the labour market.

## 24.2. Background on labour migration to Libya: trends and policy developments over time

Historically, Libya has been a key destination for labour migration in North Africa. Prior to the revolution in 2011, there were an estimated 1.35 million–2.5 million migrant workers, predominantly in the health and construction sectors, services and, to a smaller extent,<sup>4</sup> also the agriculture and oil industries. The higher salaries compared with Libya's neighbouring countries played a key role in this context (ICMPD, 2010). The private sector was and still is modest, though it is growing. It accounts for only 5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) and about 14 per cent of employment (4% to 6% of employed workers, and about 8.6% of self-employed). It consists of a small number of formal private and foreign companies, mainly small and micro enterprises (a full 95% of private enterprises are small and micro-sized), and a larger number of informal activities. Informal enterprises are generally involved in labour-intensive small-scale activities, operating with limited capital and rudimentary equipment, and producing low-value products and services.

Although at least 796,915 of migrants were estimated to have left the country in 2011 (IOM, 2011), Libya's migrant population remains relatively large. More specifically, according to estimates by IOM Libya's DTM programme, there were at least 625,638 migrants in the country as of April 2020 (IOM, 2020b), from 40 different countries. The majority of migrants come from Libya's neighbouring countries – the Niger, Chad, Egypt and the Sudan – accounting for 64 per cent of Libya's migrant population. Migrants were recorded in different communities across the country, with a particular concentration in Libya's economic hubs along the Mediterranean coast and at transit points in the country's south (see Figure 24.1).<sup>5</sup>

Despite the ongoing conflict in parts of the country and the related economic challenges (Box 24.1), the higher salaries offered by Libyan employers compared with those offered in neighbouring countries, as well as the persistent demand for migrant labour in Libya's labour market, continue to make it an attractive destination for migrants. Flow Monitoring Surveys conducted by IOM DTM with over 13,000 migrants between January and August 2019 revealed that economic motives remain the primary driver of migration to Libya, with 84 per cent of surveyed migrants citing different economic reasons for migration to the country, such as limited employment opportunities and lower income levels in countries of origin (IOM, 2019). Similarly, among the migrant population present in Libya surveyed by IOM in 2019, the main reason encouraging respondents to stay was the possibility of finding employment in the country, enabling them to send remittances to their families. Most migrants in Libya are the main income earners of the recipient household. In most cases, migrants' households in the countries of origin heavily depend on remittances.

<sup>4</sup> These two sectors employ only 10 per cent of the Libyan labour force.

<sup>5</sup> During the reporting period (January–February 2020), DTM Libya's 41 flow monitoring points monitored migration flows at key transit points covering 15 municipalities in 10 regions (manatik) of Libya. Flow monitoring points are set up at key transit locations along major migration routes within Libya where migrants are observed arriving and departing. Given the high mobility of migrants within Libya, it is possible that, during the reporting period, a small proportion of migrants may have been counted at more than one flow monitoring points; therefore, the aggregated arrivals and departures should be broadly considered as indicative of the general mobility trends observed in the different parts of the country.

The Libyan labour market is now shaped by growing unemployment for nationals on one side, and substantial numbers of foreign migrant workers on the other side: a paradoxical situation arising from a combination of skills mismatch, public sector dominance of the labour market and distaste for manual labour among Libyans. The profile of labour migrants in Libya reflects such mixed nature of arrivals, resulting in a population with heterogeneous backgrounds, profiles and conditions of stay and employment in Libya, and in overlapping migrant categories and statuses, such as migrant workers (both regular and irregular), migrants in transit, asylum seekers, refugees, long-term migrants (both regular and irregular), smuggled migrants and potential victims of trafficking in person, and migrants in detention.



### Box 24.1. Economic fallout post-2011

The reduction in Libya's oil revenues that took place after the outbreak of the 2014 civil war has exacerbated the country's pre-existing budget deficit, which resulted in a profound liquidity crisis, still rife in the current context (Altai Consulting and Istishari, 2019). The crisis of confidence in the Libyan dinar led to an important currency depreciation, which strongly affected the country's economy. The crisis has both further reduced access to finance, and affected the value of imported inputs, therefore increasing the price of starting a business in the country. In addition, factors such as the continuous outbreak of violence and proliferation of armed groups, sporadic waves of displacement, a near breakdown of the rule of law, the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (see Box 24.2) contribute to a weakening of the economy and the Libyan currency, resulting in a worsening of the already strained situation for migrants in Libya. Despite these challenges, however, it is interesting to note that, among surveyed migrants who struggled to find employment in Libya, the most commonly cited barrier was "limited job availability" (50%), followed by "insufficient skills" (37%). The "unstable security situation" was cited only in third place (35%).

### Box 24.2. COVID-19 impact in Libya

The Libyan economy was further negatively impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, severely affecting migrant workers in Libya, particularly those relying on daily labour. Rapid assessments conducted by IOM Libya in April and May 2020 revealed that the economic slowdown, partially triggered by measures implemented to curb the spread of the virus, resulted in a decrease of available job opportunities for migrant workers across Libyan municipalities. Mobility restrictions and the related reduction in employment opportunities appear to have significantly exacerbated migrants' vulnerabilities.\* The detrimental impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global oil prices poses additional risks for Libya's economic model, where oil revenue constitutes the bulk of both government revenue and GDP. Declines in remittances sent by migrants in Libya are also expected due to COVID-19.

Apart from these economic ramifications, crowded accommodation arrangements, such as shared rooms for migrant workers, often pose severe challenges to performing social distancing, and limited health risk awareness is also of concern. Poor access to health care (where available) for migrants, including for victims of trafficking, may add to the adverse impact for this particularly vulnerable population group, as well as delayed access to justice and judicial remedies. Overcrowding in detention facilities undermines hygiene, health, safety and human dignity, and constitutes a serious obstacle to preventing, preparing for or effectively responding to COVID-19 (UNODC, WHO, UNAIDS and OHCHR, 2020). Lastly, there is a potentially higher risk of xenophobia and manifestation of intolerance towards migrants, who may mistakenly be perceived as responsible for spreading the virus.

\*IOM, 2020c. This covers employment, rapid market assessment and public services affected by mobility restrictions.



Echoing the global fears of “a lost generation” facing permanent exclusion from labour markets as the world recovers from the pandemic, migrants, particularly young ones, risk being left behind in Libya, too. Also, conflict and existing tensions might spark social unrest, given the coincidence of a predominantly young population, large size of the informal economy and limited capacities of testing and tracing. Labour market outcomes could be particularly damaging and long term for all Libyan and migrant workers, who may have a harder time finding decent jobs, thus becoming more vulnerable (ILO, 2020).



## 24.3. Evolution of labour migration policies in Libya

Migration policies in Libya have played a decisive role in shaping migration trends and dynamics, attracting foreign labour to the country (IOM, 2012). These have evolved in line with domestic and foreign policy developments.

The main legal framework governing the entry of foreign nationals was adopted in the 1980s. Law No. 6 of 1987 outlines the general conditions for entry and stay in Libya applicable to foreigners. Law No. 10 of 1989 allowed nationals from Arab countries to enter Libya and reside in country, enjoying the same rights as Libyan citizens. Nationals from Arab countries were also encouraged to stay, benefitting from advantageous conditions compared with other migrant workers in the labour market, including the enjoyment of some political rights, such as participating in the General People’s Committees and holding high administrative and political roles (ICMPD, 2020).

Some important changes to the legal framework were introduced in the 1990s. Prior to the United Nations air and arms embargo (1992–2000), Gaddafi’s policy of encouraging nationals coming from Arab countries had enabled Libya to attract large numbers of Arab workers filling employment gaps (Maghur, 2010). However, the perceived lack of support from Arab countries following the United Nations sanctions caused Tripoli to shift its foreign policy towards Africa. This involved ending visa requirements for nationals of sub-Saharan African countries and opening Libya’s border to migrant workers from East and West African countries such as Nigeria, the Sudan, Chad and Mali. This increase, however, also led to the further fragmentation of the Libyan labour market, as Libyans were unwilling to fill essential positions in areas such as construction and agriculture, despite calls to nationalize the workforce.

During the 2000s, the launch of Libya–European Union cooperation to combat irregular migration to Europe changed the situation. From the early 2000s, new laws and rules were introduced with the purpose of regulating the large number of undocumented migrants residing in Libya. These measures resulted from several agreements that Gaddafi made with European country governments with the aim of fighting terrorism, drug trafficking and irregular migration, also responding to the European Union agenda’s priority to secure its southern Mediterranean border. However, these measures led to large-scale rejections at the borders and forcible repatriations of undocumented migrants throughout the decade. In 2007, new visa requirements were imposed for all foreigners, with the exception of Arab country nationals, and their status became irregular overnight (Di Bartolomeo et al., 2011). This was also accompanied by a requirement to regularize the employment of foreign nationals, who also lost free access to health, education and other public services.

Based on IOM assessments conducted in Libya in 2019, migrant workers are currently allowed to obtain work permits if they have employment contracts in Libya, according to national rules and regulations. The employers must be legally registered, and the contract must be in accordance with the terms and procedures established by national labour law. However, the procedures are not always strictly or literally applied by the authorities, and implementation differs across municipalities.

In October 2019, Libyan authorities, including the Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation, started the negotiations with the Government of the Niger to conclude a bilateral labour agreement to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration between the two countries. Also, in October 2019, IOM facilitated a regional dialogue to support the Libyan authorities to engage government counterparts from 14 countries on potential avenues that could facilitate safe, orderly and regular labour migration to Libya.

## 24.4. Labour market assessments conducted by IOM Libya in 2019 and 2020

Several studies were conducted by IOM Libya in 2019 and 2020 to assess the Libyan labour market (see Table 1). Baseline and pre-existing literature on the Libyan labour market published before IOM started to work on the more recent and up-to-date assessment tend to focus on small- and medium-sized enterprises and the mapping of the private sector. Moreover, most of the publications and studies previously published were conducted from 2014 to 2016, and might not adequately reflect the current labour market situation in Libya. Besides being outdated, literature is mainly focused on southern Libya.

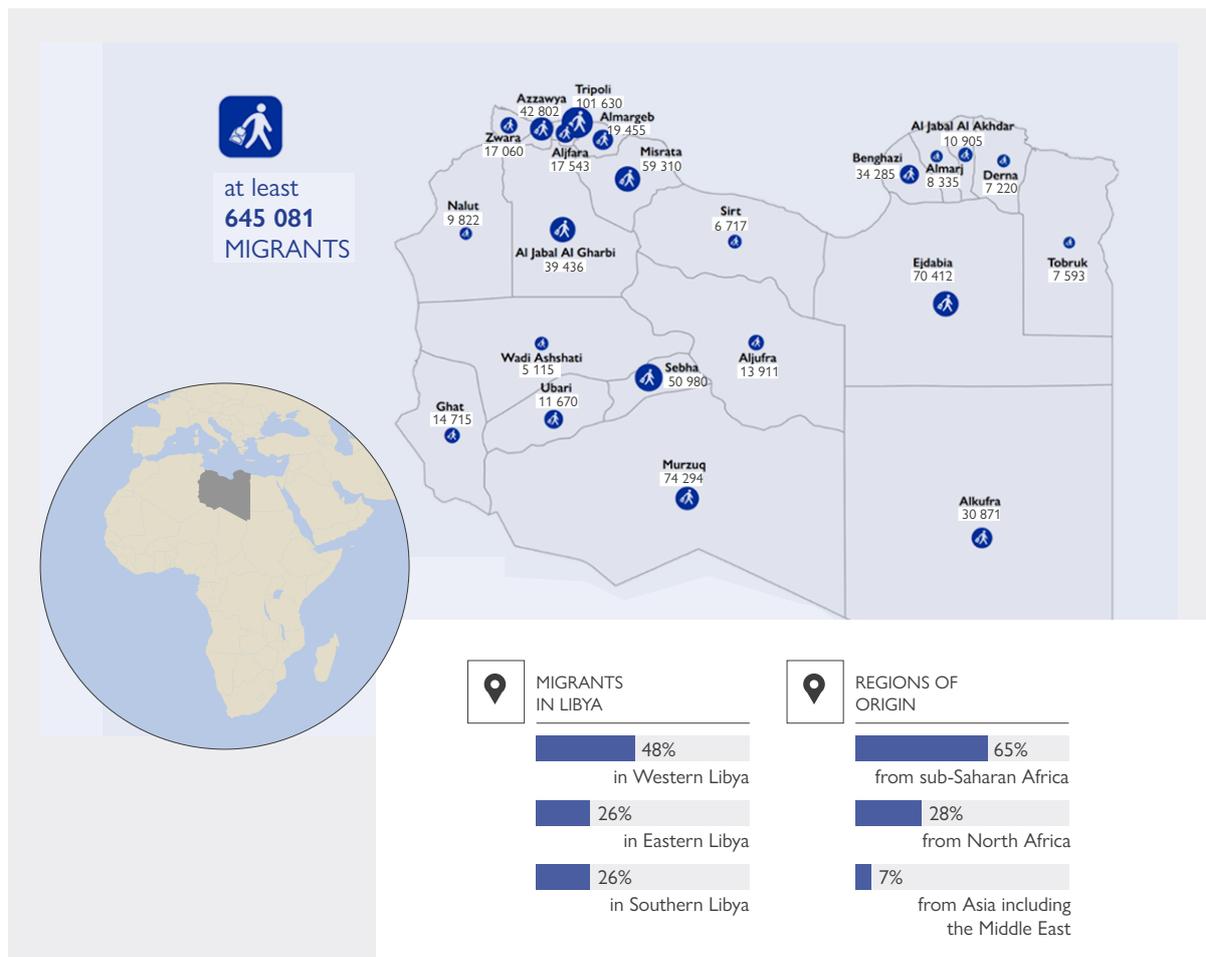
The studies conducted so far by IOM point to three main trends affecting the country's labour market: a bloated public sector (still employing 70% of salaried employees), an anaemic private sector, and a poorly planned education system. These trends, coupled with a hostile regulatory and financial environment, have led to discrepancies in expectations regarding employment, and to the importance of the informal private sector. The following section presents the main findings and recommendations emerging from IOM assessments conducted so far.

**Table 23.1.** Overview of labour market studies and assessments conducted in Libya

Title	Year of publication	Data collection	Partners	Location
<b>National</b>				
Libya post-2011: Analysing the impact of armed conflict on long-term migrants in Libya	2020	2019	IOM, Columbia University	Libya
Assessment on Existing Migrants Registration Mechanisms by Selected Libyan Municipalities	2019	2019	IOM	Libya
Assessment of Libyan Labour (Employment) Law and Training Manual on Migration Management	2020	-	IOM	Libya
Labour Market Information System for Libya	2020	2020	IOM, Voluntas Advisory	Libya
Labour Market Assessment	2020	2020	IOM, Key Aid Consultancy	Libya
<b>Subnational</b>				
Rapid Labour Market and Skills Assessment	2019	2019	IOM, Altai Consulting	Ubari, Qatrun
Assessment of economic opportunities for host and migrant communities in the agriculture and livestock sector in Libya	2019	2019	IOM, DIWAN Market Research, Voluntas Advisory	Kufra, Sebha, Qatrun
Labour Market Assessment in Benghazi and Kufrah	2019	2019	IOM, Altai Consulting	Benghazi and Kufra
Mapping Labour Skills of Migrants in Misrata: Challenges and Strategies for Integration into the Libyan Market	2020	2019–2020	IOM, Georgetown University	Libya
Study on the Perceptions of Host Communities, in Libya, towards Migrants	2020	2020	Diwan Market Research	Benghazi (and Tripoli)

First, results indicate that the labour market may have remained sufficiently large to absorb migrant labour. The majority of respondents in these studies reported that they were working and had faced no major challenges in finding employment in Libya. Moreover, migration to Libya was found overall to have a net positive impact on the employment status of migrants interviewed, as 76 per cent of migrants reported being employed in Libya at the time of the interview, while only 52 per cent said they were employed in their countries of origin before moving to Libya (IOM, 2019). The majority reported having sent remittances back home since they arrived in Libya. On average, migrants reported to have sent back around USD 2,500 per person since their arrival in the country. Long-term migrants who send remittances report being the main breadwinners of their recipient households.

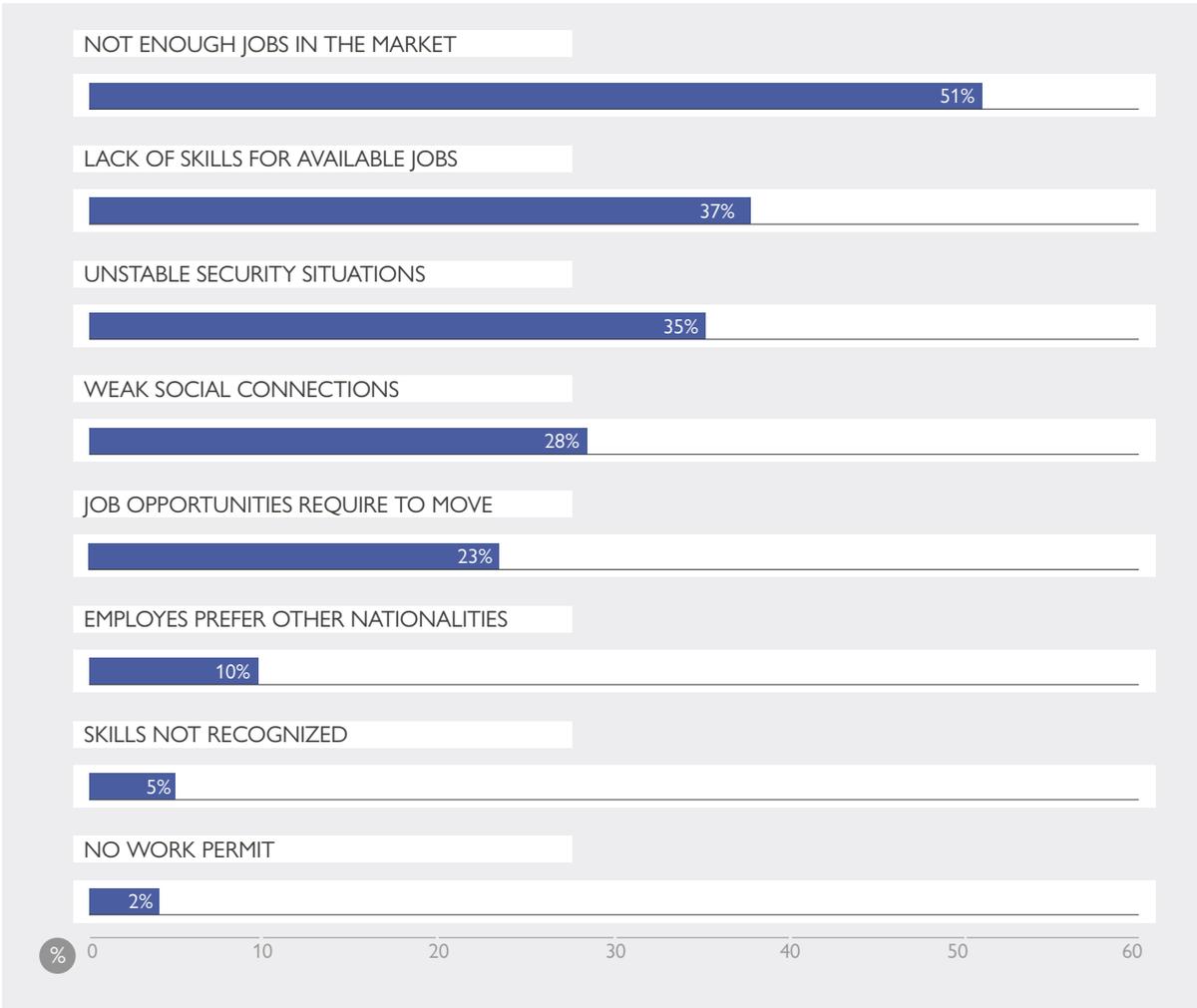
**Figure 24.1.** Migrants identified in Libya, by region



Note: These maps are for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

Furthermore, the results show a strong correlation between finding employment and length of stay in Libya. Eighty per cent of migrants who have been in Libya for more than a year report currently being involved in income-generating activities, compared with 50 per cent of those who have been in Libya between one and three months and 35 per cent of those present in the country for less than two weeks (see Tassilo, Cottone and Rossi, Chapter 5 of this volume). Migrants reported being primarily employed in the construction, water supply, electricity and gas sectors, followed by agriculture, pastoralism, the food industry field and manual craft. Among surveyed migrants who struggled to find employment, limited job availability was the most commonly cited barrier, followed by insufficient skills for the jobs available (Figure 24.2).

Figure 24.2. Obstacles to finding employment



Source: IOM, 2020d.

Furthermore, studies have pointed out that migrants are not perceived by the local community as competing with Libyan citizens in the job market, as they are often hired for jobs that Libyans are generally not willing to do.<sup>6</sup> For example, the deteriorating economic situation post-2011 has resulted in the proliferation of entrepreneurial efforts at the local level, ranging from construction activities to smaller-scale farming and light industries. These kinds of enterprises all depend to a significant degree on migrant labour (Clingendael Institute, 2019). Moreover, migrants often represent a source of income for the local community, which makes a profit from providing services to them (IOM Libya and Altai Consulting and Istishari, 2019). As noted in a recent study on migration governance in Libya: “From an economic point of view, migrants have historically contributed substantially to the Libyan economy and attempts to improve their position would be likely to result in economic gains for migrant and host communities alike” (Clingendael Institute, 2019). In short, Libya continues to be a country of destination for migrant workers, despite the many challenges the country is facing, and migrants continue to contribute to filling gaps in the Libyan labour market.

<sup>6</sup> According to one Libyan researcher, who formerly owned a construction business in the East of Libya, finding Libyans willing to work in construction was difficult, even at a time when private sector construction jobs paid higher wages than public sector employment. He stated that employing Libyans was doubly difficult because many lacked the technical skills needed and the desire to perform jobs requiring physical labour.

## 24.5. Preliminary recommendations for labour market interventions based on IOM's findings

### 24.5.1. Invest in key sectors with potential for migrant workers

Migrants interviewed across the studies listed were very likely to occupy positions ranging from waiting tables or washing cars to transportation of goods, construction, mechanical repair and agriculture. Based on an analysis of firms' perspectives, a study found that agriculture, infrastructure and manufacturing are some of the sectors that are expected to create the most jobs in the short-to-medium term. The strength of the construction sector may also be reflected in the preferences of some of the study participants, the most highly educated of whom often cited engineering and construction companies as their main career targets. Overall, the studies suggested that there is a potential to target the agriculture, local manufacture and construction sectors as potential sources for further employment opportunities for the migrant population.

The construction sector has traditionally faced considerable problems, including the lack of access to capital and the shortages in skills and equipment. This could partly be explained by the disconnect between Libyan youth's most desired jobs and aspirations, and local demand, which creates challenges for employers. Farmers, for example, find it difficult to obtain the workforce required for production, mainly due to the need for technical expertise and the unwillingness among Libyans to engage in physical labour. Today, employment in industry (largely the oil sector) and agriculture accounts for only 10 per cent of the labour force, representing only 20 per cent of the level seen nearly 30 years ago. An analysis of challenges, opportunities and needs in the agriculture and livestock sectors showed that the agriculture sector contributes approximately 3 per cent to Libya's GDP, much less than in the other countries in North Africa. The agriculture sector is largely composed of small-scale farms with only a limited number of employees. More investments in this sector would increase employment opportunities for migrants and contribute to development in Libya, as well as improved incomes for migrants and families in countries of origin. Understanding how these sectors could grow and which investments in human resources and capital are needed for that to happen is key.

### 24.5.2. Improve the business environment to unlock the economic activity potential of small enterprises

Migrants cited the relative dynamism of some private sector companies, typically in the water bottling or information technology sectors, and the importance of smaller businesses operating in the area of services, as important sectors for upholding a relatively vibrant labour market. Supporting microenterprises should also be prioritized to minimize informality. When asked which type of businesses had traditionally been successful, respondents cited small businesses (clothing shops), the food services industry (café, restaurants, home-based catering businesses and similar), and the automotive sector (mechanics workshops, importing cars or auto parts and similar enterprises).

At the individual level, the need to have a strong personal network and the lack of technical and vocational skills (generally related to specific work fields, such as culinary skills or auto mechanics) were cited as a barrier to employment. The latter accounts for the interviewees' upholding the importance of vocational training programmes to support livelihoods in the area (most felt that technical and artisanal hard skills were more important than education for employment in the private sector).

Moreover, some cultural and social barriers proved to make it more difficult for migrants and women to access some types of jobs. The lack of finance and the low access to imported goods also continue to constitute impediments to the launching and development of small enterprises. The difficulty of accessing finance, which is the main obstacle to starting or expanding a business, affects migrants to a higher extent than it does Libyans. All individuals interviewed in one survey had either relied on their personal earnings or on loans from friends and family to establish their businesses. None of them had resorted to a bank, a microfinance institution or a private lender.

### 24.5.3. Increase the competitiveness of the private sector

The public sector is perceived as very attractive for young Libyan workers.<sup>7</sup> Data collected from interviews revealed that the government sector has represented a steady source of employment in recent years, especially for women, as some social considerations and traditions tend to restrict their ability to work in other fields. Overall, the public sector employs up to 70 per cent of the Libyan workforce, or 85 per cent of the active Libyan workforce, a high rate even by regional standards. The rate for women is even higher (93%). The reliance on public sector jobs varies regionally, however, with access to public sector employment opportunities being limited in some regions (Altai Consulting and Istishari, 2019). Despite the crisis and the difficulty for public sector employees to withdraw their salaries from banks for long periods due to the liquidity crisis, the general trend is that fresh graduates still prefer public sector employment.

Meanwhile, Libyan jobseekers cite a lack of employees' rights, low salaries in some fields and a lack of social security mechanisms in comparison with the public sector among the reasons why they do not seek jobs in the private sector. One key policy to increase the relative attractiveness of private sector jobs would therefore be to reduce the dichotomy between the public and private sectors by streamlining working conditions between the sectors and offering comparable benefits for both sectors. To this end, policymakers should focus on how to support local enterprises to establish robust safety nets, perceived as fair and equitable by both owners of such enterprises and workers in search of opportunities in the private sector, with a view to promoting the development of private economic initiatives. Another focus could be the promotion of public–private partnerships as key reform elements. Furthermore, it has been suggested that a dynamic private sector cannot be created without a comprehensive reform of the current public administration system.

### 24.5.4. Invest in quality education and training that is relevant for the Libyan labour market

Official statistics indicate a large increase in the number of higher education institutions in Libya since independence. But the evidence in the literature suggests that this increase has considerably exceeded the actual needs and demands of the country. Moreover, Libya has repeatedly been ranked among the poorest performing countries in the world when it comes to quality of public schools, quality of the education system, and availability of trained scientists and engineers. Bilateral agreements and targeted programmes for scholarships and overseas training could be an option to turn Libya's education sector into a productive asset for the country.

When asked about the main reasons why it was difficult to find employment, “insufficient skills” was the second most reported obstacle raised by surveyed migrants, potentially indicating a mismatch between the migrants' skillset and the demand in the Libyan labour market. Highly educated Libyans might lack practice in their field of study, making launching a profitable business riskier. Some studies suggested that migrants would benefit from Arabic language courses, as learning the language would facilitate their relations and interactions with Libyans, especially in the service industry. It was also highlighted that it would be important to invest in trainings to develop agricultural skills to increase productivity in that sector.

<sup>7</sup> Based on 40 in-depth interviews conducted in Kufra with youth and migrant respondents – including 15 women – to obtain a deeper social insight into their experience with seeking employment or starting their own businesses, three trends affecting formal activities were highlighted: (a) the prevalence of the public sector, which is perceived as very attractive for young workers; (b) the relative dynamism of some private sector companies, typically in the water bottling or information technology sectors; and (c) the importance of smaller businesses operating in the area of services.

### 24.5.5. Conduct analysis on how to improve the legal framework governing migrants' access to work

The fragmented legislative framework poses a further challenge, as many laws issued in the 1970s and 1980s have become outdated and irrelevant but are still in force. Studies have suggested that a full review of Libya's labour laws, labour rights and labour organizations should be performed to provide a better overview and identify needs and gaps. Other factors influencing the labour market are the weakness of labour unions and the absence of laws regulating the relationship between workers and employers, the need for clear strategies to develop the labour market and the instability of labour market institutions.

Since foreigners continue to be absorbed into Libya's labour markets, more knowledge and actions are needed to fight against exploitative situations.<sup>8</sup> Migrants are potentially more vulnerable than host communities to the violation of their human rights and to exploitation. Exploitative situations might arise whenever no official documents, written contracts or regular payments for their work are ensured. Other studies have noted that there is insufficient formal migration governance efforts – both at the national and the local level in Libya – that seek to improve the situation of migrants in Libya with the final objective of their normalization or integration in society (as opposed to detention and deportation). Given poor governance in this area, technical support for local governments in Libya without improved legislative and governance structures would not automatically result in improvements in migrants' situations (Clingendael Institute, 2019).

As pointed out, Libyan authorities both at local and central levels took some actions to counter the risks of irregular migration and possibly create regular pathways. These include informal registration mechanisms at the municipal level and the negotiations at the central level with the Government of the Niger to establish a bilateral labour agreement to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration between the two countries. However, more knowledge and actions are needed to fight against exploitative situations.

### 24.5.6. Future data collection and analysis

To provide further guidance and develop the broad set of recommendations highlighted in this chapter, a few suggestions for future research and data collection have been identified:

- Research should begin by complementing existing labour market assessments in Libya, both in terms of geographies and sectors. Our analysis suggested that most existing studies have focused on small and medium-sized enterprises and the mapping of the private sector, and that these have been mainly concentrated in the country's south. However, given the relatively high concentration of migrants in the northern shores of the country, along with the fact that these are areas with high concentrations of smuggling activities, assessments should focus on these areas as well. Complementary research should also include the specific challenges and opportunities of female migrant workers in Libya.
- Further understanding is needed of the potential of investments in competitive wage-earning opportunities among migrants and Libyan youth to undermine the attractiveness of the smuggling business and informal activities. For this, more data are needed on the profiles of smugglers and their incentives to engage in the business, as well as on their role in their respective communities, building on the existing but limited evidence currently available.

<sup>8</sup> To support stakeholders and the Libyan authorities, including the Ministry of Justice, in improving relevant existing policies and designing evidence-based ones, IOM started a Study on Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons in Libya and the Influence of Transnational Organized Groups with Connections to Intermediaries in the Major Countries of Origin, Transit and Destination of Migrants, which will be completed by the end of 2020.

## 24.6. Conclusions

Libya has always been a major destination country for foreign workers from sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. The vast majority of migrants in Libya come from neighbouring countries and make important contributions to both the local economy and to their countries of origin through remittances. In fact, migrants in Libya have diverse experiences, aspirations, migration histories and livelihood situations. Considering the decrease in arrivals through the Central Mediterranean Route to Europe, understanding labour migration dynamics in Libya through dedicated data collection and research emerges as a critical need to inform comprehensive, evidence-based migration management and policy, and enhance safe and regular migration to the country.

The analysis conducted in this chapter shows that there have been recent policy developments with the active engagement of Libyan authorities to explore possible options to register migrants in the country, counter exploitative situations and improve international – bilateral and regional – cooperation on migration.

The challenges that both migrants in Libya and government authorities have been facing over the past years in the context of the protracted conflict in Libya have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on migrant workers and host communities. More evidence and actions are needed to allow foreigners to participate actively in Libya's labour markets, and to support the Libyan authorities, including the Ministry of Justice, in improving existing labour migration policy frameworks for the benefit of all.

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Returning migrants receive vocational training.  
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# 25. | What are the future climate scenarios in North and West Africa?

Benjamin Sultan<sup>1</sup>



ADVERSE DRIVERS



VULNERABILITIES

**Abstract:** This contribution shows how North and West Africa are highly exposed to climate change and threatened by extreme heat, food and water shortages. These climatic factors, in combination with other political and socioeconomic factors, will add pressure in the future to African economies and livelihoods, and may affect migration flows, often internal and to urban areas, as already observed.

Evidence that the increase of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions has led to significant changes in climatic conditions at the global and the local level has surged over the past two decades. Even if climate change in the twenty-first century will be limited to a global mean temperature increase of 2°C, as targeted by the Paris Agreement, the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report (IPCC, 2018) highlights a stronger warming over land and a cascade of effects on natural and human systems, with substantial risks for impacts on ecosystems, health and agriculture. North and West Africa are among the world’s most exposed regions to negative climate change impacts, due to a combination of important variability of climate, strong reliance on climate-sensitive activities, such as rain-fed agriculture, and limited economic and institutional capacity to cope with, and adapt to, climate variability and change (Roudier et al., 2011). Furthermore, under its current climate, Africa is already facing recurrent food crises, heat extremes and water scarcity, which are exacerbated by rapid population growth and unstable political environments. Climate change will thus act as an additional stress in the future of African economies and livelihood, and may affect migration flows, often to urban areas, as already observed (Waha et al., 2017).

## 25.1. Future climate scenarios in North Africa

North Africa is often considered a “climate change hotspot” (Diffenbaugh and Giorgi, 2012). Observations and model simulations concur that hot days and heat extremes have become more frequent in recent decades, while the frequency of cool days and nights has decreased (Lelieveld et al., 2016). For example, the number of warm days and nights has approximately doubled since the 1970s. This warming is absent in

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simulations over a control period without radiative forcing, and thus it can be largely attributed to human-induced climate change. Observed trends of rainfall are less homogeneous and significant, with strong declines over the Mediterranean parts of Morocco and Algeria, and parts of Libya, and a slight increase over Mediterranean Egypt.

The most important and robust change in climate projections under increased greenhouse gas forcing is the considerable change in mean, variability and extreme of temperature and rainfall (Schilling et al., 2020). Climate model projections suggest that climate warming in North Africa is much stronger in summer, which is already hot and dry (Lelieveld et al., 2016). For instance, if global warming reaches +4°C, some regions, such as Algeria, could see their mean summer temperatures increase by +8°C by the end of the century (Waha et al., 2017). In addition, a strong increase of heatwaves is consistently projected across climate models and scenarios (Lelieveld et al., 2016). In future climate scenarios, a decrease of rainfall is projected for large parts of North Africa, as well as an increase in extreme drought conditions around the Mediterranean, North Africa and the Middle East (Waha et al., 2017). Although the drying of the region is consistent between models, there is little agreement between climate models in the changes of heavy rains (Schilling et al., 2020).

The projected precipitation decreases in North Africa will affect water resources, in particular surface water that supplies the largest dams and reservoirs in North Africa (Tramblay et al., 2018). This decline in water supply is likely to occur in a region where water demand is expected to increase due to population growth and economic development, indicating higher water stress in the future (Schilling et al., 2020). The decline of water availability threatens the agriculture sector, with serious implications for farmers' livelihoods, national economies, food security and poverty. Furthermore, heat stress is recognized as the major weather-related threat for public health, increasing cardiovascular and premature mortality (Lelieveld et al., 2016), and leading to important loss of labour productivity (Dunne et al., 2013). Heat stress imposes an upper limit to adaptation to the most severe warming scenarios (Sherwood and Huber, 2010). Indeed, in the future, the climate in large parts of the Middle East and North Africa could change so drastically, with frequent hot days with daily maximum temperatures above 50°C, that it could leave part of the region uninhabitable for some species, including humans (Lelieveld et al., 2016).

## 25.2. Future climate scenarios in West Africa

West Africa is nowadays experiencing rapid climate change, depicted through widespread warming, with increasing mean and extreme temperatures in spring and summer in the Sahel (Fontaine et al., 2013; Russo et al., 2016). This observed warming is attributed to human-induced climate change, which warmed up West Africa by approximately 1°C (Sultan et al., 2019). After the long and intense drought of the 1970s and 1980s, annual rainfall is increasing in several Sahelian countries, while interannual and intraseasonal variability is very high, with frequent dry spells and heavy rains (Panthou et al., 2014). While the role of anthropic activity on the observed evolution of annual rainfall is still debated, several studies attributed the increase in the frequency of heavy rains to global warming (Sultan et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2017).

As for North Africa, climate projections under increased greenhouse gas forcing shows a strong increase of mean, variability and extreme of temperatures. This warming is a robust feature of climate change projections, even if the amplitude, ranging between +3 and +7°C, depends on the model and the emission scenario (Monerie et al., 2012). More intense and frequent heatwaves are also expected (Vizy and Cook, 2012), and the heat stress induced by this warming is amplified by an increase of humidity over tropical and subtropical Africa, although temperature is not projected to increase as much as in North Africa (Zhao et al., 2015). The future projection in precipitation simulated by climate models in the twenty-first century is far less robust than temperature and not spatially homogeneous over the Sahel, with less rainfall expected in Western Sahel and more rainfall in Central and Eastern Sahel (Sultan and Gaetani, 2016). The occurrence of extreme heavy rains will increase over West Africa by 40–60 per cent, and the southern Sahel by 50–90 per cent during boreal summer (ibid.).

Even if the scale of the projected impacts is uncertain, a number of recent studies have estimated that increasing greenhouse gas emissions will likely reduce mean crop yields and increase year-to-year variability of crop production (Sultan and Gaetani, 2016; Sultan et al., 2014; Knox et al., 2012; Roudier et al., 2011) in several countries of West Africa that are already food-insecure today. West African river basins will likely face severe freshwater shortages, thus limiting their potential to increase agricultural productivity through the implementation of large-scale water storage and irrigation (Sylla et al., 2018). These negative impacts on agriculture and water resources are likely to occur even under the most optimistic scenarios where global warming does not exceed 1.5°C, let alone 2°C (Sylla et al., 2018; Faye et al., 2018a; Parkes et al., 2018b). As for countries in North Africa, extreme heat also poses a serious health risk that could be fatal for vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, and low-income people.

## 25.3. Conclusions

North and West Africa are highly exposed to climate change and threatened by extreme heat, food and water shortages. These climatic factors, in combination with other political and socioeconomic factors, could add pressure that may influence migration patterns and the occurrence of conflicts.<sup>2</sup> The countries in North and West Africa stand to gain considerable benefits from global mitigation efforts implied in the low-emissions scenarios. Such global efforts would significantly reduce the severity of the projected impacts, even if adaptation will remain essential to limit the damages caused by climate warming.

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<sup>2</sup> See Bendandi, Chapter 26 of this volume.

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## 26.

## Migration induced by climate change and environmental degradation in the Central Mediterranean Route

Barbara Bendandi<sup>1</sup>



ADVERSE DRIVERS



VULNERABILITIES

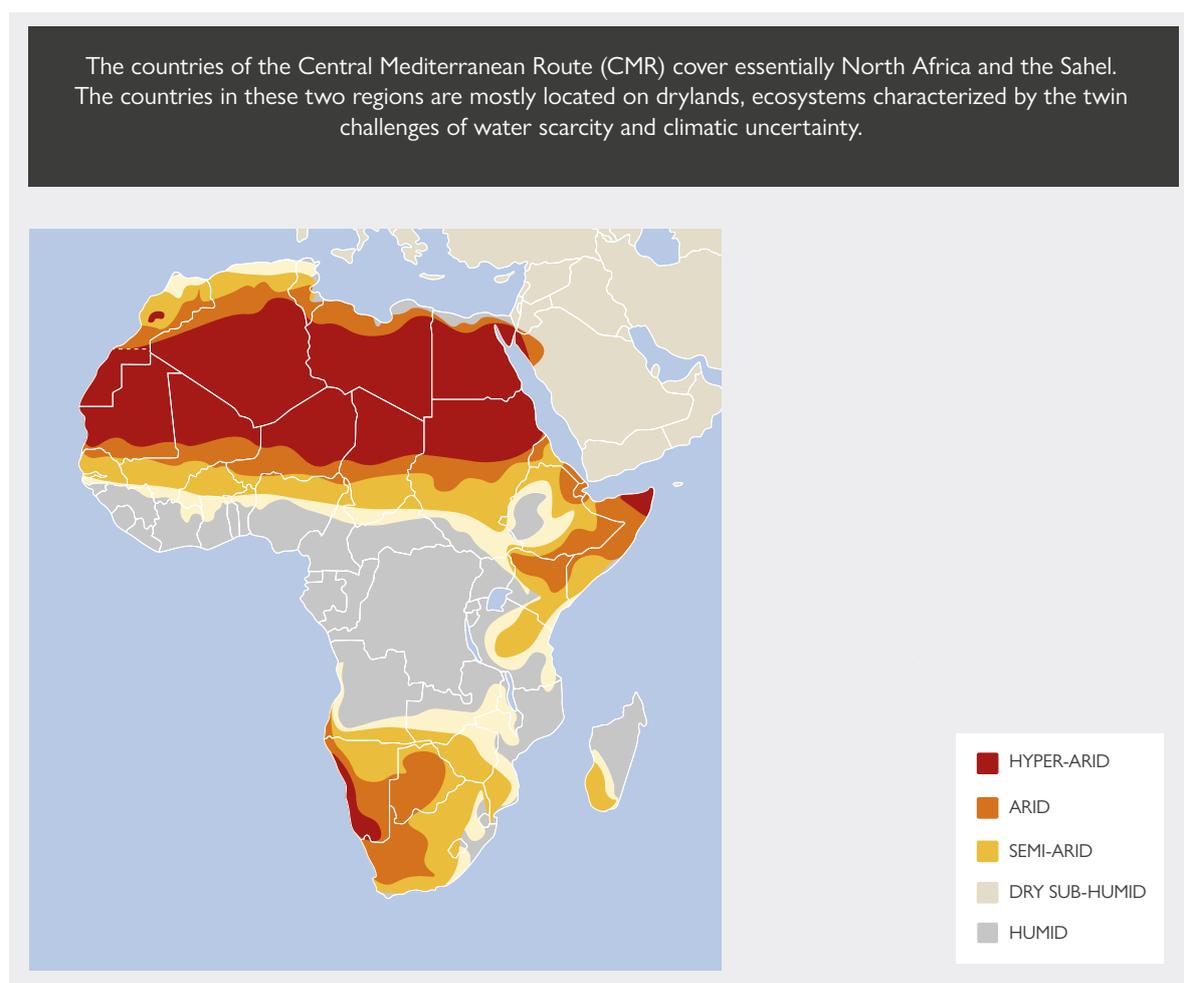
**Abstract:** This chapter investigates the role of climate and environmental factors in driving migration in countries on the Central Mediterranean Route. It uses a literature review to frame the complexity of these linkages, including how climate influences conflict and how conflict drives migration. Land degradation, land tenure insecurity and lack of rainfall are major drivers of environment-induced migration, and land fertility and productivity are key “pull” factors. These results indicate that the European narrative framing migration on the Central Mediterranean Route as primarily “economic” often overlooks key factors, such as climate and environmental drivers of migration. Understanding of the changing climate and environment should be expanded, and initiatives to create income opportunities through land and ecosystem restoration – such as the IOM Initiative on Sustainability, Stability and Security described in the chapter – should be supported.

### 26.1. Introduction: climate and environmental conditions in the Central Mediterranean Route

The countries of the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) essentially cover North Africa and the Sahel, a surface of 6,000 km from west to east and 3,000 km from north to south. The countries in these two regions are mostly located on drylands, ecosystems characterized by the twin challenges of water scarcity and climatic uncertainty. Whereas Sahelian countries are all among low-ranking countries on the United Nations Development Programme’s 2018 Human Development Index, the countries in North Africa score much higher. All the Sahelian countries, with the exception of Senegal, are listed as being of serious concern in the 2017 Global Hunger Index (Global Hunger Index, 2019).

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

**Figure 26.1.** Drylands in Africa



Source: IPCC, 2019:3–11.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

However, the Sahel has not always been known for its poverty. Until the twentieth century, the Sahel was self-sufficient in terms of food production, and even exported part of its harvest (Descroix et Lambert, 2018). Farmers and pastoralists have traditionally thrived in drylands by adapting lifestyle strategies, planting drought-resistant crops, and practicing water harvesting and selective irrigation to minimize the difficulties of living in conditions of distress (UNCCD, 2017).

Nomadic movements or occasional migrations have also been part of the livelihood strategies adopted by individuals or households living in drylands (Abdelali-Martini and Hamza, 2014). In West Africa, rural populations frequently use migration to cope with the seasonality of the climate (Barbier et al., 2009), sending young adults to the cities in the dry season to reduce the demands on household food supplies and in the hope they may earn money (Rain, 1999).

Part of the explanation of the misfortune falling in the Sahel has been the impact of climate change: the 25-year drought in the Sahel in 1968–1993 contributed to the collapse of rural societies (Descroix et Lambert, 2018), whose survival mechanisms have proven to be insufficient to cope with the impacts of the changing climate.

The countries of the CMR are particularly vulnerable to climate change because of their heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture, which contributes 40 per cent of the combined Sahelian gross domestic product (GDP) and employs more than 70 per cent of the labour force in the Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad (Sartori and Fattibene, 2019).

Temperatures in the region have been rising. Since 1950, weather stations in West Africa have measured an increase of around 1°C across the region (Morice et al., 2012), and in the Sahel the change is higher – 1.5 to 2°C. Monthly temperature records show that the warmest months of the year – April, May and June – have experienced even greater increases in temperature of up to 3°C (Guichard et al., 2015). According to Niang et al. (2014), average temperatures in the region are projected to increase between 1.5°C and 4°C by mid-century, compared with the period 1986–2005. The number of heatwave days each year is also projected to increase significantly by 2050, especially in the western Sahel (Vizy and Cook, 2012).

The implications of this warmer temperature for rainfall are less clear. A significant increase in climate variability is expected. This means more frequent droughts and heavy rainfall events (IPCC, 2014), disrupted planting and cropping seasons, and hence lower yields and falling household income. In Ghana, land degradation decreased agricultural incomes by USD 4.2 billion between 2006 and 2015, and poverty increased by 5.4 per cent in the same period, due to various factors, including land degradation. The annual cost of land degradation was estimated at about 0.5 per cent of GDP in Tunisia and Morocco (IPCC, 2019) and up to 20 per cent in Burkina Faso (UNCCD, 2017). Some studies found that climate change impacts on migration by reducing crop yields (Cai et al., 2016) and GDP per capita (Cattaneo and Peri, 2016).

