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MIGNEX Background Paper

Comparative experiences of transit migration management

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MIGNEX

MIGNEX (Aligning Migration Management and the Migration-Development Nexus) is a five-year research project (2018–2023) with the core ambition of creating new knowledge on migration, development and policy. It is carried out by a consortium of nine partners in Europe, Africa and Asia: the Peace Research Institute Oslo (coordinator), Danube University Krems, University of Ghana, Koç University, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Maastricht University, the Overseas Development Institute, the University of Oxford and Samuel Hall.

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MIGNEX Background Papers

MIGNEX Background Papers are scientific papers containing the documentation and analyses that underpin the project results. Selected insights from background papers are also presented in non-technical form in other formats, including MIGNEX Policy Briefs and MIGNEX Reports.

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Contents

Tables

Figures

Boxes

List of acronyms

AU	African Union
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
EU	European Union
EUTF	European Union Trust Fund for Africa
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IDPs	internally displaced persons
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LFIP	Law on Foreigners and International Protection
MP	Mobility Partnership
RA	Readmission Agreement
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States
US-CBPA	US Customs and Border Protection Agency

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Comparative experiences of transit migration management

This paper engages critically with the concept of transit migration and identifies key patterns of transit migration management at global, regional and country level. Through comparative analysis it examines the transit migration routes and policies of four MIGNEX countries; namely, Turkey, Tunisia, Ethiopia and Pakistan.

As a term, 'transit migration' is criticised due to its analytical shortcomings, Eurocentric origins and political implications for migrants as well as for countries associated with transit

The dynamics of transit migration management can be observed in various routes to popular destinations such as the US, Australia and Europe.

Transit migration management operates within different policy contexts. These differences should be analysed with reference to their contextual nuances.

Introduction

Conventionally, the migration literature divides nation states into categories such as sending/origin and receiving/host countries, which each apply different sets of policies to immigrants and emigrants (Massey and Taylor, 2004). Since the 1990s, the changing international migration regime and the increasing political will to control migration have given rise to a third category, namely the 'transit country' (İçduygu, 2005; Düvell, 2012). A **transit country** is vaguely defined as the country where migrants temporarily reside to reach third countries (İçduygu and Yükseker, 2010). **Transit migrants** are defined by the authorities 'as aliens who stay in the country for some period of time while seeking to migrate permanently to another country' (Düvell, 2012: 417).

As migration policies of the Global North have become more selective in general and restrictive towards irregular migration (De Haas, et al., 2016), aspiring migrants who are unable to migrate through legal means resort to **stepwise migration,** journeys into countries in the vicinity of popular destinations. Terms such as 'transit country', 'transit migration' and 'transit migrant' are borrowed from the policy agenda of the developed world and are now widely used to identify certain types of mobility and certain policies that aim to manage these forms of international mobility. Our approach in studying transit migration starts with the empirical observation that transit migration has become not only a policy area concerning

Europe, but a global phenomenon with a real impact on the policies of destination countries in various parts of the world such as the United States (US), Europe and Australia, but also of countries situated along migration routes leading to these popular destinations, which are at times identified as transit countries but that are also becoming de facto places of destination (Üstübici, 2018; Norman, 2020). One should also acknowledge that migrants on the way as well as potential migrants who intend to migrate are highly affected by these policies.

This MIGNEX Background Paper aims to provide a comparative assessment of transit migration management in selected MIGNEX countries, in the European neighbourhood (using the cases of Turkey and Tunisia) and along migration trajectories (using the cases of Ethiopia and Pakistan). European migration management, especially in relation to irregular migration and asylum, is highly dependent on policy approaches to transit migration. On the one hand, transit migration has become a part of the migration experience, particularly for migrants from origin countries where there are very few opportunities for legal migration to Europe. On the other hand, transit migration management has become a key policy area where the European Union (EU) and its Member States are required to closely cooperate with third countries to ensure the effective management of irregular migration directed to Europe (see Lebon-McGregor et al., 2022). Against this backdrop, this Background Paper acknowledges transit migration as an integral part of individual mobility strategies and examines transit migration management as an integral part of countering these mobility strategies. This exploratory paper is motivated by three guiding research questions:

– What are the major comparative dimensions of transit migration management?

– How does the phenomenon of transit migration unfold in different regions of the world and along migration trajectories to Europe?

– What are the manifestations of transit migration management at the national level in Turkey, Tunisia, Pakistan and Ethiopia, and at the level of individuals residing in those countries?

The paper has five main parts. Part 1 offers a brief history and overview of the evolution of transit migration, as a global trend and as a migration policy category since the early 1990s. We revisit the definition of the main concepts we use in this paper (such as transit migration, securitisation, politicisation, migration diplomacy, externalisation, mixed migration, among others) and lay out different dimensions of studying transit migration management from a comparative perspective. Accordingly, a comparative account of transit migration management may focus on: i) different regions of the world where transit migration has become prominent, ii) migration routes commonly used by migrants, and iii) individual countries identified with transit migration.

Reflecting our general approach to transit migration as a global phenomenon and a policy category with real impact on the experiences of migrants and non-migrants of (transit) migration, the paper first provides a bird's eye view of the phenomenon at the global and regional level. Hence, Part 2 provides a global overview of transit migration patterns and policies in popular migration destinations (US, Australia, Europe) and their wider regions where transit migration management has become prominent in recent decades. Part 3 zooms in on two transit migration corridors into the EU. The two sections in this part provide a closer look at transit migration management and its effect on migrants along two major migratory routes, to better account for the regional dynamics of transit migration. In Part 4, we compare transit migration management in four countries (Pakistan, Ethiopia, Tunisia, Turkey) that have been researched in the context of MIGNEX. Expert interviews and background papers on migration-relevant policies in those four countries in the context of MIGNEX Work Package

(WP) 5 provided an important starting point for this comparison (see Godin and Vargas-Silva, 2020). Triangulated with detailed desk research, this part compares the target population, tools and actors of transit migration management in these four countries as well as its impact on individual experiences. Therefore, we not only focus on policy developments but also on individuals' direct and indirect experiences of transit migration in research areas where MIGNEX empirical research has taken place in the context of WP3 and WP4 of the project. A detailed methodology of this country-level comparison is provided in the Part 1. Finally, in the last part of the paper, we conclude by providing key academic insights and policy perspectives.

Part 1: Key concepts and operationalisation

1.1 The emergence and proliferation of the concept of transit migration

Transit migration – in the sense of stepwise migration, passing through several cities and nation-state borders – is not a new phenomenon. Transit routes and towns also existed in the context of ancient trade routes in the Sahara or the Eurasian Silk Route (Düvell, 2006; Kimball, 2007). Yet, the term transit migration, as a tool of migration management, beyond the description of a geographical location, has been introduced and has become part of common policy language in a particular context of EU expansion and the overall securitisation of migration (Oelgemöller, 2011; Düvell, 2012). The end of the Cold War and the expansion of the EU into Eastern Europe gave rise to new security concerns. In the EU context, unauthorised migration was perceived as a threat to the functioning of the Common Market, and the strengthening of external borders was seen necessary for the elimination of internal borders (Huysmans, 2006). In this context, new EU Member States, especially through Eastern enlargement of the EU, have been the major targets for restrictive border and asylum policies. Growing interest in controlling irregular flows of migration and asylum have justified the securitisation and politicisation of human mobility at the EU's external borders as well as beyond.

Consequently, the term 'transit migration' is widely used in EU policy documents and in grey literature produced by international organisations, especially in relation to the designation of EU neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Morocco, Libya, Ukraine and Egypt as transit countries (Düvell, 2012). In line with these developments, major organisations and policy groups such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Council of Europe have often included transit migration in their agenda and have offered various definitions (ibid.). UNECE (1993: 7) was among the first to provide the earliest definition of transit migration, describing it as 'migration in one country with the intention of seeking the possibility there to emigrate to another country as the country of final destination'. IOM also played a crucial role in promoting transit migration in the international policy agenda. In 1994, within a series of papers, IOM urged its Member States to identify transit migration as an important issue in international migration and in particular in irregular and asylum migration (e.g., IOM, 1994a; 1994b). Hence, as a political concept circulated by several international organisations, 'transit migration', 'transit country' and 'transit migration management' gained currency in the context of 'the external dimensions of the EU immigration and asylum policy' (Boswell, 2008; Lebon-McGregor et al., 2022).

Today, the term is used widely in other regions of the world to describe stepwise migration in the Global South. This is no surprise, as changing security regimes in conventional destination countries such as US, Canada and Australia have put more emphasis on securitising their

borders either through physical fortifications or digital means, making the entry of potential refugees and migrants much more difficult (Frelick et al., 2016). Also, research has documented that the transfer of border and migration management mechanisms to third countries is also taking place in various regions beyond Europe such as the US and Australia (Kimball, 2007; Basok et al., 2015; Missbach, 2015; Missbach and Philips, 2020). All of these efforts of fortification and externalisation of border controls to stop irregular migration make transit migration management a global issue, and this calls for an overview of the manifestations of transit migration in different parts of the world. As we elaborate in Part 2 of this background paper, power relations are not uniform between developed countries aiming to manage transit migration and developing countries subjected to transit migration management patterns.

1.2 Transit migration as a contested concept

Despite widespread, almost global use of the term in policy and academic circles, there are also several contestations around the concept of transit migration management that we need to acknowledge. Transit migration is not a neutral analytical concept. The term 'transit migration' does not simply describe 'an existing reality, but to some extent [is] also a part of the process of constructing that reality in such a way that discursive practices enable policy statements to conceptualise and talk about this phenomenon' (İçduygu and Yükseker 2010: 441). Labels such as 'transit migration', 'transit migrants' and 'transit country' have had political implications for migrants on the way, as well as for countries associated with transit migration. In one of the early critical accounts on the subject of transit migration, Düvell (2012: 417) argues that most of the interpretations and definitions offered for transit migration are narrow, vague, confusing and incoherent. We group these contestations around the term 'transit migration' with regards to its *legal, temporal, subjective* and *spatial* connotations. The details are presented in Figure 1.

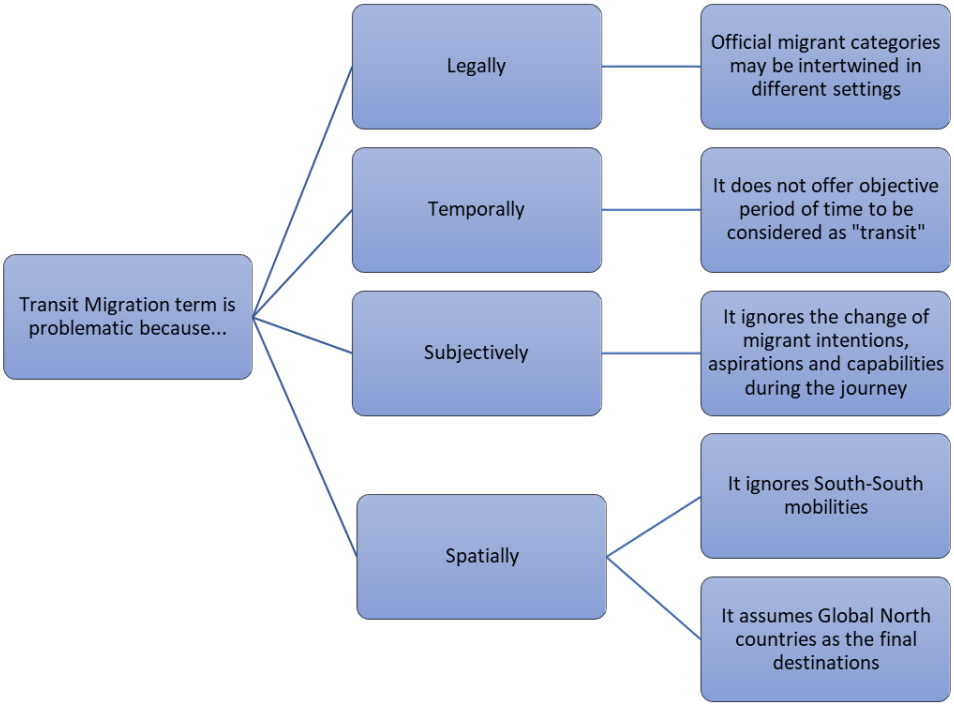

Figure 1. Transit migration as a contested concept

Source: The authors.

