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POLICY BRIEF

Mixed Migration Data Collection and Dissemination in North Africa

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Context of the study:

Recent events in the Euro-Mediterranean area have led us to believe that migration is exacerbating and accelerating, even though the pandemic has put some strain on it. In addition to classic economic reasons of push and pull factors, other political, security, and environmental determinants have been added.

North Africa has become a buffer zone between sub-Saharan Africa, West Asia, and Europe. The different countries of North Africa did not have the same migration profiles, but it must be noted that they are coming together to host a sub-Saharan transit migration, and also refugees fleeing war zones from increasingly remote areas.

The shift of all North Africa countries from one-way migration to a mixed migration did not help evolve their statistical information system to capture all migration flows in their complexity. It is mostly the security and/or economic dimensions that affect the decision-making process. The persistence of disparities in demographic growth and economic development, in addition to the exacerbating of armed conflicts and political instability in the peripheral countries, leads us to believe that these migratory flows will not fade away in the medium term, let alone the shorter term. The environmental and climate dimension is another aspect that will affect population movements shortly. For this reason, it is about time to set up mechanisms to collect data on the various migratory flows, whether regular or irregular, at both national and regional levels. It is no longer about outsourcing border management for the EU, but rather about managing its own borders. It is evident that this is a challenge that requires enormous human, financial and technological resources when we know the immenseness of the maritime and land borders throughout the Sahel-Saharan band.

The interest in migration issues from a political perspective differs from country to country. The degree of interest has affected the development of institutions dedicated to migration. Countries with no natural resources but with an abundant workforce have been the most interested in the migration dynamics and their impact on the development of the countries of origin.



Transit and irregular migration are only addressed from a security perspective by law enforcement and/or humanitarian perspective by Non-Governmental Organizations.

The lack of reliable data on population movements has led to a form of myopia among demographers in the region, who continue to ignore migration in population projections.

Therefore, it is not enough to settle for a human rights-based conjectural approach, but rather to develop a long-term vision that combines national development and international cooperation within the overall framework of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Given the complexity of the migratory phenomenon, the diversity of profiles and motivations in the countries of the region, the scarcity of well-documented statistics, the best position would be to ask questions about ways of safeguarding the virtuous principles known and recognized by international bodies, such as:

- How can we ensure the right to movement of people in light of globalization, along with possessions and goods, without increasing the risks of poverty, delinquency, social rifts and the movement of drugs and weapons?
- How to ensure the right to development throughout the world, particularly and above all in areas that currently seem to be left behind, in light of the global agenda for Sustainable Development?
- How can we get migration out of the stigma that characterizes it today, as a hindrance to the development of host countries, and bring it up to the levers that lead to the development and ensure inclusiveness, and foster contact between civilizations? (Especially since the UN projections for 2050 predict an unprecedented intensity of migration).

This policy paper:

This policy paper aims at fleshing out the state of mixed migration in the region from a quantitative point of view. It focuses on the methodologies of mixed migration data collection, analysis, and dissemination in the MENA region and different actors who are in charge of mixed migration data. The main purpose of this policy paper is to shed light on best practices as well as recommendations for further work on mixed migration data in the region. Specifically, this policy paper covers the following topics:

1. A brief definition of mixed migration and the importance of the term.
2. Migration data collection and the international guidelines (GCM, UNDESA, Census recommendations on migration, and other guidelines)
3. Current available data on international migration in the MENA region with special focus on mixed migration
4. The way ahead: recommendations for governments, national statistical offices and other stockholders.