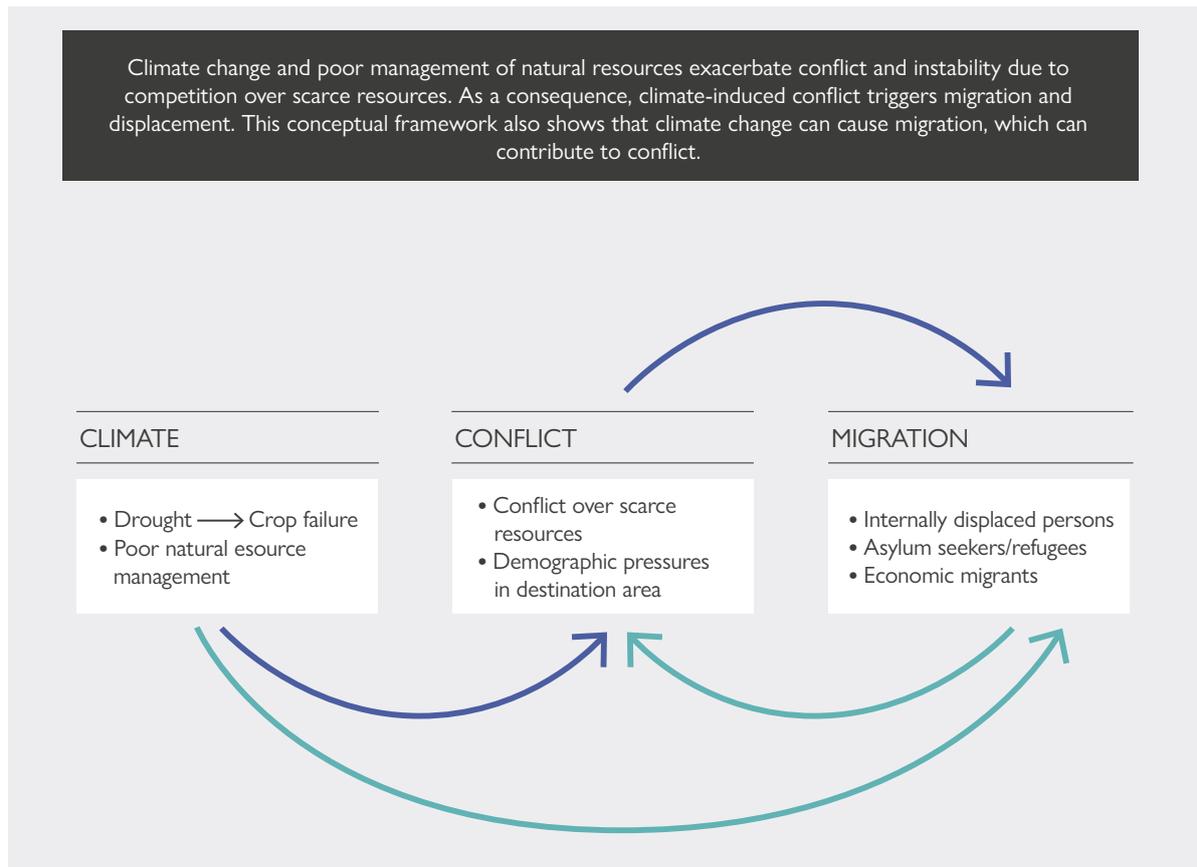
The idea that climate and environmental factors are drivers of migration has been accepted and incorporated in international documents and frameworks on migration, such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. However, the general lack of understanding of the complex relationships between environmental changes, conflict and migration remains a major challenge. This also includes the measures to address it. Yet, increased understanding is crucial, and action is needed. After a brief review of the literature on climate change, environment and migration (section 26.2) and a description of the main problems related to this phenomena in the countries of the CMR area (section 26.3), I propose land restoration as a measure to address the issue and describe how the African countries have taken action with an intergovernmental initiative (section 26.4).

## 26.2. Climate change, environment and migration: methods and challenges

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2014), climate change and variability are expected to aggravate poverty, food insecurity, inequalities, violence and conflicts. The interplay between climate, conflict and migration is complex and the scientific literature on this is still in its infancy, and provides mixed results. On one side, Beine and Parsons (2015) included violence and climate change variables in their model on migration and found that the increase in the incidence of violence corresponds with higher migration flows. Reuveny (2007) analysed 38 cases since the 1930s in which environmental changes triggered mass migration, and concluded that 19 of them resulted in some form of conflicts due to competition over scarce resources.

While it was relatively easy to find evidence that migration is influenced by conflict, finding evidence that climate change and environmental pressure induce migration through conflict was a difficult task (Abel et al., 2019). Based on the literature on the relationships between climate and conflict, as well as between conflict and migration, Abel et al. (2019) designed a framework (Figure 26.2) that shows the interplay of conflict and climate change on migration.

**Figure 26.2.** Conceptual model of climate, conflict and migration



Source: Abel et al., 2019.

Figure 26.2 describes how climate change and poor management of natural resources exacerbate conflict and instability due to competition over scarce resources. As a consequence, climate-induced conflict can trigger migration and displacement. This conceptual framework also shows that climate change can cause migration, and both can contribute to conflict. For Abel et al. (2019), it is crucial to analyse the causality structure of the relationship between climate, conflict and migration in two steps: by first looking at how climate influences conflict and then at how conflict drives migration.

While describing their conceptual model, Abel et al. (2019) also warn about the challenges encountered in the literature on climate change/environment and migration. In particular, they underline that most of the macrolevel studies use linear models where the drivers of migration (such as climate, political factors, economic conditions and conflict) are assessed simultaneously. Then, the specific impact of climate change on migration is isolated, often using multivariate models (Piguet, 2010).

A key challenge for measuring climate and environmentally induced migration is the general lack of empirical data (Gemenne, 2011). Climate change science and research on migration are often difficult to compare, due to scalar mismatches (aggregate relationships are a focus of empirical migration findings, as opposed to local, small-area climate predictions), temporal mismatches (migration models tend to be static, whereas climate models tend to be dynamic), and treatment of forecasting (probabilistic models are rare in migration research, but common in climatologic research), according to Raleigh et al. (2008). A common research method to identify possible environmental “signals” in migration patterns is to combine environmental datasets with existing census data comparing the timing of changes in environmental conditions with the timing of migration movements of individuals and households (Fussell et al., 2014).

Other concerns relate to the framing of the research. For example, Gemenne (2011) highlights that the importance assumed by climate change on the international agenda has overshadowed the research on other types of environmental drivers. As a result, many studies assume that what holds true for migration driven by climate change also applies to other environmental drivers. Furthermore, the bulk of the literature on the topic focuses on three main aspects: the weight of environmental factors in the migration decision, the number of people who could be displaced, and the legal and humanitarian problems posed by these new flows of migrants (Gemenne, 2013).

Finally, projections are also based on problematic assumptions, as most of them just consider the numbers of people who would be leaving an area “at risk” as a proxy for the number of potential migrants (Ionesco et al., 2017).

## 26.3. Climate and environmental change-driven migration in the Central Mediterranean Route

Reviewing the case studies in the countries of the CMR, it appears that long-distance and international migration tend to decrease during drought because of people’s reduced ability to invest in long-distance migrations during slack periods (Henry et al., 2004a) or because they hope to return home once rain is back. This was confirmed by studies in Burkina Faso, where people from drier regions are more likely to engage in temporary and permanent migration to other rural areas (Henry et al., 2004b); and in Mali, where migration during drought was limited to short-distance rather than international destinations (Findley, 1994). The study of Bleibaum (2009) on two villages in Senegal’s Peanut Basin demonstrated that the richest village had individuals who migrated to larger cities or Europe, and for longer times, while in the poorer village, people migrated seasonally only to the cities. All the interviewees coming from dry areas said that they would have left (for the cities or abroad) if life in the village – which depended on agriculture – was no longer possible, while those living near the river, where irrigated agriculture was possible, said that they would have stayed.

In the Niger, Senegal and Benin, migration often occurs in fragmented journeys, where crossing the border is only one step of the longer itinerary. To diversify the incomes and sustain the families, households send one of their members to the city, with the aim of receiving remittances to cope with the disruption (Jonsson, 2010). According to Afifi (2011), environmental degradation has a considerable impact on migration in the Niger. Although seasonal migration is part of the culture of the Niger, long-term and permanent migration is becoming more frequent, due to the effects of climate change. Migrating to Europe is not a common dream for the people of the Niger. They generally prefer to stay on their land but, when environmental conditions deteriorate, rural youths are left with no choice other than moving elsewhere to live and work. According to Mounkaila (2002), it is a chronic food deficit that would lead to the permanent abandonment of an environmentally degraded area. It is a last resort solution because immobility would result in death from starvation.

Guinea, the Gambia, Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria and Senegal, as coastal countries, are also highly vulnerable to environmental changes in the form of coastal erosion, soil salinization and land degradation. Senegal ranked as the world’s eighth most at-risk country in terms of sea-level rise (Amara et al., 2019). While a growing number of fishermen had to leave their homes and equipment because of the rising sea, mass outmigration of youth in the surrounding dry areas often leads to land abandonment (Foresight, 2011; Hunter and Nawrotzki, 2016). In Nigeria, according to a 2011 study, the homes of 9.7 million people could be affected by sea-level rise in 2050 (Wheeler, 2011).

However, the main climate-induced risk relevant to Nigeria is due to the decreased economic opportunities. A total of 60 per cent of Nigeria’s population and three quarters of its unemployed are under 30 years of age. Evidence suggests that disenfranchised young people who lack resources and economic opportunity are more likely to join violent non-State groups (Langer and Ukiwo, 2011) such as paramilitary forces. Nigeria has also witnessed how the climate-migration dynamics contribute to increasing violence and conflicts. The shrinking of Lake Chad has become a threat for over 15 million Nigerians living in the area and about 10 million others living outside Nigeria’s shores (Akubor, 2017). Abbass (2012) argued that the exacerbation of vulnerability and conflict in Northern Nigeria is both a product of the impact of climate change and drought leading to competition between farmer and pastoralists

for grazing and farming land. The changes in the environment and the scarcity of resources worsened pastoralists' relationship with farmers as well as the intensity and magnitude of pastoralists' movement southwards. This exodus in search of pasture land caused widespread conflicts and violence (Akubor, 2017).

Ghana's environment has been severely affected by climate change in the past 10 to 15 years, and has experienced an increased frequency of natural hazards, which in turn have intensified migration from the drier northern regions to the richer southern lands (Sow et al., 2014) and towards urban areas. Despite a higher cost of living, Kumasi and Accra attract migrants, due to perceived employment and education opportunities (Paone and Richmond, 2017). While many migrants perceive their decision to migrate as an economic and food security choice, the initial drivers are related to land degradation and climate change impacts (Warner et al., 2012). There is evidence that when farmers control water availability with irrigation systems, produce more money per tilled acre, migration propensity decreases (Bawakyillenuo and Alfred, 2013).

Sanfo and Fonta (2017) investigated the role of environmental factors on farmers' intervillage migration in 12 villages in south-west Burkina Faso, and found that land degradation, land tenure insecurity and lack of rainfall were major drivers of environment-induced migration. Almost 90 per cent of the interviewees considered productive land to be the main "pull" factor of their decisions to migrate and 74 per cent reported that land had become infertile in their own villages, compared with land fertility in the host zone. The study concludes that it is important to design policies that address adaptation and land restoration to reduce environmental degradation that puts too much pressure on farmland resources.

Land restoration and sustainable land management therefore have the potential to successfully reduce the negative impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on rural poverty – and hence on potential migration – by raising household incomes and diversifying livelihoods, creating and improving employment opportunities, and reducing gender and social inequality (IPBES, 2018:353; Adams et al., 2016).

## 26.4. Restoring degraded lands to address the root causes of migration

The root causes narrative is based on the idea that most migration to Europe is driven by economic factors; hence, an increase in economic opportunities in countries of origin will reduce migration (Fine et al., 2019). To make sure that politicians and policymakers continue to agree on investing in developing local economies and expanding opportunities for those who desire to stay, but are unable to do so, it is crucial to recognize that the root causes of migration go beyond economic factors. Climate change, environmental degradation and climate-induced conflicts are crucial drivers that compel people to migrate.

Measures linking sustainable land management with migration management policy and practice have proved to be of relevance to create positive opportunities for migrants and communities (IOM and UNCCD, 2019). Making sustainable land management and ecosystem restoration compatible with the creation of dignified and attractive employment opportunities is key for averting and minimizing climate- and environment-induced migration.

However, the working conditions in rural areas are often precarious because jobs are mostly informal, with no written contracts and little or no social protection (Deotti and Estruch, 2016). In order to retain and attract rural youth who have become increasingly disillusioned with the prospect of working in rural areas, it is essential to improve the quality of jobs, especially for those least protected, poorly remunerated, and of low status (ILO, 2017); secure their access to land; and protect their land rights.

The 3S Initiative is a renewed and determined effort to transform degraded lands in an inclusive and income-generating opportunity that creates the millions of jobs needed to foster stability and sustainable development. It is a State-led initiative launched by Morocco and Senegal at the African Action Summit by the Heads of State and Government (Marrakesh, November 2016) to bring a "voice for Africa" in the debate over the environmental drivers of migration and instability on the continent.

The 3S Initiative has two main objectives: (a) addressing climate change by increasing the area of arable land and forests in Africa, which requires investment in restoration and sustainable management of degraded lands; and (b) reducing migration pressures by creating new rural jobs in Africa through investment in agriculture, agro-industry and forestry. The focus is on employing young people, migrants, displaced populations and individuals targeted by extremist groups.

The 3S Initiative is unique in that it addresses the interlinked issues that threaten the sustainability, stability and security of the African continent: climate change and migration pressures. The 14 African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central Africa Republic, Chad, the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Morocco, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Zambia and Zimbabwe) participating in the 3S Initiative so far have prepared projects that address the above objectives. Foreseen are the following specific activities: restoration of agricultural degraded lands and forests; protection and management of watersheds; start-up support for individual farmers through cash grants, agricultural tools and training; transfer of land tenure rights to individual farmers; financial incentives for the creation of private enterprises in agro-industry and forestry; support for village groups to strengthen local agricultural production; and creation of eco-villages to promote ecological tourism.

Restoration efforts in drylands frequently encounter several limits, such as drought and scarce soil productivity. Since climate change projections indicate an increase of drought and more severe heatwaves in many dryland regions, ecosystems need to become more resilient to shocks, adverse weather conditions, water limitations and changing rain patterns. Technologies for reintroducing native plants and recovering critical ecosystem functions are available, but climate change projections introduce large uncertainties about the sustainability of current restoration practices. Currently, there is a lack of knowledge of adaptation limits and potential maladaptation to combined effects of climate change and desertification. Extreme forms of desertification can lead to the complete loss of land productivity, limiting adaptation options. Some adaptation options can lead to serious environmental impacts, such as irrigation causing soil salinization or overextraction leading to groundwater depletion. Economic, social and environmental sustainability is the ultimate aim of all restoration activities under the 3S Initiative, but there is no ready-made recipe. Restoration activities need an inclusive approach involving decision makers at all levels. Dialogue among multiple sectors and stakeholders is crucial to address the drivers of land degradation, improving policies, choosing restoration sites, securing tenure, supporting markets and attracting investment.

The countries involved in the 3S Initiative believe that social cohesion, peace and prosperity can be achieved by providing access to land and securing tenure to youth and other vulnerable groups, and by investing in the restoration of land and rural infrastructure. The secretariat entrusted to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the co-chairs have devoted significant efforts to: (a) build a network of senior officials/ Sherpa (advisors to Heads of State and Government) that led the advocacy efforts and ensured that the climate change–migration nexus be considered in the international processes on migration, such as the Global Compact for Migration, the Valletta Action Plan, the Rabat Process and UNCCD Conference of the Parties decisions; and (b) build a multi-donor trust fund based in a development bank to implement the Initiative. Implementation is at the early stages. Countries are working on developing national strategies to identify the target areas and vulnerable groups as well as the road maps to create the new job opportunities.

In the framework of the 3S Initiative, IOM is implementing a community stabilization project supported by UNCCD. The project focuses on migrant reintegration and on countering radicalization through the creation of jobs related to the restoration of degraded lands and their productive base in Agadez, the Niger. Agadez was chosen as a “demonstration site” for the 3S Initiative because the region is highly affected by desertification, and its population has been surviving for years on economic activities related to migration, such as catering, transport and accommodation for the transiting migrants. Increasingly strict immigration policies have decreased the income of those offering services (such as housing, transports and the like) to the migrants, and local authorities are worried that the lack of jobs could lead to the terrorisme de prestation individuals who, out of desperation, accept to work for radicalized groups to obtain remuneration. So far, 200 hectares of land have been identified for a pilot experiment of restoration to create green jobs based on sustainable land management, reduced environmental impact and decent work conditions. Of this, 30 hectares have been restored and allocated to the selected beneficiaries (unemployed youth, former smugglers and returning migrants). Each beneficiary has received from the authorities one hectare of land to use for income-generating activities. Vegetable farming is very much dependent on season, some seasons not being as profitable as others. With that in mind, and until the end of the project, each of them receives a monthly

allowance of CFAF 60,000 for two years, the time estimated to restore the degraded lands and be able to have an income from the produce of the lands. On the same land, 500 West African migrants have been trained in sustainable land management, while residing at the IOM transit centre and awaiting return to their countries of origin. Through the technical training and the practical sessions offered on the plots of land allocated by the city of Agadez, the participants learned new skills in view of returning to their countries of origin, where central and local governments are expected to provide land concessions for the returnees who have been trained.

## 26.5. Conclusions

The political crisis around migration in Europe has prompted international development efforts to renew their focus on the relationship with African countries along migration routes. This provided the opportunity to promote strategic investments towards productive sectors and programmes, with the aim of creating new jobs. However, to make these investments work in the medium and long term, dialogue with countries of origin and transit should move beyond the “root causes” approach and consider the crucial role of climate and environmental change in the equation.

This requires considering that people might be compelled to leave their countries of origin because of their exposure to climate-related hazards and environmental degradation that affect livelihood options and increase rural unemployment. An increase in economic opportunities in countries of origin will not be sufficient to reduce migration, without the implementation of efficient policies and strategies aimed at mitigating and adapting to climate impacts and environmental degradation, including by restoring lands and ecosystems.

Tying migration management objectives with pre-existing poverty reduction programmes is not sufficient. A comprehensive approach that accounts for the need to adapt to climate change, restore the degraded natural assets and create alternatives to forced migration is necessary. If large-scale initiatives on migration, development and the environment fail to achieve their aims, security-driven approaches to migration might gain more traction, leaving many to migrate via irregular channels as the only alternative for survival.

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## 27.

Towards the successful reintegration of returned migrants: IOM Niger's trainings for migrants in transit<sup>1</sup>Lorelle Yuen<sup>2</sup>RETURN AND  
REINTEGRATION

**Abstract:** This chapter explores the initial impacts of the microbusiness management training offered by IOM to migrants in transit back to their countries through the Niger. Due to the increased number of migrants expelled from Algeria to the Niger since 2018, there has been a significant increase in the number of migrants assisted with voluntary return to their countries of origin from the Niger. Upon return to their home countries, IOM assists these migrants with reintegration activities. Two case studies of returned migrants are showcased to demonstrate the impact of the training and to highlight the challenges they are facing.

## 27.1. Introduction

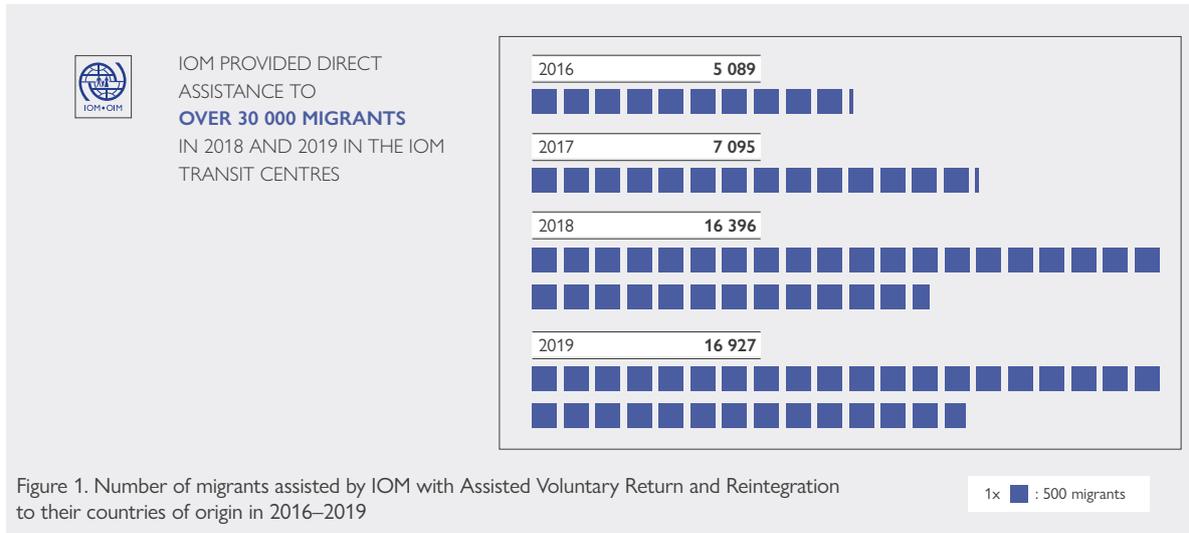
Situated between West, Central, East and North Africa, the Republic of the Niger is a major country of transit for migrants.<sup>3</sup> In 2018–2019, the number of migrants arriving to the Niger from Algeria increased dramatically due to the systematic expulsions of migrants, starting at the end of 2017. As a result, IOM provided direct assistance to over 30,000 migrants in 2018 and 2019 in the IOM transit centres (see Box 27.1), many of whom were also assisted with voluntary return to their countries of origin (Figure 27.1). In 2019, 95 per cent of returnee migrants were male and 78 per cent were young men and women between the ages of 15 and 29 years. Almost all were from countries within the West and Central Africa region; 52 per cent came from Guinea and Mali alone (Figure 27.2).

<sup>1</sup> This chapter was written with support from Claire Gaulin and Corantine Groccia, IOM Niger.

<sup>2</sup> IOM Niger.

<sup>3</sup> According to IOM (2020), the main host countries of destination (countries that assisted migrants in their return) in 2017–2019 were Libya (41,400), followed by the Niger (36,900). In total, 18,534 migrants were assisted in the six transit centres of IOM Niger throughout 2019. IOM Niger also provided assistance for the voluntary return of 16,927 migrants in 2019, including 16,378 migrants in transit and 549 people from the Niger.

**Figure 27.1.** Number of migrants assisted by IOM with Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration to their countries of origin in 2016–2019

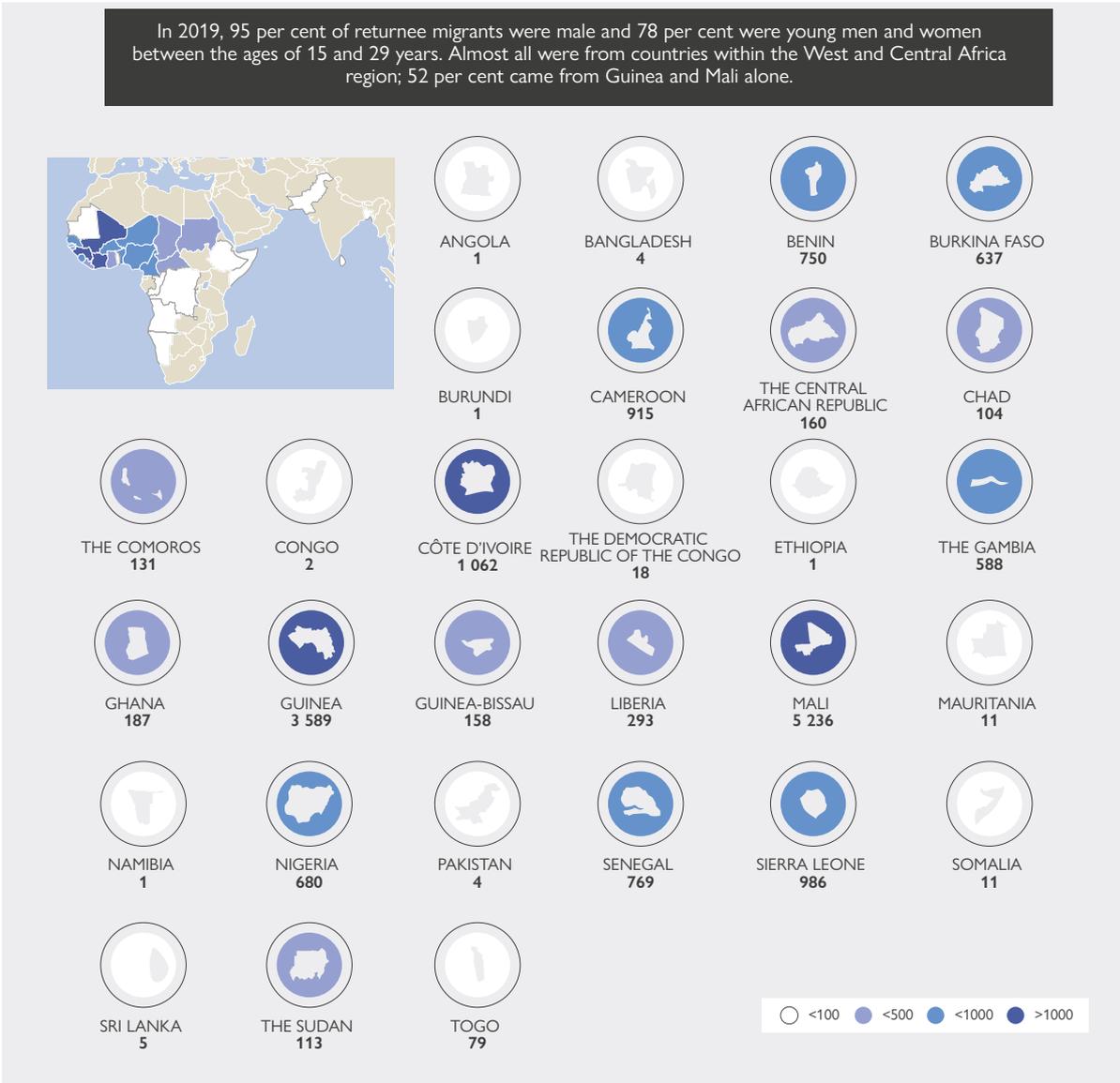


### Box 27.1. IOM Niger transit centres

Migrants transiting through the Niger intending to return to their countries of origin or communities of origin (for migrants from the Niger)\* with the assistance of IOM, temporarily stay in transit centres until their scheduled departures to their home countries or communities. IOM manages six transit centres across the Niger – in Agadez, Arlit, Dirkou and Niamey (three centres). All migrants arriving at the transit centres are registered and informed about their rights, and the services provided by IOM. Assistance in the centres includes accommodation, water, food, access to health care, preparation and facilitation of travel documents, psychosocial support, protection screening and support to the most vulnerable migrants, recreational activities and vocational trainings. In 2016 and 2017, most migrants arrived at the transit centres at their own initiative or by referral by one of IOM’s community mobilizers. In 2018, this shifted to the greatest number of migrants (46%) arriving at transit centres with the assistance of IOM after being expelled from Algeria, a significant increase from 2017, when only 4 per cent of migrants arrived with the assistance of IOM after being stranded in the desert. The average transit time varies depending on the migrant’s vulnerability status and/or presence of consular services in the Niger to process travel documents.

*Note:* The majority of migrants assisted in the transit centres are foreigners; however, there are also some assisted migrants from the Niger, who typically come to the transit centre on their own initiative. These do not include those repatriated from the official convoys, but may include some expelled from Algeria or rescued through IOM’s search and rescue operations conducted in the areas around Agadez, Arlit, Dirkou and Bilma.

**Figure 27.2.** Number of migrants assisted by IOM with voluntary return from the Niger by country of origin, 2019



Note: These maps are for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

IOM assists stranded migrants in the Niger with return to their home countries where, upon their return, they receive assistance from IOM to set up and implement their reintegration activities. Depending on the needs, skills and aspirations of each migrant, the reintegration assistance can include medical assistance, psychosocial support, education, vocational training, development of economic activities (such as microbusinesses or income-generating activities) and/or cover the housing/basic needs of the returnees. Most returnees choose to set up microbusinesses, but many lack the skills to enable them to set up viable businesses or livelihoods when they return.<sup>4</sup> This is partly attributed to the lack of specialized training and education on business development, which could greatly increase the successful outcome of their businesses. Additionally, the education level of migrants varies, with 33 per cent lacking any formal education, 27 per cent having completed secondary school, 19 per cent having primary school,

<sup>4</sup> Over 85 per cent of returnees assisted with Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) from the Niger to Sierra Leone, Liberia, Benin, Togo, Chad, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo chose to set up businesses. Statistics do not include returns to other countries of return (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal).

12 per cent having Koranic school and 10 per cent having higher education.<sup>5</sup> In response to this gap, IOM Niger began offering business management<sup>6</sup> and market gardening techniques<sup>7</sup> trainings to migrants in the Agadez transit centre, the largest transit centre in the Niger, where the majority of migrants stay for a short period of time, in order to make better use of their time in transit and to prepare for successful and sustainable reintegration.<sup>8</sup> The business management trainings also include visits to local microbusinesses in Agadez, where the migrants meet business owners to inspire them and allow them to ask them questions.

Since November 2019, vocational trainings are also offered to unaccompanied migrant children during their stays in the IOM transit centre in Niamey.<sup>9,10</sup> The trainings enable these young migrants to go back to their countries of origin with certificates, thus supporting their entry into the labour market and facilitating their reintegration.

In the West and Central Africa region, business management trainings may be available to returnees upon their return home, depending on their countries of origin. In some countries, such as Sierra Leone and Nigeria, these types of trainings have been defined as mandatory prerequisites for IOM to support migrant returnees with the establishment of economic activities through reintegration assistance upon their return. However, there remains a large gap for many returnees transiting through countries other than the Niger and those returning to countries other than Sierra Leone and Nigeria, where these programmes are not available.<sup>11</sup>

The successful and sustainable reintegration of returning migrants, the majority of whom are youths, remains challenging and complex. Most migrants originally left their home countries due to a lack of appropriate job opportunities. In West and Central Africa, the share of people who are unemployed or have unstable jobs is estimated at 50 to 90 per cent of the total labour force (African Development Bank Group, 2018). On top of that, youth unemployment is generally much higher than – often double – adult unemployment (African Development Bank Group, 2019).<sup>12</sup> Considering the dramatic increase in the number of returning migrants, particularly youths, to countries within West and Central Africa over the past two years – a trend which is likely to continue – the question of the impact of interventions towards sustainable reintegration becomes increasingly important.

This paper aims to assess the initial impacts of the trainings offered at the Agadez transit centre based on post-training evaluation surveys conducted with migrants who have completed the training and have since returned. Only the initial impacts of the trainings can be measured, since trainings started in July 2018. The impact will be assessed among the migrants who have returned home for at least three to six months and have chosen to start microbusinesses as their reintegration activities.<sup>13</sup> Longer-term impacts of the training for migrants who have returned for at least one year or longer will be subject to future assessments. Further analysis will be conducted in order to compare over time the businesses of migrants who completed a business management training compared with those who did not receive any training. Understanding factors that may positively contribute to the success and ease of migrants' reintegration process is key, as effective economic reintegration can significantly influence migrants' decisions to remigrate, either irregularly or regularly.

<sup>5</sup> Based on the 2018 profile data of migrants staying in the transit centres in the Niger.

<sup>6</sup> The International Labour Organization (ILO)'s "Improve your business – IYB" training (in French, "*Gérez mieux votre entreprise – GERME*").

<sup>7</sup> Market gardening techniques trainings are offered in partnership with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Regional Directorate for Agriculture (*Direction Régionale de l'Agriculture*). The training is aimed at migrants from rural areas interested in agricultural activities.

<sup>8</sup> On average, the duration of stay in the transit centre is two weeks. However, the duration varies between migrants, as it depends on several factors: for example, on the nationality of the migrant, as some countries do not have any embassy/consulate in the Niger, which explains that it requires more time to obtain a travel document to organize the return to the country of origin. Also, migrants with specific vulnerabilities, unaccompanied children or people who are not fit to travel due to medical complications usually stay longer.

<sup>9</sup> The training includes six modules, such as mechanics, carpentry and sewing.

<sup>10</sup> Literacy, English and information technology classes are also offered to unaccompanied migrant children during their time in transit.

<sup>11</sup> Business management trainings (not mandatory for all) are also offered by IOM country offices in the following countries upon the return of migrants: Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea-Bissau. Similar to IOM Niger's business management and agricultural techniques trainings offered to migrants in transit in the transit centres, IOM Morocco also offers trainings to migrants in transit before their return to their countries of origin.

<sup>12</sup> The United Nations definition of youth is all people between 15 and 24 years of age. In 2019, 50 per cent of returnees assisted with AVRRO from the Niger to their country of origin were youth between 15 and 24 years.

<sup>13</sup> The scope of this paper is only for returned migrants who chose to start microbusinesses, not other reintegration activities.

## 27.2. Methodology

The results of the post-training evaluation surveys are based on data collected from January 2019 to December 2019 for migrants who completed either the ILO IYB training (69 people) or the market gardening techniques training (7 people) or both (4 people). The trainings started in July 2018, and as migrants do not necessarily depart for their home countries immediately upon completion of the training, the first cycle of surveys was conducted in January 2019 for the first group of trained migrants that returned home for at least three months, followed by a second cycle in May and June 2019 for successive groups of returned migrants. A total of 80 responses were received from 2 females and 78 males of the following nationalities: Liberia (24), Cameroon (21), Côte d'Ivoire (15), Nigeria (14) and Benin (6).<sup>14</sup> Stratified sampling of migrant returnees was used based on sex and country of origin to ensure representativeness across all groups given the predominance of male migrants and certain nationalities. The majority (79%) of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 33 years, with most having completed secondary school (25%), followed by other higher-level education (14%).<sup>15</sup>

All returning migrants were surveyed by IOM staff after returning to their home countries for three to six months, in order to understand the initial impacts of the trainings.<sup>16</sup> A perception survey was used to assess how returning migrants perceived their situations, as well as to solicit their direct feedback about the training and their challenges, since this was the first time IOM Niger had conducted business management trainings for migrants in transit. Perceptions help reveal how a person views their environment or makes sense of their situation, which becomes the basis for their behaviours and their decisions (such as whether they feel the need to migrate or not based on their economic situation). It is important to note that perceptions can differ vastly due to differences in life experiences, education, attitudes, motives and interests. Given the diverse backgrounds of migrants surveyed, a perception survey was useful in gauging each migrant's sense of their own success or situation and how the trainings may have contributed to this success or not.

The case studies are based on follow-up interviews conducted in January 2020 with two migrant returnees who had returned for at least one year.

## 27.3. Status of businesses

Returnee migrants, upon arrival to their home countries, begin the process of designing their reintegration plans<sup>17</sup> with the support of IOM Reintegration Assistants in their countries of origin. All migrants surveyed wanted to establish microbusinesses. Of those who were interviewed, half (40 people) had already started their microbusinesses, of which 75 per cent self-rated the status of their businesses as doing well (19 people, 47.5%) or very well (11 people, 27.5%).<sup>18</sup> Migrants stated that the training helped improve their lives and boosted their confidence. Others, who are now running profitable businesses, plan to further expand their businesses. For instance, a 51-year-old male from Benin said: "Thanks to the training, I have learned the importance of diversifying my sources of income. This led me to launch other income-generating activities that are yielding enough money. I also learned how to manage a business so that it is promising. This allowed me to manage well my first activity and be able to launch a second one. I intend to continue this way and make my investment grow."

<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that survey responses were not received from Guinea or Mali, the two top countries of origin for returning migrants transiting from the Niger.

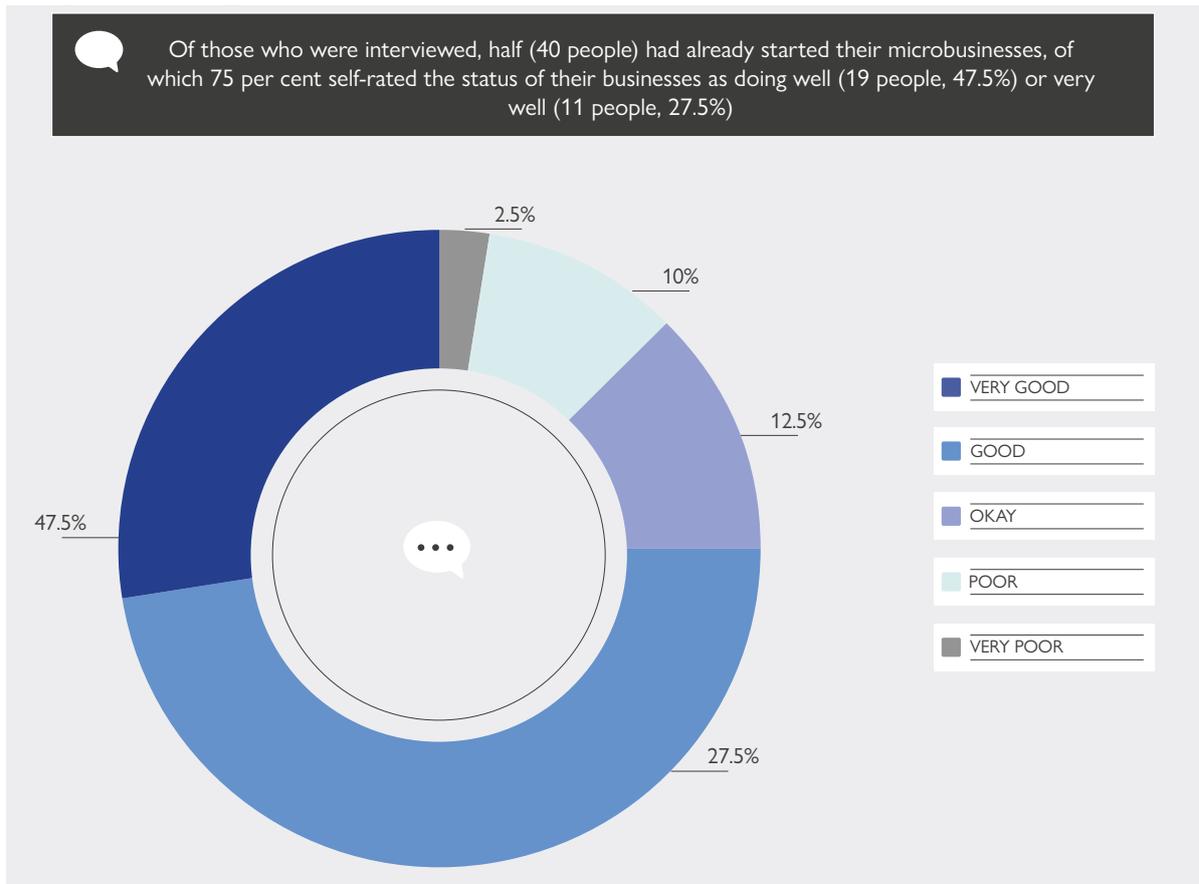
<sup>15</sup> IOM Niger transit centre registration data.

<sup>16</sup> Response bias may have influenced the response of respondents, which may have caused survey results to be more positive, as surveys were carried out by IOM staff.

<sup>17</sup> A reintegration plan is a tool for returnees to identify their objectives for their reintegration process and to plan, with the support of the case manager, what support is needed and how it will be provided. The plan is developed by bringing together an understanding of the returnee's skills, needs and motivations, and the context of the return environment, including its challenges, opportunities and available services.

<sup>18</sup> Survey questions asked respondents to rate the status of their microbusinesses based on the Likert scale, ranging from "Very Poor" to "Very Good".

**Figure 27.3.** Self-rated status of microbusiness among migrant returnees in country of origin at time of survey, three to six months after return



Those who had not yet started their businesses indicated that this was due to delays in receiving the materials for their businesses or other administrative procedures required for validating their business plans. Despite the delays, returnees stated that the training was “very valuable” and explained that they were able to utilize the knowledge gained from the training to develop a viable business plan. One migrant from Cameroon waiting to start his business said: “I [did a] feasibility and market study before choosing my reintegration project.” Another migrant from Côte d’Ivoire explained: “The skills acquired during the training allowed me to learn how to undertake, settle down, do a market study, exchange with partners who [trade in] silk, know these competitors and take into account the needs and tastes of the customer base.”

## 27.4. Usefulness of training for reintegration process

Interviewees were asked to rate four statements assessing the impact of the training in contributing to identifying their business ideas, developing their reintegration plans, as well as how useful the training was in contributing towards the planning or management of their reintegration activities.<sup>19</sup> The majority of returnees, including those who had not yet started their businesses, stated that they “agree” or “strongly agree” that the training was useful, with slightly more returnees (73.8%) who found the training to be more useful in developing their project ideas and

<sup>19</sup> Respondents were asked to rate the following four different statements based on the Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”, to assess how the training contributed towards the development of their reintegration project ideas and/or implementation of their microbusinesses (reintegration activities). Two statements assessed the impact of the training on developing their project ideas and reintegration plans: (a) The training contributed towards identifying my project idea; (b) The training contributed towards developing my reintegration plan. Two other statements assessed the impact of the training on implementing their reintegration plans: (a) The training contributed towards planning/organizing my reintegration activities (microbusiness); and (b) The training contributed towards the better management of my reintegration activities (microbusiness).

reintegration plans, rather than the actual implementation and management of their reintegration plans (58.8%), which may be attributed to the more theory-based methodology of the training, as well as the fact that their businesses only recently started.

Common themes were observed across interviewees who answered positively (68 people answered “agree” or “strongly agree”) to questions regarding the impact of the training on developing or implementing their reintegration plans. Returnees stated that the training enabled them to identify viable business ideas based on the localized needs and market demands, by first conducting market surveys. Others described how they learned the principles of business management, including the importance of diversifying income sources and saving a portion of profits and techniques to expand their businesses (see Case Study 1). Developing a foundation and sound knowledge of business management is vital for the success of a business, and for contributing towards the success and sustainable reintegration of returnees. A common finding across monitoring reports evaluating the reintegration activity and progress of returned migrants indicates that migrants lack knowledge on the importance of saving and how to reserve a portion of profits to sustain their business in the long term.

“I thank God for the microbusiness training. It has helped me a lot in managing my business. I had businesses before but they usually collapsed due to poor management or lack of business management skills. For example, I never used to observe my profit from the principle. Now I know how to sell my products to make and save the profit. Presently, I’ve increased the business and moved from the market into a shop. I also have good savings.” – Liberian man, 23 years of age.

“Through the training I gained more ideas to run and manage my business well. With the knowledge gained, I’m able to save my profit to develop the business and sustain myself. For example, before the training I didn’t know how to price my goods to get profit or even sell faster. I thank God for the training. Now I know all about business, its principles and profit, and my business is growing rapidly.” – Liberian man, 27 years of age.

Interviewees who answered negatively were few (nine people answered “disagree” or “strongly disagree”) – only three people who had started businesses rated them as performing poorly; the others had not started their businesses yet. They mentioned that they did not have the opportunity to utilize the knowledge and skills gained from the training back home, either due to sickness or personal problems (two people) or lack of market opportunities in their areas of origin (two people). Others mentioned challenges in following the training due to illiteracy (one person) or due to going back to school instead of focusing on the business (one person). One person stated that the training was not useful practically and another that their reintegration plan was irrelevant to the training.

“I didn’t know if the training help[ed] me to develop or implement any of my reintegration plans... because I needed to go back to school. [Because I went back] to school, I [didn’t] get the opportunity to [run my] business [and] unfortunately I [gave] the business to one of my family member[s], [and] due to mismanagement, the business broke down.” – Liberian man, 29 years of age.

## 27.5. Difficulties encountered

For migrants who risked everything in the hope of establishing their lives outside their countries, sometimes at the wish of their families or communities, returning home is difficult. Returnee migrants face stigmatization and lack of acceptance by their families and communities. Several returnee migrants surveyed stated that they were homeless when they returned or had to find their own accommodation as their family members did not welcome them back. Some migrants are also in debt to family members or friends due to money borrowed or even stolen to finance their migration journeys.

On top of these difficulties, migrants are faced with pressure to establish new means of livelihood in the same poor economic conditions that drove them to migrate in the first place (see Case Study 2). Lack of opportunities in the job market, especially in rural areas far from the capital, represents a big challenge, where migrant returnees risk being in competition against each other. To tackle this issue, IOM Reintegration Assistants try to diversify the portfolio of activities proposed and to work with local non-governmental organizations, which are well aware of the local context and opportunities.

Despite having the choice among several – and combinable – options for designing their reintegration plans, returnees usually focus on activities that enable them to meet their basic needs and those of their family members, which leads them to sometimes ignore their urgent medical or psychosocial needs. To overcome this challenge, IOM Niger offers medical support outside of the “reintegration package”, so that migrants in need do not feel that this assistance will undermine the budget available to develop their microbusinesses or income-generating activities.

## 27.6. Moving forward

Overall, this initial assessment showed that the trainings had a positive impact for returning migrants in their ability to design a viable business plan. The majority of migrants surveyed also self-rated their businesses to be doing well thus far, and said that the trainings provided them with a renewed sense of hope to be able to apply their new skills back home, especially as many migrants arrived to the transit centres hopeless and defeated from their perceived failed migratory experience.

“With the ideas and skills I own now, I think I can become a successful business owner back home.” – Congolese woman, 35 years of age.