The term 'transit migration' often has negative connotations due to its association with irregular migration, illegal activities, human smuggling and organised crime. Meanwhile, *legally speaking*, one should acknowledge that transit migrants are not a distinct category of migrants, but they are intertwined with other categories such as 'irregular migrants', 'asylum seekers', 'victims of human trafficking' or even with 'emigrants', considering that nationals may also resort to leaving their country of origin without legal documents or may be stuck on their way to their intended destination. Plus, in fact, from an empirical perspective, we should recognise that refugees and other migrants on the route share similar means (the smugglers and other networks to facilitate their international mobility) and similar motivations (poverty or conflict) (Norman, 2020). Hence, another widespread term used in transit migration contexts is **mixed migration**. Emerging in the 2000s in United Nations (UN) documents, existing uses of 'mixed migration' may refer to the 'complex composition of migration flows' or 'both the complexity as well as individuals' mixed asylum seeker motivations for moving' (Sharpe, 2018: 117). The term has either been used directly in the text or implied to refer to the impossibility of distinguishing asylum seekers from other migrants on the route.

Temporally speaking, the undefined length of time to be considered as a transit migrant constitutes another epistemological vagueness of the term. One key contestation exists over the 'migrant in transit' concept since the idea implies fixed start and end points and it does not account for the dynamic nature of stepwise migration (Paul, 2011; Collyer and de Haas, 2012).

Relatedly, the concept disregards the *subjective and heterogeneous dimensions of migration* experiences in terms of the diverse motivations and residential status of migrants in transit spaces (Collyer, 2010). The *intentions* of migrants who are allegedly identified as transit, for further migration may not be clear or pre-defined. One needs to acknowledge that transit migration is a phenomenon resulting from migrants' *aspirations, decisions* or *ability* to continue their journey to their intended destination. Both aspirations and abilities are subject to change depending on migration policies that enable or inhibit mobility as well as on opportunities in the country of origin, destination or transit.

In this regard, the Latin origin of the word **transit** reflects the richness of the process of mobility, both in its intransitive form (*to go, to move, to pass from one condition to another, to pass to the enemy, to have changes of opinion, to flow, to change, to transform, to end, to finish*) and in its transitive form (*to overtake, to cross, to cross over, to overcome, to go unnoticed*). The different etymological nuances thus remarkably reflect the ordeal and strategies of mobility that are recounted in today's narratives of mobility: there is talk of migration and of management, of course, but also of decisions, of waiting, of being stuck and stranded, of reversals, of transformations, of temporary victories, and of death sometimes (Khosravi, 2010).

Indeed, ethnographic and sociological research highlights the experiences of migrants in transit countries in relation to the temporalities of migration (Iranzo, 2021), waiting (Sampson et al., 2016; Kaytaz, 2016) and being stranded (Collyer, 2010, Collyer and De Haas, 2012). As an example, Hess (2012) uses ethnographic life stories and narratives to theorise border regimes from the perspective of migrants focusing on their actions, and tactics during their journey. The author argues that the production of a precarious transit zone can be partly understood as the spatialised social effect of the EU's border regime, and also as the effect of the migrants' individual objectives and tactics such as exploiting informal labour markets, using the networks or nodes of migration knowledge, communication and transport technologies

(McAuliffe and Jayasuriya, 2016). These experiences are studied from the migrants' perspectives, with the aim of explaining decision-making along the route (Schapendonk, 2012; Belloni, 2018). Others have looked at experiences of semi-permanent settlement in different contexts and policies targeting this situation of 'permanent temporariness' (Basok, 2019; see also Üstübici, 2018; Norman, 2020).

Spatially speaking, the term 'transit migration' designates a politically constructed space, the 'transit country' (Oelgemöller, 2011). At the state-level of analysis, the term is contested in relation to its western centralism, assuming that all migrants from developing countries are on their way to the EU (or the US or Australia). This neglects the dynamics of South–South migration and the internal dynamics of so-called transit countries. It is common to refer to countries in the Global North as **destination countries** (Missbach and Philips, 2020: 22). In turn, **receiving country** has become a commonly used term to describe countries that receive migrants and refugees, at times against the country's political will and despite its lack of reception infrastructure. The receiving country may be considered to be a place of temporary residence. We should note some of these 'receiving' countries, associated with transit migration, have received a large number of migrants and refugees and have become 'de facto immigration countries' (Üstübici, 2018) or reluctant hosts (Norman, 2020). At the same time, they have been pressured and/or incentivised to manage transit migration within their territory.

Such contestations also relate to an ontological issue that transit can only be defined once it has finished, when 'transit migrants' arrive at their intended destination having crossed several nation-state borders. In other words, most migrants are assumed to be in transit even if they are not making a deliberate or planned attempt to traverse borders to reach a specific destination, or if they are apprehended at a border. Spatially speaking, 'transit countries' are in practice "'anti-transit' areas where alleged transit migrants are stopped and controlled" (Üstübici, 2018: 54).

Acknowledging these contestations around 'transit migration', we generally refrain from using the term in this paper due to its analytical flaw. However, it is mentioned throughout the text to refer to the potential of being identified as a transit migrant and to refer to the use of the term in policy and literature. We rather use the generic and more inclusive category of **migrants** in the rest of the paper (Carling, 2017), to refer to those on their way and acknowledging that among them are those in need of international protection, i.e., refugees and asylum seekers. While using 'migrants' as an inclusive term, we also acknowledge that tools of transit migration management disrupt the international protection regime established in the aftermath of World War II by shifting the responsibility of protection to 'transit countries' with little legal, administrative or financial capacity to ensure full protection (Betts and Collier, 2017; Fitzgerald, 2019). Hence, we use **refugees** and **asylum seeker** when needed, with reference to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) definitions, rather than a given country's legal definitions where the term 'refugee' may or may not be used in national legal documents.

1.3 Transit migration management and its implications

Existing uses of the term conceptualise transit migration as a technocratic problem that can be contained if it is managed in a proper way. In recent years, **migration management**, rather than 'migration control', is being circulated in policy agendas (Carling, 2019). The logic behind this shift in terminology is the principle that migration can be properly managed to generate optimal results. This shift indicates a technocratic emphasis in which migration can be

governed as a tool for development (Geiger and Pécoud, 2010) for the benefit of not only potential destination countries but also source and transit countries and even for the irregular(ised) migrants themselves. Plus, such justifications for early interventions to contain and eventually stop transit migration have been criticised for concealing the selfish interest of developed countries engaging in gatekeeper arrangements with less developed ones (Missbach and Philips, 2020). Hence, another related but equally contested term we use in this background paper is 'transit migration management'.

Box 1. Migration 'management' in the UN policy agenda

The philosophy behind this form of managerial/developmental global migration governance can be traced to the adoption of the Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) by the international community in 2015, to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted in 2000. One of the novelties of the SDGs is that they clearly address migration. Target 10.7 aims to 'Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies'.

Source: See https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal10

On the basis that transit migration can be prevented or managed through good cooperation with third countries (see also Box 1 for the emergence of 'migration management' in the UN policy agenda), closures at the external borders of the EU have been coupled with conditionalities requiring neighbouring countries to play an active part in 'combating' irregular migratory flows, within the logic of externalised migration control. As a result, new multilateral and bilateral agreements on border management have been forged between the EU, its Member States, and its neighbouring transit countries (see Lebon-McGregor, 2022) along migration trajectories far beyond the immediate EU region. These efforts have important implications at the international level and for relations with state and non-state actors.

In fact, the externalisation of EU migration policy has become a central framework for the EU's border and migration management over the last three decades. Different types of conditionalities and compensations over migration cooperation between EU and third countries have given rise to intensification of **migration diplomacy** (see Box 2) where cooperation over border and asylum policies has become an indirect form of foreign policy. The practices of externalisation as the main plank of EU migration policy (Frelick et al., 2016) encompass a wide range of approaches from border controls and rescue operations. To measure and address the root causes of migration, various forms of development initiatives have been tied to migration management, involving a wide range of state and non-state actors (Stock et al., 2019).

Box 2. Migration diplomacy

Tsourapas (2017: 2370) defines migration diplomacy as 'the use of diplomatic tools, processes and procedures to manage cross-border population mobility, including both the strategic use of migration flows as a means to obtain other aims, and the use of diplomatic

> methods to achieve goals related to migration. Immigration laws, bilateral or multilateral readmission agreements (RAs), policies of secondment and diaspora outreach, or deportation regulations typically constitute notable tools of migration diplomacy.'

Such attempts have required active involvement and investment by neighbouring countries in connection with border controls and migration management. Plus, these policies not only affect neighbouring countries but also countries in more distant places in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Central America. Hence, recent research on externalisation calls for a research agenda that not only focuses on neighbouring countries, but the wider effects of these processes of externalisation (see the special issues by Stock et al., 2019). In this context, **border externalisation** commonly refers to 'a series of processes of territorial and administrative expansion of a given state's migration and border policy to third countries' (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015: 231). Because measures of transit migration management are externalised to wider geographies than the EU region, this background paper puts particular emphasis on the dynamics of transit migration not only from designated MIGNEX countries (Turkey, Tunisia, Ethiopia, Pakistan) into the EU, but along migration routes that link migration trajectories leading to popular destination countries. We use the term **migration corridor** or **transit migration route** interchangeably to refer to trajectories commonly used in stepwise migration. Note that transit migration routes include an assembly of geographical areas, at border, city and national level and each targeted by transit migration management. As we unpack further in Part 2 of this paper, this approach aims to provide a fuller picture of regional and global interdependencies when it comes to transit migration and its management. We also explore how the securitisation of transit migration manifests along migration routes.

1.4 Studying transit migration management from the perspective of transit countries

So far, we have suggested that transit migration is a global phenomenon despite its ill-defined, contested nature. Moreover, we have highlighted its international dimensions and implications for relations among actors. The discussion of transit migration, in line with the focus of this paper, necessitates defining the parameters of transit migration management. In this section, we identify key dimensions of transit migration management and provide a working definition to compare and contrast global patterns of transit migration without losing contextual differences. This section also details the methodology followed in Part 4.

Comparing the experiences of Mexico and Morocco as transit countries, Kimball (2017) defines four criteria of transit countries, based on geographical position, volume of migration, existence of immigrant population desiring onward migration and policy framework. Accordingly, first, transit states must border a 'fully developed country'; second, transit states must show a higher rate of emigration than immigration; third, transit states must function as primary staging grounds for migrants who intend to travel on to a nearby desired destination country; and fourth, over time transit states adopt and enforce more restrictive migration and border policies (Missbach and Philips, 2020: 21).