1. Defining mixed migration

The term “mixed Migration” is a reaction to the increasing mobility worldwide and the need for temporarily classify people on the move under a broad umbrella, for a short period, in order to cover them under a broader kind of protection as humans. “The principal characteristics of mixed migration flows include the irregular nature of and the multiplicity of factors driving such movements, and the differentiated needs and profiles of the persons involved. Mixed flows have been defined as ‘complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants.’ Unaccompanied minors, environmental migrants, smuggled persons, victims of trafficking and stranded migrants, among others, may also form part of a mixed flow.”¹

IOM defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State, away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person’s legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is². Comparing the definition of mixed migration to the definition of migration, one can notice that the definition of mixed migration can be regarded as a sub-category of the broad definition of migration as defined by IOM.³

2. Migration data collection and international guidelines

It is not a surprise that the first objective, out of the 23 objectives of the Global Compact for migration (GCM), is to “collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies.” This key objective reflects two realities; the first is the scarcity of reliable and disaggregated data on migration, and the second reality is the fact that migration data is needed and vital for informed migration policies and strategies. The keyword in this objective is the call for the collection of “disaggregated data.” The disaggregated data on migrants is vital for their classification and their associated entitlements.


As for detailed international guideline on the collection of data on international migration, two international instruments can be consulted; the United Nations’ “Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration” and the United Nations’ “principals and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses.”⁴

¹ IOM (2019) IOM Mixed Migration Brochure for the Web, <https://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/Mixed-Migration-HOA.pdf> 29.07.2021.

² IOM (2019) Key Definitions and Terms, <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms> 29.07.2021.

³ Zohry, A. (2019) “The Future of Mixed Migration in North Africa: What’s Missing and What Can Be Done?” in IOM *Setting up a Road Map for Mixed Migration in West and North Africa*, IOM, Geneva.

⁴ United Nations (2017) Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3, Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York. ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/67/Rev.3



As per the United Nations' recommendations on statistics of international migration⁵, the definition of international migration for the purposes of data collection is tied to two main concepts: *the country of usual residence and the duration of stay*. Box 1 below shows the definition of country of usual residence, of long-term international migrant and of short-term international migrant.

As for detailed international guideline on the collection of data on international migration, two international instruments can be consulted; the United Nations' "Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration" and the United Nations' "principals and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses."⁴ As per the United Nations' recommendations on statistics of international migration⁵, the definition of international migration for the purposes of data collection is tied to two main concepts: *the country of usual residence and the duration of stay*. Box 1 below shows the definition of country of usual residence, of long-term international migrant and of short-term international migrant.

As to the collection of data on migration in national censuses and in accordance with United Nations recommendations⁶ for the study of international migration, census recommendations tend to focus on two subgroups of the population: the foreign-born population and the foreign citizens living in the country at the time of enumeration. In order to identify the members of these groups, two elements must be recorded in the census: (a) the country of birth and (b) the country of citizenship. In addition, it is important to register the year of arrival in the country of enumeration in order to establish the length of stay of international migrants residing in the country.

As shown above, one can notice that the international guidelines cover the broad aspects of international migration data and their data collection methodologies and analysis. The newly evolved phenomena, such as measuring irregular migration or mixed migration, are not covered by such international guidelines and recommendations.

⁵ United Nations (1998) Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1, Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 58, Rev.1, Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York.

⁶ United Nations (2017) Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses Revision 3, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics Division, United Nations, New York. ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/67/Rev.3.



Box 1
Definition of the country of usual residence, of long-term international migrant and of short-term international migrant

Term	Definition
Country of usual residence	The country in which a person lives, that is to say, the country in which he or she has a place to live where he or she normally spends the daily period of rest. Temporary travel abroad for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment, or religious pilgrimage does not change a person's country of usual residence.
Long-term migrant	A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. From the perspective of the country of departure the person will be a long-term emigrant and from that of the country of arrival the person will be a long-term immigrant.
Short-term migrant	A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least 3 months but less than a year (12 months) except in cases where the movement to that country is for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage. For purposes of international migration statistics, the country of usual residence of short-term migrants is considered to be the country of destination during the period they spend in it.

Source: United Nations (1998) Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1, Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 58, Rev.1, Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York.

3. Migration data available in the MENA region with a particular focus on mixed migration

As a matter of fact, data on mixed migration per se are not collected by national statistical bureaus or any other governmental entity in North Africa. Although, mixed migration data are collected, classified and published, mainly, by International Organizations and International Non-Governmental Organizations. The governments of North Africa, usually, collect data on migration by three methods: census data, sample surveys and administrative data collection.