“The training allowed me to have confidence in myself.” – Ivorian man, 21 years of age.

“I just want to say many thanks to IOM worldwide for assisting migrants to return to their homes and for the reintegration assistance given. This has helped us restart our lives once more at home.” – Liberian man, 27 years of age.

The trainings offered to migrants in transit represent one small piece of a large puzzle that attempts to creatively support migrants in their sustainable reintegration by making use of their time in transit. Other options – such as partnering with the private sector to offer internships and facilitate job placements, and involving diasporas to contribute to support returnees both financially and through transfer of expertise or know-how – are already being explored by IOM and other partners, and have been compiled in the IOM Reintegration Handbook (IOM, 2019 and Chapter 29 of this volume. Continued monitoring and evaluation of the status of the businesses and welfare of migrant returnees are needed to further assess the long-term impact of the business management trainings, and to shape and explore existing and new interventions that work towards maximizing the success of migrant returnees in their reintegration processes and achieving economic security.

### Case Study 1

Boubacar is a 27-year-old man from Liberia. (For reasons of confidentiality, names in the case studies reported in this chapter are not real names.) He decided to migrate to Europe to have a better life and to be able to support his family back home. He ended up staying in Algeria for about two years, but life proved to be difficult due to limited job opportunities, so he decided to return back to Liberia. After leaving Algeria, he entered IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme at the transit centre in the Niger, where he participated in the week-long business management training course offered at the centre. He eventually returned home with the assistance of IOM in August 2018.

Upon his return, Boubacar decided to restart his old cement business, where he sold cement wholesale to customers. He said that the training helped him to reassess the business environment to see whether restarting his old business was a good idea or not. After he conducted a market assessment, he was able to put together a business strategy on how to regain his old customers and attract new customers, using knowledge he gained from the training. The training also helped him to competitively price his materials.

Boubacar was able to restart his business and he was even able to regain his old customers and win new customers, despite other competitors in the market. He said that the training helped him to run and manage his business well the second time around. For example, he now knows how to save profits to reinvest into the business and also how to competitively price his goods to earn a profit, something he struggled with in the past. Now, his business is growing and he is currently conducting assessments to determine whether he should expand his business to other parts of the country.

Boubacar's business is not without challenges, however. Due to the economic state of his country, the rate of buying has decreased, which has negatively impacted his business. Furthermore, he has experienced a decrease in the number of customers, which may also be attributed to the current economic situation. Finally, he mentioned that high transportation fees from his home to his shop are preventing him from further developing his business, as he needs to spend a lot of his money on transport costs. Despite these challenges, Boubacar says that he is satisfied with his current economic situation and that he believes he made the best decision to return home. He is optimistic that he will be able to take advantage of other opportunities to continue to improve his life and economic situation.

## Case Study 2

Ibrahim is a 28-year-old man from Côte d'Ivoire. Back home, he was a technician for MTN, a telecommunications company. However, he aspired to improve his economic situation and his skills in order to set up a money transfer business. He decided to migrate to Algeria, where he worked and received training from a Chinese company in the industry of industrial refrigeration and cabinet cooling. He was living in Tamanrasset, in southern Algeria, near the border with the Niger, for just about a month, when Algerian authorities expelled him, along with a group of other migrants, to the Niger.

Ibrahim entered IOM Niger's transit centre in Agadez, where he decided to partake in the week-long business management training course offered there. He agreed that the training was very useful for him, saying "This training allowed me to know a lot of things. [It is] very beneficial for me." Ibrahim has been home since the end of October 2018, and since January 2019, he became involved in a new community poultry project, along with 12 others, in his hometown of San Pedro, where they aim to raise and sell chickens. As deputy group leader, he said that the training helped him to better structure his group and better organize the activities for the group, and that it taught him sales techniques, which proved useful for the business. He explained that the first phase of the project was successful, as they were able to obtain a farm and 1,000 chicks. However, with the second and third phases, they have been experiencing difficulties, which he attributes to the large number of people involved in the project. He himself, as well as others in the group, are finding it difficult to make ends meet.

In order to improve his economic situation, Ibrahim is also engaged in other side businesses, including the selling of telephones and clothing. He started these side businesses as soon as he returned home; he said the training gave him a good entrepreneurial spirit as well as skills to develop a marketing strategy, which has helped him with both these businesses, as well as the community poultry project. Overall, Ibrahim is happy to be back home and to be close to his family again, but he said he does not feel like he is able to stay at home due to low earnings and family pressures. Despite these pressures, Ibrahim remains optimistic, saying "The means are lacking for the moment, but I am very motivated."

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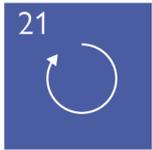
# 28.

## Returning migrants: from disillusion to integration initiatives in the South-East, North and Central regions of Senegal

Aly Tandian<sup>1</sup>



MIGRANT AND DIASPORA CONTRIBUTIONS



RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

**Abstract:** This chapter examines the impact of various forms of return on migrants, their families and communities in Senegal, in particular in terms of resilience and/or development. It focuses on spontaneous and independent return, on voluntary return (taking place with IOM support), and on forced return (expulsion). It draws on data collected through individual and group interviews with returning migrants. Results show that migrants who return voluntarily tend to evoke an idyllic image of migration, whereas migrants who were forced to return tend to experience disillusion. Some migrants use money and experience gained abroad to become entrepreneurs; they promote the image of returnees as an asset. However, given Senegal's migratory tradition, migration journeys are considered positive even when returnees come home "empty-handed".

### Data sources

The different types of return (spontaneous/independent, voluntary/with International Organization for Migration (IOM) support and forced/expulsion) are analysed using individual and group interviews with returning migrants, and quantitative data collected in south-eastern (Tambacounda, Kédougou and Kolda), northern (Matam) and central (Kaolack and Louga) Senegal.

### Principal conclusions

In Senegal, migrant returns cannot be attributed only to disillusion with the migrant experience, even though that is the case for many migrants. Some migrants used money transfers and the experience they gained abroad to become entrepreneurs. The image of returning migrants as entrepreneurs is a valuable asset; for a long time, the members of the Senegalese diaspora were considered by the "Boy Town" urbanites as uneducated hicks incapable of launching entrepreneurial activities in their country of origin.

In Senegal, migration is a legend that has set the daily pace of life for people for many years. It was during the colonial period that the Senegalese came to be known in the West African subregion as "great travellers", who journeyed long distances to conquer new territories, establish themselves in many different places, and optimize their opportunities and chances for success. Consequently, Senegalese society looks on such journeys as positive acts intended to form the personality and enable the person leaving to acquire (im)material goods, even if that person experiences hardship or comes home empty-handed.

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The desire to migrate to Europe made itself felt more frequently during the 1990s, when popular television channels reinforced that illusion. Television broadcasts used the magic of images to heighten the allure and create an image of other parts that sustained a migratory culture. In the local discourse, some returning migrants – who became entrepreneurs, thanks to money transfers and the experience they acquired abroad – proudly evoke an idyllic image of migration, whereas those who were forced to return or expelled cast a very disillusioned eye on their ventures. Many of the latter receive IOM support to help them reintegrate.

Using a socioanthropological approach, individual and group interviews were conducted with returning migrants, and quantitative data collected, in south-eastern (Tambacounda, Kédougou and Kolda), northern (Matam) and central (Kaolack and Louga) Senegal, in order to analyse the various types of return (spontaneous/independent, voluntary/with IOM support and forced/expulsion). This article is interesting in that it also considers the impact that these different types of return had on migrants, their families and communities, in terms of resilience and/or development, in these different parts of Senegal.

## 28.1. Sociodemographic and economic characteristics of returning migrants

A survey of 66 people (40 from Tambacounda, 12 from Kédougou and 14 from Kolda) – all of whom had returned to Senegal, and most of whom had taken the irregular migration corridor to Libya – showed that most had left their country of origin for the first time between 2000 and 2015. Moreover, 89 per cent of returning irregular migrants had left their regions of origin to travel abroad only once or twice; over 11 per cent, from all regions, had left three to five times.

The data collected revealed that some of the persons interviewed had migrated for the first time in previous decades. Most of those people were originally from rural areas. They migrated from one to five times, whereas those migrating between 2000 and 2015 did so more often (three to five times).

That statistic is much higher in the Kolda region, where one out of three returning irregular migrants had left the region three, four and even five times to travel abroad. This has one of two explanations: either the migrants had papers enabling them to come and go whenever they wanted, or they had made repeated (failed) attempts to migrate.

Before travelling abroad, most of the migrants lived in rural areas: on average, in all the regions considered, 93 per cent came from rural areas, as opposed to 7 per cent from urban areas. In terms of occupation, almost all the returning irregular migrants confirmed that, before migrating, they had worked in various fields: on average, in all the regions considered, 50 per cent of the migrants had worked in agriculture, 25 per cent in animal husbandry, 7 per cent in trade, 2 per cent in the hospitality industry and 5 per cent in transport. In addition, 22 per cent of the returning irregular migrants were educated, approximately 7 per cent up to baccalauréat level or higher.

There are several reasons why these returning irregular migrants decided to abandon a previous occupation – agriculture, animal husbandry, trade or transport – to migrate. In all the regions considered, most of them spoke of constraints relating to financial shortfalls (28%), barriers to saving (24%) or harsh working conditions (18%).

Financial shortfalls, barriers to saving and harsh working conditions were the main reasons for giving up an occupation and migrating in Tambacounda (75%), Kédougou (52%) and Kolda (63%).

It is nonetheless important to underscore that, in Tambacounda and Kédougou specifically, 16 per cent of returning irregular migrants said that they had abandoned their earlier activities and migrated because the profits made did not belong to them.

## 28.2. Return of Senegalese migrants: a mix of disillusion and assistance

In Senegal, irregular migration is so complex that it is very difficult to measure; it is also practically impossible to provide exact figures on the phenomenon. The available data are both fragmented and discontinuous, provided in connection with certain highly publicized tragic events that tend to be humanitarian in nature. For example, there are no statistics on migration to Spain, which is one of the two countries receiving the most irregular migrants in Europe. For Italy, the Ministry of the Interior only provides figures on the numbers arriving in the country by sea: 5,981 Senegalese in 2015, 10,327 in 2016 and 6,000 in 2017 (Ndione, 2018).

Over the past 10 years, numerous Senegalese attempting to migrate have been repatriated, their irregular status having prevented them from realizing their dreams in the countries of transit or destinations. Such is the case for a number of Senegalese who were living in the Niger or Morocco. Citizens of Senegal do not need entry or resident visas to enter either country, according to the legislation of the Economic Community of West African States for the former and bilateral agreements for the latter. They can stay in the country for 90 days without being troubled by the police.

Some of those irregular migrants returned to Senegal on their own, whereas others were able to return thanks to assistance provided by IOM in the context of its mandate. In 2017, for example, 3,023 Senegalese aged from 9 to more than 63 years, but for the most part between 18 and 26, were able to return to their country of origin (ibid.).

The assisted returnees were men and women, and came from all 14 regions of Senegal, although the majority were from Tambacounda, Kédougou and Kolda. In that part of Senegal, the lack of youth employment opportunities was often cited as the main reason for migrating.

As mentioned earlier, several returning migrants (spontaneous/independent, voluntary/with IOM support and forced/expulsion) were able to make the original journey thanks to the resources mobilized by their parents. In such cases, repatriation is always deemed a failure. In the eyes of the returning migrants and their parents, such a failure is a source of shame, the repatriated or expelled migrant being deemed to have wasted what little money the family had.

In addition to the disillusioned migrants repatriated under assisted return and reintegration programmes, Senegal also has numerous but often poorly documented cases of voluntary return. The migrants concerned develop – individually or collectively – reintegration initiatives that are of benefit to several members of their communities.

There are also success stories, the outcome of policies to help migrants expelled from their countries of destination to reintegrate. While few in number, such cases are worth pointing out, to highlight the reintegration support provided by the State of Senegal or international institutions.

## 28.3. Successful reintegration initiatives by returning migrants

In Senegal, after several consecutive years of drought (1972–1973 and 1982–1984), associations of emigrants based in France ploughed money into agricultural production, investing heavily in, for example, village irrigation systems and the construction of water storage facilities. More recently, they seem to have refocused their investments. At individual level, remittances serve to secure food for relatives remaining in the country, but are also sometimes invested in agricultural production activities, to pay for labour and inputs. Unlike migrants active through associations abroad, in Saloum (in central Senegal), migrants preferred to return home, where they sometimes invested financial resources earned while abroad. Examples of returning migrants in four regions of Senegal are given below.

In the Kaolack and Matam regions, voluntary returnees invested in various innovative sectors, drawing on their money transfers and personal experience, whereas in Louga, initiatives were taken thanks to the Regional Council, which organizes an annual “Forum with emigrants”.

### 28.3.1. Moustapha – Kaolack region – returned to Senegal and invested in agriculture and animal husbandry after several years in Lerida, Spain

Moustapha is currently the mayor of Darou Salam commune, in Kaolack. He migrated in 2005, at the age of 30. He first travelled to France, not as an immigrant, but to participate in the International Agricultural Fair. For that occasion he had a 45-day visa. He was able to make the trip because he was the president of the Cadre Local de Concertation des Producteurs, the local producers’ organization, but above all because he had produced a record 34 tons of seed in 2004. That exploit allowed him to travel to Europe on exchange visits. By the time he returned to Senegal, he had acquired a taste for migration. He applied for and was granted a six-month visa to return to Europe. On this second trip, he left to join a friend based in Lerida, Spain. Three days after his arrival there, he found work in the fields. After four days of work he had earned 400 euros. He did the maths, and decided to stick with that job and to resign from his civil service position with the Ministry for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development.

Moustapha stayed in Lerida for four years without papers (resident permit), which he obtained in 2009. Three months later, he returned to Senegal on vacation. At the end of his vacation, he returned to Spain with one of his wives, his nephew and his son. From 2009 to 2014, he returned to Senegal every year for two months to rest. He decided to return definitively following the 2008 financial crisis, which affected Spain and Europe in general. The primary factor motivating his return to Senegal was the growing financial burden of supporting his family. In addition, he realized that all his children and nephews wanted to join him in Spain. In the end, after much hesitation, he returned to Senegal with his wife as a way of showing his children and nephews that they were not obliged to leave for Europe to succeed.

During his years in Spain, Moustapha invested. Twice he bought a seven-seat car to sell fish – borrowing 2 million CFA francs (3,048 euros) from the Crédit Mutuel for that purpose – but the project did not work out as he had anticipated. Its failure was discouraging. Later, he did some *Opérations Tabaski*,<sup>2</sup> but his relatives took the sheep without paying. It was for all those reasons that he decided to return to Senegal and manage his investments himself. To prepare for his return, he spent more time in Senegal in order to supervise his affairs more closely. In 2014, he started raising cattle and in 2016, small ruminants. He currently has 90 head of cattle and employs four farmhands to look after them. He has 60 hectares of land. With his wife, he wants to have a market garden on 20 hectares, to grow off-season crops, raise poultry, and plant trees and shrubs. He plans to apply the drip irrigation techniques he learned about in Spain. He is working with a partner to sink a borehole. For his agricultural activities, he employs 13 farmhands for five months and his family year-round. He has opened a money transfer office in Nioro. He plans to continue investing in agriculture, because he loves the work and has the requisite know-how. He has submitted his plan for a market garden to Senegal’s *Fonds de Garantie des Investissements Prioritaires* (a guarantee fund for priority investments). In Spain, he also learned how to stable and manage livestock, a couple of methods for treating certain animal diseases, and how to rapidly fatten cattle. He wants to have an impact on the food security of people in his area, growing vegetables for a more diversified diet and making available cow’s milk thanks to stall milking. He also plans to create jobs in the transformation and commercialization of milk. His only regret is that the young people in the area do not follow his example and want to emigrate, as he was the first in the area to do so. They have watched as he built a concrete structure and acquired assets. When he sees young people leave by land or by sea, he feels that he is partly to blame. The positive side of migration is that it enabled him to acquire knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> Tabaski, or Eid al-Adha, is the Muslim “Feast of the Sacrifice” or “Feast of Sheep”.

### 28.3.2. Sidy – Matam region – between Brazzaville and Abidjan, was able to mobilize financial resources to invest in agriculture in Senegal

Sidy was born on 17 January 1963 and is from Matam. He first migrated in 1977. From Dakar, he travelled to Abidjan and Brazzaville, where he lived for 18 years without returning to Senegal. In Brazzaville, he worked as a stonemason. He returned because he felt that his investments in Senegal were not being properly managed by his brothers – the money that he was sending to build his house was being used for other purposes. In Côte d'Ivoire, he was in trade but he also learned agricultural techniques. He has been back in Senegal for 12 years, working in market gardening and animal husbandry thanks to the money he earned as a migrant. He grows maize, peanuts and beans on seven hectares. He employs farmhands under the *métayage* system but also occasionally hires day workers. He owns 22 head of cattle and over 100 sheep and goats. The four employees who look after them receive room and board and are paid 35,000 CFA francs (53 euros) per month. Sidy also has shops in the Republic of the Congo, which are managed by his brothers who stayed there. He plans to continue investing in Senegal, especially in rural development.

### 28.3.3. Various emigrants – Louga region

Every year, the Regional Council organizes the “Forum with emigrants”, to facilitate their integration (Sall et al., 2010). In Louga, for want of a framework, the emigrants who opted to return voluntarily to their place of origin have for the most part managed to build a dwelling that they occupy with their families or rent out. The rent allows them to meet certain expenses, such as tuition for their children and food. The buildings are often rented to State civil servants posted to Louga. To make up for the lack of an official framework for returning emigrants, a new partnership approach has been put in place: the Regional Council organizes an annual “Forum with emigrants”, to enable the people of Louga as a whole to benefit from their compatriots’ migration; previously, only the migrants’ families benefited from the investments in properties.

#### **The Louga Regional Director of Planning confirmed this in the following terms:**

Most of the emigrants’ investments were in buildings, so we tried, at the level of the Regional Council, to organize the Forum with emigrants. The first time, the Forum was organized with local technical services and the emigrants... The aim was to identify the region’s potential in terms of fisheries, animal husbandry, agriculture, trades, etc. Each in his own area of concern tried to set out the potential, to try and orient emigrants who had ideas for projects... For us, we didn’t want the emigrants from Louga to continue investing in Dakar when there were investment possibilities in Louga, especially since the region is bursting with potential. If that potential were properly exploited, the town would benefit. During the Forum with emigrants, we brought the emigrants face-to-face with partners... We decided for the Forum with emigrants to find focal points among emigrants who were from Louga originally but who had settled in Italy, Spain and so on. Those focal points are information relays that enable the emigrants to organize, to think about productive projects (interview with the Louga Regional Planning Director, 21 February 2008).

In addition to the “Forum with emigrants”, the Louga political authorities established a “business wicket”. Along these lines, the Deputy Governor of Louga adds that the “business wicket” can help secure the emigrants’ investments (ibid.).

By launching the “Forum with emigrants” and the “business wicket”, elected officials sought to involve emigrants who had returned voluntarily in local efforts to develop Louga and the neighbouring area.

In one example in Louga, an emigrant who had returned voluntarily, and had always worked in the artistic milieu as a promoter, opened a recording studio that currently employs young people from the town and helps launch the careers of young local talents with a cultural bent.

According to M. Fall, an emigrant who returned voluntarily and is the director of the recording studio, “not a day goes by without some new talent knocking on my door with a demo tape or recording. And in addition to these singers, there are the theatre and dance groups” (interview with M. Fall, 21 February 2008).

It must be pointed out, however, that the investments sometimes founder because of the emigrants' low level of education and the risk that the funds will be used for other purposes by the relatives or friends in charge of managing the activities. Obviously, these economic initiatives have a promising future and are sure to take off at some point.

At the same time as these migrants returned voluntarily to Senegal to invest in the agricultural sector, migrants returning from Libya faced numerous problems relating to their return and socioeconomic reintegration. In the face of those difficulties, IOM introduced a process of assisted voluntary return and reintegration, in order to help Senegalese migrants reintegrate properly into their communities. As part of the reintegration process, IOM provides the returning migrants with information on opportunities in Senegal and informs potential migrants about the risks and dangers of irregular migration. This is the case of Diallo, who benefited from IOM assistance.

#### 28.3.4. Diallo – Kolda region – returned from Libya with IOM assistance in March 2019

Diallo is an emigrant who lived in Libya before deciding to return to Kolda with the help of IOM, which provided him with seed funding to open a mobile phone store and repair shop. According to Diallo, the funding very quickly affected his life for the better.

Diallo is one of the beneficiaries of the roughly 100 IOM projects providing reintegration assistance to returning migrants between June 2017 and June 2019. According to Richard Danziger, IOM Regional Director for West and Central Africa, speaking to *Walf Quotidien* on 25 January 2019, "IOM assistance aims to mitigate the suffering of returning migrants. It also aims to find opportunities for returning migrants, to give a positive, more secure and beneficial face to migration."

*Today, thanks to IOM,  
I have a job that allows me  
to meet my personal needs  
and support my parents.  
I never stop advising my  
friends who stayed in Libya  
to do what I did, and come  
back and work in Senegal*

*(interview with Diallo,  
26 March 2019).*

## 28.4. Conclusion

In Senegal, not all returns can be summed up by disillusion, even though many migrants do come back disappointed. Some migrants have become entrepreneurs thanks to money transfers and the experience acquired abroad. The image of the returning migrant as an entrepreneur is a valuable asset, because for many years the members of the Senegalese diaspora were looked on by the "Boy Town" urbanites as uneducated people unable to engage in business initiatives in their country of origin.

The creation of businesses by returning migrants reflects a twofold trend: a sharp increase in the number of entrepreneurs and a strong qualitative improvement in the businesses they create. The forthcoming changes in agriculture are likely to be brought about by these migrants' investments, especially in the central and northern parts of the country, which attract those interested in farming because of their geographical location.

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# 29. Operationalizing an Integrated Approach to Reintegration (ORION)

Joy Paone<sup>1</sup>



**Abstract:** The ORION project aims to provide the tools necessary to operationalize an integrated approach to reintegration. It has conducted pilot tests through specific interventions in Guinea, Senegal and Morocco. The project has four key elements: a reintegration handbook, a mentoring approach, a comparative analysis, and a cross-regional workshop.

Reintegration for migrants returning home has emerged as one of the top priorities for policymakers, and for humanitarian and development actors. This is due to an increase in the number of migrants who find themselves stranded in host or transit countries because of a lack of legal status, or because they are not found to be in need of international protection. These migrants are unable to remain in their destination countries and thus often opt to return home. However, they may struggle to readapt and rebuild their lives once back home. Furthermore, high levels of returns can strain the socioeconomic fabric in countries of origin.

IOM considers reintegration sustainable when “returnees have reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with (re)migration drivers. Having achieved sustainable reintegration, returnees are able to make further migration decisions a matter of choice, rather than necessity” (IOM, 2017). As such, IOM recognizes that a holistic, needs-based approach to reintegration is needed: one that responds to the economic, social and psychosocial needs of returnees, while also benefitting communities of origin and addressing structural challenges to reintegration.

Through research undertaken under the Mediterranean Sustainable Reintegration (MEASURE Project) (2017), recommendations were made to support sustainable reintegration of migrants who return to their home countries. The research also led to the development of a set of field-tested indicators relating to the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions of reintegration, together with a reintegration scoring system, making it possible to measure post-return outcomes and to facilitate the understanding of returnees’ progress towards sustainability (Samuel Hall and IOM, 2017). These tools will allow IOM and other practitioners to compare trends in returnees’ reintegration across countries and over time.

<sup>1</sup> IOM Department of Migration Management.

Following the conceptualization of IOM's integrated approach to reintegration (IOM, 2017) and taking into account the recommendations of the MEASURE report (Samuel Hall and IOM, 2017), the ORION project aims to provide the tools necessary to operationalize the approach and test pilot specific interventions in Guinea, Senegal and Morocco. More specifically, the ORION project has four key elements:

- (a) A [Reintegration Handbook \(IOM, 2019\)](#) and training curriculum (including an online course<sup>2</sup>) – aimed at reintegration practitioners, including policymakers – have been developed to provide practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance.
- (b) A mentoring approach<sup>3</sup> is being piloted to provide intensified support and follow-up to returnees, helping to ensure they are not isolated upon their return. Currently, 216 returnees are part of this pilot project in Guinea, Morocco and Senegal. Overall, they have reported the mentors have helped them gain more trust in the reintegration process, and a deeper involvement of local authorities and other stakeholders has been noted.
- (c) A comparative analysis is currently being conducted. Drawing from the collection of standardized data on reintegration outcomes of returnees who have received different kinds of support, this study will help provide evidence on the effectiveness of these interventions related to others.
- (d) A Cross-Regional Workshop was held in September 2019 in Senegal – gathering 30 reintegration practitioners from Guinea, Morocco and Senegal – to facilitate the exchange of promising reintegration practices. A final workshop is planned for late summer 2020 in Morocco.

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<sup>2</sup> Available at [www.ecampus.iom.int/login/index.php](http://www.ecampus.iom.int/login/index.php) (accessed 11 June 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kf8\\_jfptf6o&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kf8_jfptf6o&feature=youtu.be) (accessed 11 June 2020).

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# MIGRATION GOVERNANCE AND POLICY AND PROGRAMMING RESPONSES



Migrants prepare to board an IOM ship to evacuate Libya. © IOM 2011/Nicole TUNG

# Migration Governance, and Policy and Programming Responses

## Introduction

Migration is old, but its governance is relatively recent. The building of independent States in North and West Africa, the construction of national identities, the extension of States' control over the lives of individuals and the provision of services to the population soon raised the issue of who belongs to the national framework of rights and duties, and who does not; who shares the national identity, and who does not. International migration brought up specific issues. How do States engage with their citizens abroad? Do they grant them political rights such as voting from abroad and political representation? What rights, including those of entry and stay, shall be granted to immigrants, and on what conditions? States have provided very diverse responses to these questions.

Migration often takes place across borders. However, despite growing international policy frameworks, policy competency on migration is still national. States hold sovereign policy competency on migration. They also engage with other States through bilateral and multilateral policy frameworks. They do so at the regional level (for example, through the 1979 Protocol on Free Movement, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Common Approach on Migration) and at the continental level (such as through the Migration Policy Framework for Africa). Increasingly relevant are also transregional policy frameworks, in particular with the European Union. At the global level, most of them have signed the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and further relevant instruments, such as the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, ratification and transposition of these policies at the national level are sometimes slow.

Finally, migration governance goes beyond the movement of people and includes various aspects of the lives of migrants. Governing migration is by essence multisectoral. Migrant integration policies are a case in point, as they span all public policies – from health, education and housing, to communication, security and justice.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted in 2018 by a vast majority of the world's nations – including most countries in the regions covered by this volume – is a non-binding agreement laying out a set of principles and commitments for greater international cooperation on migration.

Most States along the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) are part of free movement areas. The trend towards lifting intraregional border controls has, however, unfolded in parallel with a trend towards tightening external border controls. These two trends have shaped regional and transregional migration governance in West and North Africa and in Europe (Schöfberger, Chapter 30 of this volume). Even though free movement policies were adopted quite early in ECOWAS and the European Union, and discussed

for a long time in the Arab Maghreb Union and the African Union, their implementation remains challenging due to political and socioeconomic differences between Member States, to different migration-related interests and to growing interregional dependencies.

Europe's tightening external border controls, combined with an increasing criminalization of irregular migration in West and North Africa, have had a significant impact on the lives of migrants. While the demand for smuggling services does not appear to have decreased, rising entry barriers have stimulated the criminal organization of irregular migration. Trends recently detected in the region point to the progressive conversion of smuggling activities into thriving trafficking businesses, involving the exploitation of migrants and asylum seekers, and the trade of harmful narcotic drugs (Raineri, Chapter 31 of this volume).

At the national level, States have adopted policies and laws that are directly or indirectly relevant for migration. All North and West African nationality laws give precedence to blood over territorial bonds, so migrants belong more to where they come from than to where they reside. While States are now committed to reincorporating expatriate nationals in the economy and the citizenry of their homelands, full inclusion of immigrants is not part of current political agendas across the region. Irregular migration is increasingly punished by detention and deportation, instead of amnesty and regularization (Fargues, Chapter 32 of this volume). The European Union and its member States' increased engagement with African States on immigration control is to be factored into the criminalization of migrants with an irregular status currently taking place along the entire CMR.

Many migrants abroad and their descendants do still engage with their countries of origin. Recently, these countries have also increased their efforts to engage with them. As with many countries around the world, Member States of ECOWAS have designed diaspora policies that include the establishment of dedicated institutions to foster remittances, transfers of knowledge and diaspora political engagement (Schöfberger, Chapter 33 of this volume). Comparable institutions were set up earlier in North Africa. The facilitation of voting from abroad in national elections has pushed away the territorial boundaries of citizenship (Jaulin, Chapter 34 of this volume). But to what extent State policies actually increase the contribution diasporas have always brought to the economic, cultural and political life in their countries of origin remains to be studied.

Immigrants can appear to locals as people with different manners. They might be regarded negatively, as potential competitors on the labour market, or sources of insecurity, among other things. Prejudices, xenophobia and discriminatory attitudes towards migrants and refugees are commonplace around the world, but tolerance, sympathy and openness are equally common, and a plurality of opinions is the rule. Building a cohesive society is a process of mutual respect and adaptation of newcomers and existing communities. Opinions are shaped by facts and ideas – on the one hand by the actual experience of locals and migrants interacting in the real life, and on the other hand by visions propagated by politicians, opinion leaders and the media. Opinions are also nuanced by the tangible situation of migrants, as locals do not see immigrants whose businesses create employment the same way they see refugees or transit migrants with irregular status (Borgnäs and Acostamadiedo, Chapter 35 of this volume).

Understanding public opinion about international migration and what factors influence perceptions of the phenomenon is important for countries and the international community to foster a constructive and balanced public discourse, and to effectively counter xenophobia and stigmatization of migrants. This section provides examples of two initiatives implemented in North Africa to help balance the migration narrative, one directed at Egyptian youth and one with the aim of training journalists for responsible and evidence-based media reporting on migration (Pace, Shireen and Borgnäs, Chapter 36 of this volume).

In this context, information and awareness-raising campaigns that civil associations and international organizations carry out with the support of the European Union to alert would-be migrants to the dangers of irregular migration must be carefully monitored. Do these campaigns really provide young people with information they would not already have? Do they play any role in reducing the numbers of those risking their lives along the CMR and incite them to make a safer choice (Tjaden, Chapter 37 of this volume)?

Humanitarian action among migrants and refugees travelling the CMR is more necessary than ever. Against this backdrop, data collected by the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) bring the evidence needed for donors, governments and practitioners to make informed decision-making for evidence-based programming and action on the ground. However, the utility of the collected data can be improved by suggesting practical measures at different stages of the data management, information-sharing and coordination (Bonfiglio, Leigh and Zakoska-Todorovska, Chapter 38 of this volume).

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INTERNATIONAL  
COOPERATION AND  
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

# 30.

## Free movement policies and border controls: regional migration governance systems in West and North Africa and Europe, and their interactions

Irene Schöfberger<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** Most States in West and North Africa and in Europe are part of free movement areas. The trend towards lifting intraregional border controls has, however, unfolded in parallel with a trend towards tightening external border controls. This chapter analyses how the two trends have shaped regional and transregional migration governance in West and North Africa and in Europe. It first looks at regional policy structures in West and North Africa, then analyses how these are integrated in wider continental trends and how they interact with free movement policies in Europe. The chapter draws on an analysis of policies of the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and the European Union. It finds that, even though free movement policies were adopted quite early in ECOWAS and the European Union, and have been discussed for a long time within AMU and the African Union, their implementation remains challenging, due to political and socioeconomic differences between member States, to different migration-related interests and to growing interregional dependencies.

Most States in West and North Africa and in Europe are part of free movement areas. In the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment was introduced in 1979. In the European Union, free movement of persons was enshrined in the Treaty of Rome, establishing the European Economic Community in 1957, and was consolidated by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992. In both West Africa and Europe, free movement policies have facilitated intraregional mobility, which is much more prevalent than mobility between regions. Their introduction testifies to a political recognition that this mobility is essential for regional economic integration and development. An ambition to extend free movement policies has also been present in the work of the African Union since its beginnings, and has recently gained momentum with its 2018 Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment.

National borders have, however, not lost in importance. To begin with, the implementation of free movement policies has implied challenges within ECOWAS and the European Union. These challenges have been due to political and socioeconomic differences between member States, as well as differences in migration-related interests, reflecting varying migration and remittances flows, labour market needs and geographical locations. In addition, the implementation of free movement policies has also led to a renegotiation of the role of national borders due to growing interregional

<sup>1</sup> IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre.

dependencies. For instance, controls at the European Union external borders and beyond have increased, based on cooperation with several African States. Finally, advancements on the creation of a free movement area in North Africa have been slow (Urso and Hakami, 2018).

This chapter illustrates how these two trends – towards lifting intraregional border controls and tightening external border controls – have shaped regional and transregional migration governance in West and North Africa and in Europe. It first looks at regional policy structures in West and North Africa, then analyses how these are integrated in wider continental trends and interact with free movement policies in Europe.

## 30.1. Free movement and borders in regional migration governance

### 30.1.1. Economic Community of West African States<sup>2</sup>

Intraregional mobility and migration have a long-standing tradition in West Africa. Compared with other world regions, such as Europe, West African modern States are relatively recent, having gained independence from former colonial powers only from the late 1950s. Historically grounded studies in the region have also shown that a space delimitation based on fixed territorial structures was introduced only by colonial administrations (Walther and Retailié, 2008). Before that, space was for a long time organized according to social affiliations, through a “fluid and constantly moving territoriality” (Lima, 2013). Locations that were geographically distant could be controlled by a single authority (see Mbembé, 2005). At the same time, lifestyles and practices based on mobility – such as nomadism, semi-nomadism and shifting cultivations – were frequent, allowing communities and households to adapt to a resource-poor environment. Whereas in recent decades national laws have progressively hindered nomadism (see FAO and IUCN, 2018), cross-border movements remain frequent in the region (Fedorova and Shupert, Chapter 4 of this volume) and entail practices as different as seasonal or more permanent migration, migration for education and trade, and family visits. While its forms have adapted to a changing world, this mobility continues to contribute to development and resilience in the region (Quartey, Addoquaye Tagoe and Boatemaa Setrana, Chapter 21 of this volume). This is increasingly also recognized by national governments through free movement policies, as well as diaspora policies.

An ambition to implement free movement policies has been present in the ECOWAS undertaking since the beginning. The 1975 ECOWAS Treaty foresaw “the abolition between the Member States of obstacles to the free movement of persons, services and capital” as one of the key objectives of the newly created Community (ECOWAS, 1975:article 2d). A few years later, the 1979 Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment was the first protocol to be ratified by its Member States. It provided for a progressive institution of the rights of entry, residence and establishment of ECOWAS citizens within the region, to be completed in three phases within 15 years. In the first phase, a right of entry and stay for up to 90 days, allowing ECOWAS citizens with a valid travel document and an international health certificate to enter the territory of other ECOWAS States without visas and entry permits, was implemented. In the second phase, a right of residence has been rendered possible via the introduction of residence permits. However, advancement on the implementation of the third phase and of a right of establishment has been slower.

<sup>2</sup> ECOWAS Member States are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

Free movement policies were also reaffirmed and mainstreamed in further policies of the Community, such as the revised ECOWAS Treaty of 1993, which reaffirmed the rights of entry, residence and establishment (ECOWAS, 1993:article 59). The promotion of free movement is one of the eight thematic priorities of the Migration Dialogue in West Africa, established in 2000, as well as one of the main focuses of the ECOWAS Common Approach to Migration, adopted in 2008. The Common Approach also marked a transition towards a more integrated regional migration management. Rather than only focusing on the implementation of free movement within the region, the Approach drafted a structure of how to deal with migration within, from and to the region, through a stronger coordination of national approaches. In addition to free movement, the Approach also contemplated policy harmonization, management of regular and irregular migration, fight against human trafficking, and promotion of the rights of migrants and refugees (ECOWAS, 2008). At the time of writing, the Approach is undergoing a revision.<sup>3</sup>

Instrumental to the realization of ECOWAS free movement policies has also been the progressive adoption of common travel documents, allowing citizens to move within the region. An ECOWAS travel certificate was introduced in 1985. In 2000, the Abuja Summit led to the adoption of an ECOWAS common passport. However, challenges persist in practice. In fact, approximately 53 per cent of the population of the ECOWAS region is unregistered and does not have proof of legal identity (World Bank, 2018). This hinders access to critical services and the ability to get official travel documents. According to the 1979 Protocol, however, official travel documents are currently required in order to cross borders within the Community.

While free movement policies remain a priority for ECOWAS Member States, national divergences have challenged their full implementation. In fact, the implementation of phase three of the 1979 Protocol – on the right of establishment of ECOWAS citizens in the whole territory of the Community – has yet to be completed. In addition, ECOWAS approaches have not yet been mainstreamed in migration-relevant national policies. For example, Adepoju has noted that national laws and employment codes often continue to restrict the access of foreigners, including ECOWAS citizens, to specific economic sectors, and that in some cases expulsions have also taken place (Adepoju, 2015).

The implementation of the 1979 Protocol is also challenged by political difficulties, institutional and administrative barriers, and practical hindrances. First, political support has sometimes been weak or unstable, funding insufficient and political mandates unclear. Inter-State border disputes have also been challenging. Additional concerns have been linked to disparities in the economic and labour market situations and population sizes of the various Member States. In particular, Nigeria has a higher gross domestic product (GDP) and a significantly larger population than other Member States. Political instability, as well as domestic politics and changing attitudes towards migrants, has also had an impact on the willingness of national governments to engage more in regional approaches and to renounce some national migration policy competencies. In addition, practical and administrative challenges have been related to border controls, sharing of information with citizens and increasing insecurity in the region, among others (Adepoju, 2015; Castillejo, 2019).

Additional national divergences have emerged following an increasing engagement on migration management of the Community and its Member States with European counterparts. According to some authors, this engagement has led some West African governments to dedicate greater policy attention to irregular migration at the national level (Castillejo, 2019; Jegen, 2020). Further national differences may be explained by the presence of bilateral agreements between European Union counterparts and specific ECOWAS Member States, which may not necessarily be aligned with regional priorities.

The negotiation of free movement and migration policies within the region could acquire a new form, in case Morocco joins the Community. In 2017, ECOWAS Member States reacted to Morocco's application with an approval for membership "in principle" and postponed a final decision after the completion of an in-depth study (Al Qays Talha Jebri, 2020). In case of a positive decision, migration-related interests of ECOWAS Member States would become further diversified, and this may increase the complexity of policy negotiations. In addition, if Morocco also

<sup>3</sup> Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, the Niger, Benin, Togo and Guinea-Bissau are also part of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). The WAEMU founding treaty (WAEMU, 1973) sets out the creation of a common market, based inter alia on the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital, and the right of establishment of self-employed or salaried persons. Article 76 of the Amended Treaty (WAEMU, 2003) furthermore contains provisions on freedom of movement, residence and establishment.

signed the 1979 Protocol, the ECOWAS and European Union free movement areas would share a common border, likely leading to intensified European Union efforts to engage with ECOWAS Member States on immigration control.

### 30.1.2. Arab Maghreb Union<sup>4</sup>

Intraregional migration is less important in North Africa, where more than 90 per cent of emigrants lived outside the continent in 2017, compared with less than 30 per cent of West African migrants (European Commission, Joint Research Centre, 2018). This relatively lower mobility within the region is also reflected in lower advancement with regard to regional free movement policies. In 1989, the Treaty instituting the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) foresaw that its member States would have worked “gradually towards achieving free movement of persons and transfer of services, goods and capital among them” (AMU, 1989:article 2). It also envisaged achieving a right of establishment. However, in recent decades, the activities of the Union have been hindered by low political support, inter-State disputes and internal crises. Challenges such as insecurity and difficult transport connections also contributed to this outcome. However, Tunisia has granted a right of visa-free entry to citizens of other AMU member States (Urso and Hakami, 2018). According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, further provisions on free movement have been introduced by Morocco and Libya.<sup>5</sup>

## 30.2. Continental efforts towards free movement policies and the role of regional economic communities

The idea of continent-wide free movement of persons can be traced back to the foundation of the African Union in 1963 as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (African Union and IOM, 2018). The first concrete provisions were enshrined in the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa 1980–2000, which called for States to allow the free movement of labour in the African common market. In 1991, the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community included a first binding commitment to “adopt, individually, at bilateral or regional levels, the necessary measures, in order to achieve progressively the free movement of persons, and to ensure the enjoyment of the right of residence and the right of establishment of their nationals within the Community” (OAU, 1991:article 43.1). The Treaty also assigned a key role to five regional zones that later became regional economic communities (RECs). After OAU’s transformation into the African Union in 2002, the African Union continued to support the idea of free movement policies on different occasions, such as at the Sirte Council in 2005, where it called for the introduction of an African passport, and where the establishment of a Continental Free Trade Area was decided upon in 2012. The need for free movement of persons as linked to the idea of pan-Africanism and an integrated and united continent was reaffirmed in 2015 in the African Union Agenda 2063 (African Union, 2015:article 73). Agenda 2063 assigned to RECs an important role for the implementation of free movement policies by 2023, and called on States to waive requirements for entry visas for African citizens moving within the continent. In 2018, the African Union finally adopted a Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment, which foresaw a progressive implementation of free movement policies, starting from the REC level. The revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa, adopted the same year, also recommended that States “enhance cooperation and coordination amongst States in subregions and regions with a view to facilitating free movement at bilateral, subregional and regional levels”, and to “harmonise and strengthen implementation of REC free movement provisions related to residence and establishment, in order to aid labour mobility” (African Union, 2018:article 2.2).

<sup>4</sup> AMU member States are Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

<sup>5</sup> See [www.uneca.org/pages/amu-free-movement-persons](http://www.uneca.org/pages/amu-free-movement-persons) (accessed 29 July 2020).

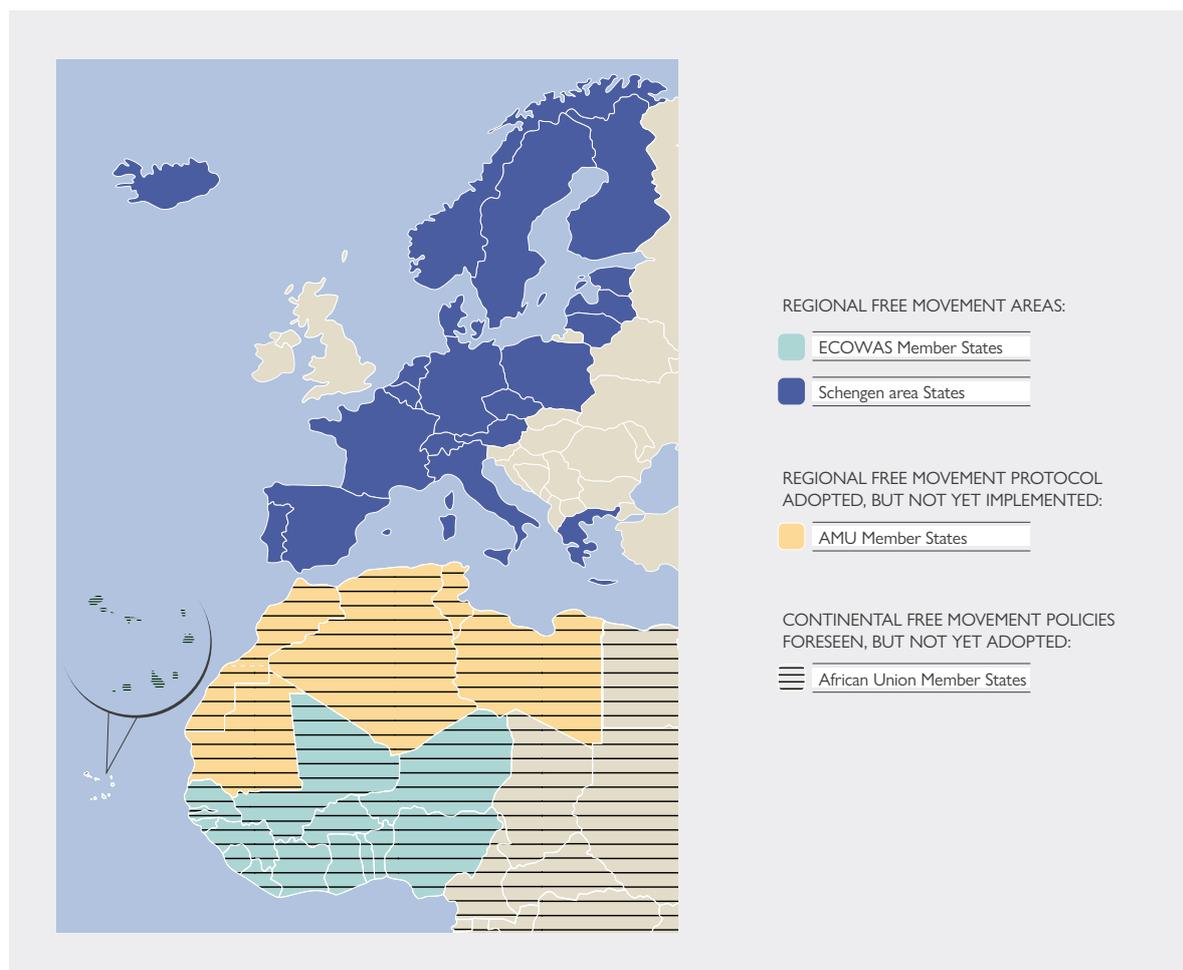
However, national divergences regarding free movement policies exist as related to these continental processes as well, and in addition to those at the regional level mentioned above. These include sociopolitical challenges, such as different sizes of national economies and populations, inter-State conflicts and tensions, varying inflows and outflows of migrants and remittances, different labour market needs, changing public attitudes towards migration and challenges related to national sovereignty and competencies. A low degree of implementation of African Union agreements also hinders more rapid progress towards free movement. Further challenges are related to national capacity and resources – for example, due to national differences in travel and personal documents standards and border management systems. National security and public order concerns, such as transborder crimes and terrorist activities, also need to be mentioned. Finally, there are public health concerns, due to limited transnational health monitoring systems, hampering the implementation of free movement policies and frameworks (see African Union and IOM, 2018).