In identifying dimensions of transit migration management, we propose some amendments to these criteria. In the context of EU externalisation, we observe that not only countries neighbouring the EU but almost all countries along migration routes including the places of origin are incentivised, if not coerced, by the EU to manage transit migration. Therefore, a comparative account of experiences of transit migration management in the EU context should take into account the experiences of neighbouring countries to the EU (e.g., Turkey and Tunisia), as well as those in the wider region (e.g., Pakistan and Ethiopia) and those within the

EU (e.g., Greece, Italy) associated with onward migration (see, for instance, Fontanari, 2018). Therefore, along with Missach and Philips (2020), we also propose amending the geographical criterion by recognising the extension of transit migration management tools to wider regions than neighbouring countries.

In this light, Part 4 analyses the four MIGNEX countries under the criteria depicted in Figure 2, with the aim of providing a comparative account of transit migration management which partly overlaps with Kimball's (2017) initial typology.

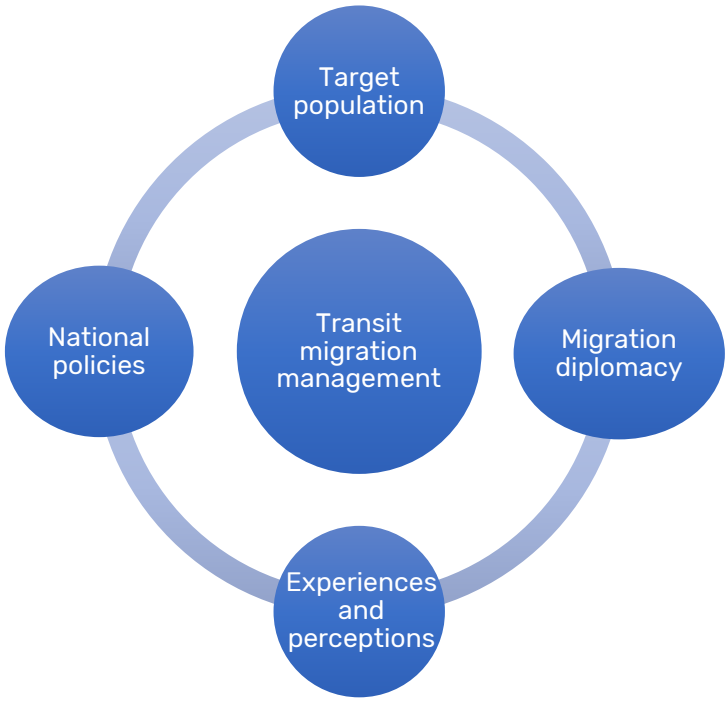

Figure 2. Four dimensions of studying transit migration management

Source: The authors.

Target population of transit migration management

It has been acknowledged that, regardless of countries labelled as transit or not, many countries can simultaneously exhibit all three types of migration: emigration, transit and immigration. Hence, the target of transit migration management may include various categories of migrants who may potentially engage with transit migration. For instance, the volume of nationals and non-nationals leaving a country through clandestine means and who are apprehended could potentially overlap with statistics on transit migration. Or else, it is assumed that undocumented migrants who are considered to be the most likely candidates for transit migration may decide to stay in the transit country rather than moving on. Therefore, by target population of transit migration management, we do not only mean the sheer volume of transit migration, which is difficult to measure, but an overview of secondary sources on the main nationalities associated with transit migration and their estimate numbers if available (through apprehensions, number of asylum seekers, migrant population) for comparative purposes. We also include the number of nationals apprehended and/or seeking asylum in neighbouring countries or in Europe, where relevant.

National policies

We also embrace Kimball's (2017) criterion that transit countries would adopt more restrictive migration and border policies. In this frame, the political and migration policy landscape of a given country should also be analysed when studying transit migration. In particular, we focus on the available legal framework of migration management, asylum and border controls, on the discourses of political elites, the level of securitisation and politicisation, and public attitudes towards migration (see Table 1). The research conducted under MIGNEX WP5 on key migration and development policies in MIGNEX countries, including transit migration and immigration policies, provides a good starting point for such a comparison (see Godin and Vargas-Silva, 2022 for documentation of the data collection in WP5).

We further unpack this dimension of transit migration management by focusing, where relevant, on the level of securitisation and politicisation of transit migration at the national level. **Securitization** refers to the 'processes in which the socially and politically successful "speech act" of labelling an issue a "security issue" removes it from the realm of normal day-to-day politics, casting it as an "existential threat" calling for and justifying extreme measures' (CASE Collective, 2006: 453). In the context of transit migration, we also refer to the association of transit migration with border security and domestic security (Norman, 2020), taking into account the militarisation of physical borders.

By **politicization,** we refer to immigration-related issues becoming part of high-level politics, including electoral politics (Üstübici, 2019) and of official statements from bureaucrats, politicians or the media (Norman, 2020). 'Politicised' also means that the issue of migration has become a political issue, as a result of deliberate action or otherwise, whereby people become politically active over the issue, publicly displaying xenophobic attitudes towards migrants who are considered as transit or at best semi-permanent, calling for more restrictive policies (Kimball, 2007; Norman, 2020). Note that the degree of politicisation of international migration may differ from one context to another.

Migration diplomacy with the EU in the context of transit migration management

Under this dimension, we analyse how transit migration management became part of negotiations with the EU. Some countries arguably may have more incentives to partly subscribe to playing the role of transit countries than others. Others may have more political leverage in these negotiations. We therefore identify migration diplomacy with the EU as well as with individual member states as another criterion to define transit countries.

Incentives including the receipt of targeted development aid and financial and administrative support – such as specialised training of key government agencies, capacity-building activities as well as existing agreements over migration concerning areas of readmission, mobility partnerships (MPs) and visa facilitation – are compared. Note that there is a partial overlap here with the above dimension on national policies. We acknowledge that EU transit migration management tools also entail investments in capacity-building so that transit countries adopt a suitable legal framework to strengthen border controls but also to absorb migrants within their territory by providing paths to legality and to international protection.

In addition to legal/institutional dimensions of negotiations between states, we also aim to capture perceptions on transit migration by policy actors, where available. In other words, in analysing how migration diplomacy unfolds, it is important to consider whether policy actors embrace the association with the term 'transit migration', whether they think it is strategic to

cooperate with the EU on this topic, and whether a transit-migration focus undermines the implementation of policies aimed at enhancing the rights and social inclusion of immigrants.

Experiences and perceptions of transit migration management

As implied above regarding the discussion on the volume of transit migration, restrictive migration policies may lead to high numbers of people who are willing to migrate but are unable to do so, thus leading to involuntary immobility. We contend that transit migration management has implications not only for the migrants allegedly in transit that these policies are targeting, but also for *nationals as potential transit migrants*. The wide use of this category in official discourses has an influence not only on public perceptions of migratory phenomena but also on the real lives of (potential) migrants (Collyer and de Haas, 2012). To this end, we measure the prevalence of direct and indirect transit migration experiences and juxtapose this with aspirations and intentions to migrate, using survey data and fieldwork data collected in 11 research areas in the selected MIGNEX countries (see Hagen-Zanker et al. (2022) for detailed documentation of the MIGNEX survey). We therefore define the level of familiarity with transit migration in relation to aspirations to migrate as another dimension to compare experiences of transit migration management. Our use of the MIGNEX survey data is detailed at the beginning of Part 4.

Table 1. Operationalisation of the main dimensions of transit migration management

Main dimensions	Target population	National policies	Migration diplomacy	Experiences and perceptions
How do we analyse these main dimensions?	Main nationalities associated with transit migration Assessment of available statistics on transit migration in particular, and on immigration in general	Legal frameworks of migration management, asylum and border control Discourses of political elites Level of securitisation and politicisation Public attitudes towards migration	Legal/institutional dimensions of negotiations between states Political motivations behind negotiation	Direct and indirect experiences of transit migration Migration aspirations Unrealised migration intentions Risk perceptions

Part 2. Transit migration around the world: various geographies compared

As argued earlier, there is a degree of Eurocentrism in the use of the term 'transit migration' (Collyer and de Haas, 2012), which reflects the reality that when many potential migrants are not able to migrate directly from their own homelands to European countries, transit migration – or, in other words, stepwise migration – often becomes a strategy for entering the targeted destination country (İçduygu and Yükseker, 2012). In this context, it is also argued that, mostly, externalisation policies of the EU's border control have serious implications for

these stepwise migration. Many migrants find their intended onward journey blocked and consequently become stranded in the so-called transit countries in the European peripheral areas, such as Morocco or Turkey. However, Europe is not the only geography affected by transit flows. Similar movements are witnessed in other parts of the world, as also documented through different historical examples. For instance, refugee flows from Vietnam in the late 1970s indicate a pattern of stepwise movements that have been followed by migrants from the South or Central American countries to the US since the 1980s and 1990s, and more recently in the late 1990s and early 2000s from Iraq and Afghanistan through Indonesia to Australia (Collyer and de Haas, 2012).

It appears that transit migratory flows are observed in certain geographically established **migratory corridors –** the paths or routes that migrants use to travel between their origin, transit and destination areas. The formations of these paths are contextual and are often historically formed in the context of the economic, social and political nature of the migratory regimes or systems in various geographies (İçduygu, 2021). Here we refer to three different regions around the world which not only provide us with a comparative global setting to examine transit migration flows but also help us to better understand the transit migration observed in Europe and its peripheries. These three corridors are located in the following geographies, analytically linking the migratory flows to the three developed/core/ receiving areas: North America (US), Europe and Australia. Putting it more firmly, the first corridor originates from the South or Central American countries and Mexico and arrives in the US; the second corridor begins from various parts of Asia into the southeast of the continent, and then mostly to Indonesia and then to Australia; and the third corridor comes from various Asian, African and Middle Eastern countries mostly to the Mediterranean Basin and then to Europe.

2.1 The US

The Americas host more than a quarter of the overall migrant population in the world (73.5 million people in 2020) (Migration data portal, 2020), although the number of migrants in the region is less than in Asia and Europe. Nevertheless, the region contains what is regarded as the most important migration route in the world – the prominent North American corridor linking Mesoamerica to the US and Canada (Castles et al., 2014). Along with hosting migrants from Africa, Asia, Europe and other parts of the world, the region deals with interregional movement, in particular south–north migration to the US and Canada resulting from underdevelopment, poverty and violence.

One of the important characteristics of the international migration system in the Americas is the presence of irregular migratory flows, part of which has implications for transit migration in the region. The paths of many migrants include multiple destinations and transit routes in a south to north direction. Estimated figures of the irregular immigrant population of the US indicate that this peaked in around 2007 when the population stood at 12.2 million people and 4% of the total US population. The most recent estimates in 2017 put this number close to 11 million, representing around 3% of the total US population (van Hook et al., 2022).

It is known that visa overstays account for a larger share of the irregular migrant population than illegal border crossings, which partly reflects the realities of transit migration through South and Central America to the US. Indeed, only 9% of recent immigrants to the US arrived from a transit country as opposed to their country of birth (Artuc and Ozden, 2018). Figures from the US Customs and Border Protection Agency (US-CBPA) indicate that while 43% of the 300,000+ irregular migrants apprehended at the Mexican border in 2017 were nationals of neighbouring Mexico, many others were migrants passing through Mexico: 22% of them from

Guatemala, 17% of them from El Salvador, 16% from Honduras and around 4% from countries such as India, Brazil, Ecuador, China, Nicaragua and Cuba. In 2021, reported figures from the US-CBPA show that while there were nearly 1.7 million irregular migrants apprehended at the US–Mexico borders, only 35% were from Mexico. The remaining proportion were migrants from other countries in the region transiting through Mexico: Ecuador (6%), Brazil (3%), Nicaragua (3%), Venezuela (3%), Haiti (3%) and Cuba (2%) (US-CBPA Stats and Summaries, n.d.).