3.1 Census data and international migration

As for censuses as means of international migration data collection in North Africa, it is evident that all countries in their last censuses collected data on international migration according to the international standards discussed above. The main questions included in the census questionnaires of all countries include a question on nationality and another question on country of birth. Questions on migrants' characteristics are included in the census questionnaires for both migrants and non-migrants. The tabulation of the census data include separate tables for non-citizens and their volume and composition. All census reports of the latest censuses of North Africa countries include such tables, except Egypt where the tabulations of the last census data (2017) on non-citizens are not published yet. Libya is lagging behind and one can say that Libya is missing one census, since the last census is dated back to 2006. The last population census was conducted in 2020 in Algeria, 2017 in Egypt, 2014 in Tunisia, 2013 in Mauritania, 2014 in Morocco, and 2008 in Sudan (another census is planned for 2022).

3.2 Sample surveys

Despite the fact that censuses are best used to measure the international migrant, they do not yield reliable statistics on international migration determinants and consequences. Censuses and other sources of data usually collect information on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of migrants. In addition, most of the data collection systems, other than surveys, do not collect information on the situation of the migrant prior to migration, which is important to understand both the determinants and consequences of migration for international migrants. Hence, specialized surveys constitute the best data collection system to gather the information needed to carry out a proper examination of the determinants and consequences of international migration.

As for North Africa region, a set of Household International Migration Surveys (HIMS) were implemented in the region. The latest of such surveys is being implemented in Tunisia (Tunisia-HIMS). In 2013, the HIMS was implemented in Egypt. The HIMS surveys are implemented under the Household International Migration Surveys in the Mediterranean countries (MED-HIMS) programme, initiated by the European Union.



As part of the MEDSTAT cooperation program, implemented in the countries of the Southern Mediterranean, the High Commission for Morocco carried out, in 2018-2019, a National Survey on International Migration⁶.

3.3 Administrative sources

In many countries, continuous statistics on international migration can be derived from the administrative procedures involved in controlling admission of the stay of foreigners and the exit of nationals. Such procedures include residence permits and exit permits as well as work permits issued to foreigner to work in the country of destination. The records related to such procedures could be a good source of data on international migration.

Administrative sources also include border statistics. Border statistics are derived from the collection of information at points of entry into a country and at points of departure. When talking about administrative sources of data, it's important to remember that such data are not collected for the sake of making available migration data but rather to manage migration. They are collected mainly for administrative purposes. All North African countries, partially, publish reports based on administrative data.

To sum up, one can say that different methods to collect data on international migration are utilized in North Africa. However, these methods don't capture the needed details to identify mixed migration or to produce updated and disaggregated data on international migration. Hence, efforts need to be directed towards conducting periodic household surveys to capture the characteristics of migrants as well as more utilization of administrative data to produce disaggregated reports on different kinds of human mobility in the region.

Administrative data include consular data from North African countries abroad or foreign countries in North Africa. Data collected by security agencies or NGOs on irregular migrants and deportation should also be included.

4. The way forward

As mentioned above, mixed migration is a matter of fact and can't be avoided. Instead, efforts should be directed to shaping and re-shaping of the definition of mixed migration. Despite the increasing academic interest in the last few decades on migration, academics, by nature, are more suspicious and rigid in accepting and welcoming new terminologies. Hence, the academic work on mixed migration is recommended to focus on developing and reshaping the definition of the mixed migration as well as developing methodologies to measure mixed migration.

As for policy makers and national statistical offices, we need, first, to convince them that the term mixed migration will not replace the conventional definitions of (economic/voluntary) migrants and refugees, but it mainly aims at protecting the human rights of people on the move. We need also to link the mixed migration term to objective number one of the GCC which calls for the collection of disaggregated data. Collecting data on mixed migration and the different categories of people on the move that it includes is a matter of disaggregation.