### 30.3. Transregional migration governance: interactions between African and European policies

In recent decades, migration governance in West and North Africa has been increasingly linked with the migration governance processes of the European Union. Transregional migration policy negotiations spanning the two continents have taken place and influenced free movement and border control policies in ECOWAS and AMU member States.

Free movement of persons has been present in the European Union since its establishment as the European Economic Community in 1957. That year, the Treaty of Rome established a common market based on free movement of goods, people, services and capital. The Schengen Agreement, signed in 1985 and entered into force in 1995, abolished internal border controls.<sup>6</sup> In 1992, article 8 of the Treaty on European Union, signed in Maastricht, established European Union citizenship for all nationals of member States, involving a right to freedom of movement and of residence in the territory of all member States. In 1997, the Schengen acquis was transferred into the Treaties through a Protocol to the Amsterdam Treaty. The Amsterdam Treaty also called on member States to adopt measures ensuring the free movement of persons, in conjunction with measures with respect to external border controls, asylum and immigration. In 2004, the Directive 2004/38/EC, on the right of European Union citizens and their family members to move and reside freely within the European Union established further rights and obligations.

<sup>6</sup> The Schengen Agreement initially involved seven member States and now encompasses most European Union member States, except for Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland and Romania. However, Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania are currently in the process of joining the Schengen Area. Of non-European Union States, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein have joined the Schengen Area.

**Figure 30.1.** Free movement areas in West and North Africa and in Europe

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

In parallel to advancements on free movement of persons, since the late 1990s, European Union member States have started working on the establishment of a common immigration and asylum system. This system was to be based on responsibility sharing between member States and valid in the entire territory of the Union (internal dimension). Negotiations on this common system have been more difficult than foreseen, due to member States' reluctance to renounce national competencies and take up shared responsibilities on migration and asylum, as well as to increasing national divergences in terms of migration realities and wider social and economic situations (Schöfberger, 2019). For example, different European Union member States have different labour market needs and geographical locations, and therefore different migration-related priorities. As a result, a shared system on the internal dimension has yet to be identified, and the new Von der Leyen Commission has been working on a Pact on Migration and Asylum (European Commission, 2020). In order to decrease pressure on the difficult negotiation of the internal dimension of European Union migration management, member States soon after decided that this internal dimension was to be supported by an external dimension of migration policy, to be based on a strengthened engagement with States beyond the external borders of the Union. At the Tampere Summit in 1999, member States recommended increasing cooperation and partnerships with countries of origin and transit of migrants, including West and North African States (European Council, 1999).

As the external dimension was intended to be supportive of the internal dimension, negotiations between European Union member States have always had a strong influence on their engagement with African counterparts. This influence has changed over time. At first, policies such as the 2005 European Union Global Approach to Migration

and the 2006 Joint Africa–European Union Declaration on Migration and Development had diverse objectives. Some of these were related to a stronger control of the European Union external border, and included cooperation with countries of origin and transit on irregular migration and return. Others were related to migration as an opportunity for development in Africa and Europe, and included better integration of migrants and a facilitation of diaspora investment. However, in the following years, the focus of the internal dimension has changed. A combination of processes and factors, including the 2007/2008 financial crisis and increased migrant arrivals to the European Union in 2015, led to greater political divergencies between European Union member States. As a result, agreeing on a common migration and asylum system on the internal dimension has become increasingly difficult. Common concerns about securing the external European Union border have meant it has been relatively easier for the European Union and its member States to agree on strengthening efforts to control immigration into the Union – although national approaches to this have differed.

This has led to a stronger focus on border control in European Union member States' cooperation with African States. Policies such as the revised 2011 European Union Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, the 2015 European Agenda on Migration and the 2015 Valletta Political Declaration and Action Plan, as well as the related allocation of funds, placed a stronger emphasis on border security, on combatting irregular migration and on migrant return. Measures referring to migration as an opportunity for development in countries of origin and destination have decreased. At the same time, policies addressing migration as the result of development failures have gained momentum. They have been accompanied by an increased use of European Union development funds to address irregular migration, for example through the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa, launched at the Valletta Summit in 2015. The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa is largely based on the assumption that supporting development in African countries would reduce irregular emigration and displacement (European Commission, 2015). This has been challenged by theoretical and empirical research arguing that a positive income shock in lower-income countries would initially lead to an increase in emigration rates (see Clemens, 2014; Clemens and Gough, 2019). This strengthening policy linkage between development aid and migration management has also been in line with the increased conditionality of European Union external policies, including development policies, to cooperation in European Union migration management, which was introduced by the 2002 Seville Council Conclusions (European Council, 2002).

An increased focus of the European Union on border controls has been challenging in its policy negotiations with African counterparts. To begin with, ECOWAS member States are increasingly aware of the importance of the diaspora to support development and resilience, and are enhancing efforts to engage with it (Schöfberger, Chapter 33 of this volume). Remittances, which were more resilient than foreign aid and direct investment during the 2008 economic downturn (Gagnon, 2020), and have since been increasing, represent a consistent share of GDP in many countries in the region. In many West and North African countries, public attitudes towards migration tend to be very positive (Borgnäs and Acostamadiedo, Chapter 35 of this volume). Therefore, some governments may be reluctant to engage in measures that could limit the emigration possibilities of their citizens. For this reason, and due to the salience of return and readmission in domestic debates in some West African States, cooperation on forced return and readmission has been challenging (Adam et al., 2020). On the contrary, many West and North African States would like to see more regular migration possibilities for their citizens included in the debate. Issues related to State sovereignty and national competencies on migration, development and security are also intervening in negotiations. At the same time, some authors (*ibid.*) have suggested that African governments operate a mediation between such domestically and internationally driven policy preferences linked to donor support.

The effects of the European Union's increased attention to border controls on regional free movement policies in West Africa are still unclear. As mentioned above, some authors have argued that the European Union's engagement with African States has led some of them to strengthen border controls. However, as illustrated in the previous paragraph, West and North African governments are also, to different extents, reluctant to mainstream the European Union's increasing focus on border controls in their policies. These opposing trends may increase intraregional divergences between African States with different migration-related interests and with different relations with European Union member States. Such divergences may, in turn, hinder advancement on regional free movement agendas.

## 30.4. Conclusion

Trends towards lifting intraregional border controls and tightening external border controls have shaped regional and transregional migration governance in West and North Africa and in Europe. On the one hand, free movement policies were adopted quite early on in ECOWAS and the European Union, and have been discussed for a long time in AMU and the African Union. Their importance has also been reaffirmed through recent policy developments. On the other hand, their implementation remains challenging, due to the fact that States have different interests with regard to migration, and may be hesitant to engage in regional migration governance structures. Migration-related interest, as well as national sovereignties and identities, are moreover constantly renegotiated, particularly in West and North African States, which are relatively young independent States. Growing interregional dependencies have also contributed to render the implementation of free movement policies challenging.

Social and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic may have an impact on regional and transregional migration governance. In particular, they may reshape national migration-related interests, in parallel with changing labour market needs and employment levels of States that are differently affected by the pandemic. Resulting divergences between European Union member States, in particular, may hamper the ability to find an agreement on internal migration management and lead to an even stronger focus on the Union's external borders.



In the last decade, a stronger focus of the European Union on its external borders has also led it to strengthen its engagement on immigration control with member States of the ECOWAS and AMU. It is still too early to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the effects of this engagement on free movement policies in West and North Africa.

Whereas progress on lifting intraregional border controls has been considerable in both the European Union and ECOWAS, in the European Union it has taken place in parallel with a stronger tightening of external border controls than in ECOWAS. This may be due to the fact that divergences between member States on immigration from other regions are stronger between European than between West African States. The fact that ECOWAS member States are also member States of the African Union and therefore involved in continental efforts towards the establishment of Africa-wide free movement policies may also contribute to this difference. In addition, public attitudes to migration seem to be more positive in West Africa than in Europe (Boragnäs and Acostamadiedo, Chapter 35 of this volume).

Social and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic may have an impact on regional and transregional migration governance. In particular, they may reshape national migration-related interests, in parallel with changing labour market needs and employment levels of States that are differently affected by the pandemic. Resulting divergences between European Union member States, in particular, may hamper the ability to find an agreement on internal migration management and lead to an even stronger focus on the Union's external borders.

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## 31.

## The collateral damage of the war on smugglers along the Central Mediterranean Route

Luca Raineri<sup>1</sup>

VULNERABILITIES

SMUGGLING  
OF MIGRANTS

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

**Abstract:** This contribution describes how migrant smuggling along the Central Mediterranean Route has transformed in the past half decade. Available data demonstrate that migratory flows along the Route have considerably shrunk in comparison with the levels seen in 2014–2017. It remains questionable, though, whether the demand for smuggling services has also decreased. Available ethnographic evidence suggests that the prospect of northbound migration remains attractive for many sub-Saharan Africans. The rise of the entry barrier into the market of irregular crossings has stimulated the criminal organization of irregular migration. Trends recently detected in the region point to the progressive conversion of smuggling activities into thriving trafficking businesses, involving the exploitation of migrants and asylum seekers, and the trade of narcotic drugs.

Available data demonstrate that migratory flows along the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) have considerably shrunk in comparison to the peak of the migration “crisis”<sup>2</sup> of 2014–2017. This observation holds true not only for the last leg of the journey, connecting Libyan shores to Europe via Malta and Italy, but also for the trans-Saharan routes used by migrants and refugees to access Libya from the rest of Africa.<sup>3</sup>

Reasonably, these changes can be at least partly attributed to the impact of European Union measures to tackle irregular migration in the region, including the support to African governments for enhanced border controls and greater criminalization of irregular migration. European Union institutions have largely framed these measures as a way to “fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking” (with the two notions being often problematically conflated) (European Commission, 2016); “disrupt trafficking networks” (Council of the European Union, 2015); “disrupt the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks” (European Union External Action Service, 2017); and even wage “a war on smugglers” (European Commission, 2015a), as the then-European Union Migration and Home Affairs Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos put it. In line with this approach, available evidence suggests that the supply of smuggling services to transport migrants and asylum seekers from sub-Saharan Africa to Libya (Tubiana et al., 2018), and from Libya to Europe (Micallef et al., 2019b), has considerably reduced in the last few years (Cusumano and Villa, Chapter 16 of this volume).

<sup>1</sup> Sant’Anna School of Advanced Studies.

<sup>2</sup> For a critical take on the notion of migration “crisis”, see Jeandesboz and Pallister-Wilkins (2016).

<sup>3</sup> IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix data corroborate this assessment. However, one should point out that data collection challenges along remote African routes mitigate the accuracy of cross-time comparisons of migratory flows. In this case, existing databases concur with qualitative evidence and anecdotal reports that migratory flows from the Sudan and the Niger into Libya, even if sustained, have declined.

It remains questionable, though, whether European Union policies have also contributed to curbing the demand for smuggling services in countries of departure and transit. Available ethnographic evidence suggests that, in spite of a growing awareness about harsh security and economic conditions in Libya, the prospect of northbound migration to North Africa or Europe remains attractive for many sub-Saharan Africans (Mixed Migration Centre, 2019). As the impact on migratory flows of the measures to “tackle the root causes of migration”<sup>4</sup> is so far unproven, at least in the short term, the tightening of border controls and the criminalization of irregular migration risk fuelling the demand of smuggling services in order to circumvent the reduction of regular migration opportunities. In other words, the emphasis on enhanced border controls runs the chance of simply pushing underground the providers of smuggling services, who remain committed to meeting a steady demand of mobility.

From this perspective, the outsized attention to the supply side of smuggling appears to have prompted not only a quantitative reduction, but also a “qualitative shift” of irregular migration along the CMR. Regular and irregular migratory flows from sub-Saharan Africa (and especially West Africa) to North Africa have existed for decades. Until recently, however, the infrastructure of such flows has relied less on hierarchically integrated, professionally organized criminal networks than on highly opportunistic, poorly criminalized smuggling initiatives.<sup>5</sup> Deeply woven into the texture of ordinary social life, these small-scale businesses essentially harnessed their own social capital, which contributes to explaining why abusive and exploitative practices against migrants were quite infrequent (Benattia et al., 2015; Sanchez, Chapter 18 of this volume). In the last half decade or so, though, the rise of the entry barrier into the market of irregular crossings has stimulated the criminal organization of irregular migration. Small-scale, “homespun” migrant smugglers have been progressively driven out of business, giving way to a few transnational but highly organized networks, straddling the boundaries of countries such as Libya, the Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Guinea, the Sudan and Eritrea. In a highly securitized and competitive environment, these managed to survive and consolidate by resorting to large-scale corruption schemes involving high-level politicians, tribal authorities, militias and members of the security apparatuses (Raineri, 2018; El Kamouni-Janssen, 2017; Stocker, 2017).

One should point out that the more smuggling becomes organized, the less migrants’ agency and mutual trust relationships matter. This inevitably increases migrants’ and asylum seekers’ vulnerability to deception, abuses and exploitation. Facing the obstacles to northbound migration, smugglers seek to extract value from migrants through extortion in order to compensate the reduced turnout – for instance, with the promise of facilitating a journey that instead turns into an opportunity of exploitation.<sup>6</sup> The smuggling of migrants can therefore turn into a human trafficking business. The growing scope of the trafficking of women is a clear illustration of this. With the curtailment of migration opportunities to Europe, whether regular or irregular, many girls and women have remained trapped in formerly “transit countries” along the CMR, and found themselves forced into prostitution in order to “buy” their passage onward, pay their debts, or simply make a living. As for opaque businesses and criminal matters in general, and most notably within fragile countries, ethnographic evidence compensates here for the intrinsic lack of reliability of statistical records. The rise of sophisticated schemes of trafficking of women has been observed in Gao (Mali), Agadez (the Niger) and all over Libya (Mixed Migration Centre, 2019; Micallef et al., 2019b; Women Refugee Commission, 2019). Under the radar and underreported, their rapid expansion suggests the structuring role of highly organized Nigerian criminal organizations.

This should not be seen as an isolated phenomenon. Emerging evidence suggests that, while mixed migratory flows are shrinking along the CMR, the scope of human trafficking is broadening. Corroborating this assessment, recent research has observed the rise of debt-bound travel schemes in the Sudan and Chad, often leading to forced labour in the Saharan goldmining sites (Tubiana et al., 2018; Boukare, Chapter 23 of this volume); the increase of extortions and kidnapping-for-ransom against smuggled migrants in the Niger and Mali (Micallef et al., 2019a); and the systematic exploitation of the labour of migrants trapped in connection towns, detention centres and credit houses in Libya (al-Arabi, 2018; Micallef et al., 2019b). According to a Nigerian smuggler and trafficker based in Agadez, “credit houses [where migrants who travel on credit are sold to employers in order to pay off their debts] are hell on earth; it is worse than slavery: people suffer daily torments, and tortures are systematic”.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> As per the stated objectives of the European Union Trust Fund for Africa. See European Commission (2015b).

<sup>5</sup> UNODC (2011). For a more general framing, see Sanchez (2017).

<sup>6</sup> Available criminological reports have abundantly illustrated the point with empirical evidence (Malakooti, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Nigerian smuggler, Agadez, November 2019.

At the same time, there are indications that many smugglers have simply shifted to the smuggling of other “commodities”, equally (if not more) profitable, but less politically sensitive, and therefore less subject to law enforcement. The rampant rise of drug trafficking along former migrant smuggling routes is a case in point. As recent research has highlighted, Libyan coastal towns that used to be among the main embarkation of irregular migration to Europe – such as Zuwara and Sabratha – are becoming drug trafficking hubs (EMCDDA, 2019). Similarly, one of the former migrant smuggling kingpins is also believed to have turned to large-scale drug trafficking after the fallout of migrant smuggling operations in Sabratha.<sup>8</sup> In the same vein, the Niger is experiencing a dramatic surge of drug trafficking, especially of tramadol, a synthetically modified opioid. Many smugglers and drivers formerly facilitating irregular migration have reportedly switched to this emerging business, once they were driven out of business by the crackdown on migrant smuggling in 2016 (Micallef et al., 2019a). As a tramadol smuggler in Agadez put it: “I was working with migrants, until the implementation of the law 36/2015<sup>9</sup> made my activity impossible and forced me to find another job to feed my family. That’s how I started trading tramadol!”<sup>10</sup> Overall, while direct causal attributions are difficult to substantiate, these scattered pieces of evidence form a coherent picture, suggesting that individuals and criminal networks have invested in the field of drug trafficking to compensate the revenue losses brought about by the implementation of European Union-sponsored measures against irregular migration.

These outcomes are only partly surprising. It is, after all, a long-established trope of the criminological literature that criminalization often leads to criminogenic effects. The trends recently detected in the region point to the progressive conversion of smuggling activities into thriving trafficking businesses, involving the exploitation of migrants and asylum seekers, and the trade of harmful narcotic drugs. Despite the reduction in irregular migratory flows reaching Europe from Africa, this may lead one to legitimately question whether, overall, the European Union is being successful in its ambition to “disrupt human trafficking networks”.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> This refers to the law criminalizing migrant smuggling adopted by the Niger in 2015, and enforced since 2016.

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## Ousmane Diarra, President of the *Association Malienne des Expulsés*<sup>1</sup>

### What are AME's objectives?

The *Association Malienne des Expulsés* (AME) was created in 1996 by Malian migrants who were forcibly returned from different countries, including France, Uganda, Saudi Arabia and Liberia. Since then, we have been working on return and expulsion, focusing on migrants' rights and humanitarian emergencies.

### Who are you supporting?

At the beginning, we mainly supported forcibly returned migrants, then migrants who had been rejected at the borders, and now also migrants who have returned voluntarily. As an association, we define "expulsés" as migrants who were able to reach their country of destination, but were later forcibly returned from it, or who were not able to reach it because they were not allowed in at the border; and voluntary returnees as migrants who have had unlucky migration experiences and who decide to return to Mali with international support. In practice, in the first semester of 2019, we worked with 6,621 returnees from Africa, Europe, North America and Asia. On 15 January 2020, we supported Mali in receiving 180 citizens forcibly returned from Algeria and the next day in receiving 117 from Libya.

### What kind of support do you provide to returnees?

At the beginning, we used to go to the airport of Bamako, to control that the rights of forcibly returned migrants were respected. Since then, we have increasingly focused on supporting them upon their return. Many of them come from rural regions of Mali and don't have family in Bamako. Therefore, we welcome them in a host centre, where we support them with food, clothing and travel assistance to return to their places of origin. In cooperation with Doctors Without Borders France, we also provide psychosocial support to returnees who are traumatized by their migration experiences or by having been expelled, sometimes after having lived for years in their countries of destination, or who are rejected by their families and communities. In this last case, we also try to mediate and to support the returnees' reintegration in their local context of origin. We also have a mutual support group for migrants who were expelled by different countries of destination. In addition to the psychological difficulties I already mentioned, many of them also face health problems or economic difficulties, as employment opportunities and resources are scarce in Mali. Here again, we think that we need to distinguish between persons who have decided to return voluntarily, even if they could have stayed in their countries of destination, perhaps buying their own flights and with the purpose of starting a business, and persons who did not have a choice. For the latter, it is much more difficult. The two groups are also perceived differently by society, as the former are more likely to invest and create jobs for other persons, and the latter often have problems to pay their own expenses. This is a big problem, in fact, due to which many of them decide to emigrate again.

### How is the situation now, compared to 10 years ago?

The overall number of returnees has increased. However, 10 years ago, most returnees were persons who had been forcibly returned from their countries of destination, whereas now they are mostly voluntary returnees and migrants rejected at the border. Voluntary return has increased in volume in recent years, particularly after the Valletta Summit in 2015. And while we also have many migrants that were rejected by Algeria, we didn't have them 10 years ago. Of course, there are still Malian migrants who are forcibly returned from different countries in Europe, Africa and Asia, but these are less than 10 years ago.

### What would you recommend to researchers and policymakers?

In Africa, development is linked to agriculture, farming and fishing. We think that this is also where we need to start from, to increase the well-being of aspiring migrants and returnees in their local context, and to contrast mystified perceptions of migration. We need to offer them this kind of training. At AME, we have developed a project in this sense, but are still searching for funding.

<sup>1</sup> Interview conducted by Irene Schöfberger, IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre.

## 32.

## Migration governance in North and West Africa: national policy frameworks

Philippe Fargues<sup>1</sup>

BORDER MANAGEMENT

CONSULAR PROTECTION  
AND ASSISTANCEMIGRANT AND DIASPORA  
CONTRIBUTIONS

**Abstract:** This chapter addresses two core questions: (a) How does international migration impact national frameworks of rights and duties?; (b) What policies do States develop to deal with their expatriate nationals and the entry and stay of foreign nationals? Section 32.2 reviews legislation on nationality and the various ways it has evolved in response to ground realities created by emigration and immigration. Section 32.3 describes States' strategies to make their nationals abroad a resource for the development of their countries of origin, notably through remittances and investment. Section 32.4 is on States' efforts to organize their national communities abroad, and connect them to various aspects of their homelands' lives, while protecting them in the foreign countries where they reside. Section 32.5 deals with the reception of foreign nationals and focuses on irregular migration and its growing criminalization in countries along the Central Mediterranean Route. A common pattern emerges in North and West Africa, by which States recognize international migrants as citizens of the countries they come from more than full members of the ones where they actually live.

## 32.1. Introduction

The claim of a triple unity – one people, one narrative and one territory – is a founding principle of modern nations.<sup>2</sup> International migrants seem to challenge this unity: immigrants because, although they are present on the territories of the nations, they do not share the narrative of their citizens; emigrants because, although they share the narratives of their nations of origin, they are absent from their territories. At independence, all African nations established nationality laws and rules of entry and stay for foreign nationals. But it took them more time to articulate proper, identifiable migration policies. This chapter will successively review North and West African policies on nationality, expatriate nationals and irregular migration.

## 32.2. Defining nationals

The modern governance of migration started with nationality laws. At independence, all North and West African States defined who nationals are. They all adopted at the

<sup>1</sup> European University Institute.

<sup>2</sup> This claim is all the more important in young nations in which complex ethno-linguistic makeups risk challenging national political constructs. Nations are "imagined communities" in the words of Anderson (1991).

beginning a principle of nationality transmission by descent (*jus sanguinis*): sons and daughters of nationals (a national father in the first nationality laws of the Maghreb) are themselves nationals.<sup>3</sup> With the passing of time, however, numbers of immigrants and emigrants grew and States had to amend the law in order to respond to situations created by international migration. Table 32.1 summarizes the main features of nationality laws today.

Immigration raised the question of granting individuals born in the country from foreign national parents a right to nationality in virtue of their place of birth (*jus soli*). Gradually, all West African States except Côte d'Ivoire and the Gambia introduced some *jus soli* in their nationality laws. Under certain conditions, such as continuous residence in the country, children of immigrants would become eligible for nationality of their countries of birth. In Côte d'Ivoire, the permanent establishment of large numbers of immigrants in the absence of any *jus soli* has produced a sizeable proportion of non-citizens representing around one fourth of the total population.

By contrast with West Africa, Maghreb countries (apart from Mauritania) are still sticking to an almost exclusive paternal *jus sanguinis*, admitting only a few exceptions, such as in the case of orphans or children born of unknown parents. However, in order to address the situation of children born of mixed couples, all Maghreb countries except Libya have extended the principle of *jus sanguinis* to maternal descent: children born in the country of a national mother and a foreign national father now have a right to inherit nationality from their mother when the foreign father is dead or non-resident (Tunisia, 1993; Algeria, 2005; Morocco, 2007).

While dominant *jus sanguinis* in the Maghreb has made post-independence immigrants non-citizens in the countries where they live and many were born (second-generation migrants), Morocco has granted them citizenship-like rights. Article 30 of the Moroccan Constitution of 2011 stipulates that “Foreigners under Moroccan jurisdiction enjoy the fundamental freedoms recognized to Moroccan citizens” in accordance with the law. Those among them who reside in Morocco can participate in local elections by virtue of the law, of the application of international conventions or of practices of reciprocity.<sup>4</sup> Recognizing some political rights of non-citizens is a considerable step towards migrants’ full inclusion.

**Table 32.1.** Right to nationality in North and West Africa

Country	Year of original nationality law	<i>Jus Sanguinis</i>		<i>Jus Soli</i> (Some)	Naturalization by marriage	Dual nationality	
		Father	Mother				
Algeria	1963	Y <sup>a</sup>	Y	N <sup>b</sup>	Y	Y	(1963)
Burkina Faso	1961	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(1989)
Côte d'Ivoire	1961	Y	Y	N	R <sup>c</sup>	R	(1961)
Gambia	1965	Y	Y	N	Y	R	(2001)
Guinea	1960	Y	Y	Y	R	N	–
Libya	1954	Y	N	N	R	R	(1954)
Mali	1962	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(1995)
Mauritania	1961	Y	Y	Y	R	R	(2010)
Morocco	1958	Y	Y	N	R	Y	(1958)
Niger	1961	Y	Y	Y	R	Y	(2014)
Senegal	1961	Y	N	Y	R	R	(1961)
Tunisia	1956	Y	Y	N	R	Y	(1975)

<sup>a</sup> N: No right; <sup>b</sup> Y: Full right; <sup>c</sup> R: Restricted right.

Sources: Perrin, 2016; and Manby, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> For the Maghreb countries, Parolin, 2009; Perrin, 2007:479–497. For West Africa, Manby, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Morocco's Constitution of 2011, available at [www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Morocco\\_2011.pdf?lang=en](http://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Morocco_2011.pdf?lang=en).

A second question raised by immigration is whether nationality can be obtained in the course of one's life, and in particular if a national can transmit it to a foreign spouse. The right to transmit nationality through the marriage bond exists in all North and West African countries. After a certain duration of marriage and residence in the country, a foreign woman can claim the nationality of her national husband. In most cases, however, there is a gender asymmetry and a woman cannot pass on her nationality to a foreign husband. In Algeria, the first nationality law (1963) provided for the transmission of Algerian nationality by marriage on condition that the naturalized woman renounce her nationality of birth (Perrin, 2016).

Marriage is not the only reason for which a foreigner can be granted nationality in North and West African countries. Nationality laws recognize other reasons, such as long-term residency, but due to strict conditions and heavy bureaucratic steps, naturalization is uncommon across the entire region. Numbers of naturalized people are in the dozens per year in Burkina Faso, Senegal, the Niger and Guinea. In Côte d'Ivoire, around 100,000 cases of naturalization since independence represent a tiny 2 per cent of the current migrant stock in the country (Manby, 2016). Things could be slightly different in Libya, where the law defines an "Arab nationality" that seems to facilitate the acquisition of Libyan nationality for nationals of other Arab States, but no empirical evidence confirming this is available.

International migration raises another issue: that of dual nationality. Over the years, long-term migrants become integrated into their host countries, the nationality of which they, or their children, might acquire. This applies in particular to sub-Saharan and Maghrebi migrants in Europe. Can migrants and their descendants keep the nationalities of their countries of origin once they have become nationals of the countries where they live? Is loyalty to a nation compatible with multiple nationalities? States of the Central Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) and Senegal, which were all countries with large emigrant populations in Europe at the time of independence, have since the very beginning provided for dual nationality under specific conditions. The same applies to Côte d'Ivoire, but for opposite reasons: at independence, the country was already host to large numbers of farmers originating from Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) and other neighbouring countries whose contribution was deemed instrumental to the economic success of Côte d'Ivoire.

### 32.3. Making nationals abroad a resource for the nation<sup>5</sup>

In the first years following independence, young African nations were fragile political, economic and social constructs. They were often crossed by divisive lines of ethnicity, language, religion and ideology in a period marked by the bipolarism of the Cold War. Several governments were not looking favourably at the emigration of their citizens. They saw those leaving as disloyal to their nations. Moreover, governments themselves were fragile and unwilling to accept democratic challenges to their power. Therefore, a number of opponents went into exile, often finding shelter in former colonial powers. In this context of distrust, several African States put barriers to the emigration of their citizens (such as unavailability of passports and exit visa requirements) and did not make efforts to maintain links with their expatriates. In an initial stage, transnational bonds of families and communities hardly benefited from the support of States.

Later, when States lost some of their grip on economies and implemented International Monetary Fund-inspired programmes of neoliberal economic reform while facing high levels of youth unemployment, they started to reconsider emigration. Understandingly, no government would openly advocate the emigration of their citizens, as this would be admitting their own failure. Yet, many saw it as a safety valve, as the departure of young people would bring relief on the labour markets, unless emigrants had skills in heavy demand, in which case governments would qualify their leaving as "brain drain" or "brain flight". Moreover, a sense developed that émigrés could be resources for their countries of origin. One after the other, all African States established institutions to deal with their expatriate nationals (Table 32.2). In Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Member States, it consists of a

<sup>5</sup> On the early period of diaspora policies in North Africa, see Brand (2002) and Fargues (2013). On sub-Saharan Africa, see ICMFD and IOM (2015).

Directorate of the “Ministry of African Integration and (Burkinabe, Ivoirians, Malians, Nigériens, Senegalese) Nationals Abroad”, a designation that highlights the African dimension of international migration. On its side, Morocco created three institutions for its nationals living abroad: a Ministry, a Council and a Foundation.

A common concern of States over recent decades has been to make expatriate nationals effective actors in the economic development of their countries of origin. In particular, fostering remittances and inciting migrants to invest in their homeland became part of African development policies. In 2018, migrant workers' remittances represented a range between a relatively low 0.8 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in Côte d'Ivoire (a predominantly migrant-receiving country), and 1 per cent in Algeria (a middle-income oil-rich country), to a very high 6.2 per cent in Morocco, 9.1 per cent in Senegal and 15.1 per cent in the Gambia, making emigration a highly profitable export for several African economies.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 32.2.** State institutions linking expatriates and their countries of origin

Country	Remittances, percentage of GDP (2018)	Institutions
Algeria	1.0%	Delegate Ministry in charge of the National Community Established Abroad – Consultative Council for the National Community Abroad
Burkina Faso	3.1%	Ministry of African Integration and Burkinabè Abroad
Côte d'Ivoire	0.8%	Ministère de l'Intégration Africaine et des Ivoiriens de l'Extérieur - Direction Générale des Ivoiriens de l'Extérieur
Gambia	15.3%	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad
Guinea	0.4%	Ministère des Affaires étrangères, de la Coopération, de l'Intégration africaine et des Guinéens de l'étranger; Haut Conseil des Guinéens de l'étranger
Libya	n/a	n/a
Mali	5.1%	Haut Conseil des Maliens de l'Extérieur, Ministère des Maliens de l'Extérieur et de l'Intégration Africaine
Mauritania	1.5%	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development; specific governmental committees dealing with migration management
Morocco	6.2%	Ministry in Charge of Moroccans Living Abroad; Council of the Moroccan Community Living Abroad; Hassan II Foundation for Moroccans Living Abroad
Niger	3.0%	Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, de la Coopération, de l'Intégration Africaine et des Nigériens à l'Extérieur, Haut Conseil des Nigériens à l'Extérieur
Senegal	9.1%	Ministère des Affaires étrangères et des Sénégalais de l'extérieur; Direction générale des Sénégalais de l'Extérieur; Fonds d'Appui à l'Investissement des Sénégalais de l'Extérieur
Tunisia	4.9%	Office of Tunisians Abroad

States understood that migrants will remit and invest in their countries of origin all the more readily when they trust their financial systems. Generating national expatriates' confidence for attracting their money was one of the reasons that prompted the relaxation of exchange controls and currencies convertibility in the Maghreb countries. Allowing traceable bank transfers at no or low cost for migrants became States' response to the spread of illegal “suitcase

<sup>6</sup> See [www.worldbank.org/en/topic/labormarkets/brief/migration-and-remittances](http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/labormarkets/brief/migration-and-remittances).

trading” between Maghreb and Europe. This practice, which was particularly common among Algerian émigrés, consisted of having consumer goods smuggled into their countries of origin in lieu of money transfers. It fostered the emergence of large-scale illegal cross-border trade, resulting in considerable tax losses (Tarrius, 2010). Suitcase trading had not developed the same way in sub-Saharan Africa, where the CFA franc, the currency of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, the Niger, Togo and Senegal), was pegged to the French franc, then the euro, and enjoyed an unlimited guarantee for convertibility (the CFA franc is poised to end in 2020 and be replaced by the “eco”).

Remittances benefit migrants and their families in the first instance. As a way to make them profitable to the broader economy of origin countries, State and non-State actors in Africa launched investment programmes and opened banks targeting expatriate nationals. For example, the Government of Senegal has established a Support Fund for Investments of Senegalese Nationals Residing Abroad,<sup>7</sup> with a mandate for promoting productive investments by expatriate Senegalese “with sufficient resources and a desire to carry out projects at national level”, in other words to expand the developmental impact of remittances beyond the migrant’s family circle.<sup>8</sup> The Fund grants loans up to CFAF 15 million (USD 25,000) for developing projects in all sectors except commerce, transport and real estate. It includes a special programme (Financement des Femmes de la Diaspora) dedicated to the promotion of female entrepreneurship. Moreover, the Housing Bank of Senegal has developed a financial product (Pack Diaspora) intended for Senegalese nationals residing abroad. Similar programmes now exist in most African countries.

In Guinea, the High Council of Guineans Living Abroad in 2008 organized the first forum for mobilizing Guinean expatriates to contribute innovative financing of development in Guinea (Diallo, 2015). In Burkina Faso, the Government incites its citizens living abroad to invest in a “Diaspora City”, a special real estate investment fund.<sup>9</sup> In the Gambia, the West African country most dependent on migrant remittances, the Gambia Diaspora Directorate coordinates the Government’s work in “optimizing diaspora input and contributions to national development, removing unnecessary bureaucratic barriers, and assisting individuals in the diaspora and organizations to implement their projects”.<sup>10</sup>

## 32.4. Organizing national communities abroad

While fostering remittances and investment is a core dimension of diaspora policies of African States, taking care of cultural links between members of the diaspora and their homeland has gained importance for North African States of origin for a permanent emigration to Europe. These States see maintaining a sense of belonging to their nations of origin among second-generation migrants as a challenge. In order to rouse an Arab and Muslim identity among their diasporas in Europe, they have supported schools providing language courses and religious education to children of migrants in European cities, as well as holiday camps in the Maghreb to accommodate students for summer vacations. Article 16 of Morocco’s Constitution of 2011 states that “The Kingdom of Morocco works for the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of Moroccan citizens abroad ... It is committed to the maintenance and to the development of their human ties, notably cultural, with the Kingdom, and the preservation of their national identity”.<sup>11</sup> On 1 November 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation created a hotline for Moroccans living abroad directly accessible from their main countries of residence (Medias24, 2018).

Organizing the diaspora is on all States’ agendas in West Africa. Making their communities abroad part of the administrative and political life of their homelands and protecting them in the countries where they live is the goal. The situation of migrants originating from Burkina Faso in Côte d'Ivoire is a case in point. For decades, people from Burkina Faso had lived in harmony with locals in Côte d'Ivoire. In the late 1990s, however, the invention of “Ivority” – an identity that indigenous peoples of Côte d'Ivoire would share – and the civil war that broke out in 2002

<sup>7</sup> Decree 2008-635 of 11 June 2008 creating the Fonds d'Appui à l'Investissement des Sénégalais de l'Extérieur (FAISE). See <http://faise.sn>.

<sup>8</sup> FAISE “vise à promouvoir les investissements productifs des Sénégalais de l'Extérieur disposant d'un minimum de ressources financières et désireux de réaliser leurs projets sur l'ensemble du territoire national”. See <http://faise.sn>.

<sup>9</sup> See <https://lefaso.net/spip.php?article84447>.

<sup>10</sup> See <http://gambiadiaspora.net>.

<sup>11</sup> See [www.usc.es/export9/sites/webinstitucional/gl/institutos/ceso/descargas/Const-Morocco\\_2011.pdf](http://www.usc.es/export9/sites/webinstitucional/gl/institutos/ceso/descargas/Const-Morocco_2011.pdf).

suddenly challenged their integration in society. Many migrants fell victim to xenophobic acts, prompting their (or their parents') State of origin to entrust a dedicated institution, the General Directorate of Burkinabe Living Abroad (DGBE), with protecting and organizing their community (Loada, 2006). At present, DGBE manages a community directory and convenes a General Assembly of Burkinabe Living Abroad.<sup>12</sup> In Côte d'Ivoire, where the large Burkina Faso community had been structured for many years along the lines of traditional chiefdoms in Burkina Faso, DGBE has worked to reorganize the community in accordance with administrative structures in Burkina Faso by granting traditional delegates a modern administrative function (Les Echos du Faso, 2019). Similar institutions were created by all ECOWAS countries (Schöfberger, Chapter 33 of this volume).<sup>13</sup>

## 32.5. Criminalizing irregular migration

In parallel with efforts to incorporate expatriate nationals into their citizenry, African States have built up instruments to remove undocumented foreign nationals from their territories. In addition, during the last two decades, African States of origin or transit of irregular migration to European States have become increasingly involved in the remote control of the European Union's external border.

Laws on entry and stay passed soon after independence had defined punishments for unlawful status of foreign nationals. However, when irregular migration and cross-border smuggling gained momentum in the early 2000s, one after the other States along the Central Mediterranean Route amended laws to include new categories of offences and tighten sanctions (Table 32.3). On the other side, it is during this period that several European States, then the European Union, started to rely on third countries of origin and transit to control Europe's external borders. Stopping clandestine migration became for African States on migratory routes to Europe a bargaining chip at the negotiating table, in exchange for more flexible visa regimes.

**Table 32.3.** Instruments to combat irregular migration, smuggling and human trafficking

Country	Irregular migration	Human trafficking
Algeria	Law No. 08–11 of 2008 governing the entry, stay and circulation of foreign nationals; Law No. 09–01 of 2009, modifying the Criminal Code to add the offence of irregular exit from its territory for its citizens and foreign residents, the offence of marriage of convenience and the crime of migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons (Art. 303)	Law No. 09–01 of 25 February 2009 modifying the Criminal Code
Burkina Faso	Law No. 029-2008/AN Art. 10; Art. 11; Art. 12: Smugglers, as well as those who falsify visas, travel documents and permits of stay, are subject to penalties of 5 to 10 years' imprisonment	Law No. 029–2008/AN to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Related Practices
Côte d'Ivoire	Law No. 2004–303, Citizens from non- ECOWAS States must have a permit of stay; citizens from ECOWAS States are eligible for a resident card. Art. 15: Irregular stay constitutes a criminal offence. Art. 16: Facilitating the stay of foreigners in an irregular situation is punishable by imprisonment and a fine	Law No. 2016–1111 to combat trafficking in persons; Law No. 2010-272 pertaining to the Prohibition of Child Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labour - Bill adopted by Parliament 24 May 2018

<sup>12</sup> Direction Générale des Burkinabè de l'extérieur 19/10/2019. Available at [www.integration.govbf/ministere/services/details/tx\\_news\\_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&tx\\_news\\_pi1%5Bcontrollier%5D=News&tx\\_news\\_pi1%5Bnews%5D=69&cHash=d7f4f3a7b6edb691c3859e86afc8009d](http://www.integration.govbf/ministere/services/details/tx_news_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&tx_news_pi1%5Bcontrollier%5D=News&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=69&cHash=d7f4f3a7b6edb691c3859e86afc8009d).

<sup>13</sup> See <http://gambiandiaspora.net/thematic-box/gambia-house-model-diaspora-diplomacy/>.

Country	Irregular migration	Human trafficking
Gambia	No domestic law penalizing the smuggling of migrants	Trafficking in Persons Act (2007) - National Agency Against Trafficking In Persons (NAATIP)
Guinea	Law 2016–59-Criminal Code Act. Art. 334 Penalizing the smuggling of migrants	Criminal Code Act. Art. 339 Penalizing violent acts, inhuman treatment and exploitation of migrants
Libya	Law No. 02 of 2004 and Law No. 19 of 2010 to combat irregular migration, providing for prison penalty and fine for the facilitation of irregular entry or exit	Law No. 10 (2013) concerning the Criminalization of Torture, Forced Abduction and Discrimination
Mali	Law 2012-023 to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Related Practices. Art. 4: illegal trafficking in migrants includes organizing the travel, accommodation or transit of clandestine migrants originating, transiting or destined to Mali's national territory	Law 2012-023 to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Related Practices
Mauritania	Law 2010-021 relating to the fight against trafficking: defines illegal entry (Art. 1) and illegal residence (Art. 8), and penalizes those facilitating such offences	Law 2010–021 relating to the fight against trafficking
Morocco	Law No. 02-03 of 11 November 2003 on the entry and stay of foreign nationals into Morocco, emigration and irregular immigration: strengthens repression against people who facilitate or organize irregular entry or exit; penalizes irregular immigrants or emigrants, should they be foreign or national citizens; introduces legal rights and protective instruments	Law 27–14 of 25 August 2016 relating to the fight against trafficking in human beings
Niger	Law 2015–36 to punish smuggling and trafficking in migrants; protect the rights of trafficked migrants; facilitate international cooperation to prevent trafficking in migrants. Penalizes smugglers facilitating illegal entry or exit (Art. 10) or stay (Art. 12) of a non-Nigerien, non-resident. Penalizes any carrier who omits to verify that each passenger has the proper documents to enter the State of destination or transit (Art. 20)	Law 2015-36 to punish trafficking in migrants. Aggravating circumstances, among others: inhuman treatment of the migrant, the migrant is a minor, a pregnant woman, etc.
Senegal	Law 2005-06 to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Related Practices. Art. 4 punishes clandestine migration by land, sea or air, originating from, transiting through or destined for the national territory	Law 2005–06 on Trafficking in Persons and Related Practices and the Protection of Victims
Tunisia	Organic Law 2004–6 modifying and completing Law 75–40 on passports and travel documents. Law 2004–6 reinforces penal sentences against assistance to irregular migration: up to 3 years in prison and 8 000 dinars fine for people who contribute, even without profit, to irregular migration; up to 4 years in prison for hosting a “clandestine”. A non-denouncement is also punished	Organic Law 2016-61 to prevent and punish trafficking in persons

Morocco was the first country to introduce a specific law against irregular migration. In the context of escalating numbers of undocumented migrants across the Gibraltar Strait, its Government issued Law 02–03 of November 2003 penalizing not only migrants with irregular status entering or living in the country, but also for the first time undocumented migrants exiting the country, nationals as well as foreigners, and persons involved in accommodating irregular migrants or facilitating their travel. At the time of writing (early 2020), an estimated 70,000–80,000 irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa lived in Morocco, where many of them were probably stuck for lack of a European visa. In 2013–2014 and 2017–2018, the Government conducted two large-scale amnesties by which around 50,000 undocumented migrants were regularized, representing 85 per cent of all applicants.<sup>14</sup> With migratory routes gradually shifting from the western to central Mediterranean Sea, all Maghreb countries soon followed Morocco regarding the criminalization of irregular migration.

In 2004, Tunisia adopted Law 2004-6 punishing with heavy penalties irregular migrants and migrant smugglers, as well as any persons who would wittingly refrain from reporting to the police an act of irregular migration or migrant smuggling committed by others (Art. 45).<sup>15</sup> In 2008, Algeria in turn issued Law No. 08–11, which added marriage of convenience, with the aim of regularizing migrants to the list of offences. Law 08-11 was invoked by Algeria in recent years (from 2014 to the present) to deport many tens of thousands of sub-Saharan migrants, including second-generation children born in the country, a mass expulsion heavily criticized by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants during a 2018 visit to the Niger.<sup>16</sup> In February 2009, Algeria amended its criminal law to include the offence of irregular exit for nationals and foreign residents (Art. 303).<sup>17</sup> The law, however, was not able to curb the flow of Algerians irregularly departing by sea to Europe, which remains significant to this day (early 2020).<sup>18</sup> Libya was the last country of the Maghreb to adopt a law penalizing clandestine exit (Law No. 19 of 2010). Law No. 10 of 2013 on the Criminalization of Torture, Forced Abduction, and Discrimination includes provisions to specifically protect migrants in detention.<sup>19</sup>

In West Africa, Senegal issued a law against migrant smuggling and human trafficking as early as 2005, at a time when the most perilous sea route to a European State, linking Senegal to the Canary Islands, started to be used by migrant smugglers to bypass the Gibraltar Strait. Law 2005-06 punishes irregular migration by land, sea or air, originating from, transiting through or destined for the national territory.<sup>20</sup> The law, however, did not prevent the number of migrants travelling this route to peak in the three following years, with around 50,000 crossings from 2006 to 2008. Then Mauritania, another point of departure for clandestine migration by sea to the Canary Islands, issued Law 2010–021 relating to the fight against trafficking in migrants, which makes no clear distinction between smuggling and trafficking.<sup>21</sup> Mali issued Law 2012-23, of which Art. 4 penalizes organizing the travel, accommodation or transit of irregular migrants originating from, transiting through or destined for Mali. In 2020, however, this law remained little known to the judiciary in the country.<sup>22</sup>

The Niger went a step further with Law 2015–36 relating to trafficking in migrants, which explicitly criminalizes both irregular entry and exit of any person who is not a national or a legal resident of the Niger, and penalizes the migrant person as well as the smuggler.<sup>23</sup> The Guinea Criminal Code Act of 2016 penalizes migrant smuggling (Art. 334) and violent acts, inhuman treatment and exploitation of migrants (Art. 339).<sup>24</sup> The Gambia is at present the only country in the region with no domestic law criminalizing migrant smuggling.<sup>25</sup> Côte d'Ivoire is a case in point. A major destination for migrants from within the ECOWAS area of free circulation, it had no specific legislation on

<sup>14</sup> Kingdom of Morocco, Ministry of Foreign Affairs African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates. Available at [www.diplomatie.ma/en/node/1680](http://www.diplomatie.ma/en/node/1680).