It appears that economic, social and political instability in some of the south and central American countries are likely to play a main role in the irregular transit flows at the US–Mexico border. Over the last decade, in Ecuador, widespread economic problems seem to have pushed many migrants towards Mexico and then to the US. Haiti, meanwhile, has faced a number of push factors, ranging from natural disasters to political crises. The ongoing crisis in Venezuela has had a significant influence on migration flows in the region and continues to be one of the largest displacement crises in the world. Approximately 5.6 million Venezuelans have left their country since early 2010 (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021). Colombia, Peru, Chile, Ecuador and Brazil are the main destination countries for Venezuelan refugees in the region, while some Venezuelans tend to move to the US from these first destination countries, mainly through Mexico. Meanwhile, the persisting cases of transit migration at the US–Mexico border have not only involved people from South and Central America: figures from the US-CBPA indicate that there have been an increasing number of nationals from distant countries such as Romania, India, Turkey and Syria.

Transit migration in the Americas is mostly experienced on northbound migratory corridors including the historic Mexico–US corridor, the Central American corridor towards the US, the corridor that connects the Andean Region with Central America, Mexico and the US, and the corridor connecting Brazil and Mexico (Herrera and Gómez, 2022). Mexico is an important stage in the route to the US; the Central American corridor has performed the dual task of being the 'gate' to and the 'backyard' for popular North American destinations for decades due to its geographical position (Drotbohm and Winters, 2018). The corridor is used heavily and increasingly by South American and Caribbean migrants transiting to the US. Various South American countries are connected to the Central American countries, Mexico and the US in a system of expulsion and transit (ibid.). The Central American route mainly includes Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua (or its territorial waters), Honduras and Guatemala (Winters and Mora Izaguirre, 2019). Intraregional flows in Central America are another characteristic of migration in this corridor, particularly towards Costa Rica, Ecuador, Chile, Panamá, Belize, Brazil and Argentina. It is worth mentioning that these transit hubs also act as an important source country towards the US for both the citizens of Central American countries and Mexicans who have been forced to abandon their communities for decades mainly due to violence and organised crime.

Since the 1990s, the US started to invest in the militarisation of its own and other borders in the region, under the banner of fighting drugs and organised crime, but eventually targeting migrants. The externalisation of migration control in the North American region began in the late 1980s after a cooperation programme was devised between the US and Mexico. The operation directly targeted Central American migration (Frelick, 1991). The programme boosted the presence of the US Border Patrol along the border, created checkpoints in transit corridors, expedited asylum applications, and trained Mexican officials in detecting false documents (Frelick et al., 2016). Since then, diverse programmes have been established between the countries, externalising the US border controls and cooperation between US immigration officials and their Mexican counterparts.

The large effort to detain and deport migrants continued not only at the US borders but also in Mexico and Central American regions (Vogt, 2016). During the past decade, the US externalisation efforts also extended to Central American source countries as attention gradually shifted to Mexico's southern border. This spilled over into Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador as a result of US–Mexico securitisation (Winters and Mora Izaguirre, 2019). As an example, in 2014, Honduran law enforcement units began an operation to intercept children and families trying to cross the border from Honduras into Guatemala. According to reports, the included units received equipment and specific training from US Border Patrol, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement or other US migration control and law enforcement bodies (Frelick et al., 2016).

A number of recent events keep the discussion of transit migration management as a vibrant political issue in this region. For instance, the increase in the number of **migrant caravans –** a term used to describe the collective journey of migrants over land borders – urged the US and Mexican governments to enhance immigration enforcement including the prevention of transit migration, a rise in military officers at the border and increased detentions (Wurtz, 2020; McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2022). One of the recent initiatives in this regard includes the highly contested 'virtual border wall' between the US and Mexico, currently being developed by the US-CBPA in collaboration with leading technology firms. This 'wall' will include mass surveillance using drones and towers that will detect and categorise people and objects rapidly in an image or video file (Fang and Biddle, 2020).

Border security and immigration issues have been among the campaign discussions of both Donald Trump and Joe Biden since 2016. During his presidency, Donald Trump made various immigration changes, mainly to address caravans of illegal immigrants, asylum fraud and terrorism. Trump's administration also started to build 450 to 500 miles of a border wall between the US and Mexico. Significant construction efforts continued during his presidency. However, Biden's campaign website stated that they would stop building the wall as it does little to deter criminals and cartels seeking to exploit US borders (Sprunt, 2020).

Various scholars (Basok, 2019; Frank-Vitale, 2020) argue that the dynamics in the emergence of transit migration discourses in the Americas are different from the European context. They suggest that, contrary to the European experience where the discourse of transit migration is related to state power to strengthen its border security and externalise migration control to neighbouring states, the discourse in the Americas has been advanced by human rights activists and academic researchers to refer to the abuses and dangers migrants have experienced in Mexico and at the Mexican–US border. Meanwhile, there are also references to the structural factors in the region that are similar to the European context: for instance, the pressure placed by the US on Mexico bears a resemblance to the EU's policies of border externalisation (Basok, 2019; Faret et al., 2021).

2.2 Australia

In 2020, there were over 7.6 million migrants living in Australia, making up nearly 30% of the country's population. As observed since the early 2000s, although the volume of irregular and transit migratory flows to Australia does not reflect a quantitatively significant figure, the complex nature of long transit journeys linking the continent to countries in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Indonesia that makes the Australian case really unique (Koser and McAuliffe, 2013; Missbach and Hoffstaedter, 2020). Despite being geographically isolated as an island in the Pacific Ocean, with a coastline that has not easily offered the prospect of irregular migration movement, such movements have

occurred over the decades, and some involve stepwise migration. For instance, in 1976, the first boatload of refugees fleeing Vietnam sailed into Darwin Harbour in Australia. They, and those who followed, left Vietnam following the Vietnam War (Betts, 2001; Anderson, 2012). Over the next few years, about 2,000 more refugees travelled to Australia in boats. More recently, in the last two decades, Australia has been the most important, if not the sole destination country, in the Asia Pacific region.

In order to reach Australia, during the late 1990s and early 2000s, some migrants from countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Myanmar or Sri Lanka resorted to irregular routes consisting of multiple legs, particularly transiting through Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam (Missbach and Hoffstaedter, 2020). According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2018), migrants from Southwest Asia and South Asia (particularly Sri Lanka) travel to Malaysia and Indonesia in order to be smuggled into Australia. Other groups such as Afghans, Iranians, Iraqis and Pakistanis travel by air to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, either directly or through the Gulf region or through Bangkok, Thailand (Crouch and Missbach, 2013, cited in UNODC, 2018). For both migrants and locals, the next step is to travel from Malaysia to Indonesia, mostly by land, to the Malay Peninsula, and then by ferry and boats to Sumatra or other parts of Indonesia for six to eight hours (UNODC, 2018). The departure points in Indonesia are to its southeast, on the coastline of Java Island, before moving on to Christmas Island or Ashmore Reef. Yet, it has become increasingly difficult to reach Australia by sea since late 2013, when the maritime route from Southeast Asia to Australia was closed with increased controls (ibid.).

As noted by Hugo et al. (2017), various Asian countries have played increasingly significant roles as transit locations for migrants to Australia: in particular, Indonesia has been the main country, which, until the commencement of the Australian Government's military-led Operation Sovereign Borders in 2013, functioned as a transit point for asylum seekers and irregular migrants seeking to land on Australia's northern shores. Indeed, Australia's externalisation policy dates back to the early 2000s, marked by increasing interdictions and forcible returns of migrant boats and the introduction of restrictive policies on asylum seekers who arrive by sea, such as offshore detention and processing (Frelick et al., 2016). By wielding considerable influence on the migration policies of other Asian Pacific countries, Australian externalisation policies aim to prevent migrants (including asylum seekers) from travelling to Australia. To this aim, Australia has entered into bilateral and multilateral agreements with transit countries in Southeast Asia to deter human smuggling in the region via increased border controls and law enforcement, offshore processing of asylum applications, and agreements on irregular migration management (Missbach and Hoffstaedter, 2020). Contrary to general assumptions, however, Australia is not always the dominant party in its bilateral relations with transit countries. Studies highlight that transit countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia are not always open to Australia's interventionist policies, they do not depend on Australia's aid, and they have gained a significant political advantage due to their supposed role as a buffer against irregular migration to Australia (ibid.). Furthermore, these countries are not merely transit spaces, as many refugees voluntarily or involuntarily build lives there.

Since early 2002, it has been reported that Australia has detained and processed asylum seekers and refugees offshore on Christmas Island, Manus Island (Papua New Guinea) or Nauru under inhumane conditions for an indefinite period (Willekers, 2021). Although offshore policies were broadly revoked in 2008, they restarted on 13 August 2012 with the introduction of the Offshore Processing and Other Measures Bill (Willekers, 2021; Refugee Council of Australia, 2022). On 19 July 2013, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced that offshore policies were to be expanded to include all irregular boat arrivals and to prevent

them from ever resettling in Australia (Frelick et al., 2016). As of September 2022, the number of people transferred to Australia's offshore detention centres stands at 3,127 since July 2013 and 4,183 since August 2012 (Refugee Council of Australia, 2022). Over the past decade, Australia has further expanded the securitisation of its migration controls with more measures, such as resettlement agreements with third countries (e.g., Cambodia) for refugees from the offshore detention centres, military-led operations to combat human smuggling, and a regional plan implemented in collaboration with Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Malaysia for intelligence and information sharing, cooperation on naval patrols and border security, media campaigns to deter migration, and increasing the speed of deportation (Frelick et al., 2016).

Australia's policy interventions have turned the transit countries in the region into (involuntary) destination points for thousands of asylum seekers and refugees, have trapped them in transit for indefinite periods of time, or have pushed them to transit to other countries in the region instead of Australia (MMC, 2021a). For instance, the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) (2021a) has reported that an overwhelming majority of refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia initially intended to transit swiftly to another destination, most commonly Australia. However, most have been stuck for many years in Indonesia due to evolving immigration policies in Australia, with limited assistance and little capacity to integrate since Indonesia has no national refugee legislation and bars local integration. Resettlement is also an unlikely option for refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia as Australia does not resettle refugees registered with UNHCR in Indonesia after July 2014. This background has diminished Indonesia's status as a transit country for many groups. Between 1998 and mid-2013, around 55,000 migrants crossed by boat to Australia from Indonesia, while the number of new asylum seekers arriving in Indonesia halved between 2014 and 2015 (Missbach and Hoffstaedter, 2020; MMC, 2021a). In recent years, the number of people who have come to Australia seeking protection by boat is very small: for instance, the Refugee Council of Australia (RCA) reported that in the first eight months of 2022, while 22 boats carrying over 1,000 people in total arrived in the country, 44 boats carrying over 1,000 people in total were intercepted and returned to their departure points. In addition, RCA reported that around 101 boats with more than 3,330 people in total were disrupted and prevented, in cooperation with the neighbouring source and transit countries before reaching Australia's maritime borders.[1]

Overall, Australia's measures include highly problematic practices such as offshore detention and processing of asylum seekers in sites that cannot ensure refugee protection, returning migrants arriving by boats to origin or transit countries, preventing their asylum claims from being heard in Australia, and depriving them of the possibility of resettlement to Australia (Frelick et al., 2016). Although Australia's migration controls have been efficient due to its geographical status as an island, the controls have put access to asylum, provision of refugee rights and the principle of non-refoulment at serious risk.