In order to do so, we propose to design a more integrated data collection system. In fact, we must no longer be satisfied with merely capturing the information a posteriori, but to supplement it with a more prospective collection. In other words, how to capture migration flows before they occur through visa applications or aborted migration. How to design an information system that while preserving privacy (confidentiality of individual data), allows for capturing regular and irregular migration as well as potential ones. Thus, the knowledge of potential emigration zones, migration routes as well as migrant shelters and detention centers, seems to us to be essential for greater control of the management of mixed migration flows. The migration phenomenon, involving at least two countries (the one of origin and the one of destination and possibly transit), can only be properly understood through closer cooperation between statistical offices and other institutions in relation to the management of mixed migration flows (whether governmental or non-governmental), of the countries involved.

ANNEXES

Emigration component of the 2008 Algerian GDPR “Ordinary and Collective Households” questionnaire

TE 5 DEPARTMENTS ABROAD (Emigration) IN THE LAST 5 YEARS		مفادرة الوطن (الهجرة) خلال 5 سنوات الماضية							
DEP1 - Have there been people who were members of the household who settled abroad (emigration) in the last 5 years?				هل حدثت حالات هجرة إلى الخارج خلال 5 سنوات الأخيرة لأشخاص و كانوا أعضاء في الأسرة					
Characteristics of the person at the time of departure				مميزات الشخص أثناء مفادرة الأسرة					
DEP 2	DEP 3	DEP 4	DEP 5	DEP 6	DEP 7	DEP 8			
الرقم الترتيبي Order No.	تاريخ المفادرة Date of departure	الجنس sex	السن عند المفادرة Age at departure	الحالة الزوجية Marital status	المستوى التعليمي Level of education	الحالة الفردية Individual situation			
إسم الشخص First name of the individual	سجل شهر وسنة المفادرة of the person	1- ذكر 2- أنثى 1- Male 2- Female	سجل سن الشخص عند المفادرة للخارج Enter Age of the person at departure abroad	1 - Single 2 - Married 3 - Divorced 4 - Widowed	1 - أعزب 2 - متزوج 3 - مطلق 4 - أرمل	1 - بدون مستوى 2 - ابتدائي 3 - متوسط 4 - ثانوي 5 - جامعي 6 - NC	1 - بدون مستوى 2 - ابتدائي 3 - متوسط 4 - ثانوي 5 - جامعي 6 - غير معني	1 - مشغول 2 - بطال 3 - طالب 4 - حالة أخرى	
	الشهر Month	السنة Year							

¹ IOM (2019) IOM Mixed Migration Brochure for the Web, <https://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/Mixed-Migration-HOA.pdf> 29.07.2021.

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⁵ United Nations (1998) Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1, Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 58, Rev.1, Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York.

⁶ United Nations (2017) Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses Revision 3, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics Division, United Nations, New York. ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/67/Rev.3.

⁷ Prévu initialement pour 2013 puis 2018, il a été retardé pour des raisons financière puis politique. En effet, il est prévu que la collecte pour ce recensement se fasse grâce à des tablettes (CAPI) qu’il faudrait importer.

⁸ Les recensements estiment bien la population étrangère résidente dans le pays donc les stocks mais pas les flux. Leur fiabilité dépend plus du taux d'exhaustivité du recensement en particuliers pour les étrangers en situation irrégulière. Par contre l'émigration de la population nationale n'est pas systématiquement saisie. Dans le recensement algérien de 2008, un volet émigration a bien été introduit mais aucune donnée n'a été publiée car l'information a été jugée par les statisticiens de l'ONS non fiable.

⁹ L'enquête nationale sur la migration internationale, par sa dimension et sa couverture thématique, est la plus importante jamais réalisée au Maroc sur les migrations internationales. Elle vise à fournir des données représentatives, rétrospectives et comparatives sur les caractéristiques des migrants (actuels et de retour), sur les intentions d'émigrer et sur les causes et les conséquences des migrations internationales.