<sup>15</sup> *Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne*, No. 11. 6 February 2004, pp. 252 and following.

<sup>16</sup> Voice of America Afrique. 9 October 2018. Available at [www.voaafricque.com/a/l-onu-appelle-l-algerie-a-cesser-immEDIATEMENT-les-expulsions-de-migrants-africains/4605757.html](http://www.voaafricque.com/a/l-onu-appelle-l-algerie-a-cesser-immEDIATEMENT-les-expulsions-de-migrants-africains/4605757.html).

<sup>17</sup> Loi n° 09-01 du 25 février 2009 modifiant et complétant l'ordonnance n° 66-156 du 8 juin 1966 portant Code pénal, *Journal officiel*, 2009-03-08, n° 15. Available at [www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p\\_lang=fr&p\\_isn=81146&p\\_country=DZA&p\\_count=1086](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=fr&p_isn=81146&p_country=DZA&p_count=1086).

<sup>18</sup> Algeria-Watch, Criminalisation de la migration. Available at <https://algeria-watch.org/?cat=198>.

<sup>19</sup> Available at [www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p\\_lang=en&p\\_isn=96439&p\\_country=LBY&p\\_count=150](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=96439&p_country=LBY&p_count=150).

<sup>20</sup> Loi n° 2005-06 du 10 mai 2005 relatif à la lutte contre la traite des personnes et pratiques assimilées et à la protection des victimes. Available at [www.unodc.org/res/cld/document/loi-no--2005-06-du-10-mai-2005\\_html/Loi\\_No\\_2005-06\\_FR.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/res/cld/document/loi-no--2005-06-du-10-mai-2005_html/Loi_No_2005-06_FR.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> Loi n° 2010- 021 du 10 février 2010 relative à la lutte contre le trafic illicite de migrants. *Journal Officiel de la République Islamique de Mauritanie*, 30 April 2010. Available at <http://anac.mr/ANAC/JOI/2010/1214%20fr%20%20sc.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> See [www.maliweb.net/societe/traites-des-personnes-et-traffic-illicite-de-migrants-des-crimes-negliges-qui-rongent-le-mali-2857967.html](http://www.maliweb.net/societe/traites-des-personnes-et-traffic-illicite-de-migrants-des-crimes-negliges-qui-rongent-le-mali-2857967.html).

<sup>23</sup> See [www.unodc.org/res/cld/document/ner/2015/loi\\_relative\\_au\\_trafic\\_illicite\\_de\\_migrants\\_html/Loi\\_N2015-36\\_relative\\_au\\_trafic\\_illicite\\_de\\_migrants.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/res/cld/document/ner/2015/loi_relative_au_trafic_illicite_de_migrants_html/Loi_N2015-36_relative_au_trafic_illicite_de_migrants.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> See [www.refworld.org/pdfid/44a3eb9a4.pdf](http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/44a3eb9a4.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> See <http://thepoint.gm/afrika/gambia/article/lack-of-domestic-laws-on-trafficking-gives-girls-way-to-middle-east-naatip-director>.

irregular migration until the political crisis of the early 2000s, which stirred up xenophobia in the country. In 2004, the country adopted Law 2004-303, penalizing irregular stay and its facilitation (Art. 16), and punishing foreigners threatening public order with deportation.<sup>26</sup> But it was not until 2016 that a full law on trafficking in persons similar to other ECOWAS Member States' was passed in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>27</sup>

On the other side, the development of the European Union as an area of freedom of movement (Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (Treaty of Rome), 1957) and residence for persons with European Union citizenship (Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty), 1992), and the phasing-out of internal borders between States parties to the Schengen Agreement, had a great impact on the governance of migration in Africa. Tightening controls at the European Union's external border has since then been regarded a necessary corollary of their removal at internal borders between Member States. Two complementary approaches emerged to tackle irregular migration of third-country nationals: remotely controlling the external border in order to prevent unauthorized entries, and passing readmission agreements with third countries, in order to address the issue of unauthorized stays.

Negotiating readmission at the bilateral level, either as part of broader cooperation agreements or as a specific clause of migration agreements, has long been a practice between African and European States. Under these agreements, each party commits to readmit to its territory its nationals who have illegally entered or are residing without authorization in the other country. Expanding readmission agreements, however, comes up against two deadlocks. First, the European Union, which is one area in terms of movement of persons, tries to pass readmission agreements as one bloc. But partner countries reject an asymmetric approach that would at once commit a single State to a bloc of 28 (now 27) States. Second, the European Union is keen to return migrants who entered irregularly to the countries from which they departed for Europe, whether they are nationals from that country or not. But while partner countries accept the readmission of their own nationals, they reject that of third-country nationals who had transited through or temporarily resided in their territories. The European Union's strategy out of the deadlock consists of bunching four lines of action in one Global Approach to Migration and Mobility: better organizing legal migration, preventing and combating irregular migration, maximizing the development impact of migration, and enhancing the external dimension of asylum.<sup>28</sup>

## 32.6. Conclusion

International migration has challenged nation-building processes in Africa. A common legal approach has consisted of giving precedence to blood over territorial bonds. Migrants belong as much, or more, to where they come from than to where they actually live. Nationality laws are more lenient with dual citizenship of those who left than with naturalization of those who arrived. Full inclusion of immigrants is an exception. By contrast, States have all worked at reincorporating expatriate nationals, first in the economy, then in the citizenry of their countries of origin. Making emigrants' money, business networks and knowledge a resource for the country, and organizing their communities abroad, are typical components of African migration policies. At the same time, irregular migration has become a legal offence severely punished: not only irregular entry and stay of foreign nationals, but also irregular exit of nationals as well as non-nationals. New categories of offences linked to irregular migration have made an appearance in legislation. Regional, but also extraregional policy frameworks, notably those of the European Union, have played a key role in these developments. The time has arrived to reap the benefits of helping the European Union to guard its external borders, and negotiate opportunities for legal migration and support to make migration work for development.

<sup>26</sup> See [www.gouv.ci/doc/accords/1512497039CODE-D-IDENTIFICATION-DES-PERSONNES-2004-303.pdf](http://www.gouv.ci/doc/accords/1512497039CODE-D-IDENTIFICATION-DES-PERSONNES-2004-303.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> Loi n° 2016-1111 du 8 décembre 2016 relative à la traite des personnes. *Journal Officiel de la République de Côte d'Ivoire*, 6 February 2017. Available at [www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p\\_lang=en&p\\_isn=104190&p\\_count=3&p\\_classification=03](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=104190&p_count=3&p_classification=03).

<sup>28</sup> See [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/international-affairs/global-approach-to-migration\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/international-affairs/global-approach-to-migration_en).

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# 33.

## Diaspora and development policies in the Economic Community of West African States

Irene Schöfberger<sup>1</sup>

GLOBAL COMPACT FOR  
MIGRATION OBJECTIVES



SKILLS RECOGNITION



MIGRANT AND DIASPORA  
CONTRIBUTIONS



REMITTANCES AND  
FINANCIAL INCLUSION



INTERNATIONAL  
COOPERATION AND  
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

**Abstract:** The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its Member States are increasingly adopting policies and measures aiming at maximizing possible benefits of migration for development. This chapter analyses how ECOWAS Member States engage with their diasporas. It draws on an analysis of United Nations, African Union, ECOWAS and national policies, strategies and regulations on migration, diaspora and development. It finds that in ECOWAS Member States, policy attention to migration and the diaspora is recent, but rapidly increasing. Diaspora-related measures are integrated in the migration policies and strategies that have been/are being developed since 2014 in 14 out of 15 countries. In some cases, diaspora policies were adopted before wider migration policies. Whereas 13 out of 15 States mention diasporans as development actors, they define their possible contributions to development differently. They all mention financial transfers, whereas fewer States mention migrants' skills and knowledge transfers, political influence transfers and benefits of diaspora political engagement. Diaspora institutions have been created in 13 countries, in 8 cases with a ministerial status. However, a scarcity of data on diasporas hinders effective policymaking.

### 33.1. Introduction

Migration can be an opportunity for development. In West Africa and worldwide, migration is growing together with technological and infrastructural changes that could allow an easier transfer of financial and non-financial remittances, and an easier circulation of knowledge and skills between countries of origin, transit and destination. However, obstacles such as scarce support to emigrants' contributions and high remittance transaction costs still hinder effective harnessing of such opportunities.

In this context, States of origin of emigrants are increasingly adopting policies and measures aiming at maximizing possible benefits. State efforts to engage with the diaspora are on the rise in West Africa and worldwide. These have led to a rapid diffusion of diaspora policies and institutions. Whereas they have existed for a longer time in some important countries of origin, such as Mexico and Italy, worldwide their adoption has been accelerating since the mid-2000s, when the United Nations started recommending them as a good practice for development cooperation. This international model has spread rapidly and has been adopted by States with varying needs, identities and migration situations (Gamlen, 2019). In parallel, States have increasingly coordinated their formerly partially dispersed diaspora engagement initiatives. In this context, they have tended to define diasporans<sup>2</sup> as non-resident citizens (see Box 33.1).

<sup>1</sup> IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre.

<sup>2</sup> The term "diasporan" is used in this chapter in order to avoid the group membership implications of the expression "diaspora member".

Despite their increasing importance, diaspora policies still receive less consideration than immigration policies. Whereas policymakers and researchers have dedicated more attention to States of origin recently, they have mostly focused on their role for the immigration policies of States of destination. The transnational engagement of States of origin with their citizens abroad for domestic purposes has received less attention. Moreover, so far, research on diaspora policies has mostly focused on national rather than multi-country case studies. An analysis of diaspora policies in the whole West Africa region is still missing.

This chapter analyses diaspora policies and institutions in ECOWAS and its 15 Member States. It first provides some explanations of recent trends towards State engagement with the diaspora and the emergence of diaspora institutions, and illustrates recent policy attention to diasporas at the global, African and West African levels. It then analyses the state of diaspora policies in ECOWAS Member States. Finally, it draws some conclusions and recommendations.



### **Box 33.1.** Defining diaspora groups

Diaspora groups have been defined in different ways. State approaches often tend to focus on non-resident citizens, including emigrants and their descendants (Collyer, 2013). With a similar approach, the International Monetary Fund defines a diaspora as a “group of persons who have migrated and their descendants who maintain a connection to their homeland” (Ratha and Plaza, 2011). Instead, the African Union defines the African diaspora as “consisting of people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union”.<sup>3</sup>

Researchers have underlined that citizens can have different feelings of belonging and willingness to engage with their countries of origin. Therefore, an alternative suggestion of diasporas has been suggested, based also on an “ongoing orientation towards a ‘homeland’ and maintenance of a group identity over time” (Gamlen, 2019:8). In other words, a diaspora has been defined as “an imagined community living away from a professed place of origin” (Vertovec, 2009:5). Such a definition implies that diasporas are not equivalent to broader emigrant communities, but rather “constructed from some broader potential pool of engagement” (Collyer, 2013:7), based on a “sense of common purpose” and willingness to engage with countries of origin. Therefore, the composition of diasporas can change over time, based on changing situations in countries of origin and destination of emigrants, but also on personal life situations and social networks.

Researchers have also suggested that diasporans can invest expecting to gain different types of returns. These include financial returns, emotional returns, social status or political returns. Often, motivations for engagement and expected returns are multidimensional (Riddle, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> African Union, The Diaspora Division. Available at <https://au.int/en/diaspora-division>.

## 33.2. State efforts to engage with diasporas are on the rise

States engage with their diasporas with different objectives and particularly with the aim of supporting national development, extending their political and administrative functions abroad and increasing emigrants' political participation (see, for example, Collyer, 2013). The first objective refers to emigrants' potential contribution to development in countries of origin. Over the years, policymakers and researchers have interpreted this influence differently. Development "pessimists" have tended to put greater focus on negative externalities of migration, such as "brain drain" or dependency from remittances; and development "optimists" have tended to underline more positive effects, such as increasing remittance transfers. In the 1950s and 1960s, a greater emphasis was put on development-optimist arguments, whereas development-pessimist arguments received increased attention in the 1970s and 1980s. Since the 1990s, a renewed optimism has been observed (de Haas, 2010). A stronger focus on the possible support of migrants to development in countries of origin and destination has also represented a point on which the interests of these States and of non-State actors could converge. International organizations have played a critical role in supporting their diffusion and in increasing promotion of diaspora engagement initiatives. The second objective refers to the extension of the State's political and administrative functions beyond national borders. It has been suggested that by allowing the strengthening of State engagement with citizens living abroad, diaspora policies and institutions have contributed to a "redefinition of the State" (Levitt and Dehesa, 2003), in particular through measures aiming at increasing the extension of the financial resources and of the political influence of the State beyond its national borders. The third objective, lastly, refers to an increase of emigrants' political participation, through a progressive extension of the citizenship and political rights of citizens abroad (Bauböck, 2007), for instance by allowing them to vote from abroad or to hold multiple citizenships. Box 33.2 illustrates challenges related to diaspora policy effectiveness.



### Box 33.2. Diaspora policy effectiveness: Challenges and potential for improvement

Evaluating the effectiveness of diaspora policies in West Africa is challenging. To begin with, most of them have been introduced only recently. In addition, there are broader challenges with regard to the evaluation of the impact of diaspora policies more broadly. In fact, their objectives and impact are often not clear, in particular regarding the intended form of development, and due to the variety of stakeholders involved (Vezzoli and Lacroix, 2010). However, researchers have highlighted that the effectiveness of diaspora policies can be augmented through cohesive and coordinated policies, including measures strengthening migrants' political representation and protection, as well as their links with their countries of origin (Gamlen, 2006). Research has also highlighted the need to harmonize both migration and development, as well as national and local policies (Mensa-Bonsu and Adjei, 2007). Furthermore, it has underlined that development outcomes of diaspora policies also depend on migrants' legal and political rights; broader social, economic and political contexts in origin and destination countries; and investment conditions and remittance-transfer structures. All these need to be addressed – for instance, through comprehensive development policies – if migrants' contributions to development are to be supported (de Haas, 2010). Finally, broader challenges related to migrants' contributions to development need to be addressed (see Quartey, Addoquaye Tagoe and Boatemaa Setrana, Chapter 21 of this volume). These include migration selectivity, differences between consumptive remittances expenditures and productive investments, and scarce policy attention to internal and South–South migration.

States have engaged with their diasporas by establishing diaspora institutions. This chapter looks at diaspora institutions as “formal State offices dedicated to emigrants and their descendants” (Gamlen, 2014:182). This definition includes formal offices attached to executive and legislative institutions at the national level. Diaspora institutions can be units, directorates or agencies, which are mostly integrated in ministries of foreign affairs. However, in some West African countries, diaspora institutions have reached ministerial status. Some States also have governmental diaspora councils, which in this chapter are considered as diaspora institutions. In other cases, diaspora councils are independent from the State and can therefore not be considered as diaspora institutions. Non-State diaspora councils are mentioned here, but not included in the analysis. In addition, several actors have an influence on diaspora policymaking and programming. These include international organizations such as IOM, the United Nations Development Programme, the African Development Bank, the World Bank and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development; private banks and investment institutions, such as the African Institute for Remittances; development cooperation agencies; local governments; and civil society organizations. As this chapter focuses on State-led diaspora policies and institutions, international organization-led diaspora engagement measures are not included in the analysis.

Diaspora institutions can fulfil different functions (Gamlen, 2014). To begin with, they can fulfil “tapping” functions and aim at supporting development and foreign policies with possible financial and political contributions of the diaspora. Diaspora engagement strategies often aim at facilitating remittance transfers, trade and investment. Less often, they also aim at facilitating the transfer of skills and knowledge, and at increasing political participation, including on development cooperation planning. Diaspora organizations have called for strengthening engagement strategies targeting these non-financial contributions (Madichie, 2016). Diaspora institutions can furthermore fulfil “embracing” functions with a view to strengthening emigrants’ links with their home countries – for instance, through an extension of political, welfare and social rights, or through symbolic events such as diaspora conferences and “diaspora days”. Finally, they can also have “governing” functions and aim at adapting national migration governance to evolving broader policy developments, such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

### 33.3. Global, African and West African policies pay increasing attention to diasporas

Migrants’ contributions to development have received growing recognition in recent times. At the global level, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development introduced a first explicit recognition of migrants’ contributions to inclusive growth and sustainable development, and called for reducing remittance transaction costs. Objective 19 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration later called for improving conditions for migrants to contribute to sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination. In particular, it called for adopting migration policies; integrating migration into development planning and sectoral policies at different levels; facilitating migrants’ contributions, including investments and entrepreneurship; investing in research on migrants’ non-financial contributions; and enabling their political participation. In addition, it recalled the need for participatory approaches, including State and non-State actors.

More detailed provisions have been adopted at the African level. The African Union has recognized the importance of the diaspora in different ways, including by declaring that it is the Union’s “sixth region”,<sup>4</sup> and that encouraging its full participation is one of its key objectives. To this aim, Agenda 2063 called on African Union Member States to enable diaspora participation and facilitate free movement of people, as later concretized in the 2018 African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol. In 2012, the first Global African Diaspora Summit led to the adoption of five projects, including the development of a Skills Database of African Professionals in the Diaspora to facilitate their involvement in Africa’s development agenda, the African Diaspora Investment Fund and the African Institute for Remittances. The Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa (African Union, 2018) identified diaspora engagement as one of its eight key pillars for engagement. It highlighted existing challenges regarding trust-building among diaspora institutions, scarcity of quality data on diasporas and remittances, and the need to develop national

<sup>4</sup> State of the African Diaspora, The Sixth Region of Africa. Available at <https://stateofafricandiaspora.international/the-6th-region/>.

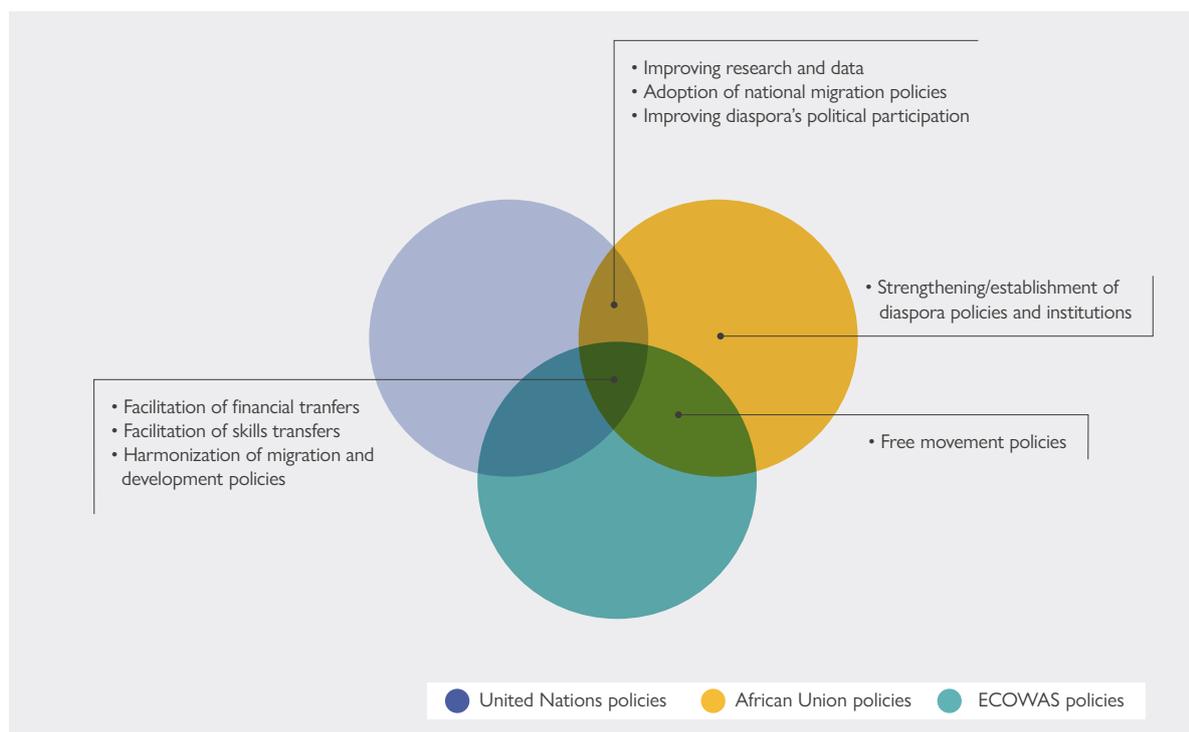
diaspora engagement strategies, in line with international frameworks. It also called for engaging with second- and third-generation diasporans. The Migration Policy Framework for Africa recommended multiple strategies to address these challenges. To begin with, it recommended establishing diaspora focal points and agencies; adopting whole-of-government approaches; and developing diaspora engagement strategies, together with international donors and organizations. It further recommended facilitating diaspora investment and circulation of knowledge and skills, as well as broader political, social and economic reforms that could help attracting diaspora engagement. Finally, it recommended improving research and data collection, including through diaspora mapping.

In West Africa, diasporas' contributions to development are also recognized. While the regional migration policy being developed will likely contain more detailed provisions, the issue is currently addressed in the ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration. Adopted in 2008, this Approach is, however, less detailed than documents adopted later at the African and global level. It claims to harmonize migration and development policies, including through migration and development action plans. It does so mainly based on a recognition that "legal migration towards other regions of the world contribute to ECOWAS Member States' development", whereas less attention is paid to internal and interregional migration. At the same time, the Approach reiterates that free movement of persons in the region – as established by the 1979 Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment – is a priority for the region (see Schöfberger, Chapter 30 of this volume). Even if not specifically focused on the diaspora, in fact, free movement policies facilitate the circulation of persons and the transfer of diaspora contributions. Diaspora engagement measures proposed in the Approach are mostly focused on the potential of financial transfers and investments for development and the involvement of the diaspora in development projects. Improving migrants' education and skills and reducing the potential negative impact of "brain drain" are also mentioned. The Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA, created in 2001) also includes diaspora issues as one of its areas of discussion. European Union–ECOWAS policy negotiations have also had an impact on diaspora engagement strategies in the region, as discussed in Box 33.3.



### **Box 33.3.** Diaspora engagement strategies in the context of wider European Union–ECOWAS policy negotiations on migration

Since the 2000s, the policy relevance of migration between West Africa and Europe has risen both for ECOWAS and its Member States, and for the European Union and its member States, in parallel with increasing migration from West Africa to Europe (see Fedorova and Shupert, Chapter 4 of this volume) and intensifying European Union efforts to engage with West African countries on migration following the establishment of the Schengen Area of Free Movement (see Schöfberger, Chapter 30 of this volume). Related interregional policy negotiations have contributed to framing evolving migration and diaspora policies at the regional and national levels. Diaspora-related aspects have been present in policy negotiations since the beginning, even though to a changing extent over the years. In 2006, the Joint Africa–European Union Declaration on Migration and Development recognized migrants' contributions to development in countries of origin, transit and destination, and affirmed the need to support diaspora efforts. This recognition was also present in the 2006 Rabat Declaration, launching a political Dialogue on Migration and Development between European, West African and Central African States. Migration and development-related aspects have also remained present in interregional policies developed in the following years. However, their balance with further migration-related issues, such as immigration control, has changed in line with shifting international migration priorities (Schöfberger, 2019). There has been an increasing focus on how migration could be due to development challenges, rather than how it could contribute to addressing them. Meanwhile, growing policy attention to migration in countries of origin and transit, and increased availability of funds, have supported the development of national migration policies and strategies. As analysed below, this has in some cases allowed national Governments to further develop diaspora engagement strategies and institutions. The recent launch of the European Union-funded European Union Global Diaspora Facility further suggests greater attention to diaspora contributions at the European Union level.

**Figure 33.1.** Key diaspora engagement strategies recommended in United Nations, African Union and ECOWAS policies

### 33.4. What is the state of diaspora policies in West African States?<sup>5</sup>

In the 15 ECOWAS Member States, policy attention to migration and the diaspora is relatively recent but increasing. Where present, relevant policies have incorporated diaspora engagement elements, as suggested at the levels of ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations (see Figure 33.1), while simultaneously selecting and adapting them to national migration and development trends and needs, and to different social, economic and political contexts. This section provides an overview of diaspora engagement measures and structures included in relevant national policies in ECOWAS Member States.

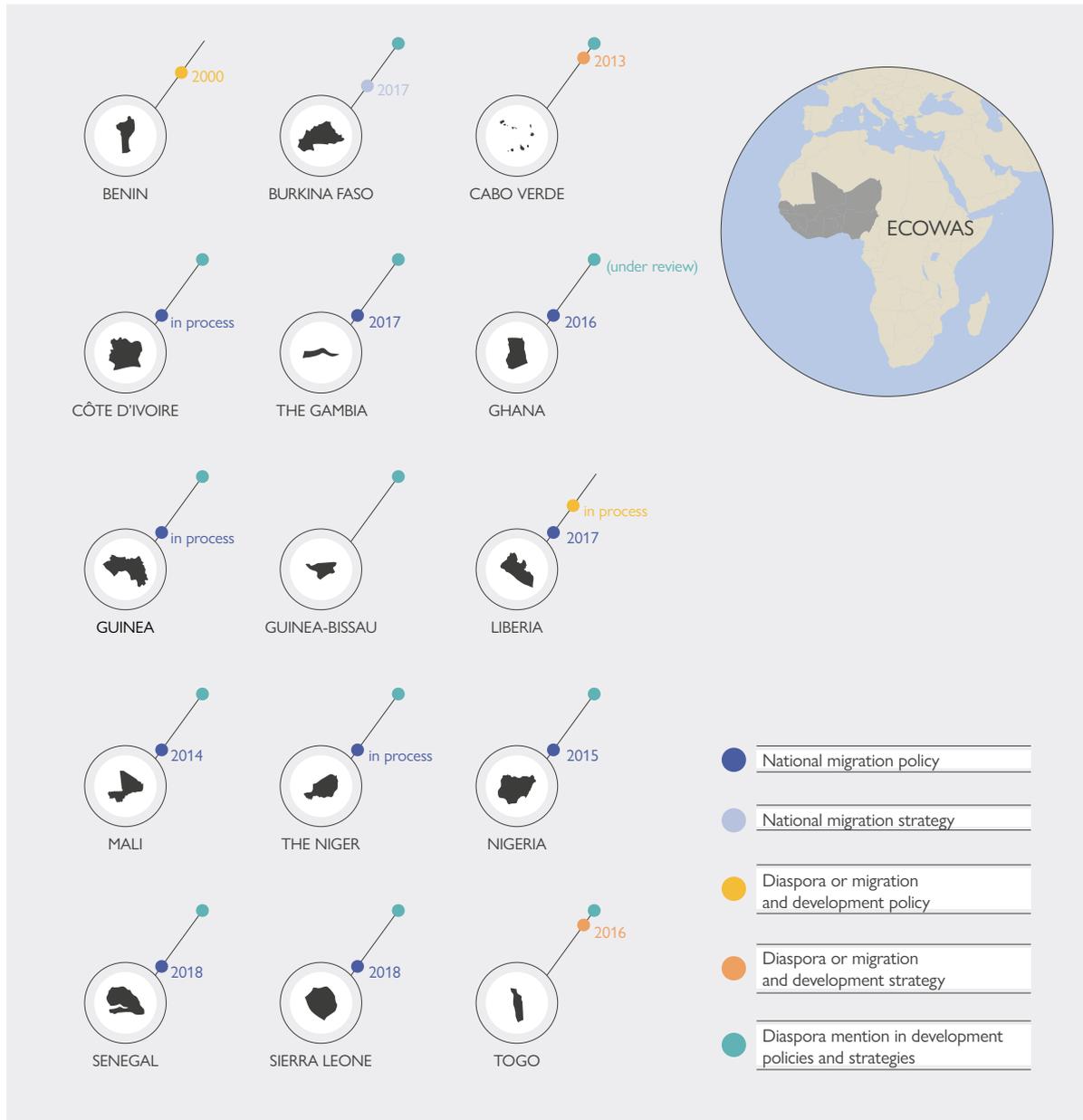
The adoption of national migration policies and strategies is very recent in the region, the first national migration policy having been adopted in 2014, but has since then progressed rapidly (see Figure 33.2). In recent years, seven countries have adopted a national migration policy: the Gambia (2017), Ghana (2016), Liberia (2017), Mali (2014), Nigeria (2015), Senegal (2018) and Sierra Leone (2018). Five further countries are currently working on the elaboration of a national migration policy: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and the Niger. In addition, Burkina Faso (2016) and Togo (2016) have adopted national migration strategies. Diaspora-related measures are included in all these documents.

Seven countries have developed or are developing specific diaspora or migration and development policies, strategies or regulations. In three cases, these documents were adopted before wider migration policies and strategies. Benin had already adopted a national policy for Beninese abroad in 2000, while it is still elaborating its national migration policy. Cabo Verde's 2013 National Strategy on Emigration for Development remains the only relevant document at the national level. Moreover, Togo adopted a strategic plan on the mobilization of its diaspora in 2013, three years

<sup>5</sup> This section is based on an analysis of national migration, diaspora and development policies, strategies and regulations, as detailed in the text. A direct analysis was conducted of documents available online, whereas the analysis of documents not available online was based on information available on the websites of relevant ministries, on consultations with IOM country offices and on secondary literature.

before adopting its National Strategy for Migration and Development. Liberia and Guinea are also finalizing a national diaspora engagement policy. In the Niger and Senegal, finally, relevant diaspora-related provisions are contained in the order for the creation of the Directorate for Nigeriens Abroad and in the Community Approach to Senegalese Abroad of the related Directorate General, respectively. In Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo, national labour migration policies and policies also include provisions on diaspora engagement.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 33.2.** Adoption of relevant policies



**Note:** These maps are for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

<sup>6</sup> Ghana's national labour policy is being finalized. The analysis of Ghana's diaspora engagement policies and strategies is therefore based merely on its National Migration Policy for Ghana – Migrating out of Poverty (2016).

Efforts are also ongoing regarding a harmonization of migration and development policies, as recommended in policies of the United Nations, the African Union and the ECOWAS. The national development plans of 12 States mention migrants' possible contributions to national development, and foresee diaspora engagement measures. Benin's and Liberia's development plans do not, and the Long-term National Development Plan for Ghana 2018–2057 is currently under review.

ECOWAS Member States define possible diaspora contributions to development and to political and administrative processes differently, and therefore adopt different diaspora engagement strategies. They all recognize that diasporans are important actors for development. The transfer of financial contributions receives particular attention: policy and strategy documents of 13 countries foresee measures addressing the potential of remittances for national economic growth, and in particular for the national budget, for investment, trade and employment creation. Moreover, most countries have adopted or foreseen the adoption of measures intended to lower costs of remittances, and three countries explicitly indicate the need to engage emigrants as actors for local economic growth and development. Instead, only five countries currently foresee measures aiming at supporting the transfer of skills and knowledge, whose extent and possible impact are perhaps still less immediately visible. The creation of a portfolio of skills of citizens abroad is also included in the draft national migration policy of the Niger.

The Gambia and Côte d'Ivoire refer to a transfer of political influence, by indicating that diaspora engagement can increase the countries' political influence abroad. Supportive to a strengthened political engagement of the diaspora are further provisions adopted by these and other States aimed at improving the political representation of diaspora groups, including through improved coordination between the Government and diaspora institutions and associations, through councils of citizens abroad, through diaspora forums or through the extension of political rights, such as the allowance of multiple citizenships and of voting from abroad and/or for diaspora representatives in national parliaments (see Jaulin and Smith, Chapter 34 of this volume). In other cases, however, migrants' participation in political processes remains difficult, in line with difficult Government–diaspora relations. This could lead to a misrepresentation of migrants' interest in the definition of diaspora engagement strategies and eventually to ineffective policies.

In line with the Migration Policy Framework for Africa's recommendation, 13 countries have established diaspora institutions. In eight countries, diaspora institutions have reached the ministerial level. Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali have established ministries for African integration and of their nationals living abroad. In Benin, the Gambia, Guinea, the Niger and Senegal, the term "diaspora" is explicitly included in the names of ministries of foreign affairs. In Cabo Verde, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo, the respective diaspora unit, agency and directorate are attached to the ministries of foreign affairs. In Nigeria, a House Committee on Diaspora Affairs is also present. In Sierra Leone, the Office of Diaspora Affairs is attached to the Presidency. Finally, in Liberia and Guinea-Bissau, the only two countries that have so far not established dedicated diaspora institutions, responsibility for diaspora issues is still attributed to ministries of foreign affairs. The eight councils of citizens abroad existing so far also play a relevant role regarding the diaspora's political representation. In Burkina Faso, Guinea, the Niger, Senegal and Togo, they are attached to ministries. Côte d'Ivoire is also planning to establish a Council of Ivorians Abroad attached to the Ministry of African Integration and Ivorians Abroad. In Benin, Mali and Nigeria, relevant councils are private. In addition, in some countries, central banks also play a relevant role. National central banks in Ghana and Nigeria are responsible for implementing remittances-related policies. The Central Bank of the Gambia publishes quarterly data on remittances. In Benin, the establishment of a bank for investment for Beninese abroad is planned. In Senegal, similar functions are performed by the Investment Support Fund for Senegalese Abroad, attached to the Directorate General for Senegalese Abroad, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad. The creation of a diaspora investment fund is also foreseen in the draft national migration policy of the Niger.

Collecting data on the diaspora and developing diaspora databases or mappings are essential for evidence-based policymaking. However, so far, only three countries have adopted comprehensive diaspora mapping strategies. Senegal collects data on its diaspora through various channels, including voluntary online registers, consular registers and information from diaspora associations. The Global Database on Nigerians in Diaspora is currently based on voluntary registration, but the National Policy on Migration foresees the establishment of a comprehensive diaspora database. The Final Report of the Strategic Plan for the Mobilization of the Togolese Diaspora (2013) foresees a diaspora mapping. In the Niger, where an online registration system has been created, but was inactive at the time of writing, the establishment of a diaspora statistical bulletin and of a comprehensive database is foreseen in the draft

national migration policy. Five additional countries foresee the establishment of diaspora databases or of migration observatories tasked with collecting data also on the diaspora: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Mali.

## 33.5. Conclusion and recommendations

Diaspora policies are on the rise in West Africa. In some countries (such as Benin), diaspora engagement strategies were adopted even before their recommendation as best practice from the United Nations, and preceded the development of national migration policies. Diaspora-related issues are currently mainstreamed in the development plans of all ECOWAS Member States. The recent diffusion of diaspora policies and engagement measures has been accompanied by the creation of diaspora institutions at different levels. ECOWAS Member States strengthen their engagement with the diaspora, with the aim of supporting emigrants' potential contributions to development, to extend the political and administrative functions of the State beyond national borders and to increase emigrants' political participation. They dedicate particular attention to financial transfers at the micro and macro levels, whereas measures targeting non-financial contributions are still less frequent. Whereas at the ECOWAS level, diasporans targeted by the 2008 Common Approach to Migration are mostly skilled South–North migrants, the profile of targeted diasporans is not specified at the national level. Both at the regional and at the national level, the development of evidence-based diaspora policies is hindered by scarce data on the diaspora.

Based on the analysis presented in this chapter, the following recommendations can be made:

To national and regional institutions:

- **Sustain efforts to harmonize migration and development policies**, in order to support emigrants' contributions to development and to improve investment conditions and remittances transfer structures. In particular, it would be important to ensure the inclusion of diaspora engagement strategies in the ongoing revision of the ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration.

To ECOWAS Member States and institutions:

- **Develop more transnational diaspora-related strategies.** These strategies, which could be developed at the bilateral, multilateral or regional level, should include interregional and internal migration, which still accounts for most migration from the region, and short-term and circular migration.
- **Strengthen measures aiming at improving the participation of diasporans** in the identification of migration- and development-related measures, as well as their political participation. This would help ensure their ownership and the sustainability of adopted measures.
- **Strengthen diaspora engagement strategies targeting non-financial transfers**, such as the transfer and circulation of knowledge and skills, in order to maximize possible benefits of emigration.

To national and regional institutions and research centres:

- **Invest in enhancing capacities to collect data on diasporas.** This is essential for evidence-based diaspora policies. Diaspora mappings and databases should include data on migration destinations and on socioeconomic characteristics of migrants.

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# 34. Diffusion and practice of external voting in North and West Africa<sup>1</sup>

Thibaut Jaulin,<sup>2</sup> Étienne Smith<sup>3</sup>



16  
INCLUSION AND  
SOCIAL COHESION



19  
MIGRANT AND DIASPORA  
CONTRIBUTIONS

**Abstract:** This chapter discusses the diffusion of external voting in North and West Africa since the early 1990s, and diaspora participation in elections in countries of origin. It starts by examining the idea that the spread of external voting is attributable solely to the emergence of diaspora policies and political liberalization processes. It then looks at the influence of citizens abroad on elections by analysing their turnout and political preferences.

Since the early 1990s, the number of countries having adopted measures to enable citizens residing abroad to take part in elections in their countries of origin has quadrupled, to about 150.<sup>4</sup> External voting has also become widespread in Africa, where nearly three quarters of countries allow citizens residing abroad to vote, compared with only four before 1990. This spectacular development, which makes Africa one of the places with the widest experience of external voting, has spawned a new wave of research (Ahanda, 2015; Hartmann, 2015; Jaulin and Smith, 2015). In this chapter, we consider the differences in time and process leading to the diffusion and implementation of the right to vote from abroad in Africa. We start by reviewing the various reasons driving the phenomenon, before discussing the real and supposed impact of out-of-country voters on such “globalized” election contexts.

## 34.1. Definition and normative issues

In its current acceptance, external voting is defined as the right of all citizens to take part from abroad in an election in the countries of which they are citizens but in which they do not reside (International IDEA and Instituto Federal Electoral, 2007; Lafleur, 2013). External voting thus takes place, by definition, outside the national territory. This sets it apart from postal ballots and proxy voting, which do not necessarily concern residents abroad, and the practice whereby some emigrants return to their country of origin on the day of the election to vote.

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is an abridged and updated version of Jaulin and Smith, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> CERI-Sciences Po.

<sup>3</sup> LAM-Sciences Po Bordeaux.

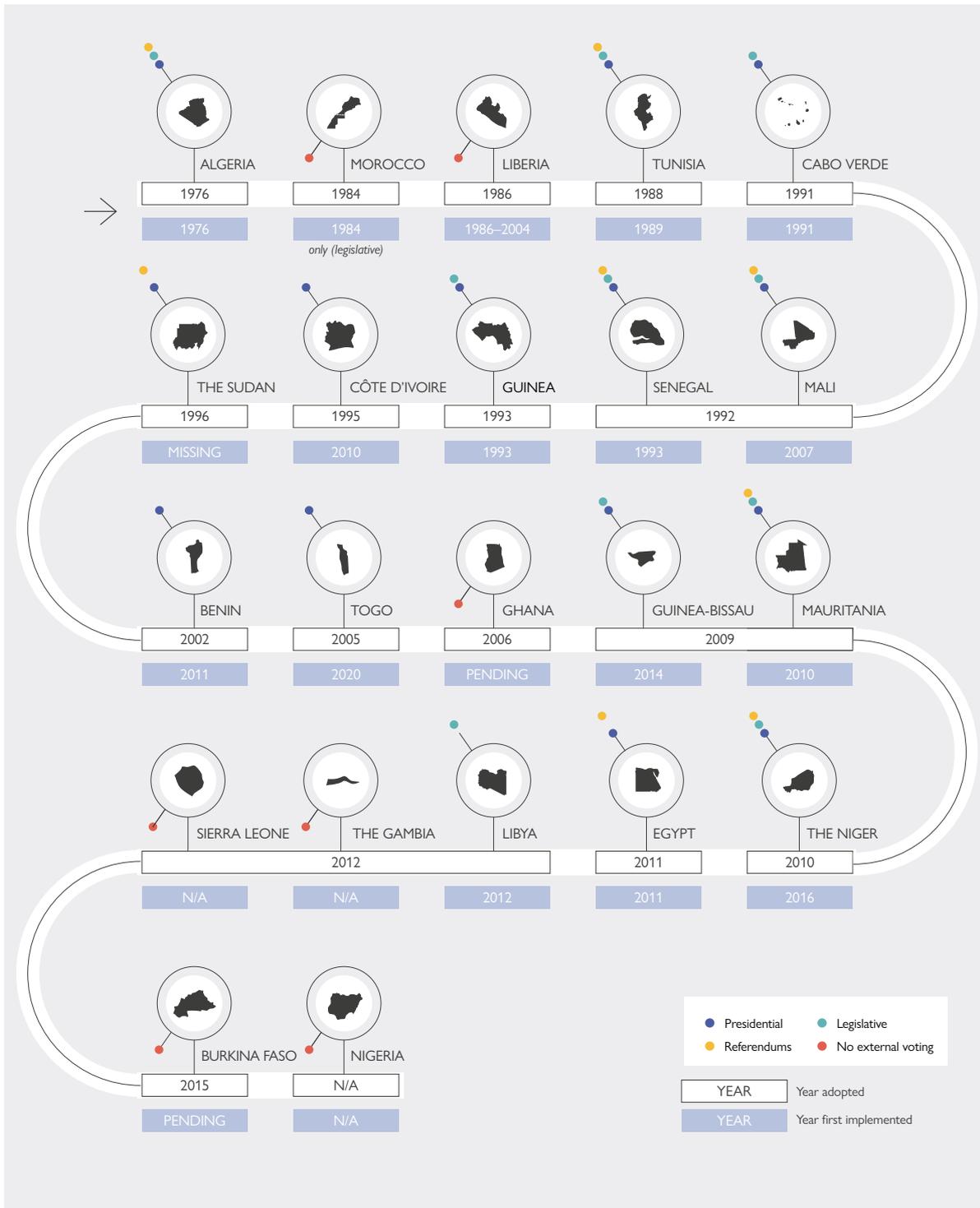
<sup>4</sup> Voting from abroad database, International IDEA, available at [www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voting-abroad](http://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voting-abroad); out-of-country voting, ACE The Electoral Knowledge Network. Available at [http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/va/explore\\_topic\\_new](http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/va/explore_topic_new).

The rapid diffusion of external voting, in the world and in Africa, tends to mask the debate on whether non-resident citizens can justifiably be allowed to participate in elections, and the differences in the legislative frameworks and practices relating to external voting (Collyer, 2014). The proponents of external voting usually advance two types of argument. The first is economic, and holds that external voting is a means of promoting the development and reach of the country by reinforcing its bonds with migrants. The second is legal, and considers that the absence of measures enabling citizens residing abroad to vote constitutes a breach of equality between citizens (Ahanda, 2015). However, the difficulties inherent in the implementation of external voting (extra costs, greater risk of fraud), for a generally low turnout abroad, frequently trigger strong reservations about whether it is necessary (Nohlen and Grotz, 2000; Rubio-Marín, 2006; López-Guerra, 2005). These reservations are often compounded by the fear – justified or not – that external voting will be a vector of foreign interference and/or that citizens abroad will exert undue influence on “internal” political life. In this respect, external voting is debated along much the same lines as the transformation of the concept of citizenship and multiple allegiances (Bauböck, 2007; Faist and Kivisto, 2008; Manby, 2009; Spiro, 2016).

## 34.2. The diffusion of external voting in North and West Africa

In the 1970s and 1980s, the countries of the Maghreb, which were governed by authoritarian regimes that held sham elections and sought to control their citizens working abroad, were among the first African countries to adopt external voting provisions (Brand, 2010). After Liberia in 1986, several West African countries (Senegal, Cabo Verde, Mali and Guinea) adopted the right to vote overseas in the 1990s, in a context of relative democratization. External voting spread throughout Africa starting in the mid-2000s, in a third wave that saw it become the rule rather than the exception, despite the absence of major players such as Nigeria. There is a huge gap, however, between adoption of the right and its implementation. While countries such as Cabo Verde and Senegal applied external voting as of the first elections following adoption of the right, in many other instances several elections were held before the right was implemented, in some cases restrictively. For example, after years of hesitation and delay, Burkina Faso, Togo and Ghana have made plans for external voting for the first time in 2020. Lastly, the fact that the right to external voting has been suspended in some countries, such as Morocco and Liberia, is a reminder that it is not irreversible.

**Figure 34.1.** Adoption and implementation of external voting provisions in North and West Africa



Note: These maps is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

### 34.3. An instrument of emigration and diaspora policies

In Africa, since the 1990s, emigrants have been perceived less as “deserters” and more as resources to be harnessed and players to be co-opted (Akyeampong, 2000). One of the common explanations for the diffusion of external voting is the desire of labour-exporting countries to encourage financial transfers by emigrants, who are often an essential source of foreign currency (Lafleur, 2013; Hartman, 2015). As such, the right to vote “out of country” is one of various political, economic, social and cultural measures implemented by States to forge closer links with their emigrants and the diaspora. However, as is illustrated by the case of Morocco, for example, the fact that a State is strongly invested politically in its diaspora does not necessarily mean that it gives its citizens residing abroad the right to vote (Iheduru, 2011; Dufoix et al., 2010; Burgess, 2014). Conversely, many countries, having adopted the right to external voting, are apparently not directly motivated by the desire to increase the volume of diaspora remittances. Rather than a possible correlation between the adoption of external voting and the economic and demographic weight of the diaspora, which is hard to measure (Collyer and Vathi, 2007), it is the contexts and mechanisms spurring many African States to “work” harder than before on their relationship with the diaspora that calls for inquiry.