2.3 Europe

Since World War II, the increasing attraction of Europe as a destination for globally mobile migrants and refugees is obvious. Eurostat figures reveal the most recent migratory picture in Europe: since 2015, around 2.5 million people per year have migrated to Europe from outside of the EU. In 2020, 1.9 million immigrants entered the EU from non-EU countries, a decrease of almost 30% compared with 2019 mainly due to COVID-related restrictions. Figures show that 23.7 million people (5.3%) of the 447.2 million people living in the EU on 1 January 2021 were non-EU citizens (Eurostat, n.d.). Note that these data exclude asylum seekers and refugees

[1] See various reports of the RCA, available at: https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/asylum-boats-statistics/

without a residence permit. There are also many irregular migrants, some of whom are indeed crossing through neighbouring non-EU countries, arriving and residing in almost all European countries (Triandafyllidou, 2016). The size of the irregular migrant population of the EU-27 in 2008 was measured to be between 1.9 million and 3.8 million people, a decline from between 2.4 million and 5.4 million people in the EU-25 in 2005 (Vogel et al., 2011). It is impossible to estimate the number of migrants and refugees who are able to enter Europe through transit countries, but it is well documented that some of these irregular migrants are indeed arriving in Europe via transit migration countries around the continent – such as Morocco, Libya, Turkey, Ukraine and Belarus (Düvell et al., 2014).

As noted earlier, in recent decades, the phenomenon of transit at European borders has become increasingly controversial. It has often been framed within the context of irregular migration or asylum flows, and consequently the role of transit countries in the journeys of these refugees and other migrants has been hotly debated and questioned. It has also frequently been argued that migrant smuggling plays a major role in these movements and is responsible for devastating humanitarian outcomes, particularly referring to the human cost of irregular border crossings -- as observed daily over the decades in the Mediterranean Basin. As a result, transit migration is seen as an issue of securitisation. Although it is obvious that smuggling is one of the factors behind irregular (transit) border crossings, it is also clear that restrictive migration and asylum policies are also important factors: migrants and asylum seekers who are in desperate need of secure places and who face difficulties in accessing legal channels of mobility contribute greatly to irregular (transit) flows (Brennan, 1984; Funk et al., 2017).

Among the geographies where transit migration can be observed, the term is predominantly politicised in the European context. In the 1990s EU policy documents began using the term to refer to irregular migration into the EU across its external eastern border and have expanded this usage to refer to ‘actual’ or ‘potential’ irregular migration across other external borders (Collyer et al., 2014: 13). In the late 1990s and 2000s, the dynamics of norms, laws and institutions resulted in the tightening of EU border policies, mainly to target the growing irregular transit migration flows, primarily from neighbouring non-EU countries. It has been argued that two different types of developments occurred: firstly, the EU institutions and Member States made an enormous effort to establish their own new aggressive policies and practices to deal with border controls and irregular flows; secondly, they attempted to force their non-EU neighbours to play an active part in combating irregular migratory flows, with the logic of externalisation of migration control (Üstübici and İçduygu, 2019). For instance, it has been observed that the highest organs of the EU (such as the European Council, the Council of Ministers, the Commission and the EU Presidency) frequently announced, as one of their top priorities, the protection of external borders against transit or irregular migration in order to ensure the internal security of the Union (Lavenex, 2006; Sterkx, 2008). As a result, then, the EU has begun to employ a strategy of border externalisation, by shifting some migration control responsibilities to neighbouring non-EU countries which seem to be serving as a stepping-stone for migratory journeys to Europe (Lavenex, 2016). These attempts have also required active involvement and investment by neighbouring countries in border controls and migration management: such pragmatic efforts, which mainly aim to stop transit flows, include bilateral agreements and military border control operations between EU states and their neighbours such as Italy and Libya, Spain and Morocco, and Greece and Turkey.

As a part of the rising concerns for the integrated border management and securitisation of EU external borders, the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (Frontex) was founded in 2005. The main activities of Frontex were heavily

focused on Euro-Mediterranean border control, often in the form of collaborations or joint operations with EU Member States. Frontex has also begun to operate actively at the land borders, primarily to prevent irregular migratory flows and often facing the arrival of third-country nationals from neighbouring countries. However, neither these Frontex joint operations nor the conventional border control activities of EU Member States have succeeded fully in preventing, controlling or even reducing the irregular migratory flows through the external borders of the EU. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of irregular border crossings which were detected and registered at Europe's external land and sea borders fluctuated over time, between over 1,800,000 crossings in 2015 and 72,000 in 2012. The latter is the lowest figure recorded in the last ten years.[2] In the same period, the average annual number of detections of irregular border crossings was nearly 350,000. Given the fact that many of these entry attempts at the EU external borders were attributed to nationals of faraway countries which do not have direct borders with the EU, it is obvious that these were the entry attempts of transit migrants. The high number of detections in 2015 influenced public opinion about transit migration into the EU; however, figures show that the majority of immigrants enter the EU through regular means.

The Mediterranean Basin, which often operates both as a transit and transnational space between various origin and destination countries, provides an ideal site to explore the dynamic nature of transit migration towards Europe. Given their visibility in irregular migration flows reaching Europe, four main migratory routes are highlighted in policy discussions, public agendas and academic work and are referred to as places where so-called irregular transit networks widely operate. These are the Western and Central Mediterranean routes that connect Africa with Europe, together with the Eastern Mediterranean route and the Balkan route that link Asia, East Africa and the Middle East to Europe. Among these, the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes gained particular importance in 2015, with the relatively large number of Syrians and Afghans who left or transited through Turkey to Europe. It has been widely argued that journeys on these routes in 2015 were moved forward through various transit passages. One must emphasise, however, that neither these routes at the south-eastern corner of Europe nor other migratory routes in the Mediterranean Basin are entirely new; indeed, migrants and refugees follow these transit migration routes that were established in the region decades ago.

Recently, the most active routes have included the Central Mediterranean route (connecting Tunisia and Libya to Italy), the Western Balkan route, the West African route and the Western Mediterranean route (Frontex, 2022). The West African route connects Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania and Morocco with the Canary Islands in Spain. According to Frontex, while the number of immigrants taking this route to Europe was relatively low for many years, it started to rise in 2018 and peaked in 2020. The Western Mediterranean route refers to the stretch of sea between Spain on the one side and Morocco and Algeria on the other. In recent years, according to Frontex data, this route has been used mostly by Algerian and Moroccan nationals, followed by migrants from West Africa. At the Western Balkan route, the high volume also reflects migration along the Eastern Mediterranean route via Turkey, the main transit country for a diverse set of nationalities, given its proximity to fragile countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Syria (as further detailed in Part 3.1). At the EU's Western Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean external borders, irregular border crossings detected in recent years were most frequently by Syrians and Afghans, followed by other groups in the wider region such as Pakistanis and Iraqis. Another significant route, the Central Mediterranean

[2] The figures concerning the detection of irregular border crossings registered at Europe's external land and sea borders were compiled by the authors from Frontex Annual Risk Assessment reports from 2010 to 2020. These yearly figures are based on the monthly statistics exchanged among Member States which are processed by Frontex.

route, connects North Africa and Italy. It has been an important route for migrants from Tunisia, Eritrea, Nigeria and some other sub-Saharan African countries, as well as some non-African countries such as Bangladesh and Syria (as further detailed in Part 3.2). In 2020 and 2021, the Central Mediterranean route was the most used route to the EU among these four routes identified by Frontex.

As the EU's interest in controlling irregular migration and asylum flows towards its borders increased, cooperation with the transit countries with regard to border controls and migration management has also become fundamental (Frelick et al., 2016). These practices include bilateral readmission agreements (RAs) and military border control operations between EU states and their neighbours, such as between Italy and Libya, Spain and Morocco, and Greece and Turkey (Üstübici & İçduygu, 2018). When compared to other regions of the world where transit migration prevails, as summarised above, we observe more coordinated and multilateral efforts when it comes to managing transit migration, including efforts to measure its volume, and engagement with third countries in transit migration management in the European neighbourhood (Lebon-McGregor et al., 2022).

2.4 The global relevance of transit migration management

It is well documented that the term 'transit migration' was initially used, almost exclusively in a European context, to refer to actual or potential irregular migration in the broader geography of Europe, to the south, south-east and east (Düvell et al., 2014). While we have witnessed nearly three decades of increasingly widespread use and growing signs that the term has been integrated into scholarly research of migration with various critical perspectives, there is no substantial comparative empirical work that examines the use and value of the term in the variety of contexts globally. In this sense, any attempt to understand how transit migration occurs in different geographical zones at the global level is a valuable exercise to examine the general dynamics and mechanisms of this phenomenon.

It is possible to make the following general inferences from the cases of transit migration corridors that target three different geographical regions around the world, namely, North America, Europe and Australia. Within the framework of its technical definition, although transit migration should not be viewed as a phenomenon that always involves irregularities in relation to migration laws, its inclusion in the current migration debate often relates to irregular migration movements. On the other hand, it seems that in addition to economically motivated irregular border crossings, the term 'transit migration' is also frequently discussed within the framework of asylum movements.

Transit migration debates and related policy developments have, historically, first occurred in Europe, mainly starting from the 1990s. Yet we have witnessed similar debates that started later in the Americas and Australia in the 2000s. Moreover, those debates in Europe mostly reveal the securitisation of transit migration issues and the externalisation of migration-related governance responsibilities to non-EU neighbouring countries as well as countries along migration trajectories. In addition, rising state-centred security debates precluded relevant human rights debates. Meanwhile, in the Americas, the focus of debates in the Mexico–US transit migration corridor have been on mostly human security issues, referring to human rights violations faced by migrants. Of course, these debates do not fully exclude the issues of preventing irregular transit migration movements, as they are often viewed as unlawful activities. Compared to America and Europe, although Australia is less exposed to transit migration movements because of its geographical isolation, we observe that its externalisation policies are more evident institutionally. In this context, serious human rights

violations are discussed especially for asylum seekers who are not admitted to the country, and where their cases are processed in the neighbouring islands.

In conclusion, the different geographies examined in this section reveal the structural and established character of transit migration as part of the international migration regime.

Part 3. A trajectory approach to transit migration

In this part we situate the discussion of transit migration management in four MIGNEX countries, within two major transit migration routes. These are the migration corridors linking: 1) Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey; and 2) Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Libya and Tunisia. When considering these two corridors, it is important to recall the very dynamic, fluctuating, changing nature of migration patterns – especially when it comes to irregular migration. Indeed, a country may be an entry point for some migrants and a final destination for others. Furthermore, the characteristics and routes of a corridor evolve over time and transit countries may become (de facto) destination countries where migrants are not only 'stranded', but they choose to stay as the notion of a 'final destination' might well change over migrants' journeys. This reflects the fluidity of migrants' aspirations and intentions; a country initially considered as temporary may turn out to become a country of settlement, and the other way around.

Finally, beyond the corridors, it is also important to note that, inside the region of destination, most migrants may keep on travelling once they enter the EU. In other words, migration trajectories do not terminate once migrants enter the EU (Belloni, 2016; Fontanari, 2018; Aru, 2022). Note that migrants' experiences along these corridors are marked by their strategies for mobility, but they also involve episodes of waiting, of being stuck and stranded, of reversals, of transformations, of temporary victories, and of violence and even death. In short, individual, local, regional and global dynamics make transit migration multidimensional and multidirectional, rather than a linear process.

3.1 Migration corridor linking Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey

History and main characteristics of the corridor

While transit migration towards Europe is one characteristic of migration patterns in the region, all four countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey) have a long history of hosting either internally displaced migrants or those fleeing from conflicts in the wider region, despite these countries' lack of a legal framework or capacity to provide protection for refugees. Today's migration routes linking Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey are characterised by mountainous, porous nation-state borders. Authorised and clandestine human mobility across these borders is prominent due to existing trade relations and conflicts in the region. In addition, categories such as 'transit migrant' or 'refugee', and classifications of 'destination' or 'transit' are not necessarily static and mutually exclusive in the region.

The journey along the corridor is mostly overland, consisting of various stops of differing durations. The majority of Afghan migrants who use smugglers transit to Iran (nine in ten respondents), although a significant proportion transits to Pakistan (four in ten) (MMC, 2022a). The typical journey is overland, but some migrants directly fly to Iran or Turkey. During their journey along the corridor, an overwhelming majority of asylum seekers and migrants depend

on smugglers at least once, not only for crossing national borders but also for other services, such as accommodation, transportation within countries, and food or water (ibid.). When smuggling networks are used, migrants usually stop in Iran to wait for smugglers to organise the next step of their journey, to gain money to move onwards, to stay with friends or relatives, or to wait for transport (ibid.). For Pakistani migrants and others transiting Pakistan, the Balochistan–Iran–Turkey route is viewed as the most common route towards Europe, completed in multiple legs with local smugglers cooperating with larger transnational networks (Aksel et al., 2016; Hahn-Schaur, 2021).

Because of the clandestine nature of human mobility across this route, it is not easy to identify the profile of migrants in transit. While not necessarily generalisable, interview data show that most of the recent Afghan migrants in Turkey are men between 18 and 30 years old and secondary or primary school graduates coming from an urban background, most of whom hold no proper documentation. Less than half have an International Protection Applicant Identification Card, or a temporary resident permit or a visa (MMC, 2022a). Although the general public perception of the recent arrival of Afghan migrants in Turkey is also skewed towards young men, there are also families with children from Afghanistan arriving through smuggling. While they may not necessarily reflect the actual distribution, 56% of respondents in an MMC survey of 665 Afghan refugees and migrants in Greece were male, whereas 44% were female (MMC, 2022b).

Transit migration through Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey

Pakistan represents both a source and a transit country in this corridor. Pakistan is a major emigration and destination country, with one of the largest diaspora populations in the world and with over 1 million registered refugees. It is also an important transit point for Afghans and other nationalities heading to Turkey through Iran. Pakistani emigration is largely driven by political insecurity and violent conflicts, unemployment and poverty, weaknesses in the governance system, and environmental factors interacting with other socioeconomic challenges (Kamali-Chirani, 2021). While most Pakistani emigrants move regularly, particularly to Gulf countries, irregular migration is relevant for mixed migration flows towards Europe and Oceania in particular (Hahn-Schaur, 2021). For instance, the majority of Pakistanis in Italy started their journey in Pakistan, and transited through Iran, Turkey and Greece, mostly using smuggling networks. Pakistani nationals are among the largest smuggled persons in Europe (ibid.) and the third-largest detected irregular migrant group in Turkey, following Afghans and Syrians with 13,444 irregular migrants detected as of October 2022 (PMM, 2022). As further detailed in Part 4.4, Pakistan is a top refugee recipient country mainly as a result of 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees registered in the country, plus an unknown and fluctuating number of unregistered ones.

Afghan migrants also transit through Pakistan en route to Turkey or Europe. Most Afghans enter Pakistan from the border crossings at Torkham (province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) in the north and Chaman (province of Baluchistan), which were previously open with no fences but are now strictly controlled by the Taliban (Kamali-Chirani, 2021). Yet, the border controls remain insufficient as Afghanistan and Pakistan share a long and porous border of 2,700 km. Although transit migration is not a key policy concern for Pakistan, a marginal number of migrants (particularly from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar) transit from Pakistan on their journey to the Iran–Turkey route to reach the shores of Greece (Qaisrani et al., 2021). The onward journey through Iran is mostly on foot or by car, particularly through the green borders between official border posts (Aksel et al., 2016), and usually starts from the main smuggling hubs of Quetta, Karachi and Peshawar (IOM, 2019; Kamali-Chirani, 2021). The exit

mostly takes place through the province of Balochistan, from the official border checkpoint at Taftan neighbouring Iran's Mirjaveh, or the unofficial point at Mand Bullo neighbouring Iran's Pishin (UNODC, 2013).

Out-migration from Afghanistan has a long history due to persistent conflict, war and violence. Globally speaking, Afghans have been among the leading nationality of refugees starting from the late 1970s (İçduygu and Karadağ, 2018). They became the major group of asylum applicants after the Taliban took control of the country in August 2021. In 2021, Afghan nationals submitted 116,862 asylum applications to European countries and 21,926 applications were submitted in Turkey. The asylum trend continued in 2022. Following Syrians, as of October 2022, Afghan nationals are the largest group of persons seeking asylum in the EU (Eurostat, 2022). Given the intensified conflict and instability, restrictions on regular migration, difficulties of access to visa and travel documents, and the Taliban's travel restrictions particularly on women's passports, irregular migration is often the preferred and the only option for many Afghans who intend to leave the country. Although regular visa paths remain available to Afghans in theory, in practice, access to authorised documents has become more challenging due to Taliban checkpoints, closed consulates, and documents destroyed for security concerns (MMC, 2022a). Smuggling networks across the country have benefited from this demand. Since August 2021, the Taliban takeover and subsequent economic collapse has led to Afghans increasingly resorting to smugglers to flee the country. Smuggling networks transfer thousands of people into neighbouring countries daily – 83% of 2,043 Afghans interviewed by 4Mi used smugglers during their journey to Turkey (ibid.).

Afghan migrants and refugees transit through many countries. The most important route for them goes through Iran and Turkey, as well as via other routes through Central Asia and Russia. For some migrants, Pakistan is also a transit country towards Iran (Samuel Hall, 2021). The preference for the Pakistan transit route through Iran is due to the increased border controls introduced at the Iran–Afghanistan borders in the last decade. The constructed fences at Iran's border force migrants to redirect their journey to cross Iran via southern Pakistan (Aksel et al., 2015).

The transit journey of Afghans through the Iran route continues in two different ways: first, the migration of those who use Iran as a transit route to Turkey and Europe; and second, the migration of Afghan citizens who have lived in Iran for a long period of time, and some born there so that Iran is their first country of departure on this route. The majority of 4Mi respondents (89%) started their journey to Turkey from Afghanistan with the most common transit countries being Iran (84%) and Pakistan (37%), and some passing through both. However, 11% of Afghans mentioned Iran as their first country of departure. According to UNHCR (2022a), Afghans living in Iran are among those refugees living in situations of protracted displacement for whom there are no prospects of a 'durable solution' – defined as a safe and dignified return, local integration, or resettlement to another country. Although Iran has been hosting millions of Afghans since the 1980s, most have limited rights in terms of access to protective status, education, and humanitarian and social services (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Thus, Afghans who have been living in Iran as refugees or undocumented migrants embark on onward journeys to Turkey and beyond. The most prevalent paths taken by Afghan respondents of the 4Mi survey were overland via both Pakistan and Iran. The large majority (84%) travelled to Turkey overland, 4% first flew to Iran and 12% reached Turkey directly from Afghanistan via air (MMC, 2022a).

Iran is a major country of transit, immigration and emigration in this migration route. Iran has a long history of receiving migrants from Afghanistan. Large-scale forced migration from

Afghanistan to Iran began in 1978, intensified by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Approximately 3 million Afghan refugees had arrived in Iran by 1989 (Abbasi-Shavazi et al., 2015). In 2015, Iran was the fourth-largest refugee-hosting country in the world with approximately 1 million registered Afghan refugees, and a further 2 million Afghans who were undocumented (UNHCR, 2022a). Moreover, according to various government estimates, 1 million Afghans have newly fled to Iran since the deterioration of the conditions in Afghanistan in 2021, taking the total number of Afghan migrants in Iran to over 3 million (ibid.).

Besides being a host country for Afghan asylum seekers and a transit route to Turkey for Afghans and Pakistani nationals, Iran can be also considered an emigration country due to the large flow of Iranian immigrants and refugees towards Turkey and the EU. Iranian citizens made 6,295 asylum applications in the EU in 2022 (Eurostat, 2022). Turkey acted as a major transit country for these migrants and asylum seekers, starting historically from the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Along with being a transit space for Iranians, Turkey also hosts a large number of migrants and asylum seekers. There are 96,295 resident permit holders and 18,933 asylum seekers from Iran living in Turkey, with Iran being the third most common country of origin for asylum applications in Turkey (PMM Statistics, 2022).

Turkish higher education institutions are also attractive destinations for Iranian students. With 12,095 students (ibid.), Iranians form the second-largest international student population in Turkey. Furthermore, as part of reciprocity agreements between Turkey and Iran, Iranian nationals can enter Turkey without a visa and can stay up to three months. This provides an easy travel experience for Iranians and thus makes Turkey the most popular tourist destination for Iranians (Hurriyet, 2018). For instance, in only the first two months of 2022, more than 650,000 Iranians visited Turkey as tourists (Milliyet News, 2022).

Turkey has been not only an important destination country, but also a stepping-stone to Europe for many asylum seekers and irregular migrants targeting Europe, due to its sea and land borders to Greece and Bulgaria. Turkey's border policy, becoming more flexible with the refugee movements from Syria after 2011, has also become an important determinant of the movement in this corridor in recent years, particularly for Afghan migrants (İçduygu and Karadağ, 2018). Turkey is the final destination for many of the recent Afghan migrants, who are pulled by diverse factors such as family reunification, seeking asylum, economic considerations and better living standards. Yet, Turkey is also a stop for Afghans who aspire but cannot afford to move onwards. These migrants mostly settle in big cities and work in low-paid jobs, especially in the construction, textile and other industrial sectors until they manage to pay smugglers to move onwards (Foschini, 2022).

In terms of transit to Europe, this migration corridor gained more visibility in 2015. This is when Syrians fleeing the civil war constituted the majority of border crossings through Turkey. Over the summer of 2015, Afghan nationals accounted for 25% of the nearly 1 million border crossings of migrants from different nationalities through Turkey to Europe, and the number of Afghan asylum seekers in the EU rose to 176,000, 14% of the total number of asylum applications to EU countries in 2015 (İçduygu and Karadağ, 2018). The number of apprehended irregular Afghan migrants in Turkey doubled from 100,841 in 2018 to 201,437 in 2019. In the context of an increasingly securitised border control approach in the region, it is reported that Afghans find it more difficult to enter Turkey and to transit to the EU (Foschini, 2022). As we discuss in detail in Part 4, major nationalities associated with transit migration are Afghans, Syrians, Pakistanis, Iranians and Bangladeshis. Bangladeshi irregular migrants are also likely

to have arrived in Turkey through the same smuggling networks as Pakistani and Afghan nationals on this route, as reported by previous research (IOM, 2019).

The experiences of irregular migrants and asylum seekers are marked by uncertainty and precarity in Turkey. As detailed in Part 4.1, Turkey is currently the largest refugee-hosting country, yet the Turkish national asylum regime is marked by the geographical limitation imposed in the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol. For non-European refugee groups, the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) defines categories of complementary refugee protection status (i.e., 'conditional', 'subsidiary' and 'temporary'). These categories increase the precarity and vulnerability of asylum seekers, with long waiting periods and no guarantee of long-term settlement or resettlement to third countries. In addition, irregular migrants can be subjected to 'removal' decisions and administrative detention (or receive the support of voluntary return as regulated by the LFIP (Sahin Mencutek, 2022)). Afghans, the second-largest group of refugees in Turkey after Syrians, face difficulties with registration and with obtaining International Protection status, and thus have limited access to health and education services (IBC, 2021). In addition, due to Turkey's 'satellite city' system, non-Syrian refugees are forced to live in remote cities where job opportunities are scarce and support networks are lacking (ibid.). However, some decide to live informally in bigger cities despite being registered in a satellite city. The recent arrival of Afghan refugees after the Taliban take-over has also led to a worsening public perception of Afghan refugees and the politicisation of the issue, leading to stricter control of the Iranian border (e.g., the continuation of the wall construction and the informal pushbacks upon arrival or after detention) (Foschini, 2022).