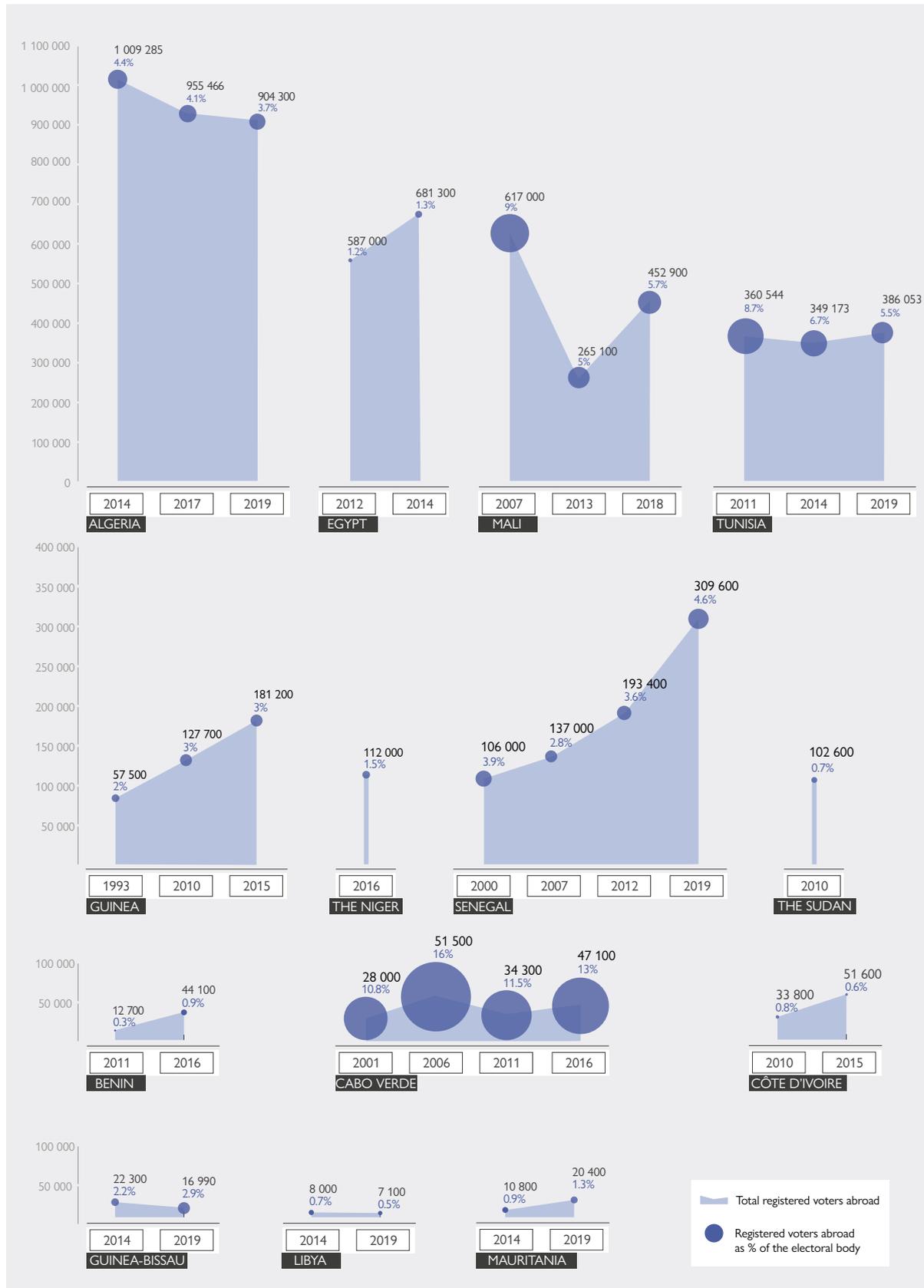
### 34.4. An effect of the process of democratization

The diffusion of external voting can also be attributed to the widespread trend towards democratization that emerged in the 1990s as it relates to a threefold process: satisfying the demands of migrant associations; the general tendency of democratic regimes to expand the right to vote to new categories of individuals; and the diffusion of new international norms on migrant rights (Rhodes and Harutyunyan, 2010). It must be stressed, however, that the segments of the diaspora that have mobilized rarely have the means to impose, in and of themselves, the adoption and effective application of that right, even where expatriate communities have played a major role in a change of government. In other words, in a context of democratization, calls for external voting find it difficult to gain traction in the policy debate in the absence of a partisan relay (Burgess, 2018) or a perception on the part of both government and opposition that they stand to gain by the process (for the case of Senegal, see Smith, 2015). Moreover, while the adoption of the right to external voting in Africa was often concomitant to the process of political liberalization and constitutional reform, in particular during the “second wave” in the early 1990s, it is important to remember that external voting is not the prerogative of democracies, as demonstrated by the unilateral adoption thereof in the 1970s and 1980s by Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (Brand, 2010). Lastly, while there are no binding international recommendations on external voting (Lafleur, 2015), IOM, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have helped organize out-of-country voting, notably for Mali (2013) and Libya (2012 and 2014). While the result of their operations was usually disappointing from the point of view of turnout, the three organizations helped spread the right to external voting, pursuant to a global strategy to mainstream the various migration issues (Geiger and Pécoud, 2014). At the same time, there also appears to be a link between the diffusion of external voting in Africa and the continent’s various colonial legacies. Indeed, there is a striking contrast between the French- and Portuguese-speaking countries, almost all of which have adopted – and in many cases implemented – external voting, and the English-speaking countries, which have been more reluctant to do so (Hartmann, 2015:8–9). Considered in that light, analysis of the diffusion of the right to external voting involves identifying – concretely and empirically – how norms, practices and know-how circulate from one country or continent to another.

## 34.5. Is the diaspora an election kingmaker?

The influence that out-of-country voters exert on elections in their countries of origin differs from one election and one country to another; and depends on the relative weight of the external electorate, turnout, the type of vote and the structure of the political field. In most countries in Africa (as elsewhere), registered voters abroad make up a very small proportion of the electorate, even in countries with many emigrants and in which external voting has been widely institutionalized; for example, Algeria and Senegal (see Figure 34.1). Moreover, turnout among out-of-country voters (Figure 34.2) depends on how restrictive the procedures are for registering to vote abroad: deadlines, required documents, registration system, vote in person at a consulate or by mail-in ballot, by proxy or via the Internet (Lafleur, 2013). Turnout also depends on the relations between the authorities in the host country and the country of origin, on the willingness and capacity of political parties to campaign abroad, and on the specific characteristics – notably socioeconomic – of migrant communities (Dedieu et al., 2013) and the associative and political dynamics they encompass (Jaulin and Nilsson, 2015). Lastly, the system of representation (proportional, members of parliament abroad, etc.) has a significant impact on the potential of out-of-country voters to influence the election outcome. In Cabo Verde, for example, where the diaspora is represented by six members of Parliament, out-of-country voters tipped the balance in the 2006 presidential election in favour of Pedro Pires, who won despite trailing his rival by roughly 50 votes among “domestic” voters. Cabo Verde has since introduced a clause limiting the maximum proportion of external voters to 20 per cent of the total (Silva and Chantre, 2007:201; Hartmann, 2015:13). In Ghana, where election results are traditionally very close and the two main parties – the National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party – alternate in power, it is more than likely that the addition of voters abroad planned for 2020 will tip the scales in favour of one side or the other.

Figure 34.2. The numerical clout of the external electorate



**Figure 34.3.** Turnout at home and abroad

## 34.6. Whom do voters abroad vote for?

The commonly held idea that the diaspora will vote for the opposition has been borne out in only a limited number of cases, and has to be tempered depending on the period concerned. In fact, the preferences of out-of-country voters are heavily dependent on how the political parties see the diaspora and its relations with the country of origin. In most countries, the diaspora vote is not fundamentally different from that of the rest of the electorate. In Benin, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali and Senegal, various elections have shown that the diaspora vote tends to be influenced by current circumstances, such as the personality of the candidates, the Government's record, the conduct of the election campaign and voting procedures abroad (Jaulin and Smith, 2015).

Consideration of the political preferences of out-of-country voters requires a shift in focus from studies on diaspora political mobilization, which was often analysed from the point of view of its radical or conflictual dimension, to electoral sociology in a transnational context. At the same time, the study of external voting also serves to engage in a stimulating discussion of recent research into the influence of emigrants on values and political behaviour in their countries of origin (for example, Levitt, 1998; Boccagni et al., 2016; Chauvet et al., 2017). Recent studies that apply the tools of sociology and electoral geography to external voting provide an initial answer to the question of whether African out-of-country voters reproduce the political, social and community divides of their countries of origin or are influenced by their environment (Dedieu et al., 2013; Jaulin, 2014, 2015; Lafleur and Sánchez-Domínguez, 2015; Ahmadov and Sasse, 2016). One of the lessons drawn from that research is that diasporas are not uniform but are instead made up of various migrant communities that tend to reproduce the divides of their countries of origin, with the consequent constitution of partisan bastions abroad and a fragmented vote within each diaspora. Furthermore, and importantly, the diaspora can play a significant part even if it cannot vote or if its capacity to influence the election outcome is limited (because of the low number of voters). Moreover, diasporas are often a prime source of campaign funding. In the African cases, the representation of expatriates as “super electors” helps place the diaspora at the heart of the election and allows it to punch, in symbolic and media terms, far above its weight, as reflected in its real numerical clout (Smith, 2015). Analysis of migrant voter behaviour therefore implies taking account of several series of variables in relation to three distinct processes: the process of selection operated by migration; the socialization of migrants in their country of residence; and the recomposition of political and social control mechanisms in a transnational context.

## 34.7. Conclusion: more than a vote

A new “frontier” of citizenship, external voting in Africa, represents a largely unexplored topic of research, the study of which will serve to enrich the literature on elections in Africa and on types of participation and transnational political engagement among migrants. The events leading to the adoption – or not – of the right to external voting and its application remain largely dependent on the national context and the domestic balance of power. From this point of view, examination of the diffusion and practice of external voting in Africa is an opportunity to reflect on the effects of migration on the political, economic and social structures of labour-exporting countries, in particular through the implementation of new public policies (“of emigration”), the diffusion of new (“democratic”) norms and the appearance of new categories of voters (“abroad”).

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ELIMINATE  
DISCRIMINATION

# 35.

## Public opinion on immigration in North and West Africa: an exploration of the available evidence

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**Abstract:** This chapter explores a range of factors shaping attitudes towards immigrants in 18 countries in West and North Africa based on results from the Gallup World Poll survey. In particular, it looks at the relationship between public opinion on immigration and (a) individuals' perceptions of their countries' economy and labour market, (b) their perceptions of the quality and availability of public goods and services, and (c) their trust in institutions such as the police and government.

### 35.1. Introduction

Understanding public opinion about international migration and what factors influence perceptions of the phenomenon is important for countries and the international community to foster a constructive and balanced public discourse, and to effectively counter xenophobia and stigmatization of migrants, as laid out in Objective 17 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (Dennison, 2018; United Nations General Assembly, 2019). Moreover, effective and sustainable migration policymaking requires an understanding of attitudes towards immigration (Barslund et al., 2019).

This chapter explores a range of factors shaping attitudes towards immigrants in 18 countries in West and North Africa<sup>2</sup> based on results from the Gallup World Poll survey. In particular, it looks at the relationship between public opinion on immigration and (a) individuals' perceptions of their countries' economy and labour market, (b) their perceptions of the quality and availability of public goods and services, and (c) their trust in institutions such as the police and government. These have all been identified as important factors affecting public opinion on immigration in the literature.<sup>3</sup>

Existing research on public attitudes towards immigration has tended to focus around the “economic competition theory”, holding that attitudes towards immigrants are driven by economic self-interest and are generally channelled through the perception

<sup>1</sup> IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre.

<sup>2</sup> Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Tunisia.

<sup>3</sup> The chapter does not explore the relationship between objective measures of economic performance and poverty, such as gross domestic product and Human Development Index, and public attitudes towards immigrants. Literature in similar contexts suggests that objective measures that capture poverty and vulnerability are not substantively associated with negative attitudes toward immigrants, while individual perceptions of the economy and the labour market, on the contrary, are (Ruedin, 2019; Gordon, 2018).

of labour market competition.<sup>4</sup> According to this theory, individuals who are more vulnerable on the labour market are less likely to be in favour of immigration. This dimension is also key to understanding attitudes in North and West Africa, where an overwhelming share of migrants – in particular migrants moving within and between these regions – move for employment and other economic reasons: more than half of potential migrants surveyed in the 2016–2018 period in 34 African countries reported search of economic opportunities and better employment as the main motivation to emigrate,<sup>5</sup> and international migrants in Africa are more economically active compared with the general population (African Union Commission, 2017).

Studies have also explored whether perceptions of the availability and quality of public goods can affect public opinion on immigration (Gordon, 2018). Migration in Africa, as elsewhere, is a significant contributor to urban growth, influencing the shape of cities, as people move away from rural communities in search of economic opportunities (Mariama Awumbila Center for Migration Studies, University of Legon, Ghana, 2017). Urban centres can have limited capacity to accommodate the incoming migrants, and disputes with local communities might arise over competition – real or perceived – for scarce local resources and opportunities, a phenomenon that has also been documented in the literature (see, for example, Beauchemin and Bocquier (2004)). In addition to the economic dimension, the chapter includes preliminary insights on how such pressures, as well as trust in institutions such as the government and police, may affect public opinion on immigrants in North and West Africa. It concludes by offering a few recommendations for further research, building on the limited body of research that currently exists on the topic of public opinion on immigration in these regions.

## 35.2. Public opinion polls about migration in North and West Africa

While public perceptions about migration in Europe have been relatively well studied, with national or cross-country studies conducted regularly on the topic,<sup>6</sup> less is known about public opinion on immigration in countries in West and North Africa. Migration-related surveys in North and West Africa tend to focus on respondents' intentions to move across international borders (see Schöfberger, Acostamadiedo, Borgnäs and Rango, Chapter 7 of this volume). An in-depth and nuanced examination of populations' attitudes towards immigrants in their own countries that can be found in polls carried out in major immigration countries in Europe<sup>7</sup> or in South Africa<sup>8</sup> is often lacking in these regions. However, most of African migration occurs within Africa,<sup>9</sup> with intraregional migration being especially significant in West Africa.<sup>10</sup> Many of the countries are major destination countries facing the challenges related to handling migration pressures and understanding that the effects of the phenomenon on public opinion are as important in North and West Africa as elsewhere.

Attitudes towards immigration can be divided into several interconnected subcategories, including attitudes towards immigrants, immigration policy preferences, the perceived effects of immigration, who should and should not be admitted as an immigrant, diversity, and how important immigration is perceived as an issue in a country. Typically, public opinion polls tend to include questions along one or several of these dimensions. However, the few public

<sup>4</sup> While the economic competition theory has been called a "zombie theory" for the repeated lack of empirical support, there has been more evidence that perceived economic competition, not actual competition, plays a more important role in shaping attitudes towards immigrants. For a comprehensive review of the literature, see, for example, Dennison and Dražanová (2018); Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014).

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 5 of this volume (Teppert, Cottone and Rossi). See also Appiah-Nyamekye et al. (2019).

<sup>6</sup> Such as the Eurobarometer and the European Social Survey, among others. For an overview of existing public opinion polls in the Euro-Mediterranean region, see Dennison and Dražanová (2018). For a further discussions of the literature summarizing attitudes towards immigrants in developed democracies, see Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014).

<sup>7</sup> See Dennison and Dražanová (2018). See also Universidad de los Andes, Sistema de Bibliotecas, available at [www-annualreviews-org.ezproxyege.uniandes.edu.co:8843/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102651](http://www-annualreviews-org.ezproxyege.uniandes.edu.co:8843/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102651) (accessed 15 July 2020).

<sup>8</sup> For opinion polls in South Africa, see, for example, Gordon (2016, 2018); and Facchini et al. (2013).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example IOM (2019). Based on data collected by DTM enumerators, over 90 per cent of those flows captured since the start of 2017 are intraregional or within the same country (IOM, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Some noteworthy examples are Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia and Libya, where the share of foreign nationals from the total population varied between 9 and 12 per cent (UN DESA, 2019).

opinion polls conducted in countries in North and West Africa have, with a few exceptions,<sup>11</sup> included very few questions related towards immigration.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, polls that have been conducted at a global level with relatively wide coverage, such as the World Values Survey and the Pew Global Attitudes Survey, and which include a number of questions relating towards immigration, include few African countries. More insights into public opinion on immigrants in North and West Africa are provided by the Gallup World Poll<sup>13</sup> and the Afrobarometer. The Gallup World Poll (GWP) currently has the broadest geographical coverage, with 165 countries covered across all continents, including 49 in Africa. The Afrobarometer covers 37 countries in Africa, including most countries in West and North Africa.<sup>14</sup>

### 35.3. Public attitudes are generally more positive in West Africa than in North Africa

In the 2016 GWP, respondents were asked about attitudes towards foreign nationals living in the country. Overall, the findings indicate that most adults in North and West Africa have high levels of acceptance of foreign nationals, with some variation across countries. However, attitudes are generally more positive in West Africa than in North Africa, where respondents generally hold more negative attitudes towards immigrants, although they still tend to be positive overall (see Figure 35.1). This is in line with findings in the 2012 GWP survey, which found that the majority of respondents in West African countries would like to see immigration levels stay the same or increase.<sup>15</sup> Residents of countries in North Africa countries were, on average, more negative about immigration.<sup>16</sup> According to data from 2012, respondents were in general more accepting of migrants coming to and living in their country or more positive about having them as neighbours rather than having them become part of the family.

<sup>11</sup> Morocco, for example, has done a more extensive survey of public opinion distributed through the Afrobarometer (2019).

<sup>12</sup> The literature has pointed out various limitations of using polls to measure public opinion, including on migration. For more on this, see, for example, IOM (2015) and Dennison (2016).

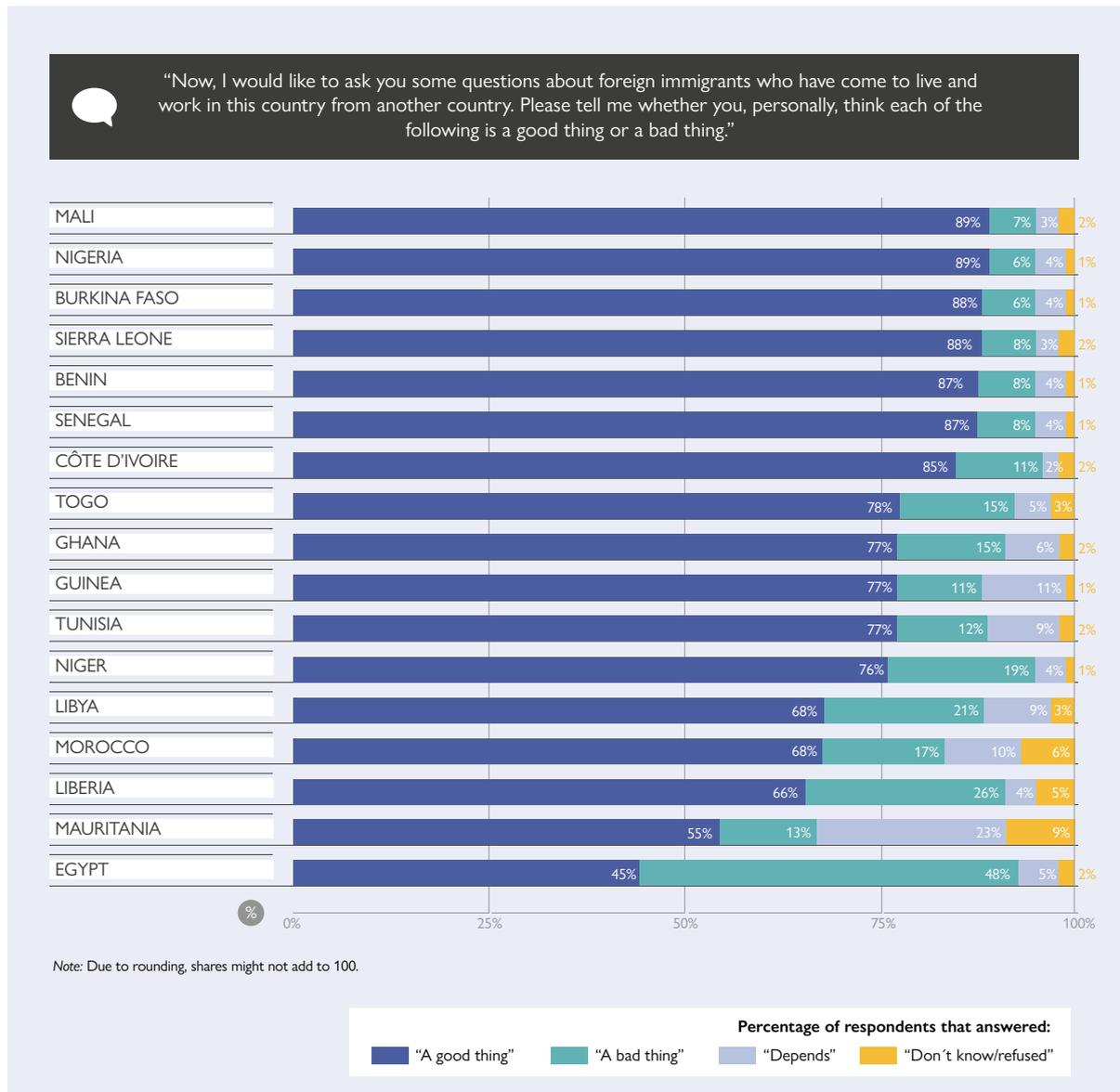
<sup>13</sup> For a discussion on the methodological limitations of these surveys, see Chapter 7 of this volume (Schöfberger, Acostamadiedo, Borgnäs and Rango).

<sup>14</sup> Except Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau and Libya.

<sup>15</sup> In 2012, the GWP for the first time included a question on migration, asking whether respondents would like to see immigration in their countries kept at its present level, increased or decreased. The responses are reported in detail in IOM (2015).

<sup>16</sup> These findings are presented in more detail in the IOM report “How the World Views Migration” (IOM, 2015). Findings by the Afrobarometer 2016/2018 poll, which measures public opinion on migration by what respondents would think about having immigrants and foreign workers as neighbours, supports the GWP finding that West Africans are significantly more positive than their North African neighbours.

Figure 35.1. Attitudes towards immigrants by country

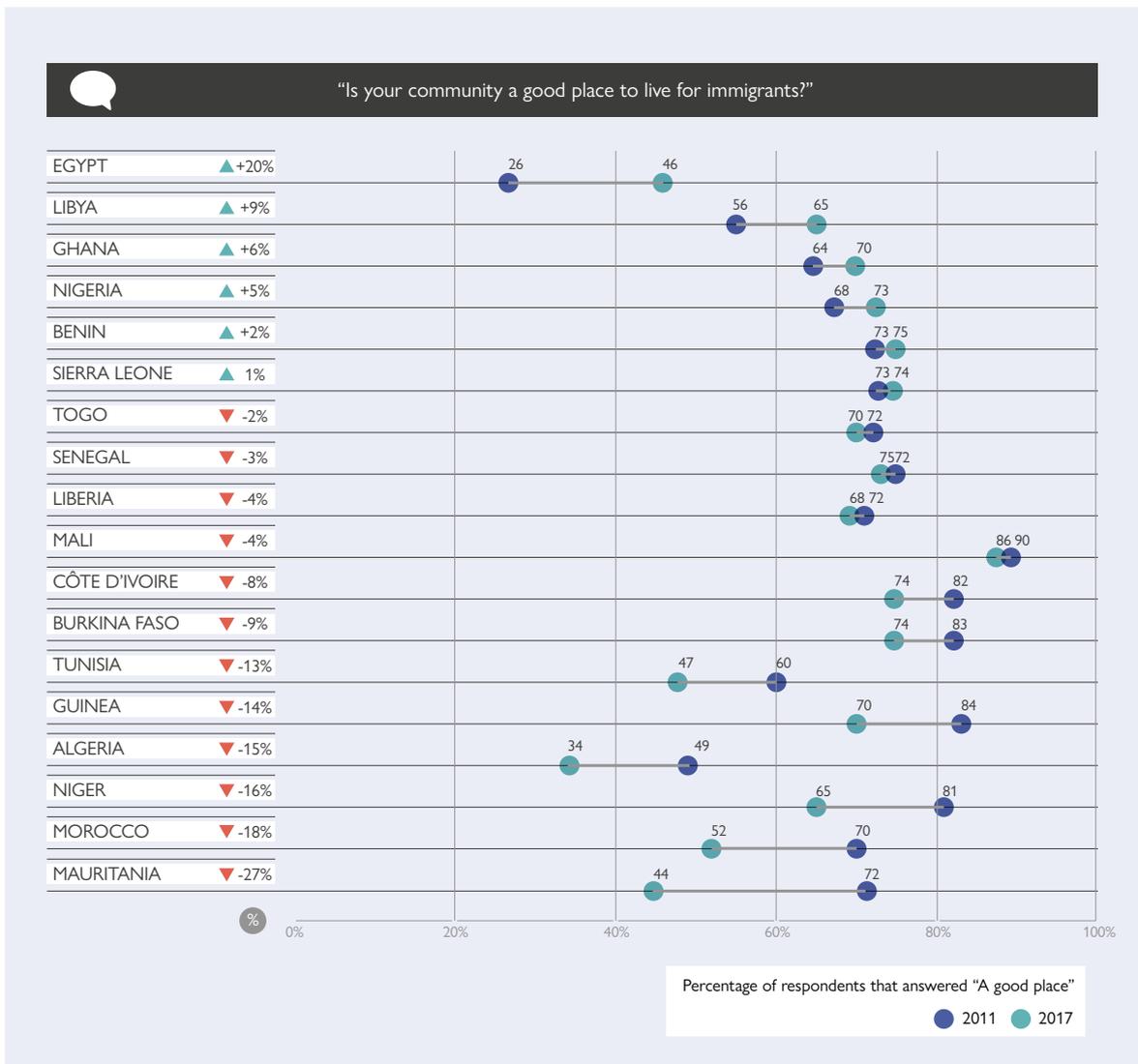


Source: Own elaboration based on Gallup World Poll, 2016.

## 35.4. Trends in public attitudes varied across North and West Africa between 2011 and 2017

An analysis of responses to a different but related GWP question that was asked over a longer time span shows that attitudes towards immigration remained stable for some of the countries studied between 2011 and 2017, while in others these changed significantly. The question asked was “Is the city or area where you live a good place or not a good place to live for immigrants from other countries?” and aimed to capture respondents’ perceptions of how tolerant their society is towards immigrants (Buitrago et al., 2018). In countries such as Egypt and Libya, the share of adults perceiving their society to be accepting towards immigrants increased in the same time period, while in Mauritania and Morocco, the share of adults expressing such views saw a decreasing trend (see Figure 35.2).

**Figure 35.2.** Share of respondents who consider that their community is a good place to live for immigrants, 2011–2017



Source: Own elaboration based on Gallup World Poll, 2011 and 2017.

In the following section, the analysis turns to how individuals’ perceptions on the economy and labour market, the quality and availability of public goods and services, and trust in institutions affect public opinion on immigration in West and North Africa. Data come from the 2016 GWP from 15 countries.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Tunisia are included. Morocco, Algeria and Libya were not included due to lack of data.

## 35.5. Positive perceptions on the economy, public goods and services, and institutions positively affect attitudes towards immigrants in North and West Africa

Figure 35.3 presents correlations between individual perceptions of a range of issues linked to the economy, the labour market, the availability and quality of public goods and services, as well as trust in institutions with attitudes towards immigrants living in the country.<sup>18</sup> The results show that positive attitudes towards immigrants are correlated with respondents' subjective assessments of having enough income to get by on and believing that it is a good time to find a job. Respondents who perceive their country's labour market as doing well are 15 per cent more likely to hold positive attitudes towards immigrants living in their country compared with those who are more pessimistic about the labour market.<sup>19</sup> Those who feel that they can get community support<sup>20</sup> are 21 per cent more likely to be positive towards immigrants living in the country than are those who do not feel they have such support. Moreover, those who consider it difficult to get by on their current household income<sup>21</sup> are 16 per cent less likely to hold positive attitudes towards immigrants compared with those who feel that they have enough current income. Although not statistically significant, the results go in the same direction in regard to respondents' views on national economic performance or their employment status, with those employed and with a positive outlook on the national economy tending to have positive attitudes towards immigrants.

The survey data moreover suggest that perceptions of the quality and availability of public goods and services, such as the educational system and housing, are generally positively correlated with people's attitudes towards immigrants; those satisfied with the housing and the education systems in their cities or towns are 16 and 21 per cent more likely, respectively, to hold positive attitudes towards immigrants living in their countries, compared with respondents who are unsatisfied with these services. It is noteworthy that citizens who are satisfied with the quality of the air are 28 per cent more likely to be positive about immigration compared with people who are unsatisfied, suggesting that environmental stressors can negatively affect attitudes towards immigration.<sup>22</sup> The relationship between perceived access and quality of public services should be further explored given that the analysis presented here shows no significant statistical association between attitudes towards immigrants and satisfaction with the quality and availability of other basic services, such as health care and water.

Finally, trust in the government and the police is also generally associated with positive attitudes towards immigrants. Compared with those who do not have trust in such institutions, those who trust the police and the government are 21 and 25 per cent more likely, respectively, to hold positive attitudes about immigrants living in the country.

<sup>18</sup> Figure 35.3 shows the results of a logistic regression analysis that regresses positive attitudes toward foreign immigrants living in the country (dummy of positive and negative attitudes) on economic perceptions, satisfaction with public goods and services, and institutional trust. The dots represent coefficients, expressed in odds ratio, and the bars represent the 90 per cent confidence interval around that estimate. Blue dots to the right of the vertical line signify positive relationships, and yellow dots to the left of the line indicate a negative association. When the bar for an independent variable does not intersect the vertical line, that variable is statistically significant ( $p < .1$ ). Country fixed effects, demographics (urban, sex, age and education) and receiving remittances are included as controls in the analysis, but excluded from the figure. Standard errors are clustered at the country level. The analysed sample in the model was reduced to 10,811 from 15,001 observations in the original data set.

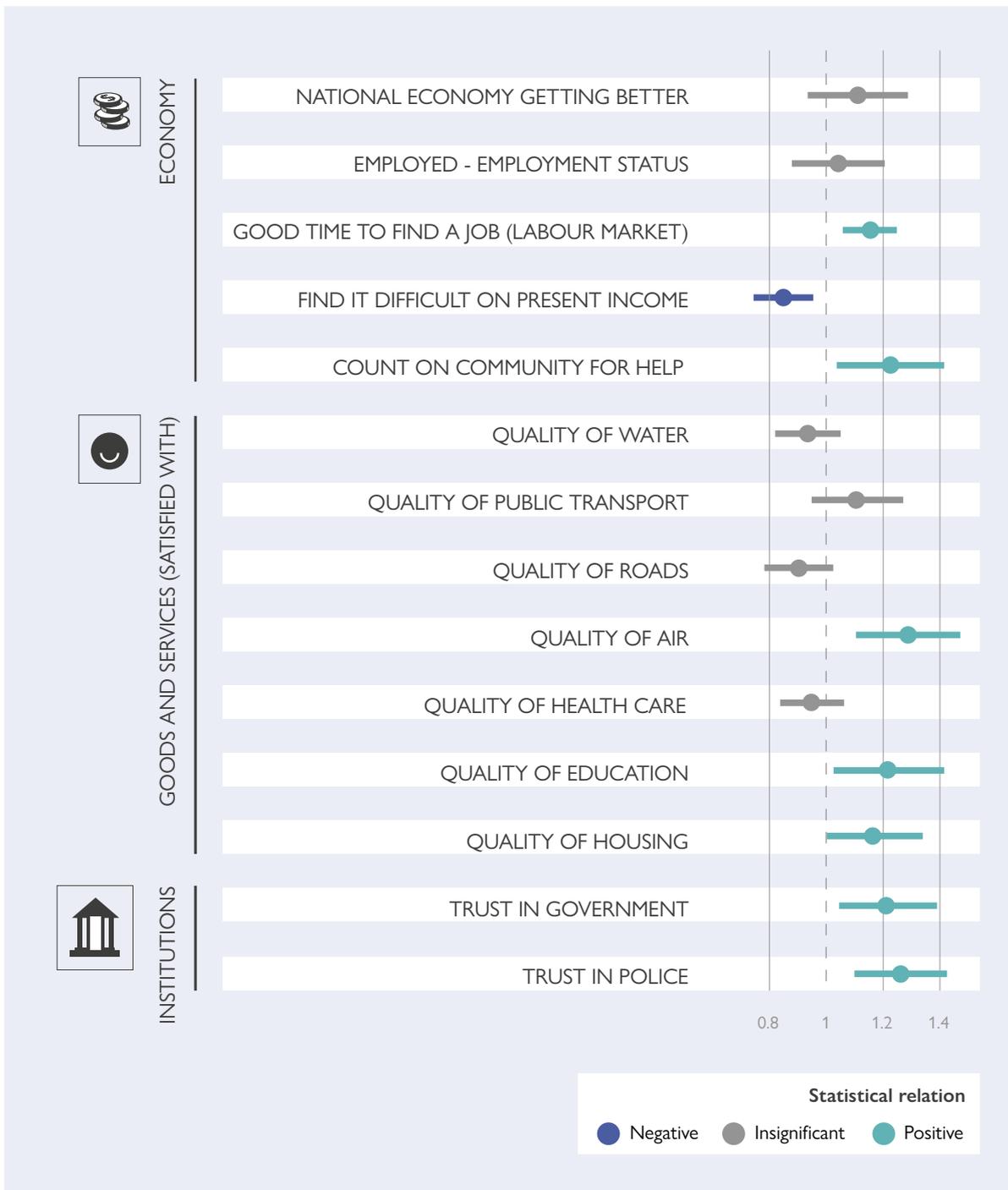
<sup>19</sup> GWP question: "Thinking about the job situation in the city or area where you live today, would you say that it is now a good time or a bad time to find a job?"

<sup>20</sup> GWP question: "If you were in trouble, do you have relatives or friends you can count on to help you whenever you need them, or not?"

<sup>21</sup> GWP question: "Which one of these phrases comes closest to your own feelings about your household income these days? Living comfortably, Getting by, Finding it difficult and Finding it very difficult".

<sup>22</sup> For more on the relationship between environment and public attitudes towards immigration, see, for example, Landau et al., (2013).

**Figure 35.3.** Individual factors of positive attitudes towards immigrants living in the country



Source: Own elaboration based on Gallup World Poll, 2016.

### Further reading: Studies on factors affecting public opinion on immigration in Africa

The limited research available on this topic has pointed to how electoral political competition can affect public opinion through increasing nationalistic attitudes. In a recent analysis of survey data from 11 African countries,<sup>23</sup> the authors found that opposition to immigration is significantly higher in more democratic countries<sup>24</sup> and when the survey is conducted closer to a national election (Whitaker and Giersch, 2015). As has been found in other contexts, immigrants often become scapegoats for complex problems such as crime and unemployment. Some studies show how, as political elites embrace exclusionary rhetoric, they may increase the salience of the immigration issue and legitimize opposition to immigration among the wider population.<sup>25</sup> A study focused on Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana found that politicians may play such an "immigration exclusion card" when the costs of immigration become concentrated for key interest groups, when embracing anti-immigration rhetoric will divide the support base of an opponent, and when the backing of anti-immigration groups is necessary to build a winning electoral coalition (Whitaker, 2015).

In an extension of the electoral argument, a survey experiment in Côte d'Ivoire (Cogley et al., 2018) found that respondents were significantly more likely to support the naturalization of immigrants who planned to vote, especially those with whom they shared a religious faith, indicating a degree of electoral calculation. In addition, citizens were more likely to support policies that allowed for the naturalization of immigrants with family connections to the country or who had been in the country for longer periods, those who had entered the country legally, and those who could contribute economically.

Meanwhile, some studies have highlighted how African experiences also challenge some commonly held assumptions about migration, not just within the region but more broadly. For example, while evidence from Europe<sup>26</sup> holds that migrants face more hostility if they are culturally different from their hosts in terms of religion, language or other traits, some experiences in Africa suggest otherwise. A study found that cultural similarities between migrant and destination communities might make relations worse, not better, as leaders of both communities are motivated to highlight differences in order to maintain their authority (Adida, 2011). Other studies have pointed out that culturally diverse countries are not necessarily more welcoming to additional diversity in the form of immigrants, with some survey data showing that opposition to immigration is in fact significantly higher in more ethnically diverse African countries (Whitaker and Giersch, 2015).

## 35.6. Conclusion

This chapter provided a descriptive analysis of attitudes towards immigrants in North and West Africa, adding to the limited but increasing evidence on this topic on the continent. It analysed three groups of factors associated with attitudes toward immigrants: namely, perceptions of the economy and labour market, the availability and quality of public goods services, and trust in institutions. It finds that positive perceptions of various factors on all these three dimensions are correlated with more positive attitudes towards immigrants: On the economic dimension, optimism regarding the possibility of finding a job and being able to count on the community for help is positively correlated with favouring immigration, while respondents who consider that they do not have enough income tend

<sup>23</sup> Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

<sup>24</sup> Which could of course be because any form of opposition is more easily spelled out in democratic contexts.

<sup>25</sup> Whitaker and Giersch (2015). The authors highlight that this pattern does not hold true everywhere, though. In Ghana, for example, long-standing immigrant groups have taken advantage of citizenship laws and a competitive two-party system to constitute themselves as an important voting bloc, prompting politicians from both sides to actively compete for their support during election campaigns (Whitaker, 2015).

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Brader, Valentino and Suhay (2008); Ford (2011); Hainmueller and Hangartner (2013); and Dennison (2018).

to have more negative attitudes. Regarding public goods and services, there is significant positive correlation between availability and quality of housing and education, and positive attitudes towards immigrants. The results also indicate a positive correlation between positive perceptions on the quality of air and positive attitudes towards immigrants. A potential relationship between perceptions on the quality of the surrounding environment and attitudes towards immigration deserves further exploration. Finally, individuals who have trust in institutions such as national systems of policing and the government are more likely to favour immigration.

These initial findings are important starting points for researchers and policymakers who wish to understand the dynamics of public opinion on immigrants in two regions that are significant origin, transit and destination countries for migrants. However, more survey data are needed for a more in-depth analysis of how attitudes change over time and what factors affect them. Overall, more nuanced data are needed to better understand what shapes attitudes in these regions; an important limitation in this analysis is the lack of precise questions in the Gallup World Poll that explore more specifically the perceived economic threat that migrants might pose on the labour market. These and other studies must be complemented with qualitative studies for a more in-depth understanding of how views are shaped and what affects them.

The relationship between attitudes towards immigrants and factors such as electoral political competition and diversity, as well as along the many factors that have been found to affect public opinion about migration in other regions – including media discourse, contact between immigrants and nationals, and psychological and early life socialization effects – also need to be further explored (Dennison and Dražanová, 2018). Furthermore, future research should explore the interactions between individual- and country-level variables, and use innovative research designs – such as involving panel data, natural experiments, and experimental manipulations – to establish causality, and not only correlations of the factors associated with attitudes towards immigration.

While this chapter confirms previous findings that North and West Africa are largely positive towards immigrants – with West Africa being particularly positive – public opinion easily fluctuates, as the analysis of the perceived acceptance levels of society towards immigrants between 2011 and 2017 shows. While attitudes remained stable in this time period for some of the countries studied, they changed significantly in others – in some for the worse. Monitoring public opinion on immigration and emigration, as well as its fluctuations, will be as important in these regions as it is elsewhere, to ensure migration policies can be adequately targeted in line with Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Objective 17 to end racism, xenophobia and stigmatization against all migrants. Importantly, a better understanding of the various factors affecting public opinion can support stakeholders to develop awareness-raising campaigns that can help ground public perceptions of migration-related issues in evidence and facts, rather than in subjective perceptions of issues such as labour market competition. It is also important to disseminate the understanding of the determinants of public opinion on immigration widely in society – with the help of media and journalists (see Pace, Zayed and Borgnäs, Chapter 36 of this volume) – so that migrants, political, religious and community leaders, as well as educators and service providers are better equipped to detect and prevent incidences of intolerance, racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination against migrants and diasporas, as called for in action g) of Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Objective 17.

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## 36.

## Balancing migration narratives through programming and media reporting in North Africa

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**Abstract:** This chapter explores a range of factors shaping attitudes towards immigrants in 18 countries in West and North Africa based on results from the Gallup World Poll survey. In particular, it looks at the relationship between public opinion on immigration and (a) individuals' perceptions of their countries' economy and labour market, (b) their perceptions of the quality and availability of public goods and services, and (c) their trust in institutions such as the police and government. These have all been identified as important factors affecting public opinion on immigration in the literature.

### 36.1. Introduction

Social exclusion is costly for migrants and societies in North Africa, as it leads to the ghettoization of migrants, which results in weakened social cohesion.<sup>3</sup> It also affects how migrants are able to use their human capital in destination countries, with a suboptimal use of their skills, and can result in increased violence and instability.<sup>4</sup> However, interventions and programmes to promote social inclusion and cohesion include not only providing skills development, training and job opportunities to migrants and host communities, but also efforts aimed at reducing misconceptions and improving public perceptions of migrants.

Research on public attitudes concerning immigration has found that the media have an important role to play; numerous studies have shown that, in general, the framing of the issue in the media affects public attitudes to immigration. In particular, there is evidence that negative stories provoke a perception of a threat to one's group, while images of immigrants engaging in common human activities increase positivity towards the migrant group. A key theoretical explanation for attitudes to immigration includes "contact theory", which predicts that increased contact with migrants lessens misconceptions about them. Actions to promote increased connectivity between migrants and host communities thus have the potential to make individuals more pro-immigration.

<sup>1</sup> IOM Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre.

<sup>3</sup> Social cohesion refers to "behaviour and attitudes within a community that reflects a propensity of community members to cooperate" (OHCHR, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> See OECD (2011). See also Monson et al. (2012), and Cloete and Kotze (2009). Inter alia, interesting readings are also Pillay et al. (2008), Idasa (n.d.), De Wit (2008), Hickman et al. (2008), Chidester et al. (2003), Geldenhuys and Rossouw (2001), McGeary and Michaels (1998), Simpson and Yinger (1972), and Wagley and Harris (1958).

This chapter presents two concrete efforts implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and partners aimed at improving social cohesion in North Africa – one to contribute to more responsible reporting on migration, through the direct involvement of journalists in the region; and the other aimed at improving perceptions of migrants among children in Egypt, by increasing connectivity between migrant and Egyptian children.

## 36.2. Balancing migration narratives through responsible media coverage

If one searches images of migrants online, despair and suffering are dominating the screen. Sensational numbers and prevailing stereotyped negative images of migrants continue to produce distorted pictures of reality, and perpetuate a discourse centring on immigration as an “invasion” or a “burden”, and as creating “insecurity” across the globe. North Africa is not immune from media coverage that often accentuates discrimination and racism.

Migration is much broader than what shocking images of migrants cramped into unseaworthy vessels might convey, and is a difficult phenomenon for journalists to report.

Irregular migration, for example, is the form of migration which tends to dominate current debates on migration. More specifically, the coverage of the issue nowadays among media outlets in Africa, just as in Europe, often concentrates on irregular movements. The reality is that migration, both from within and to North Africa, is mostly regular. In addition, irregular immigration in North Africa, just as in Europe, is mainly a matter of “overstay”, by which the status of migrants who were previously in a regular situation becomes irregular (IOM, n.d.).

The role media play in shaping public opinion and therefore its importance for migration policymaking is undeniable (Protest and McCombs, 1991). It is therefore critical that journalists have the knowledge and skills to report on migration in an evidence- and human rights-based manner. In this vein, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration calls for States to “promote independent, objective and quality reporting of media outlets ... including by sensitizing and educating media professionals on migration-related issues and terminology”.<sup>5</sup>

In recognition of the pressing need to improve the accuracy of migration coverage, IOM, in cooperation with journalists based in North Africa, has over the past three years trained over 300 media practitioners working in Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia on factual migration coverage. The participants – media students, journalists and editors – were provided with migration statistics and good practices on migration reporting, with the aim to dispel commonly held myths and stereotypes. Participants were also trained on key migration concepts and terminologies, including on the definition of migrants and the differences between irregular migration and the crimes of trafficking in and smuggling of persons – a phenomenon and two crimes that are often confused in the public debate.

Some of the stereotypes and myths discussed during the training included the common belief that immigrants take jobs away from nationals or that migrants bring diseases. These two main preconceived ideas about migrants are refuted by facts, including abundant empirical macroeconomic evidence demonstrating the positive impact of migration on destination countries’ economies globally as well as in specific low- and middle-income countries.<sup>6</sup> IOM is currently conducting studies in Egypt and Tunisia to analyse the economic impact of immigration in these two countries. The existence of a healthy immigrant effect – where immigrants are on average healthier than the native-born – is a fact.<sup>7</sup>

Another commonly held belief in the region is that countries in North Africa, including Libya, are merely transit countries towards Europe. Findings based on 13,228 quantitative interviews conducted through Displacement Tracking Matrix Flow Monitoring Surveys with migrants between January and August 2019, and 2,312 key informant interviews conducted in June–July 2019, show otherwise. Over 80 per cent of the migrants interviewed by IOM

<sup>5</sup> Available at [https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180713\\_agreed\\_outcome\\_global\\_compact\\_for\\_migration.pdf](https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180713_agreed_outcome_global_compact_for_migration.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, OECD/ILO (2018), and Boubtane et al. (2016).

<sup>7</sup> This phenomenon was observed by Raymond-Duchosal as early as 1929. Wanner, Manfellotto, Westerling and Rosén wrote on it decades later.

reported that Libya was their intended country of destination at the time of departure from their countries of origin, and that they were in Libya for work opportunities (Teppert, Cottone and Rossi, Chapter 5 of this volume).