To conclude, en route to Turkey and/or onwards, most migrants face various risks that threaten their safety and lives, including physical violence, detention, death and robbery. The most likely perpetrators of violence and abuse are reported to be border guards or immigration officials, followed by smugglers (MMC, 2022a). Border areas and some transit hubs, when combined with the lack of assistance available, are particularly dangerous (MMC, 2022b). In the corridor, the Iran–Turkey and Iran–Afghanistan borders, as well as certain locations such as Van, Izmir, Istanbul and Edirne in Turkey and Urmia, Tabriz and Tehran in Iran, are often mentioned as the most dangerous locations, particularly in terms of detention and violence (MMC, 2021a; 2022c). The detail of this corridor is illustrated in Figure 3.

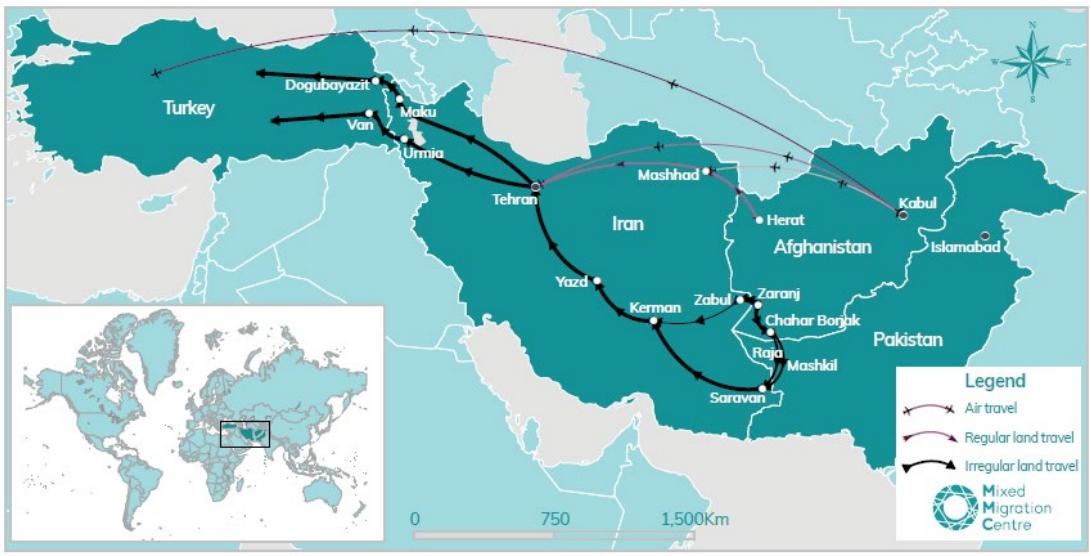

Figure 3. Migration corridors linking Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey

Source: MMC (2022a).

3.2 Migration corridor linking Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Libya and Tunisia

History and main characteristics of the corridor

Migration across East Africa and the Sahel to North Africa has a long history, traceable to 1500 BC when routes were created to transport tradable goods such as salt and gold (Attir et al., 2020). By the 20th and 21st centuries, this historic trading route had merged into one of the busiest migration corridors in the world. Currently, migration through this corridor is inherently mixed. However, increases in regional economic disparities, political turmoil and climate emergencies have resulted in an ever-rising number of forced migrants, particularly from Eritrea and Ethiopia, taking flight through Sudan and Libya in attempts to reach the North African transit hub of Tunisia. From there, many attempt the Mediterranean crossing to Europe (Bredeloup and Pliez, 2011). Migration from and through these countries takes multiple forms. The presence of migrants in these countries cannot be considered as mere transit, in a context where millions of migrants along this corridor have crossed borders to find work opportunities. This applies to Ethiopia, Sudan, Libya and Tunisia.

The profile of those undertaking travel through this particular migration corridor is overwhelmingly young but diverse. Since the early 2000s, demographics have been particularly sensitive to push factors in countries of origin including poverty, war, military conscription, persecution and a general lack of opportunities, all of which reinforce a mixed migration scenario with individuals motivated by both protection needs and the search for better opportunities (Fusari, 2018). Most often, young men constitute the majority of migrants using this corridor, especially among those coming from Eritrea where the demographics of outward migration reflect the mandatory conscription profile for national service. However, young women are also beginning to migrate in increasing numbers from the Horn of Africa countries, motivated by promises of work opportunities, particularly in the domestic labour sector in Sudan, North Africa, the Gulf and even Europe.

Yet, as a consequence of the intensification of controls, progress along this migratory route has become increasingly difficult. This reality has contributed to the development of transit areas, where migrants sometimes settle for long periods of time, without even knowing in some cases if their migratory journey will continue one day.

Transit migration through Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Libya and Tunisia

Eritrea and Ethiopia are the main countries of origin for migrants travelling along this corridor. Outward migration from Eritrea is primarily driven by the lack of domestic economic opportunities and political repression experienced by those in the country. Eritrea ranks 176 out of 190 countries in human development (UNDP, 2022). However, mass migration from the country has swelled, most notably since 2002 when the government enforced indefinite conscription into military service (Hirt and Saleh, 2018). Most emigrating Eritreans enter their chosen countries of destination irregularly. Due to the completion of national service being a prerequisite to obtain travel documents, migrants are caught attempting to leave Eritrea without permission in the form of an exit visa. Hence, they may be subjected to detention, torture, forced labour or execution (European Asylum Support Office, 2016). Many Eritrean migrants transit through neighbouring Sudan and Ethiopia since borders between the two are long and porous. Specifically, Eritrean migrants travelling along this corridor commonly move

from the capital city Asmara, or the coastal city of Massawa, to Khartoum through Ethiopia, transiting via Addis Ababa. This route is considered highly dangerous, with international actors such as UNHCR reporting frequent incidents of kidnapping, trafficking and exploitation (UNHCR, 2017).

For Eritreans as well as other nationalities, Ethiopia represents a destination country as well as a regional transit hub for migrants and refugees. It hosts the second-largest population of refugees on the African continent – around 785,322 according to UNHCR in 2021 (UNHCR, 2021a). The top countries of origin of migrants and refugees to Ethiopia include South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, Yemen, and Syria. As the vast majority of Eritrean refugees apply for resettlement opportunities, Ethiopia is de facto perceived as a transit country. This is also because, despite their legal status, refugees in Ethiopia are often not given the right to live out of camp and to work, and therefore they struggle to build a life in the country. On the one hand, many migrants and asylum seekers transit through Ethiopia, mostly from Eritrea and Somalia, on their way to Europe via Sudan, Egypt or Libya (Danish Refugee Council, 2016). However, evidence shows that those who arrive on European shores do not always cite Europe as their intended destination, at least initially, and many migrants indeed engage different forms of cross-border and circular migration within the region (Collyer et al., 2015).

While the lack of opportunities for migrants pushes many to migrate further, they are joined by Ethiopians taking the same path. As the main push factors for Ethiopian migrants include unemployment and underemployment, labour migration from Ethiopia to Sudan has increased steadily since the 1990s (Ayalew et al., 2018). However, with the protracted humanitarian crisis caused by the outbreak of the conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region in November 2020, migration through Sudan has diversified (MMC, 2021b). When travelling along this corridor, there are three particularly common routes that people choose from Ethiopia into Sudan, all of which begin in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. The first route leads to the border town of Metema, the second to Humera which is located on the border between Sudan and Eritrea, and the third, available only to those with the necessary financial means, is via plane direct from Addis Ababa to Khartoum (UNHCR, 2016). See Figure 4 for an illustration of this corridor.

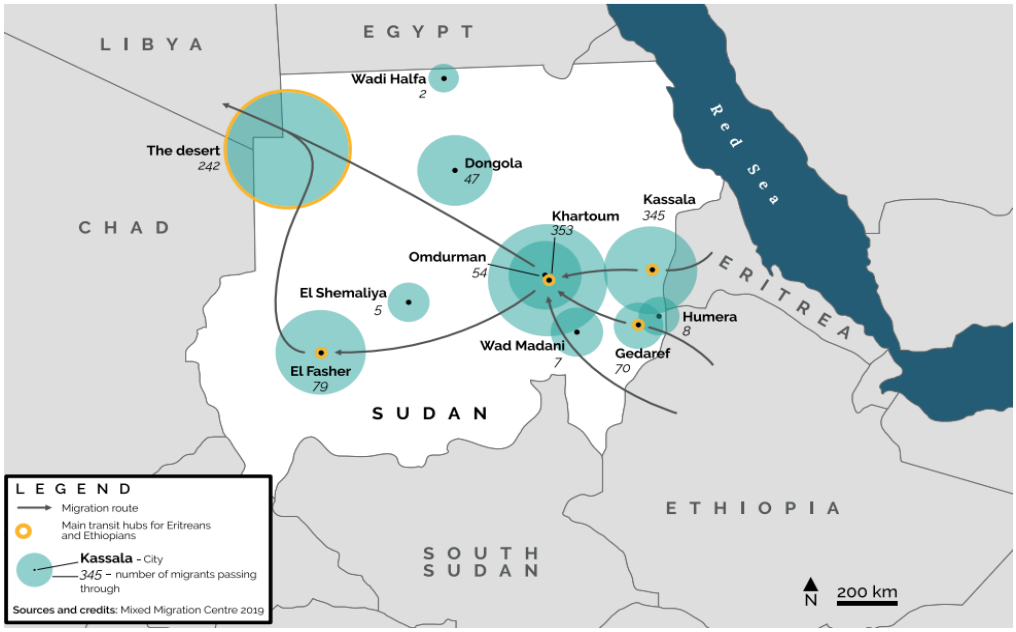

Figure 4. East African and Sudanese routes through Sudan to Libya

Source: MMC (2020).

Ethiopians and Eritreans make up two of the largest populations of refugees and asylum seekers hosted in Sudan. Much like neighbouring Ethiopia, Sudan is simultaneously a source of outward migration, a point of transit and a host. Sudan's history as a source country is longstanding, reflected by the 4.5 million Sudanese diaspora, many of whom migrated in search of economic opportunities, often heading to Gulf states, while others have been forced to leave in order to escape conflict or political persecution in less stable areas such as Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile (IOM, 2019). The country's reputation as a host is similarly embedded. Currently there are approximately 1.13 million refugees and asylum seekers in Sudan, around 1.2 million migrants living within its borders (MMC, 2022d) and an additional 1.8 million people who are internally displaced within the country (UNICEF, 2020). Sudan's reputation as a transit space, however, is slightly more recent and is driven by several factors including the country's worsening economic crisis and poor harvests which have raised the number of people facing acute hunger in Sudan to more than 18 million people in 2022 (MMC, 2022d).

Sudan's lack of appeal as a host nation has coalesced with an increase in its appeal as a transit point. Khartoum, the country's capital, has become a major migration hub with many migrants staying for years to work and save the funds necessary to continue their journey with the help of the smuggling networks. Such networks are aided by Sudan's weak border controls that each month allow thousands of people, often from Eritrea and Ethiopia, to cross from Sudanese territory into Libya, sometimes with Europe in mind as a final destination (Yahya, 2020). From Khartoum there are two main routes one might choose to reach Libya: the first crosses Darfur in western Sudan and the second goes through Dongola in the north. Some choose a third route which goes through Chad.