The trainings were conducted in North Africa under the development pillar of the European Union–IOM Regional Development Protection Programme. The initiative was first implemented in Morocco, where a master’s programme on Media and Migration was established thanks to the fruitful cooperation between IOM and the *Institut Supérieur de l’Information et de la Communication*. Trainings of journalists have also been conducted in West Africa under the European Union–IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, with over 600 journalists trained since 2018 (see Box 36.1) (IOM, 2019a).



### **Box 36.1.** Shaping public opinion in West and Central Africa

In West and Central Africa – a region where migration dynamics are complex and journalists sometimes lack proper training on media ethics and sourcing – local journalists require guidance navigating migration media coverage.

In 2018, IOM launched a series of workshops targeting journalists and media professionals from West and Central Africa. Over 600 participants attended these workshops, the main goal of which was to provide journalists with the necessary tools to report on migration in an informed way.

Participants were provided with information on the migration situation in their countries and regions, the typical profiles of migrants, and regional and global migration challenges. Through the trainings, they were familiarized with migration-related terminology and legal considerations of each term. Participants were also tasked with developing key messages for a new discourse on migration and proposed actions to improve media coverage on migration in their countries.

“At a time when sensationalism is gaining ground, it is crucial to better inform journalists about such complex issues as migration. Only those who are well informed can inform properly,” says Florence Kim, IOM’s Regional Media and Communications Officer and Spokesperson in West and Central Africa (IOM, 2019b).

## 36.3. Development of an IOM guide to train journalists on communication about migration

Over the course of the various training sessions conducted by IOM in North Africa, the organization received an increasing amount of requests from various media outlets for training materials developed for journalists. As a response, and in recognition of the need to increase the media’s capacity to report on migration issues in the region, IOM Tunisia decided to develop a comprehensive guide for the training of journalists, with the central aim of supporting media practitioners in debunking stereotypes and misinformation surrounding migration.

The *Journalist Guide to Media Coverage of Migration Based on International Law and Evidence – Tools, Practical Cases, Recommendations* (IOM, 2019c), includes examples from the region but targets a global audience. It constitutes a resource not only for journalists, but also for organizations, universities and governments worldwide interested in improving the quality of migration media coverage and contributing to an evidence-based public discourse on migration. It comes in two versions: one is directed at journalists and one is developed for facilitators as a training tool for trainers – journalists and editors-in-chief who wish to train their peers, staff or university students, for example. It gives practitioners an understanding of the regional and international context of migration by citing

peer-reviewed evidence and international statistics on migration; explaining the terminology of migration; providing a framework to rethink media coverage of migration, addressing ethical aspects of migration coverage; analysing the representations of migrants in the media; presenting a primer on the international legal framework governing migration; and providing recommendations on how the media can move to a more responsible form of migration coverage, embracing evidence and international law, and rejecting sensationalism. The *Guide* comprehensively covers all aspects a journalist needs to consider, from course content and practical exercises and best practices in pedagogy, to practical issues such as the selection of candidates, venues and equipment needed. The training is divided into several modules, each designed to raise participants' capacities in a key area related to migration coverage in the media.

The *Guide* in its two versions is published in French, Arabic and English, and is accessible free of charge, giving journalists in the region, and beyond, the opportunity to access training tools.<sup>8</sup> It can significantly contribute to more responsible and ethical media coverage of migration in the region and globally (see Box 36.2). As a next step, IOM plans to transform this *Guide* into an online course on media coverage of migration. In a related effort, IOM also gathered over 40 executives from media regulatory authorities, editors-in-chief, journalists, photojournalists, university professors and researchers from four continents in Tunisia to draft an ethical charter on media coverage on migration. A committee for finalizing the charter was set up, as well as a website for its dissemination and the promotion of its adoption at the country level.<sup>9</sup>



### Box 36.2. Thoughts from Salaheddine Lemaizi, journalist and president of the Moroccan Network of Migration Journalists

The difficulties encountered by the media in covering migration in a professional and ethical manner have their origins, in part, in the reporting methodologies utilized (a preference for immediacy and sensationalism), as well as in the nature of public debate in the age of social networks (an increase in populism, hate speech and such as a result of anonymity online, for example).

In order to combat this, the media and public actors must be provided with tools that can offer verified, balanced and accessible information on migration. The *Journalist Guide to Media Coverage of Migration Based on International Law and Evidence – Tools, Practical Cases, Recommendations* (IOM, 2019c) is one such tool. I had the opportunity to pilot the *Guide* during a training for 100 Moroccan journalists, and found it fulfils at least four functions:

- (a) Equipping journalists with the necessary tools and understanding to effectively report on the multifaceted complexities of migration;
- (b) Exploring the basics of journalism, rooted in international law and professional ethics;
- (c) Highlighting and challenging preconceived notions on migration; and
- (d) Widening the perspectives of an innovative journalistic practice in regard to content and reporting methodologies.

The success of this *Guide* led to the creation of “The Ethical Charter for Media Coverage of Migration”<sup>10</sup> in December 2019. This ambitious and independent initiative aims to serve as an incubator of ideas and commitments on the theme. However, let us bear in mind that improving media coverage of migration is a long-term task. Progress made in this field will be contingent on the building and collaboration of numerous initiatives, linking media interest in migration, mainstreaming of ethical and professional practices in journalism and continuous advocacy to change perceptions at the societal level.

<sup>8</sup> The Guides are available at <https://tunisia.iom.int/resources>.

<sup>9</sup> See Facebook page. Available at [www.facebook.com/Migrations-Charte-mondiale-d%C3%A9thique-109300947301204/?modal=admin\\_todo\\_tour](http://www.facebook.com/Migrations-Charte-mondiale-d%C3%A9thique-109300947301204/?modal=admin_todo_tour).

<sup>10</sup> See Facebook page. Available at [www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=109328283965137&id=109300947301204&\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=K-R](http://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=109328283965137&id=109300947301204&__tn__=K-R).

## 36.4. Creating social cohesion in Egypt through increased connectivity

To improve migrant integration in Egypt, the development pillar of the Regional Development and Protection Programme in Egypt designed an intervention to “change specified behaviour patterns” (Michie et al., 2011). In 2018, IOM Egypt started the implementation of its community cohesion intervention *Safarni* (“Make Me Travel” in Arabic) in Ard El Lewa, a marginalized area in the heart of Cairo, where large numbers of migrants, such as Sudanese and Yemeni, live. The intervention aimed at changing the perceptions and behaviour of children towards people from different cultures within their own community. The cultural diversity is a result of both the historic and more recent settling of immigrant communities in Ard El Lewa, bringing different traditions together while also giving rise to interpersonal conflicts and stigma between the different nationalities.

The intervention was preceded by an awareness-raising campaign on social media,<sup>11</sup> which was used to assess the public perception of the initiative. The online campaign promoting *Safarni* took children on an imaginary journey to a new country through a simulated travel experience. It included intercultural workshops with children 8–12 years of age (the appropriate ages for engaging with the programme) with different cultural backgrounds. The online campaign was a success, with more than 981,000 views, 29,000 likes, 7,000 comments and 5,000 shares, and was covered by top local media channels.<sup>12, 13</sup> The online engagement and positive feedback paved the way for the on-the-ground field intervention.

To ensure a successful behavioural change intervention, the *Safarni* team identified the most effective components to be included (Michie et al., 2011). Based on years of experimentation, the team developed its own methodology, taking inspiration from the Active Education and Montessori methods. *Safarni* has also developed its organizational structure, starting as an initiative under the umbrella of the *Selmeya* (“Peaceful” in Arabic) Network in Egypt and turning into a company focused mainly on delivering the *Safarni* programme and developing its content. The methodology has been developed and enhanced by the *Safarni* team over the course of seven years, and is based on evidence-based methods grounded in intergroup contact theory and peace education. It proved to be effective in developing the children’s awareness and provoking behavioural changes in the long term based on the *Safarni* team’s tests for the methodology and programme.<sup>14</sup> The intervention consisted of three sessions – (a) Diversity in the World, (b) Diversity in the City, and (c) Diversity in the Community – with children attending one programme session per week for a period of four months. *Safarni* engaged the parents at information sessions to also increase interaction with adults of the two target groups (migrants and Egyptians), and to encourage them to learn from their children’s experience and be more accepting of differences. *Safarni* reached 150 parents and 180 children between the ages of 8 and 12 years who were both Egyptians and migrants of different nationalities, including Sudanese, South Sudanese, Yemenis, Eritreans, Ethiopians and Syrians. At the end of the programme, an assessment through the local educators and facilitators, in addition to a “body map”<sup>15</sup> – an assessment tool to measure children’s impressions and perceptions of others of different nationalities and ethnicities – was conducted. The programme successfully achieved a 49 percentage point increase in Egyptian and migrant children’s positive feelings towards migrants (increasing from 36% prior to the implementation of the programme to 85% after its conclusion).<sup>16</sup>

*Within the framework of the project, IOM Egypt is replicating the Safarni initiative to expand its outreach in Cairo and Alexandria, while strengthening the ties between the Safarni beneficiaries and empowering the role of Safarni Alumni as agents of change.*

<sup>11</sup> Click-funding-Video for the “Living Together Campaign”, IOM Egypt, 2018. Available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcenurfR7n8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcenurfR7n8).

<sup>12</sup> Available at [www.bbc.com/arabic/40888428](https://www.bbc.com/arabic/40888428) and <https://bit.ly/3cbxGfO> (both in Arabic).

<sup>13</sup> Available at [www.aljazeera.net/news/lifestyle/2019/4/11/%D8%B3%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B7%D8%A7-%D8%A3%D9%86-%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%BA%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%AC%D9%88%D8%A8-%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%84%D9%83-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85](https://www.aljazeera.net/news/lifestyle/2019/4/11/%D8%B3%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B7%D8%A7-%D8%A3%D9%86-%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%BA%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%AC%D9%88%D8%A8-%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%84%D9%83-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85) (in Arabic).

<sup>14</sup> *Safarni* Methodology.

<sup>15</sup> Body Map is a visual tool that is used to assess participating children’s change in perception about the other nationalities and ethnicities, using drawing and colours as means of expression. The exercise focuses on body parts that reflect children’s feelings and understanding of the other, including eyes, mouth, head, ear and heart.

<sup>16</sup> Regional Development and Protection Programme Annual Report.

## 36.5. Conclusion

Although it is everyone's responsibility to address the discrepancy between the current migration discourse and reality, the media have a special responsibility, both ethically and professionally, to uphold a nuanced and fact-based discourse on migrants and migration. Given the growing importance of migration in influencing the political landscape and policy debates around the globe, including along migration routes such as the Central Mediterranean Route, it is critical for the public to have access to accurate and evidence-based information. It is also vital to work on developing the critical thinking of future generations in Africa, as in the rest of the world, which is only possible through a diverse, balanced and well-equipped media.

Similarly, programmes aimed at increasing connectivity between host populations and migrants – especially when young – can contribute to reducing misconceptions and improving social cohesion outcomes. A systematic method should constitute a starting point for such interventions, as well as for assessing the appropriateness of replicating interventions across different communities (Michie et al., 2011). *Safari* proved to be a successful behaviour-changing intervention in Egypt, relying on disseminating the behaviour and attitudes of children exposed to diversity (Ayres et al., 2013). Children are especially interested in and influenced by their peer groups, and peer-to-peer learning and collaboration are thus key to influencing narratives among this age group. However, the intervention in the Ard El Lewa community seems also to have brought about positive change in the behaviours and attitudes of children's parents towards the diversity in their own communities, suggesting that small interventions can have ripple effects across communities.

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## 37.

## Assessing the impact of awareness-raising campaigns on potential migrants – what we have learned so far<sup>1</sup>

Jasper Tjaden<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** Information campaigns are not a new policy tool, but only in recent years has evidence slowly caught up with implementation in the field of migration. This chapter outlines the learnings of three comprehensive studies completed by the IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre on the impact and effectiveness of information campaigns on the risks of irregular migration. Some of the lessons so far include: (a) there is a clear need and demand for more and better information relating to migration among potential (irregular) migrants; (b) participating in awareness-raising events can have clear effects on potential migrants' risk perceptions and intentions to migrate irregularly; (c) the cost advantage of online activities versus offline events is likely to be exaggerated; (d) campaign goals and effect sizes vary which highlights the need for discussion among implementers, researchers and donors about what success means for campaigns. Lastly, the chapter outlines a research agenda to tackle the many questions that remain.

### 37.1. What we know about migration campaigns

Every year, thousands of migrants crossing Africa and the Mediterranean Sea die during their journeys.<sup>3</sup> Research has shown that migrants sometimes begin their journeys without accurate or complete information, and as a result, may put their lives at risk (Foran and Iacucci, 2017; IOM, 2017; RMMS, 2014; UNHCR, 2017).

International organizations, civil society organizations and governments have turned to information and awareness-raising campaigns as a tool for raising awareness about the risks of irregular migration, in the hopes of keeping migrants out of harm's way and facilitating informed choices. According to the European Commission's working group on information campaigns, the European Union and individual European Union member States have funded more than 100 migration campaigns since 2014.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The author would like to acknowledge the contribution of Felipe Dunsch, Marie-Luce Bia-Zafinikamia, Horace Gninafon, Gustavo Lopez and Esther Haarmann for key IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) studies that form the basis for this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre.

<sup>3</sup> MHUB, Survey Snapshots, available from [www.mixedmigrationhub.org/survey-snapshots/](http://www.mixedmigrationhub.org/survey-snapshots/); and IOM, Missing Migrants, available from <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>.

<sup>4</sup> Presentation of the Vice-chair of the European Commission working group on information campaigns at the European Migration Network, Annual Conference in Vienna, on 3 December 2019.

Despite the growing number of information campaigns on the risks of irregular migration, there is limited empirical evidence on the impact and effectiveness of these campaigns (Browne, 2015; Tjaden et al., 2018). In a systematic review of available studies, we found that the increase in number of information campaigns has far outpaced any rigorous assessment of their effects (Tjaden et al., 2018). In the absence of reliable evidence, the debate on the potential of this policy tool often relies on largely anecdotal evidence.

Awareness-raising campaigns are also not short of critics, both in academia (Schans and Optekamp, 2016) and more generally in the public debate (Vermeulen, 2019). One common claim is that campaigns are ineffective by design, as they are built on wrong assumptions about how individuals make migration decisions. According to some critics, most migrants may be perfectly aware of the facts but accept the danger due to a lack of alternatives.

Awareness-raising campaigns rely on many assumptions – assumptions that are often not easy to back up with data. Up to now, there is still limited information on a range of relevant questions:

- What information do potential migrants already have?
- Is available information lacking or biased?
- Do potential migrants want and trust new information?
- Do migrants remember and internalize information?
- Are migrants rational decision makers who weigh costs and benefits of migration?
- Do migrants themselves make decisions or are families and communities the more important factors?
- Do migrants change their attitudes, perceptions and intentions as a result of information provided to them?
- Are changes in perceptions related to change in actual (safer) migration behaviour?

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) itself is implementing many awareness-raising campaigns around the world.<sup>5</sup> From an institutional perspective, GMDAC has a key interest in providing guidance and evidence on which approaches work to our colleagues in the field. There is a growing emphasis on data-driven, continuous learning, and evidence-based programming, to ensure that we can assist migrants as best as available resources permit.

It was in this context that IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) decided to work towards addressing glaring gaps in the evidence base and to conduct studies that can be used to inform programming in this field in the future. Three comprehensive studies have been completed. This chapter is a brief reflection on what we have learned so far.

## 37.2. The emerging evidence base: studying the effects of information campaigns (2018–2020)

Since 2018, GMDAC has released a series of studies on the effects of awareness-raising campaigns on potential migrants.

First, we conducted a large and systematic literature review of the available evidence base (Tjaden et al., 2018).<sup>6</sup> Most of the evaluations reviewed provided relatively little evidence of the full impact of information campaigns. While many of the evaluations reported the number and profiles of campaign recipients or beneficiaries, impact – a change in the outcome attributable to the campaign – was not directly measured.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> GMDAC is a separate and independent entity within IOM. Formally part of IOM Headquarters, it is not directly involved in the implementation of awareness-raising activities designed and led by colleagues in the field. Dedicated funding for impact studies and external review of all research activities ensured an objective perspective – while at the same time being part of IOM – allowed us full access to relevant campaigns under study.

<sup>6</sup> The report also included a short annex with guidance for campaign implementers on how to consider important questions for an impact evaluation.

<sup>7</sup> A common issue is the lack of a clearly defined campaign objective and/or target group. This hampers any rigorous evaluation of programme effects. The majority of the campaign evaluations reviewed claimed that the campaign under study was “successful” in inducing a change in knowledge, perceptions, attitudes and – to a lesser degree – (intended) behaviour.

Second, GMDAC, in collaboration with the IOM Media and Communications Division, released a so-called randomized controlled trial that assessed the impact of IOM's "Migrants as Messenger" campaign in Dakar. Migrants as Messengers<sup>8</sup> is an innovative awareness-raising campaign using mobile technology and social media networks to collect and share first-hand accounts of irregular migration in communities across West Africa. The idea behind the campaign was to help migrants who returned voluntarily from Libya share their experiences with neighbours, friends and family. The concept is simple: Potential migrants listen to returning migrants, who share their experiences with their peers. The impact evaluation was IOM's first randomized controlled trial, which is considered the most rigorous and scientific way of evaluating the direct effect of a programme or policy. Potential migrants (community members who expressed interest in migrating) in eight neighbourhoods of Dakar were randomly invited to attend either a Migrants as Messengers film event or an unrelated "placebo" film screening (with no informational content on migration). This study used a longitudinal dataset of approximately 1,000 interviews of potential migrants surveyed several times over a period of five months.

Third, GMDAC conducted another comprehensive impact evaluation assessment of the IOM "CinemArena"<sup>9</sup> campaign in Guinea (Bia-Zafinikamia et al., 2020). CinemArena is a mobile cinema initiative launched to raise awareness about the dangers of irregular migration among potential migrants in rural areas in West Africa, as well as to share information about safe alternatives to irregular migration, including opportunities for potential migrants in their home countries. In January and February 2019, the CinemArena team organized 32 film screenings in 32 villages across various regions of Guinea. The evaluation applied a particular type of scientific impact evaluation design, a so-called "difference-in-difference" estimation. The impact study is based on a sample of 2,861 potential migrants in 63 villages in the regions of Boké, Boffa, Gaoual and Kundara in rural Guinea. Potential migrants were surveyed a day before the arrival of the cinema caravan and then again three months after.

Fourth, GMDAC started to investigate the potential of online information campaigns, particularly ways to reach potential migrants via Facebook. Considerable funding is invested in engaging potential migrants online. However, the effects of such efforts are not well researched. Much practical knowledge and expertise are available within IOM, but data are often not systematically collected and the results from online engagement are often not documented and shared for public use. In an article contributed to the journal *Migration Policy Practice*, GMDAC first reviewed the available literature on evaluating the effects of Facebook posts and described the potential and pitfalls of using Facebook to engage with potential migrants (Lopez, 2019). Subsequently, a range of assessments was conducted based on the previous IOM Facebook campaign outreach. The analysis was based on a series of so-called A/B tests (split tests) – a method to assess which messages and which targeting works best for engaging target audiences (Haarmann et al., 2020).

## 37.3. Lessons so far

### 37.3.1. Many potential migrants lack information and want more

In our Senegal study, we found that almost 43 per cent of respondents with a general interest in leaving Senegal reported they did not feel well informed about how to migrate to Europe in general. Thirty-seven per cent said they were not well informed about the risks associated with irregular migration. The impact assessment revealed that participating in awareness-raising events in Dakar increased how well-informed potential migrants felt by an average of 20 per cent – in other words, one in five potential migrants. The study revealed striking gaps in knowledge regarding the number of casualties along the migration route to Europe, the duration of the journey to Europe and the asylum system in destination countries. Information on potential earnings in Europe and travel costs were consistent with estimates in the literature. Almost half of campaign participants said they sought out additional information after attending the events. This indicates that the events were successful in triggering some curiosity and additional information-seeking behaviour.

<sup>8</sup> Available from [www.facebook.com/MigrantsAsMessengers/](https://www.facebook.com/MigrantsAsMessengers/).

<sup>9</sup> Available from [www.iom.int/news/latest-edition-cinemarena-mobile-cinema-initiative-launched-rome](https://www.iom.int/news/latest-edition-cinemarena-mobile-cinema-initiative-launched-rome).

Our study in Guinea revealed a similar pattern. Sixty-nine per cent of respondents who considered migrating did not know how much it cost to migrate to Europe. Forty-one per cent said that they did not know how long it would take to migrate to Europe. Among those who had a general idea, 56 per cent estimated that it would take less than three months to arrive in Europe irregularly. Only 8 per cent estimated a journey longer than one year. These results stand in contrast to many testimonials and qualitative accounts describing how undocumented migrants get stuck in transit countries and have to work to save up additional resources to fund a trip across the Mediterranean. Regarding the legal context of regular migration, striking gaps emerge. Eighty-eight per cent of potential migrants in this survey reported that they did not know what asylum was. Fifty-three per cent of potential migrants in the study thought it was likely or very likely that they would get a visa to travel to Europe or the United States. Ninety-nine per cent of participants in the Guinea study said they would like to receive additional information.

In sum, the common claim in the literature that migrants are already perfectly informed does not square with the surveys we conducted. However, not everyone, of course, needs or wants information. The picture is much more mixed, which speaks to the importance of targeting those potential migrants who most demand information on safe migration, rather than targeting whole regions and villages, just because overall emigration rates appear to be high.

### 37.3.2. Young West African migrants often decide for themselves

Some evidence suggests that young migrants are often pressured by their families to migrate (Hernández-Carretero and Carling, 2012). Much of the theoretical economic literature describes migration as a collective household strategy to maximize income and hedge risks. However, we find that this pattern may depend strongly on the context. In the Senegal study, 56 per cent felt at least some family pressure to migrate. In Guinea, only 10 per cent of migrants reported feeling any pressure from family members. There are many stories of West African youth leaving without even telling their relatives, fearing that their parents would stop them. In several countries – for example, the Gambia and Guinea – there are now grass-roots organizations of mothers, fathers, siblings and others that urge the youth not to set out on the dangerous journey to Europe.<sup>10</sup>

### 37.3.3. Information campaigns can change risk perceptions

Both our surveys with campaign audiences in Guinea and Senegal confirm that many potential migrants think that irregular migration is generally very dangerous. In Senegal, of the interviewed potential migrants, 51.1 per cent assessed the risk to suffer from any form of violence to be “very high” or “critical”, and 68.8 per cent evaluated the risk to the life of someone who tries to migrate irregularly as “very high” or “critical”. On average, 34.7 per cent of the surveyed population held the perception that specific risks (food shortages, drowning, beatings and imprisonment, for example) were “very likely” to occur, and another 53.7 per cent thought they were “likely”. This means that, on average, only 11.6 per cent of the respondents assessed the risks as neutral or not likely to occur. In Guinea, 72 per cent of respondents said that irregular migration to Europe was either “very” or “extremely” dangerous.

Despite these already high levels of risk awareness, both studies found that participating in awareness-raising events can further increase risk perceptions by 25 per cent (Senegal) and 10 per cent (Guinea). This means that 1 in 4 or 1 in 10 potential migrants may change their views to think that irregular migration is very or extremely dangerous.

Whether potential migrants distinguish between general risks that can occur from specific risks they may be exposed to remains an open question. While a general appreciation of the danger involved is widespread, only the realization that one’s self could face it may influence safe migration decisions. Further research is needed to shed light on this.

### 37.3.4. Information campaigns can change migration intentions

Do awareness-raising activities change the behaviour of migrants? This is one of the key questions of governments, implementing agencies, academics, civil society and media. Changes in behaviour are clearly difficult and costly to measure, especially over time. As a proxy for eventual migration behaviour, GMDAC started to investigate migration intentions. Whether or not somebody wants to move or actually moves are, of course, two very different things.

<sup>10</sup> For example, the Youth Against Irregular Migration, which was formed in the Gambia.

However, several studies have shown that intentions, aspirations and migration plans are systematically associated with migration behaviour (see Dunsch et al., 2019 for a review; see also Tjaden et al., 2019).

In Senegal, we found that potential migrants who participated in awareness-raising events in Dakar were 20 per cent less likely to report high irregular migration intentions compared with potential migrants who did not participate in the campaign. In Guinea, we found that, on average, 1 in 10 potential migrants change their intentions to migrate without a visa.

### 37.3.5. Defining “success” and realistic expectations

The studies presented above aimed at responding the question many observers have: “Are campaigns working?”<sup>11</sup> “Working” in this case means whether or not they increase awareness and reduce the likelihood to migrate irregularly.

Before answering the question of whether campaigns are a useful investment, it is important to define what success means. We have found that campaigns can change perceptions and intentions of 1 to 3 out of 10 potential migrants who participated in relevant campaigns. Whether this is a large effect or small effect may depend on the perspective. For social scientists, effects of 10–30 per cent are considered to be very large. These effects are also large in comparison with similar studies that assessed the effects of development or health interventions.

Policymakers, however, may perceive these effects to be small. The effects may also be smaller than those reported in conventional evaluation studies that apply less rigorous methods and risk overestimating the “true” effects of campaigns.<sup>12</sup>

To manage expectations, donors, implementing agencies and evaluators should agree on what success means before the start of the project. There needs to be a clear idea on how “success” is measured. For some observers, there might even be an ethical argument that campaigns should provide information even if that information does not change anything.

An example from another field: In 2012, the United States Center for Disease Control launched a paid national anti-smoking campaign disseminating ads.<sup>13</sup> The campaign profiled real people who were living with serious long-term health effects from smoking and second-hand smoke exposure. According to an evaluation study conducted in 2012, during the campaign, the percentage of smokers who tried to quit increased by 12 per cent, translating to 1.64 million people. At the end of the three months, about 200,000 of them remained smoke-free (equivalent of 0.02%). On the one hand, an effect of 0.02 per cent appears small. On the other hand, a lot of people were still positively affected. Effect sizes have to be discussed in relation to a general responsibility to inform about risks and reduce suffering.

### 37.3.6. Emotion trumps knowledge

A growing body of research in social psychology and behavioural science suggests that facts alone do not change hearts and minds (Kolbert, 2017). It is possible that the effects we saw in Senegal and Guinea are related to the “emotional” and personal form of communication between peers. While the campaigns that we studied heightened risk perceptions and reduced intentions to migrate irregularly, campaigns had limited effects on factual knowledge questions such as costs, duration, legal procedures and the like. This may not be surprising. The information interventions that we assessed used personal and often emotional testimonials of returnees to convey information on the risks of irregular migration. While facts were mentioned in materials and discussions, the main approach focused on enabling identification of audience members with the messages as a result of emotional connection.

Overall, this suggests that changes in factual knowledge are not a prerequisite for changes in attitudes and perceptions towards irregular migration.

<sup>11</sup> As mentioned above, what it means to have a successful campaign is not always clearly defined. Do effective campaigns increase awareness, change perceptions, reduce intentions to migrate irregularly? Do they also reduce actual migration towards Europe?

<sup>12</sup> Limitations of conventional project evaluations include the absence of a counterfactual (control group), selection (randomization), small sample sizes and cross-sectional designs, among other things.

<sup>13</sup> Available from [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/about/index.html#two](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/about/index.html#two).

### 37.3.7. Outreach via Facebook involves many unknowns

Online Facebook campaigns are now part of many awareness-raising projects that aim to engage with potential migrants in countries of origin (Lopez, 2019). In fact, many of IOM's own campaigns make use of Facebook, a platform that has the appeal of reaching large audiences at relatively low costs. Common Facebook metrics cited in final evaluation reports sound impressive, yet their meaning is often not well understood. One example is "reach". The reach of a Facebook post is the number of users on whose wall the post appears – those users who hypothetically had the chance to see the post. This does not mean that as many users were actually reached, meaning that they saw or engaged with the information. More meaningful measures include clicks, views, comments or likes, which indicate how many Facebook users directly engage with the content that is disseminated.

However, many of the metrics do not provide reliable information about the impact of Facebook campaigns (Haarmann et al., 2020). There are several limitations:

- First, Facebook allows campaign implementers to target their campaigns according to a wide range of factors, such as users' sex, age group, country of residence, and other factors. However, who eventually engages (or clicks) on Facebook posts is not clear. It is not possible to directly identify potential migrants on Facebook. This means that Facebook posts need to include surveys or other ways to assess whether engaged users are actually members of the intended target groups. We find that surveys have dramatically low response rates and increase the cost of ads (Haarmann et al., 2020). If campaigns verify that Facebook users represent the target group and engage with the content, the costs of Facebook ads are more comparable to offline, in-person activities (ibid.).
- Second, even when posts reach the right audience, it is difficult to measure whether the content that users are exposed to on Facebook actually leads to a change in perceptions, intentions or behaviour – the overall objective of most campaigns. To measure such changes requires recruiting users into a longitudinal survey where users' reactions are collected before and after exposing them to posts. This requires more resources and undermines the low-cost appeal of Facebook.
- Third, Facebook users in a country are not necessarily representative of the population in that country. Access to the Internet is still low in many regions where emigration rates are high.

Overall, these limitations highlight the importance of further research to examine the relative advantages and disadvantages of online campaigns versus offline campaigns.

## 37.4. What we still don't know: a proposed research agenda

The knowledge base for information campaigns has improved significantly in recent years, and is likely to further improve in the future.<sup>14</sup> Information campaigns have become a key issue of interest for academics, policymakers and practitioners. Information campaigns are not new, but it has only been in recent years that evidence is slowly catching up with implementation in the field of migration. Despite new insights and collective learning in this field, there are many remaining questions that should excite implementers, scholars and donors in the years to come.

Several key questions include:

1. **Behaviour:** Results from two of our impact evaluations reveal that participating in awareness-raising events can change perceptions and intentions regarding irregular migration – at least in part. However, all studies so far were unable to measure changes in actual migration behaviour. There is evidence suggesting that intentions are a useful predictor of behaviour. Nevertheless, whether campaigns actually have an influence on who migrates, and how, remains uncertain. Beyond the technical issue that measuring behaviour is difficult and costly, it is also

<sup>14</sup> There are several ongoing research initiatives led by Catia Batista, Tijan Bah (both at the NOVA Business School), David McKenzie (World Bank), Bernd Beber and Alex Scacco (both at Berlin Social Science Center).

worth debating whether reducing flows, for example, is actually a meaningful outcome measure for a campaign. Preventing harm and reducing unsafe migration through sensitizing and raising awareness of the risks of irregular migration are not the same as stopping any form of migration altogether. Potential migrants may choose to migrate within the region, migrate legally or gather more information on how to migrate in safer ways. Further discussion and innovative methods are needed to measure migration behaviour that are ethical, rigorous and in line with campaign objectives.

2. **Sustainability:** We were able to assess the effects of campaigns three to four months after subjects participated in IOM events. The long-term effects of campaigns remain unclear. For example, it is possible that participants forget or get new and conflicting information. Similar research on health campaigns showed mixed results on the sustainability of information effects. Many wane after several months. Follow-up surveys are needed to assess how long-lasting the impact is and whether or not there is demand for repeated interventions and regular communication with target groups, rather than one-off events.
3. **Relative importance:** Ongoing impact assessments are primarily concerned with the question of whether or not they have an effect on potential migrants. As more evidence emerges, the next question will be: How do information campaigns compare against and/or interact with alternative interventions, such as development or livelihood interventions, different messaging and/or migration policy changes, among other things? The question remains whether campaigns are more cost-effective than alternative approaches to make migration safer.

These points highlight that there is still much to be learned in this field – for the benefit of migrants, policymakers, practitioners and donors.

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# 38.

## Importance of data-driven responses along the Central and Western Mediterranean Routes

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DATA

**Abstract:** *The field of mixed migration demands evidence-based programming. However, given the hidden, cross-border and mobile nature of mixed migration, gathering accurate data in this field is particularly challenging. This chapter builds on the experiences and lessons learned by the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and the Mixed Migration Centre's (MMC) Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi) during their data collection and analysis exercises carried out in the context of monitoring mixed migration across the Central and Western Mediterranean Routes. It elaborates on the ways in which the collected data have been used to inform internal programming of the organizations and, to the extent possible, of external actors. The chapter will also discuss how uses of the data can be improved by suggesting practical measures at different stages of the data management, information-sharing and coordination.*

### 3.8.1. Introduction

Evidence-based programming is a key component of efforts by the humanitarian community to improve the safety, protection and livelihoods of people who are traveling along precarious routes to and through Libya and across the Mediterranean: donors, governments and practitioners all emphasize the role of data and research as a basis for informed decision-making. To date, many of the tools developed to assess vulnerability and ensure appropriate assistance provision are based on camp or shelter settings, in which the population is better known and relatively more static and where access is more straightforward compared to irregular, mixed migration settings. In such contexts, household economic assessments, for instance, can be used to comprehensively assess material vulnerability of a given population.

The field of mixed migration<sup>3</sup> is no exception to the demand for evidenced-based programming. However – given the hidden, cross-border and mobile nature of mixed migration – gathering accurate data in this field proves particularly challenging. Mixed

<sup>1</sup> Mixed Migration Centre.

<sup>2</sup> IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix.

<sup>3</sup> The Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) and IOM broadly define mixed migration as cross-border movements of people, including refugees, fleeing persecution and conflict; victims of trafficking; and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have different legal statuses, as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journeys. Those in mixed migration flows travel along similar routes, using similar means of travel – often travelling irregularly and wholly or partially assisted by migrant smugglers. More details about the MMC and IOM definitions can be found, at, respectively: [www.mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/terminology\\_MMC-en-fr.pdf](http://www.mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/terminology_MMC-en-fr.pdf) and [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml\\_34\\_glossary.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf) (p.141).

migration responses require the adaptation of previously existing models and approaches to the realities of complex, diverse and highly mobile target populations and contexts. They also require actors to reflect on the type of data needed, the volume of data, and when this volume of data becomes a limitation to decision-making and programming.

This chapter will build on the experiences and lessons learned by the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)<sup>4</sup> and the Mixed Migration Centre's (MMC's)<sup>5</sup> Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi) during their data collection and analysis exercises, carried out in the context of monitoring mixed migration across the CMR and the WMR. It will elaborate on the ways in which the collected data have been used to inform internal programming of the organizations and, to the extent possible, of external actors. The chapter will also discuss how the utility of the collected data can be improved, by suggesting practical measures at different stages of data management, information-sharing and coordination.

## 38.2. Displacement Tracking Matrix

In 2015, IOM's DTM established a Flow Monitoring Survey (FMS) to gather and disseminate information about the migrant populations moving through the Mediterranean into Europe. This includes monthly flow compilation reports, quarterly regional overviews and data sets on migration flows in countries of first arrival and other countries along the route in Europe. All data are collated by IOM in coordination with ministries of interior, coast guards, police forces and other relevant national authorities. The DTM system also includes migrants' surveys to capture additional and more in-depth data on the people on the move, including age, sex, areas of origin, levels of education, key transit points on their routes, motives and intentions.<sup>6</sup> Data has been collected at close to 1,200 flow monitoring points and slightly over 36,600 surveys have been conducted in Europe since 2015.

Similar data systems were further set up in West and Central Africa, North Africa, and East and Horn of Africa to capture data on migration flows, routes and profiles. The Flow Monitoring Counting Tool allows IOM to collect information on trends and volumes (5 million individual flows observed in West and Central Africa in 2017–2019 in 35 locations), the Survey Tool collects information on migrants' socioeconomic profile (over 190,000 collected en route in West, Central and Northern Africa) and the Migrants' Presence tool collects information on migrants' stocks in a city or a country (for example, Libya and Mauritania).

## 38.3. Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative

Since 2014, MMC's 4Mi has been developing a unique network of field monitors situated along frequently used routes and in major migratory hubs around the world: East Africa and Yemen, West Africa, North Africa, Europe, Asia and Latin America.<sup>7</sup> MMC's 4Mi aims to offer a regular, standardized, quantitative and global system of collecting primary data on mixed migration. The male and female monitors of 4Mi conduct in-depth, structured interviews on a continuous basis. Where possible, they also interview smugglers and others involved in the facilitation of mixed migration. Monitors are trained and closely supervised, and use a smartphone-based application to record and transmit completed interviews to regional 4Mi hubs for storage and analysis.

<sup>4</sup> The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. It is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of displaced populations, whether on site or en route. DTM has been active since 2004 and has since then been implemented in 72 countries in the world. [DTM Info Sheet](#).

<sup>5</sup> MMC is part of and governed by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), a leading humanitarian organization responding to displacement and mixed migration in 40 countries. While its institutional link to DRC ensures MMC's work is grounded in operational reality, it acts as an independent source of data, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration for policymakers, practitioners, journalists and the broader humanitarian sector. The position of MMC does not necessarily reflect the position of DRC.

<sup>6</sup> Data and reports on migration flows captured by DTM data are uploaded to DTM's flow monitoring portal (<https://migration.iom.int/>). Reports on country, regional and cross-regional mobility trends may also be found on DTM's displacement portal (<https://displacement.iom.int/>).

<sup>7</sup> For more information about 4Mi, visit <http://www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/>.

As of early 2020, 4Mi collects approximately 1,000–1,200 interviews each month, and has conducted more than 35,000 interviews since the start of the project. The initiative predominantly uses a closed question survey to invite respondents to anonymously self-report on a wide range of issues related to their individual profiles, migration drivers, means of movement, conditions of movement, access to information, the smuggler economy, aspirations and destination choices, and assistance needs and gaps. To understand mixed migration along the CMR and WMR, MMC hubs based in West Africa, East Africa, North Africa and Europe adopt a routes-based approach and, where relevant, can combine and analyse the data collected through their respective 4Mi projects.

## 38.4. Using 4Mi and DTM migration data to inform the response across the Mediterranean route

In review of broader humanitarian frameworks spanning a multitude of humanitarian actors, IOM's DTM and MMC's 4Mi recognize five key areas in which data can influence programming: (a) needs assessment and analysis, (b) strategic response design, (c) resource mobilization, (d) implementation and monitoring, and (e) operational peer review and evaluation (MMC, 2020a). With the exception of "resource mobilization", this framework is used to illustrate how IOM's DTM and MMC's 4Mi impact the programming of organizations operating along the CMR and WMR. While DTM and 4Mi evidence and analysis are being used in initial needs assessments and analysis, strategic planning and resource mobilization stages of the programme cycle, the links between IOM DTM and MMC 4Mi data and programming in the latter stages of humanitarian programming still require strengthening. The following sections examine some key ways in which DTM and 4Mi have informed programming in these five areas.

### 38.4.1. Needs assessments and analysis

Since 2019, the Danish Research Council (DRC) has implemented a protection programme in Mali entitled "Protecting people on the move from Bamako to Gao", under the DFID-funded "Mediterranean Mixed Migration Response Programme" consortia, to provide protection assistance to migrants and reduce protection threats and human rights violations along the migration route, among other objectives. During the design phase of the programme, an assessment was carried out building on 4Mi data, including on profiles and protection incidents reported by people on the move. Additional route-based and qualitative data collected by MMC were also shared to inform a proposal to undertake a rapid protection evaluation on the Sévaré–Timbutku axis to adapt activities along this route following a deterioration of security conditions along the Sévaré and Gao route.

In the context of Libya, in 2018, DRC engaged 4Mi monitors to assist in a multisectoral needs assessment (MSNA) when the volatility and insecurity in Libya prevented DRC's access to migrant communities within Libya. Similarly, DTM flow monitoring activities in Libya have been providing a common operating picture for IOM and its partners concerning migratory routes and flows to and within Libya. In Libya, DTM has been conducting MSNAs through individual interviews (FMSs) and key informant interviews (Mobility Tracking) to identify and measure critical needs and potential programmatic responses. These assessments are conducted both as part of DTM's regular rounds (IOM, 2019a) and on an ad hoc basis, as part of DTM's event tracking to identify critical needs of conflict-affected migrants (such as during escalation of hostilities in Tripoli in 2019 (IOM, 2019b)). Findings are used both by IOM's programmes and partners, such as the Rapid Response Mechanism, implemented jointly by IOM, the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund. DTM Libya's detention centre monitoring and related monthly information products (IOM, 2019c) have been providing monthly updates to humanitarian actors concerning the conditions in Libya's detention centres, and availability (or lack) of essential services such as protection services and migrant health assistance. Apart from multisectoral assessments, DTM Libya has also been conducting sector-specific in-depth migrant assessments, such as migrant food security assessments carried out jointly with WFP (IOM/WFP, 2019) and cross-border migrant health surveillance, implemented in close collaboration with IOM's Migrant Health Department, the World Health Organization (WHO) and national authorities.

### 38.4.2. Strategic response design

In terms of strategic response design, DTM and 4Mi data have shaped decisions on where and how programmes can intervene, at both the country and regional levels. The type of data needed to shape decisions and responses varies according to specific contexts, risks and needs surrounding the affected population and country or region. Data needed often consist of, but are not limited to, protection risks, number of affected households, units and individuals, as well as sex- and age-disaggregated data, to better inform a targeted response. The kind of response implemented will in turn vary according to the results of data collection and analysis.<sup>8</sup>

For example, 4Mi data collected in Libya, on the vulnerabilities of East African refugees and migrants who had passed through the Sudan, fed back to protection programmes in the Sudan, to better understand the trajectories of beneficiaries and explore the implications for the locations of DRC programming. Moreover, in Libya, intervening in a complex and challenging context – such as detention centres, where repeated human rights abuses occur – poses multiple ethical and programmatic dilemmas, and hence risks, for humanitarian organizations. In 2018, DRC carried out a review, in part drawing upon data from humanitarian needs questions integrated into DTM Libya's FMSs and from 4Mi, and concluded that only interventions that directly responded to the humanitarian imperative should be conducted, so as to offset these risks. Following its review, DRC stopped distributing material assistance such as non-food items, and halted its protection activities in detention centres, with the exception of providing detained refugees and migrants with the ability to make phone calls. Given the concern of exposing beneficiaries to harm, MMC aided DRC Libya in conducting interviews in southern Tunisia with migrants and refugees who had been detained in Libya. More broadly, in contributing to the annual Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response (HRP) Plan, DTM's Mobility Tracking has been critical to providing migrant stock data (IOM, 2019a) to identify priority locations with a high migrant presence, as well as informing sectoral People-in-Need (PiN) estimations through providing information on protection, shelter, health, education and food security needs and vulnerabilities through Multi-Sectoral Location Assessment (MSLA) and Flow Monitoring survey data.

Using IOM DTM data and MMC 4Mi data to understand changes in migration routes has also contributed to needs assessments and analysis for programming. DTM's flow counting tool in West and Central Africa draws a large picture of migratory routes and their evolution over time. Observation in Mali and the Niger at the borders with Algeria and Libya supported IOM and partners' understanding of route shifts following the implementation of various policies, and assisted field teams to adapt their assistance, particularly with returns from Algeria and Libya to the north of Mali and the Niger in 2018 and 2019.

Additionally, in Italy, DTM FMSs were collected from 2016 to 2018, with migrants arriving by sea and by land in the country. Collected data have been used by IOM Italy's counter-trafficking units deployed at disembarkation points in the southern regions to have more comprehensive profiles of those arriving by sea and of their reported experiences along their journeys, which might indicate vulnerability to human trafficking and exploitation upon arrival. The same data were analysed for the subsample of those entering by land from Slovenia and used to design an extended presence of protection units in the northern region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, and for the subsample of migrants from the Gambia, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, and analysed by DTM staff to provide the baseline information on the profiles of newly arrived migrants for a study of diasporas from the Gambia, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau in Italy. The research was funded by the Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development within the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and coordinated by IOM Gambia with field support from IOM Italy. Through the collection and processing of primary and secondary data, the report outlines the current presence and historical evolution of the migration patterns of these three nationalities in Italy. It describes the educational background, employment status and other socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of diaspora members, as well as the flow of remittances. Moreover, the report examines the associative networks of each diaspora in Italy, and provides recommendations to foster the inclusion of diaspora members and organizations from the Gambia, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau in Italy.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that, before being analysed, all data collected by DTM and MMC 4Mi are first evaluated for quality.

<sup>9</sup> The report is available in English and French. Available at <https://publications.iom.int/books/diaspora-mapping-profile-gambia-guinea-and-guinea-bissau-diasporas-italy>.

### 38.4.3. Programming, implementation and monitoring

Currently, MMC is actively working to strengthen the links between data and programming specifically surrounding implementation and monitoring. When 4Mi monitors interview refugees and migrants, they spend significant time with them and receive information on different protection incidents they experienced or witnessed. The people interviewed are often in vulnerable situations; however, monitors are not in a position or trained to provide any assistance to them. The people they interview are often not reached by humanitarian agencies and have limited awareness of the services available to them. In Agadez, the Niger, MMC has worked together with International Rescue Committee (IRC) Niger to pilot an “orientation” system for 4Mi monitors to direct interviewed refugees and migrants towards the services of IRC. At the end of every interview, and regardless of whether the interview has been completed, 4Mi monitors ask respondents if they would like to receive a card with information on IRC, which provides services to persons who are vulnerable to and/or have experienced violations of their rights. MMC has produced a lessons-learned document from this pilot and orientation systems are currently being implemented by 4Mi in Libya and Tunisia. Moreover, in Tunisia, a new module added to the 4Mi core survey, developed in coordination with DRC protection staff, identified key areas of concern for refugees and migrants around their understanding of their migration status and access to legal assistance. These data were used to inform DRC’s Protection Help Desk programming in Medenine.

Further along the CMR in Libya, DTM integrated several humanitarian needs modules into its FMSs in 2019. The modular survey design allows for location-specific roll-out of combinations of the various modules related to food security, health, protection, non-food items, shelter and return intentions, depending on information needs and response capacity. For instance, the food security module is utilized to identify potential beneficiaries for IOM–WFP migrant food assistance, in line with vulnerability criteria previously identified in the migrant food security assessment jointly conducted by IOM and WFP in 2019 (IOM and WFP, 2019).

In Italy, DTM flow monitoring data and surveys collected in 2018 were used for an analysis on children and young adults (14–17 and 18–24 years old) from Côte d’Ivoire, at the request of the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (MLSP) in the framework of the cooperation between IOM and MLSP in unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) protection and family tracing activities. The analysis carried out by DTM staff supported the overall understanding of the national administration of this population, in correspondence with an increase in arrivals by sea of migrants from Côte d’Ivoire since mid-2018, and an increase in the relative presence of children from Côte d’Ivoire among UASC in the Italian reception system. The analysis was included in the mid-year monitoring report of the MLSP on UASC in reception, published with data as of June 2019.<sup>10</sup>

An added value of activities and operations implemented by DTM and MMC is the capacity to monitor and report against evolving trends at the country level, and increasingly at regional and cross-regional levels as well. At the heart of this monitoring is the objective of sharing not only humanitarian data, but better knowledge of complex and ever-transforming migration dynamics with key stakeholders, responders and policymakers.

## 38.5. Primary barriers to using evidence for programming

A few barriers have been identified in using DTM and 4Mi evidence for programming. The first is compatibility of research and programming timelines: as for every response, migration data products from DTM and 4Mi are not always relevant to programmatic needs, and tend rather to respond to a broader research purpose (or vice versa). Research timelines are often slower than response timelines, and data from DTM and 4Mi are less sensitive to changes over time due to the nature of sampling. Analysis may broadly support strategic design and initial operational roll-out, but is less relevant for ongoing programme interventions or for anticipating changes to the mixed migration

<sup>10</sup> The report is available (in Italian) at [www.lavoro.gov.it/documenti-e-norme/studi-e-statistiche/Documents/Report%20di%20monitoraggio%20I%20semestre%202019%20-%20I%20Minori%20Stranieri%20Non%20Accompagnati%20MSNA%20in%20Italia/Report-di-monitoraggio-MSNA-I-semestre-2019-30062019.pdf](http://www.lavoro.gov.it/documenti-e-norme/studi-e-statistiche/Documents/Report%20di%20monitoraggio%20I%20semestre%202019%20-%20I%20Minori%20Stranieri%20Non%20Accompagnati%20MSNA%20in%20Italia/Report-di-monitoraggio-MSNA-I-semestre-2019-30062019.pdf).

context.<sup>11</sup> Programmes often need to respond to faster and shorter funding and response cycles than do research projects. This limitation is rooted in the different timelines of rapid data collection for programmatic purposes versus data collection for research purposes; the first requires flexibility, the second stability. Relatedly, research findings are not always taking the additional step forward to analyse their implications for programming.

Representativeness, along with compatibility, poses a barrier for evidenced-based programming. Given the difficulty in accurately capturing mixed migration (such as border porosity, irregular nature of some of these movements and language barrier), DTM and 4Mi data are rarely representative of entire populations on the move. While they provide context-specific data that support programming in specific locations, these are not easily generalizable to support programmes in different areas or along different routes (lack of external validity).

Additionally, information management and coordination can constitute barriers in using DTM and 4Mi data to inform programming. In-depth reports require extended time to review, digest and strategize around for programme staff. In this regard, both IOM and MMC produce shorter snapshots of data and research and respond to direct requests for information from programming partners, and these modes of information dissemination could be further exploited.

At times, research cycles (from the development of terms of reference for research to data collection, analysis and dissemination) and programme response (from assessment, to operational decision making and implementation of the response) are not aligned. More effective and deliberate efforts need to be made to strengthen interactions in all phases of both processes. Research terms of reference need to be developed jointly with programme staff to help clarify from the beginning expectations and identify possible implications that a given study research can have for programming. Whenever possible, preliminary findings should be presented and discussed with programme staff, through operational workshops for instance, to start contributing to decision-making processes for operational responses as early as possible. Lastly, the analysis of humanitarian and protection consequences of research needs to be elaborated jointly with programme staff, so as to gather direct input and include them in the analysis and elaboration of recommendations. This will make recommendations as specific and tailored as possible and will facilitate ownership and early implementation by programme staff.

## 38.6. Ways forward/good practices

The following are some initial good practices to improve the effective use of data to inform programming for people on the move:

- (a) Create humanitarian research funding timelines alongside the programmatic ones, and raise awareness of donors and partners on the implications: Humanitarian programmatic funding generally runs on short-term cycles, whereas research timelines normally require longer timelines. Evidence from an Itad study on Department for International Development (United Kingdom) programming suggests that aligning data collection and humanitarian funding timelines links research and operations, which is mutually beneficial (Itad, 2018). Understanding the key moments where research can impact programming, at different stages of the research and programming cycles, and building in opportunities for coordination within project timelines and workplans, would ensure that data are being integrated on a regular basis and not at the end of projects.
- (b) Strengthen data needs analysis prior to data collection activities to have a clear understanding of what is expected: In doing so, engage practitioners and donors to capture their perspectives and expected data needs. This should also support a discussion on the research and programmatic purposes of the data collection, and will bring clarity on the expected flexibility of the activity.

<sup>11</sup> Given that 4Mi data are less sensitive to changes over time, MMC publishes Quarterly Mixed Migration Updates (QMMUs), based on secondary sources and other forms of primary data, which highlight the latest developments on mixed migration along the CMR, including policy shifts and border crossings, among others. The aim of the QMMU is, in part, to detect potential trends and signs of shifting mixed migration drivers and patterns. As of April 2020, MMC is testing out a new model for connecting with programming, by organizing a round table with programming staff to discuss the latest findings of the QMMU, and learn whether they align with or diverge from what frontline staff are seeing on the ground (MMC, 2020b).

- (c) Build in opportunities for programme adaptation based on new data and research: Use data at specific intervals of programming to assess “What change has occurred and why?” and “What does this mean for the programme?” (Derbyshire and Elbereth, 2016). Assuming that research and programming timelines are aligned, organizations and donors must allow for programme adaptations, which will likely have implications for programme length, cost and deliverables. Engaging in effective and ongoing communication of new evidence and innovation between research and programmes, within project consortia, but also outside, will ultimately provide data on the changing conditions key for providing improved services to beneficiaries.
- (d) Collect appropriate data to evaluate the humanitarian impact of programmes: Look beyond research objectives to better understand the data necessary to evaluate both the intended and unintended consequences of programming, and to build a counterfactual to programming outcomes.
- (e) Where possible, use data collection architectures for orientation and/or as another outreach mechanism for communities that may lack information about and access to assistance and services: Data collection can serve the dual purposes of both informing programmes and informing potential beneficiaries. Given the extensive time and resources used in data collection, this should also be harnessed as a potential point of contact where information can be shared.
- (f) Assume a routes-based approach when using data to inform programming at various stages along the migration journey: Improve mechanisms to feed data and research to programmes and policy earlier on, as well as further along the route. This also requires increased coordination and partnership between data collecting agencies and implementing partners, not just within country programming, but also across multiple countries. To most effectively work on route-based approaches, organizations must first work on horizontal inclusion within agencies to tackle coordination within the organization across countries, before looking to vertical inclusion, where coordination and partnership between organizations along a migration route can be adopted.

### Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly impacted mixed migration along the CMR and previously existing methods of data collection and analysis of mixed migration patterns and trends. To better inform migration programming along the route following the outbreak, mixed migration researchers adapted their data collection instruments and procedures to capture the new and evolving phenomena. Specifically, remote data collection methods and data protection safeguards were developed and introduced, which in turn impacted traditional ways of working with humanitarian actors. IOM DTM<sup>a</sup> has closely monitored the changing mobility trends, status, and restrictions on Points of Entry and adjusted country level data collection activities (flow monitoring) to examine the impacts of COVID-19 on mixed migration and to further explore the socioeconomic impacts of COVID on migrants' profiles and needs. MMC<sup>b</sup> has provided global, regional and country-level updates on the micro-level experiences of those moving along mixed migration routes to better understand how refugees and migrants perceive the pandemic, what steps they are taking to protect themselves, and how the pandemic is impacting upon their livelihoods, mixed migration drivers, and mobility patterns.

<sup>a</sup> For more details, see IOM DTM's [Mobility Impacts of COVID-19 webpage](#).

<sup>b</sup> For more details, see MMC (2020c) and visit MMC's [4MI FAQ webpage](#).



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# — ANNEXES

## Safety, Support and Solutions in the Central Mediterranean Route II Programme: Annotated Bibliography

1. June 2020 – [Europe–Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe–Overview of Trends \(January–December 2019\)](#)  
Some 33,200 children arrived in Greece, Spain, Italy, Malta, Bulgaria and Cyprus between January and December 2019 (38% girls and 62% boys). Child arrivals in Greece, Spain, Italy and Bulgaria in 2019 increased by 7 per cent compared with child arrivals in 2018 (30,085). Some 9,000 of all children who arrived in Greece, Spain, Italy, Malta, Bulgaria and Cyprus in 2019 were unaccompanied and separated. Over 17,500 children (28% of the boy and 24% of the girl arrivals) were under resettlement procedures to Europe in 2019. Out of the total number of children (202,945) who sought international protection in Europe between January and December 2019, 71 per cent were registered in just four countries: Germany (35%), France (13%), Greece (12%) and Spain (11%).
2. April 2020 – [Rethinking Care: Improving support for unaccompanied migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children](#)  
The International Organization for Migration’s (IOM’s) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Europe’s Mixed Migration Flows in the Mediterranean and Beyond (February 2019) was used to inform the report “Rethinking Care: Improving support for unaccompanied migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children”, the result of collaboration between the Lumos Foundation and a steering committee made up of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and IOM. It maps and assesses the forms of care provided to unaccompanied migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children in six European Union member States: Bulgaria, France, Italy, Greece, the Netherlands and Spain.
3. April 2020 – [Europe – Flow Monitoring surveys – Children & Migration \(2019\)](#)  
The Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMSs) are part of DTM activities in the Mediterranean region, started in October 2015 and conducted within the framework of IOM’s research on populations on the move through the Mediterranean and Western Balkan Routes to Europe. Surveys are analysed to provide information on profiles, transit routes and vulnerabilities of respondents. In 2019, data collection took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, North Macedonia and Spain, with a total of 2,841 surveys. Child respondents (14–17 years old) represent 3.5 per cent of the total sample. No child was interviewed in Spain.

4. [March 2020 – DTM Mediterranean – Western Balkans Overview 2019](#)  
This paper provides an overview of the mixed migratory trends across the Western Balkan region in 2019, comparing them to the years before. While the total number of official registrations and interceptions of migrants by the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia and Kosovo<sup>1</sup> has increased from 2018 to 2019, these summary figures should be read as an estimation of yearly trends only, as some migrants can be apprehended and registered in multiple jurisdictions, while others can pass through the Western Balkans region undetected.
5. [March 2020 – Europe – Flow Monitoring Surveys – Women & Migration 2019](#)  
The FMSs are part of DTM activities in the Mediterranean region, started in October 2015 and conducted within the framework of IOM's research on populations on the move through the Mediterranean and Western Balkan Routes to Europe. Surveys are analysed to provide information on profiles, transit routes and vulnerabilities of respondents. In 2019, data collection took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, North Macedonia and Spain, with a total of 2,841 surveys. Female respondents represent 11 per cent of the total sample.
6. [February 2020 – Europe – Summary of Key Results \(January – December 2019\)](#)  
The DTM Mediterranean team surveyed 2,841 migrants and asylum seekers in Italy, Spain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and North Macedonia. The reporting team prepared 16 statistical overview reports and released four data sets.
7. [February 2020 – Migration dynamics around artisanal gold mining sites in Burkina-Faso: Case Studies of Warwéogo and Galgouli Sites](#)  
This research aims to determine the migratory profile of artisanal gold miners and to better understand the migratory dynamics to and from the target gold mining sites (such as incentive factors and initial movements), as well as the systems facilitating this mobility. Another objective concerns the assessment of challenges related to the protection of vulnerable people around gold panning sites. Data collection took place between March and April 2019 in two regions of Burkina-Faso, on the gold site of Galgouli (south-west) and Waweogo (centre-east).
8. [February 2020 – The Gambia – Mobility Assessment on Internal Migration \(February 2020\)](#)  
This study examines internal mobility in the Gambia and provides socioeconomic profiles of migrants who move from rural to urban settings. Migrants' places of origin and destination, drivers of migration and travel intentions were analysed to further develop the profile. A complementary objective of the study is to consider the profile of rural-to-urban migrants in relation to that of migrants assisted by IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme. Data on migrant journeys and travel intentions were analysed to determine whether there is a link between rural-to-urban mobility and onward migration, either within West and Central Africa and/or beyond. Interviews with migrants and key stakeholders were conducted between November 2018 and January 2019 in 10 communities. Overall, 220 rural-to-urban migrants, 10 community leaders and 137 beneficiaries of IOM AVRR were consulted.
9. [January 2020 – Migrate to Succeed: Understanding Youth Migration Trajectories in Guinea](#)  
The main objective of this research is to understand the underlying factors of irregular migration of young Guineans 15–24 years old to Europe through the specific case of returned migrants who received voluntary return assistance from IOM in 2017.
10. [January 2020 – New Migratory Dynamics in Senegal: Situation on the Western Mediterranean Route](#)  
Migration today has become more complex, dynamic and difficult to grasp, both globally and locally. A centre of both immigration and emigration, Senegal is at the heart of complex and varied migration dynamics. There is a tradition of international migration, where 46 per cent of flows from Senegal are concentrated within the African continent, mainly in West Africa, according to the results of the national census.

11. December 2019 – [Europe – Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe – Overview of Trends \(January – June 2019\)](#)  
Some 8,200 children arrived in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Spain between January and June 2019 (35% girls and 65% boys). This is 21 per cent less compared with the first half of 2018 (10,400). Some 2,800 children who arrived in Europe between January and June 2019 were unaccompanied and separated. Of the total number of children who sought international protection in Europe between January and June 2019, over 70 per cent were registered in just four countries: Germany (39%), France (12%), Spain (11%) and Greece (10%). Over 10,400 children (24% of the boy and 27% of the girl arrivals) were being considered for resettlement in Europe.
  
12. December 2019 – [“Gold Fevers” in Mali: Migration Profiles and Dynamics in Kayes and Sikasso](#)  
The research aims to determine the migration profile of gold miners, routes to the mining sites and decision-making methods; and identify the mobility patterns conducive to “gold fever”.
  
13. November 2019 – [Migration Dynamics towards Gold Mining Sites in Burkina-Faso](#)  
This research aims to determine the migratory profile of artisanal gold miners and to better understand the migration dynamics to and from target gold mining sites (such as incentive factors and departure movements), as well as the systems facilitating this mobility.
  
14. November 2019 – [Migrate to succeed: Understanding Youth Migration Trajectories in Guinea](#)  
The main objective of this research is to understand the factors underlying the irregular migration of young Guineans 15–24 years old towards Europe, through the specific case of returned migrants who benefited from return assistance by IOM in 2017. Collection of data is held between February and March 2019 in the four natural regions of Guinea: Basse-Guinée, Moyen-Guinée, Aute-Guinée and Guinée-Forestier.
  
15. November 2019 – [Migration Dynamics towards gold mining sites in Mali](#)  
The research aims to (a) determine the migratory profile of artisanal gold miners, the routes to mining sites and the decision-making methods; and (b) identify the mobility systems supporting the gold fever. Another objective concerns the evaluation of the challenges related to the protection of vulnerable people around gold panning. Data collection took place between March and May 2019 in the Sadiola and Kenieba circles in the Kayes region, and in the Kadiolo and Yanfolia circles in the Sikasso region.
  
16. October 2019 – [Migration data on the Central Mediterranean Route: What do we know?](#)  
Migration from Africa to Europe, particularly along the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR), has come into sharp political focus in recent years. This has meant that – while governments of countries on the route, mostly in North and West Africa – are seeking to make the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) a reality for their populations, they have simultaneously been searching for effective ways to address migration issues. To make progress towards the SDGs and their migration-related targets in the region, a strong evidence base is necessary. To date, however, data on migration in North and West Africa are scarce and information to monitor the migration commitments of the SDGs are not widely available in the region. Quality data are necessary to create informed and sustainable development and migration policies in the region, and currently the design, monitoring and evaluation of such policies are constrained by lack of data availability. Therefore, there is an urgent need to improve data on migration in North and West African countries, in particular along the CMR.
  
17. October 2019 – [New Migratory Dynamics in Senegal: Situation on the Western Mediterranean Route](#)  
This research aims to be able to draw up a comprehensive profile of the migrants having taken the sea route from Senegal towards Spain between 2016 and 2018, to analyse the determining factors of migration on the scale of the candidates as well as to identify the functioning of the networks and mechanisms of irregular migration developed along the Atlantic coasts.

18. September 2019 – [Migrants as messengers: the impact of peer-to-peer communication on potential migrants in Senegal-impact evaluation report](#)  
IOM has conducted a scientifically rigorous impact evaluation to assess the impact of the Migrants as Messengers (MaM) campaign in Dakar, Senegal. MaM was a peer-to-peer awareness-raising campaign made by migrants for migrants and implemented in Senegal, Guinea and Nigeria from December 2017 to March 2019. The impact evaluation in Senegal focused on a key pillar of the MaM campaign, namely town hall events, which screened video testimonies of migrant returnees followed by interactive question-and-answer sessions with migrant returnees.
19. September 2019 – [Online migration campaigns: Promises, pitfalls and the need for better evaluations](#)  
The article discusses the weaknesses of existing impact evaluations of online migration campaigns, particularly those aiming to raise awareness about the risks of irregular migration. The article shows that there are many key structural challenges that make traditional impact evaluations over the Internet difficult to conduct.
20. September 2019 – [Female Migration in Côte d'Ivoire: The Journey of Returned Migrants](#)  
This research aims to explain and facilitate an understanding of the irregular migration process of Ivorian women along the CMR, through the experience of female returned migrants who received IOM assistance.
21. September 2019 – [Female migration in Côte d'Ivoire](#)  
Among more than 6,700 migrants assisted in their return by IOM Côte d'Ivoire between January 2017 and August 2019, 25 per cent were women. This proportion is particularly high in comparison with other countries in the region – such as Burkina Faso, Guinea or Mali – which do not exceed 5 per cent of women among migrants assisted on their return. The research aims to explain and understand the process of irregular migration of Ivorian women along the CMR, through the experience of returning migrant women who have received assistance from IOM.
22. July 2019 – [Building Migration Data: Examples of Good Practices for the African Region Capacity](#)  
This report analyses good practices in migration data capacity-building by looking at recent efforts by international organizations to enhance the capacity of National Statistical Systems and other national agencies to collect, manage and disseminate official statistics on migration, thereby providing a basis for sound policymaking. Analysis incorporates desk reviews and interviews with key informants, and includes examples from Africa and other parts of the world. While various types of data capacity-building were identified – including the production of technical documentation and tools, training workshops and knowledge-sharing events – capacity-building needs to be a long-term, continuous process, which includes buy-in from all stakeholders and long-term commitment from sponsors. Assessment of the effectiveness of data capacity-building activities is an important area for future work. The report also examines use of data for policymaking at the national and regional levels, and provides guidelines for future activities in data capacity-building.
23. 27 June 2019 – [Statistics Versus Stories: The Invisibility of Missing Migrants](#)  
IOM, the United Nations Migration Agency, collects data on migrant fatalities through its Missing Migrants Project. The project, based at IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC), has documented more than 27,000 deaths and disappearances during migration worldwide since 2014. We collect data on migrants who have died at State borders, or in the process of migrating to an international destination, regardless of their legal status. However, the deaths that we record are primarily of people who died or went missing while migrating irregularly. Our social media campaign in May reminded us that, for each of the 27,437 deaths and disappearances recorded in our database, there is an individual with their own strengths, weaknesses, aspirations and life story. It is important to bear witness to the individuality of each person represented in the database.

#### 24. June 2019 – [Fatal Journeys Report](#)

Fatal Journeys Volume 4 focuses on a special theme – missing migrant children – given the growing number of children embarking on journeys that are dangerous and often fatal. Since 2014, IOM has documented more than 32,000 deaths and disappearances during the migration journey worldwide, although the true number of migrant fatalities is unknown, as many deaths go unrecorded. Data on deaths and disappearances of missing migrant children tend to be even more limited. According to IOM's Missing Migrants Project, nearly 1,600 children have been reported dead or missing since 2014. This report discusses why it is often difficult to find data on missing migrants disaggregated by age. It explores what measures could be taken to improve data on missing migrant children, to help improve policy options and to prevent these tragedies from occurring. The report is a contribution to the joint efforts of UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM, Eurostat and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to improve data on migrant and refugee children.

#### 25. June 2019 – [African migration to the EU: Irregular migration in context](#)

This briefing provides a comparative analysis of regular and irregular migration flows from Africa to the European Union, focusing on countries on the CMR (North and West Africa) over the period 2011–2017. The aim is to contextualize different types of flows to support evidence-based policy and programming, balance predominant narratives of migration between these regions, and suggest ways to improve data on these. The briefing does this by offering original analysis of statistics on residence permits issued to African nationals in the European Union between 2011 and 2017, and comparing these to irregular sea arrivals to Europe in the same period. The conclusion is made that regular arrivals from key countries in North and West Africa have mostly exceeded irregular sea arrivals via the CMR from the same countries to the European Union every year from 2011 to 2017. In addition, while irregular migration of North and West African nationals to the European Union via the CMR increased in the years leading up to 2016, it has fallen considerably since. Availability of quality and timely data on regular and irregular migration dynamics, African migrants' socioeconomic profiles and other related topics need to be improved.

#### 26. June 2019 – [Analysis of Best Practices in the Identification of Missing Migrants: Implications for the Central Mediterranean](#)

Over the last decade, crossing the Central Mediterranean has become one of the deadliest journeys in the world for migrants, with at least 15,000 migrants having died on this route since 2014. The vast majority of bodies found are not identified, with net identification rates of migrant bodies around 22 per cent between 1990 and 2013. For every migrant body retrieved from the sea or found on the shore and not identified, there is a family living with ambiguity, not knowing if their missing loved one is dead or alive. This report focuses on the challenges faced in identifying dead migrants on the CMR and informing the families of the deceased. The vast majority of identifications in Italy and other States on this route lack reliability and cohesiveness; in particular, systematic post- and ante-mortem data collection and management is poor. The report concludes with recommendations for European States and regional institutions, as well as for civil society and international agencies.

#### 27. May 2019 – [Europe – Refugee and Migrant children in Europe – Overview of Trends](#) (January–December 2018)

Some 30,000 children arrived in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Spain between January and December 2018, a 9 per cent drop compared with 2017. A total of 12,700 children were registered as unaccompanied and separated. An estimated 14,600 refugee children were resettled in Europe in 2018, mostly to the United Kingdom, France and Sweden. Out of the total number of children who sought international refuge in Europe in 2018, almost 70 per cent were registered in just three countries: Germany (78,280), France (24,135) and Greece (21,770).

#### 28. May 2019 – [Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration \(AVRR\) and Voluntary Humanitarian Return \(VHR\) 2017–2018](#)

This document presents an analysis of interviews conducted with all individuals assisted in their voluntary return by IOM in 2017 and 2018 (65,000) to one of the 23 countries covered by the West and Central Africa (WCA) region. The objective is to provide an overview of the profile of those assisted by IOM to return to their country of origin through Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) and Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programmes. The analysis combines data sets from both AVRR and VHR. Though most returns were organized from the Niger and Libya, another 80 countries support these operations from Europe, North Africa, West and Central Africa, East Africa and many other regions around the globe.

29. May 2019 – [Improving data on migration in Africa: Expert Voices](#)

This blog piece provides an in-depth discussion of interviews conducted with selected representatives of African national statistical offices in the context of a joint African Union–IOM migration data capacity-building workshop held in Mauritania in December 2018. These discussions provide insights on migration data challenges in African countries, with a particular focus on Ghana, Zambia, Lesotho, Burkina Faso and Mauritius. Dialogue revealed that migration policies in Africa are constrained by low data availability. For 17 per cent of countries in Africa, the most recent data available from censuses refer to years prior to 2005. Only 4 in 10 countries in Africa can provide data on the age of international migrants. In response, experts discussed possible improvements and new practices. While many countries in Africa operate in a challenging statistical environment, there are promising examples of progress and data innovation in the region.

30. April 2019 – [New routes, violence and death: the situation on the Balkan route](#)

It is becoming increasingly difficult for refugees who want to go from Greece to Central Europe. They report police violence and arbitrary arrests. Even so, thousands risk the dangerous path. This piece aims to present an in-depth look at the experience of some migrants en route along the Balkan refugee route in Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, North Macedonia and Bulgaria.

31. April 2019 – [Youth and Mobility: Children and Youth on the Move Across West and Central Africa in 2018](#)

This report presents an analysis of FMSs conducted in 2018 with 11,000 respondents under 25 years old across West and Central Africa (WCA). The objective of the report is to provide a better understanding of youth mobility in the WCA region and information on the profiles, journeys and vulnerabilities of young migrants in the region. Of the 11,454 respondents interviewed in 2018, 25 per cent were under 25 years old, 11 per cent of whom were women and girls. Six per cent of youth respondents were students at the time of the interview, and 29 per cent declared having faced difficulties during the travel.

32. March 2019 – [Female Migrant Profile \(January–December 2018\)](#)

While often overlooked, women and girls are important features of migration flows in West and Central Africa. Indeed, the share of female travellers in the region has grown significantly in the past few years. This document, based on data collected through DTM, presents key figures on 6,615 women and girls surveyed in 2018 at 35 Flow Monitoring Points across seven countries. The data captured present information on the age of female travellers, countries of origin, intended destination, reasons for travel, as well as the socioeconomic backgrounds of those interviewed.

33. February 2019 – [Mixed Migration Flows in Western Balkans 2018 Overview](#)

This product provides an annual overview of mixed migration flows in the Western Balkans in 2018. Europe – Mixed Migration Flows monthly statistical report is a compilation of available information and data collected through the DTM Flow Monitoring Register (FMR) in Europe. A total of 61,012 irregular migrants were officially registered by the authorities in the Western Balkan countries, five times more than the 13,216 registered in the previous year. The most significant increase was observed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where between January and December 2018, authorities registered a total of 23,848 migrants and refugees – 20 times more than the 1,116 reported in 2017, and almost double the 2017 yearly total reported in all countries combined. Some 9,528 migrants and asylum seekers were residing in different reception centres across the region.

34. February 2019 – [Refugee and migrant children in Europe – Overview of Trends \(January–June 2018\)](#)

This product provides an overview of trends for refugee and migrant children in Europe between January and June 2018. The information provided in this brief is a compilation of available data from DTM FMSs, Eurostat, national authorities and United Nations agencies (UNICEF and UNHCR). Some 10,400 children arrived in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Spain between January and June 2018, of whom more than 4,600 (45%) were unaccompanied and separated children (UASC). Most children arriving to Italy and Spain were unaccompanied and separated, 86 per cent and 65 per cent respectively. The majority of UASC were between 15 and 17 years old. Over 7 in every 10 children sought international protection in just three European countries: Germany, France and Greece. Over 11,200 submissions for resettlement by children (29% boys and 24% girls) were made in Europe between January and June 2018.

35. February 2019 – [Europe – Summary of Key Results \(January–December 2018\)](#)

Some 10,400 children arrived in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Spain between January and June 2018, of whom more than 4,600 (45%) were UASC. Most children arriving to Italy and Spain were unaccompanied and separated, 86 per cent and 65 per cent respectively. The majority of UASC were between 15 and 17 years old. Over 7 in every 10 children sought international protection in just three European countries: Germany, France and Greece. Over 11,200 submissions for resettlement by children (29% of the boys and 24% of the girls ) were made in Europe between January and June 2018.

36. February 2019 – [Europe Regional Information Management Workshop \(RIMWG\) – Developing collaboration at regional and country level](#)

This report summarizes the first regional information management working group workshop, held in November 2018, on inter-agency collaboration at regional and country level. Timely, disaggregated data and contextualized information related to populations on the move, stranded, or seeking asylum are imperative to a well-informed, well-managed, protection-sensitive and collective response across international borders, governments and regions. To respond to those challenges, the Inter-agency Information Management Working Group – co-led by IOM, UNHCR and UNICEF – organized an inter-agency workshop on information management at the IOM regional office in Vienna. The workshop was a first of its kind, bringing together regional and country information management/monitoring and evaluation focal points from UNICEF, IOM and UNHCR.

37. January 2019 – [IOM Briefing: Migrant children in Italy](#)

This product provides an overview on trends for migrant children in Italy between January 2016 and the third quarter of 2018. Information provided is a compilation of available data collected through DTM FMR, Eurostat, secondary data sources and reports from IOM Italy field staff. Italy has been the main entry point for UASC in Europe over recent years – 45,000 UASC arrived in Italy by sea between January 2016 and September 2018 – and continued to be in 2018, together with Spain. Challenges faced by UASC are widely recognized, but there is a dearth of empirical evidence and comprehensive data describing their experiences and perceptions to inform policy and practice.

38. January 2019 – [Chad Mobility Map \(December 2018\)](#) (In French)

The objective of this report is to capture the diversity of mobility trends in Chad and neighbouring countries between 2016 and 2018 using cartography, infographics and maps to better understand possible links and connections between various mobility patterns. The report explores various types of migration patterns, namely internal economic patterns, forced displacements, returns, trafficking and links between climate change and migration, among other mobility trends. Primary methods for data collection included in-depth analysis of data sets and products provided by IOM country and regional offices, DTM, UNHCR and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), as well as interviews with key informants and community members from populations of interest. Core findings reveal that mining regions in the north of Chad are key destinations for both Chadian nationals and migrants from neighbouring countries, and it is difficult to differentiate these migratory routes towards mining regions in Chad from migration towards Libya or Europe. Further, the study found that internal displacements are an important aspect of human mobility in Chad. In addition, the report draws attention to patterns in vulnerability, migrants' region(s) of origin and wider contexts surrounding human mobility in Chad and neighbouring countries.

39. December 2018 – [Evaluating the impact of information campaigns in the field of migration: a systematic review of the evidence, and practical guidance](#)

This product describes the results of a desk review of 60 global information campaigns from 2006 to 2017 that targeted potential migrants and traffickers, as well as communities at large. The review concludes that the evidence base on the impact of information campaigns in the field of migration is limited. Further, the uptake in the use of information campaigns has far outpaced any rigorous assessment of the effects that different campaigns may have on their respective target groups. Most of the evaluations identified did not meet minimum standards for robust evidence on programme effects. Overall, there is a need for better evidence that can show how information campaigns can be designed to best achieve their intended effects in different contexts.

40. December 2018 – [Resisting Invisibility: Mothers of Missing Migrants](#)

This blog piece is a guest post by Marta Sánchez Dionis. Marta works as a Project Officer for IOM's Missing Migrants Project. Previously, she worked with several human rights organizations on issues of migration, gender and access to justice.

41. November 2018 – [West and Central Africa Regional Mobility Mapping \(October 2018\)](#)

The West and Central Africa Mobility Mapping report is a compilation of maps showing various mobility trends and mobility factors for movements to and from the West and Central Africa region (such as forced displacement, transhumance and labour movements). This work is based on multiple data collection activities implemented by IOM and other actors (such as UN DESA and ministries of interior of various countries), and showcases the complexity of mobility in the region. When reference is made to IOM data, the data were collected during: (a) Flow Monitoring Exercises, (b) Mobility Tracking, (c) data collection exercises with individuals who benefited from AVRRC programmes, (d) search and rescue activities conducted in the Niger, and (e) individual interviews with IOM key informants.

42. November 2018 – [West and Central Africa – Population On The Move: Flow Monitoring Survey Analysis in WCA \(January–June 2018\)](#)

This report is an analysis of 17,000 FMSs conducted with individuals crossing one of the 30 IOM Flow Monitoring Points in the West and Central Africa Region (located in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria and Senegal) between January and June 2018. There are two main sections to this analysis: (a) data and findings based on intended destinations of the respondents; and (b) data and findings based on the declared nationality of the respondents for the nine countries identified in our Flow Monitoring Point: Guinea, Nigeria, Mali, the Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and the Gambia.

43. October 2018 – [Analysis Flow Monitoring Survey-Child specific module \(April 2018\)](#)

This report contains findings of DTM FMSs conducted with children and youth from 7 to 19 years old between June 2017 and March 2018 by IOM field staff in Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Italy and Slovenia. The survey gathers information about migrant children profiles, including age, sex, areas of origin, levels of education, key transit points on their route, cost of the journey, reasons for moving and intentions. For the purpose of a better understanding of children's characteristics and experience during transit and at the reception countries, an additional module was added that focused on children's perception of dangers along the journey, state of health and perceptions of quality of accommodation at the reception centres. Further information about the questionnaire, sample structure, proxy indicators and survey implementation can be found in the Methodology section.

44. September 2018 – [Analysis-Flow Monitoring Survey in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

This report contains findings of DTM FMSs conducted by IOM field staff between March and May 2018 in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Bihać and Velika Kladuša. A total of 277 surveys were conducted. The non-response rate was low, with only two respondents refusing to participate in the survey. The sample used in the analysis consists of 275 valid surveys. FMSs were conducted with Syrian, Afghan, Libyan, Pakistani, Iraqi, Algerian and Iranian nationals, reflecting the profile of main nationality groups registered on arrival. A majority of them were men, between 22 and 30 years old, with primary or lower-secondary education level.

45. May 2018 – [Refugee and Migrant children in Europe – Overview of Trends \(January–December 2017\)](#)

This product provides an overview of trends for refugees and migrant children in Europe between January and December 2017. The information provided in this brief is a compilation of available data from DTM FMSs, Eurostat, national authorities and United Nations agencies (UNICEF and UNHCR). Between January and December 2017, approximately 33,000 children arrived in Greece, Italy, Spain and Bulgaria. This represents a decrease of 70 per cent compared with 2016. However, the proportion of UASC jumped by 31 per cent, to 20,000 (representing 92% of children); 92 per cent of children who arrived to Italy through the CMR were UASC. Over 11,200 children, including 465 UASC, benefited from the European Union relocation scheme in Greece and Italy in 2017; 70 per cent of children arriving in these countries sought international protection, with Germany receiving the highest number of asylum applications (89,205).

46. April 2018 – [Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe Accompanied, Unaccompanied and separated mid-year Overview of Trends \(Jan-June 2017\)](#)

This product provides an overview of trends for refugee and migrant children in Europe between January and June 2017. The information provided in this brief is a compilation of available data from DTM FMSs, Eurostat, national authorities and United Nations agencies (UNICEF and UNHCR). Between January and June 2017, over 16,500 children arrived in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Spain, of whom more than 11,900 (72%) were UASC. Arrivals in the second quarter were more than double the first quarter (11,000, compared with 5,400). A total of 11,400 UASC arrived; 7,600 children were relocated through the European Union relocation scheme from Greece and Italy.

47. March 2018 – [How a lack of data is perpetuating the invisibility of migrant women's deaths](#)

This article reflects on the available data on migrant women's deaths and what they tell us about where and how women die while migrating. Methods involve assessing the records of the Missing Migrants Project from 2017, based on ad hoc media reporting and survivor testimonies, with a global scope and with a particular focus on the Mediterranean. The conclusion is made that a lack of reliable sex-disaggregated data not only perpetuates the invisibility of female migrant deaths but also complicates our ability to identify which migratory routes are most dangerous for women. Evidence shows that women face greater risks of death while migrating irregularly, and available data indicate that the Mediterranean crossing is particularly deadly.

48. February 2018 – [A Call to Action: Protecting Children on the Move Starts with Better Data](#)

Millions of children have migrated across borders or been forcibly displaced, and reliable, timely and accessible data and evidence are essential for understanding how migration and forcible displacement affect children and their families – and for putting in place policies and programmes to meet their needs. However, we do not know enough about children on the move: their age and sex, where they come from, where they are going, whether they move with their families or alone, how they fare along the way, what their vulnerabilities are. In many cases, data are not regularly collected, and quality is often poor. This joint Call to action: Protecting children on the move starts with better data – by UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM, Eurostat and OECD – urges Member States to prioritize actions to address these evidence gaps, and include child-specific considerations in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees.

49. February 2018 – [Summary of Key Results \(2017\)](#)

This product provides an annual overview and summary of key findings from 2017. In that year, DTM Europe collected data on arrivals to Europe across the Mediterranean, migrants' presence and secondary movements in the Western Balkans through the DTM FMR. Data on population movements are complemented with information on profiles of migrants and refugees collected through FMSs. The DTM Europe team (46 DTM focal points) surveyed 9,483 migrants and asylum seekers on 120 flow monitoring points in Greece, Italy, North Macedonia, Italy, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo (see footnote 1), Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. The reporting team prepared 21 statistical overview reports and 16 migrant profiles analyses.

50. February 2018 – [Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe Overview of Trends \(January–September 2017\)](#)

This product provides an overview of trends for refugee and migrant children in Europe between January and September 2017. The information provided in this brief is a compilation of available data from DTM FMSs, Eurostat, national authorities and United Nations agencies (UNICEF and UNHCR). Between January and September 2017, 25,379 children arrived in Greece, Italy, Spain and Bulgaria, of whom 14,839 (58%) were UASC; 92 per cent of children who arrived to Italy through the CMR were UASC. Arrival of UASC increased by 25 per cent compared with the first half of 2017; 9,800 children, including 329 UASC, benefited from the European Union relocation scheme in Greece and Italy by the end of September 2017. Among them, 329 were UASC. Germany received the highest number of asylum applications (67,400, or 60% of all child claims in Europe).

## Research products under the Safety, Support and Solutions in the Central Mediterranean Route II Programme (released)

Date of publication	Topic	Status	Product	External partners	Thematic area
June 2020	Europe – Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe – Overview of Trends (January–December 2019)	Published	Report	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Lumos Foundation	Unaccompanied and separated children
April 2020	COVID-19 and migration from West Africa to Europe: what can be learnt from previous “crises”?	Published	Article	Eurasyllum	Migration dynamics/ migration policy
April 2020	Rethinking Care: Improving support for unaccompanied migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children	Published	Report	UNHCR, UNICEF, Lumos Foundation	Unaccompanied and separated children
April 2020	Europe – Flow Monitoring Surveys – Children and Migration (2019)	Published	Regional report		Flow monitoring/ children
March 2020	Europe — Mixed Migration Flows in Western Balkans 2019 Overview	Published	Regional report		Migration flows
February 2020	Europe – Summary of key results (January – December 2019)	Published	Regional report		Migrant arrivals and presence

Date of publication	Topic	Status	Product	External partners	Thematic area
February 2020	Migration Dynamics around artisanal Gold Mining Sites in Burkina Faso: Case Studies of Warwéogo and Galgouli Sites (French)	Published		Research report (United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) DFID 03)	Migration dynamics/ thematic
February 2020	The Gambia – Mobility Assessment on Internal Migration (February 2020)	Published	Research report (DFID 03)		Data analysis/ migration trends
January 2020	Migrate to succeed: Understanding Youth Migration Trajectories in Guinea (French)	Published	Research report (DFID 03)		Mitigation dynamic/ youth migration
January 2020	New Migratory Dynamics in Senegal: Situation on the Western Mediterranean Route (French)	Published	Research report (DFID 03)		Migration dynamics
December 2019	Europe – Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe – Overview of Trends (January – June 2019)	Published	Research report		Migration flows/ children
December 2019	“Gold Fevers” in Mali: Migration Profiles and Dynamics in Kayes and Sikasso (French)	Published		Research report (DFID 03)	Migration dynamics/ thematic
November 2019	Migration Dynamics towards Gold Mining Sites in Burkina Faso (English, French)	Published		Research brief (DFID 03)	Migration dynamics/ thematic
October 2019	Migration data on the Central Mediterranean Route: What do we know?	Published	Policy brief		Data availability, challenges and opportunities
October 2019	New Migratory Dynamics in Senegal: Situation on the Western Mediterranean Route (English, French)	Published	Research brief (DFID 03)		Migration dynamics/ trends
September 2019	Migrants as Messengers: The Impact of Peer-to-Peer Communication on Potential Migrants in Senegal – Impact Evaluation Report	Published	Report		Impact evaluation

Date of publication	Topic	Status	Product	External partners	Thematic area
September 2019	Online migration campaigns: Promises, pitfalls and the need for better evaluations	Published	Data brief	Eurasylum	Migration campaigns
September 2019	Female Migration in Côte d'Ivoire: The Journey of Returned Migrants (English, French)	Published	Research brief (DFID 03)		Female migrants
September 2019	Female migration in Côte d'Ivoire (French)	Published	Research Report (DFID 03)		Female migrants
August 2019	Children on the move: building migration data capacities	Published	Workshop report	UNICEF	Children/capacity building
July 2019	Building Migration Data: Examples of Good Practices for the African Region Capacity	Published	Report		Data management and dissemination
June 2019	Statistics Versus Stories: The Invisibility of Missing Migrants	Published	Blog		Migration dynamics/ thematic
June 2019	Fatal Journeys	Published	Research Report		Migration dynamics/ thematic
June 2019	Contextualizing Migration along the Central Mediterranean Route: Regular versus Irregular Migration	Published	Research report		Migration dynamics/ trends
June 2019	Analysis of Best Practices in the Identification of Missing Migrants: Implications for the Central Mediterranean	Published	Research brief		Best practices
May 2019	Europe — Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe –Overview of Trends (January–December 2018)	Published	Research report	UNHCR, UNICEF	Flow monitoring and migrant presence / children
May 2019	AVRR and VHR 2017–2018 Profiles (May 2019)	Published	Research brief		Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration and Voluntary and Humanitarian Return

Date of publication	Topic	Status	Product	External partners	Thematic area
May 2019	Improving data on migration in Africa: Expert voices	Published	Blog		Migration data/ capacity-building
April 2019	New routes, violence and death: The situation on the Balkan route (German)	Published	Research report		Migration trends
April 2019	Youth and Mobility: Children and Youth on the Move Across West and Central Africa in 2018	Published	Research brief		Flow monitoring/ children
March 2019	Female Migrant Profiles (January–December 2018)	Published	Dashboard		Female migrants
February 2019	Europe – Mixed Migration Flows in Western Balkans 2018 Overview	Published	Regional report		Flow monitoring (Balkans)
February 2019	Europe – Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe – Overview of Trends (January – June 2018)	Published	Joint inter-agency factsheet	UNHCR, UNICEF	Flow monitoring/ children
February 2019	Europe — Summary of key results (January–December 2018)	Published	Regional report		Flow monitoring (Europe)
February 2019	Europe Regional Information Management Workshop (RIMWG) – Developing collaboration at regional and country level	Published	Joint inter-agency workshop report	UNHCR, UNICEF, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	Data (collaboration)
January 2019	Italy – IOM Briefing: Migrant Children in Italy	Published	Country report		Protection, children
January 2019	Chad Mobility Map (December 2018) (French)	Published	Mobility map		Flow monitoring (Chad)
December 2018	Evaluating the impact of information campaigns in the field of migration: a systematic review of the evidence, and practical guidance	Published	Literature review		Information campaigns

Date of publication	Topic	Status	Product	External partners	Thematic area
December 2018	Resisting Invisibility: Mothers of Missing Migrants	Published	Blog		Missing migrants
November 2018	West and Central Africa Regional Mobility Mapping (October 2018)	Published	Mobility Map		Mobility Map
November 2018	Populations on the Move: Flow Monitoring Survey Analysis	Published	Flow monitoring survey analysis		Flow monitoring (West and Central Africa)
October 2018	Analysis – Flow Monitoring Surveys – Child specific module (April 2018)	Published	Analytical report		Flow monitoring (children/Europe)
September 2018	Analysis – Flow Monitoring Surveys in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Published	Analytical report		Flow monitoring (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
May 2018	Europe – Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe – Overview of Trends (January – December 2017)	Published	Joint inter-agency factsheet	UNHCR, UNICEF	Flow monitoring (children/Europe)
April 2018	Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated Mid-Year Overview of Trends (January – June 2017)	Published	Joint inter-agency factsheet	UNHCR, UNICEF	Flow monitoring (children)
March 2018	How a lack of data is perpetuating the invisibility of migrant women's deaths	Published	Blog		Data (women's deaths)
February 2018	A Call to Action: Protecting children on the move starts with better data	Published	Work package	UNICEF, UNHCR, OECD and Eurostat	Protection (children)
February 2018	Europe – Summary of Key Results (2017)	Published	Regional report		Flow monitoring
February 2018	Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe – Overview of Trends (January–September 2017)	Published	Joint inter-agency factsheet	UNHCR, UNICEF	Flow monitoring (children/Europe)

## Recurring reports under the Safety, Support and Solutions in the Central Mediterranean Route II Programme

Date by most recent publication	Topic	Focal point	Status	Product
June 2020	Mixed Migration Flows in the Mediterranean	IOM	Published (ongoing)	Monthly regional report
May 2020	East and Horn of Africa – Monthly Regional Snapshot	IOM	Published (ongoing)	Monthly regional updates for East and Horn of Africa
May 2020	Middle East and North Africa – Monthly Regional Update	IOM	Published (ongoing)	Monthly regional updates for Middle East and North Africa
May 2020	West and Central Africa – Monthly Regional Update	IOM	Published (ongoing)	Monthly regional updates for West and Central Africa
May 2020	Europe – Mixed Migration Flows to Europe, Quarterly Overview	IOM	Published (ongoing)	Quarterly regional report
April 2020	Flow Monitoring (FM) Dashboards for the Niger	IOM	Published (ongoing)	Flow monitoring dashboards
February 2020	Monthly Regional Update	IOM		Combined monthly regional updates for East and Horn of Africa; Middle East and North Africa; and West and Central Africa
November 2019	Regional Migration Report West and Central Africa (Jul–Sep 18)	IOM		Quarterly regional report









This edited volume provides comprehensive evidence on migration from and within West and North Africa and across the Mediterranean.

It highlights migrants' agency and contribution to transnational development, as well as the inequalities that shape migration and the risks that migrants are exposed to.

The volume is divided in four sections, dedicated to migration trends, risks, development and governance.

The volume features contributions from different IOM offices, as well as from other international organisations, research institutions and civil society organisations.

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