Libya's popularity as a transit space and as host to thousands of refugees and other migrants from African countries was solidified between 2012 and 2013 with the closure of formerly popular routes from the Horn of Africa to the Gulf States through Yemen, and to Israel through Sudan and Egypt, crowning Libya as the main gateway to the Mediterranean coast (Fusari, 2018). Before the 2011 crisis, Libya was an important destination for migrants in search of work opportunities, in particular in the construction and health sectors. Labour migrants were estimated at 1.35 million–2.5 million before 2011, with two-thirds coming from neighbouring countries (Chad, Egypt, the Niger and Sudan) (IOM, 2020).

The main entry point into Libya from Sudan is the Kufra district, which sits on the Sudanese border and has become a key transit hub for refugees and migrants travelling from East Africa (Fusari, 2018). This route requires journeying through the Sahara desert for between four and ten days, a journey which many do not survive. Upon entering Libya, many head to urban or coastal towns such as Bani Walid and Tripoli. In 2020, Libya counted at least 625,638 migrants in its territory including at least 348,000 children, it is noted 93% had arrived from sub-Saharan and North Africa and (Migrants Refugees, 2021). Conditions for these people have been well documented for years by human rights agencies deeply concerned by the apparent violations. Since 2011 and the fall of the country's long standing dictator Muammar Gaddafi, Libya has become profoundly unstable with migrants living within its borders vulnerable to violence, trafficking and exploitative work conditions. Thousands of refugees and other migrants have been forcibly detained in centres consistently described by the international community as inhumane; prone to severe overcrowding, reports of sexual abuse, forced

labour, torture, and deprivation of food and sunlight (Kuschminder, 2020). In some areas of the country which has been under contested rule since the fall of the Gadaffi regime, political groups drawn along ethnic lines have monetised the kidnap and extortion of East African migrants entering their territory (Kuschminder, 2020). The accounts of the abuse faced by people on their journey are countless, in particular between Sudan and Libya. Migrants travelling between these two countries have reported being trafficked, sold to ransom collectors, sexually abused, robbed and left in the desert by smugglers or the Libyan militia charged with border 'protection' (Bredeloup and Pliez, 2011).

Over the past few years as conflict and chaos in Libya has grown, militant Islamist group Daesh and affiliate groups have also targeted migrants for 'propaganda executions' (ibid.). This harrowing trend exemplifies that at the centre of many cases of exploitation is the overlap of migration with regional conflict dynamics. Smuggling services have also become incredibly expensive, rising more than 30% in recent years due to growth in migration flows through the country coupled with the deterioration of the Libyan economy (ibid.). Both of these factors place high pressure on migrants to stay longer and work in Libya, often in highly exploitative jobs, to pay for their onward travel. To the local population, these migrants are commonly referred to as 'passengers' and they have created new and shifting transit spaces within different parts of the country.

With this context in mind, it is perhaps unsurprising that efforts by migrants to leave Libya for North African neighbour Tunisia have intensified so dramatically over the past decade. To enter Tunisia from Libya, migrants commonly use one of two entry points along the border with Libya or set off on boats from Libya towards Tunisian coastal towns such as Zaris, from where in 2019 alone, more than 600 people were rescued from the sea (Camilli and Paynter, 2020). Once in Tunisia, migrants have the right to remain in reception centres run by UNHCR, IOM and the Tunisian Red Crescent for up to 60 days in order to process claims for asylum and assistance (UNHCR, 2022b). However, with the Tunisian government yet to adopt a national asylum system, and applications backlogged and ever increasing, recourse to assistance is slow and often unsatisfying for the undocumented migrants, refugees and asylum seekers residing in Tunisia.

Tunisia has historically been seen by its migrant population as more than a transit space or a stepping-stone. In fact, for many migrants it has been viewed as a feasible end destination or long-term option. Yet, those who do stay in Tunisia face limited prospects – asylum seekers lack legal protection and undocumented migrants have no ability to regularise their stay within the country. This often leaves very few options available for legal employment, though there is a large informal economy within Tunisia through which many migrants and Tunisian citizens find work. Legal recourse against irregular migrants and asylum seekers has also begun to grow in recent years with the government imposing a strict fine on irregular migrants and arbitrarily arresting those intercepted at sea and sending them back to Libya (EuroMed Rights, 2022). This increasing precarity, lack of economic opportunity and inability to access assistance leads many people to attempt to cross the Central Mediterranean route to Italy – a route dangerous enough to have claimed the lives of over 1,500 people in 2021 alone (ibid.).

To conclude, migration journeys along this corridor are mixed and complex, and the flows are renewed constantly by the crises affecting the countries in question. The journey along this corridor is most often undertaken in several legs or phases. Individuals commonly settle for varying amounts of time in countries along the way, where they can save money and/or plot out the next phase of their journey. Unfortunately, the staggered nature of travel leaves many

forced and voluntary migrants in highly precarious situations in which they are vulnerable to exploitation. Danger is intensified for irregular migrants who rely heavily on networks of human smugglers to help them along this corridor. Risk is especially high for travel between Sudan and Libya, and from Libya to Tunisia – routes which have become highly securitised and increasingly dangerous (Bredeloup and Pliez, 2011), especially since the signing of cooperation agreements in the field of migration between the EU, Tunisia and Libya.

Part 4. Transit migration management in selected MIGNEX countries

In line with the parameters of studying transit migration management, explained in Part 1 (see Figure 2), this Part provides a concise summary of transit migration management in Turkey and Tunisia (as countries in the European neighbourhood), and in Pakistan and Ethiopia (as countries along migration trajectories to Europe). The country profiles are based on a closed review of secondary literature and the transit migration-relevant data generated by the MIGNEX project, particularly from WP5 (*Migration-relevant policies*) analysing migration and development policies in these countries (see Godin and Vargas-Silva, 2022), and WP3 (*Patterns*) and WP4 (*Perspectives*) measuring migration aspirations in selected research areas (see Hagen-Zanker et al., 2022 and Erdal et al., 2022a for a detailed overview of qualitative data collection).

Each country profile provides a brief introduction with a general migration profile and political context, followed by information regarding the general profile of the main nationalities and groups targeted by transit migration management. We then provide an overview of the main policy tools employed for managing transit migration, plus additional information, based on expert elite interviews, public statements, and secondary literature on the securitisation and politicisation of transit migration across different contexts. Third, we look at how transit migration management became part of negotiations with the EU, taking into account existing agreements, and financial and administrative support received, but also policy actors' perceptions on migration diplomacy, where relevant. Lastly, we explore the ways in which residents of these countries (mostly nationals but also migrants, where relevant) experience and perceive transit migration management, in relation to their direct or indirect experiences of border controls and in relation to their migration aspirations and intentions. To this end, using the MIGNEX survey data collected in the context of WP3, we unpack transit migration experiences by locals of 11 research areas in four countries (see Box 3). Although the research areas we studied in these four countries were not transit migration hubs per se, focusing on the perceptions of individuals on irregular migration helps us to highlight the implications of wider restrictive migration policies leading to transit migration, for non-migrants who are not transit migrants at the time of the research. We have then interpreted these results in relation to migration aspirations and intentions (see Box 4). Figures 5 through to Figure 8 provide an overview of migration aspirations, unrealised migration intentions and transit migration experiences of all 11 research areas located in these four countries. Some of these Figures are segregated by gender to show the different experiences of male and female respondents. These gendered dynamics in transit migration are also addressed in country profiles, where relevant.

We have also made use of the qualitative data collected in the context of WP4 (see Erdal et al., 2022a) and case study briefs generated for each research area to triangulate the survey

findings.[3] Note that these research areas do not represent their respective countries as a whole, but instead each displays various developmental and mobility patterns. Hence, the data do not enable a country-level comparison of experiences of transit migration. Yet, MIGNEX data are useful to give an indication of how transit migration management is perceived by lay people at the local level, as research areas in different countries can be compared.

Box 3. Survey items measuring direct and indirect transit migration experiences

Have you or someone you know in the past five years…

1. Been injured whilst on the way to move to another country?

2. Lost their life on the way to move to another country?

3. Been detained on the way to move to another country, not reaching their destination?

4. Tried to move to one particular country, but was stuck in another country instead?

5. Been deported from abroad and forced to come back to [COUNTRY]?

We calculated the percentage of respondents who replied 'Yes' to the questions in each survey area in four countries.

[3] The case study briefs for all research areas are available via the MIGNEX website: https://www.mignex.org/publications

Box 4. Survey items measuring migration aspirations and intentions

Migration aspirations:

Would you like to go and live in another country sometime during the next five years, or would you prefer to stay in [COUNTRY]?

Respondents who said 'Go' are coded as 1 and 'Stay' as 0.

Migration intentions and capabilities:

In the past year, have you prepared to go to another country, but not been able to go?

Respondents who said 'Yes' are coded as 1 and 'No' as 0.

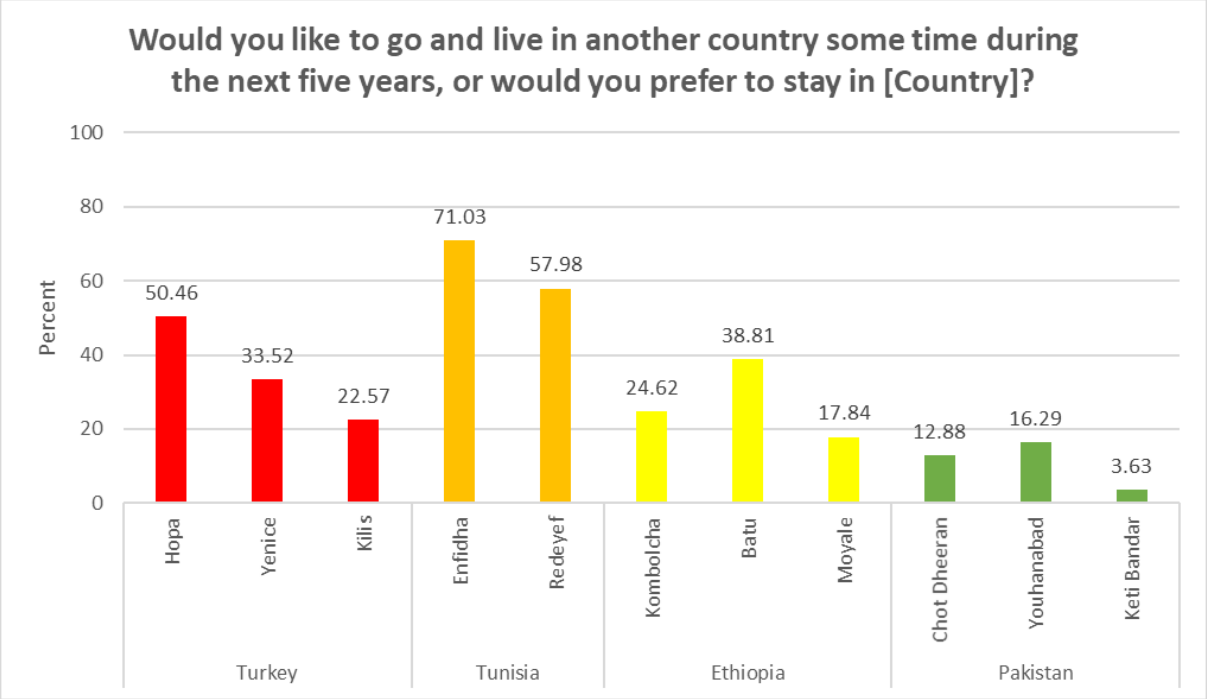

Figure 5. Migration aspirations across 11 research areas in four MIGNEX countries

Note: Bars indicate those who would like to go and live in another country.

Source: MIGNEX survey data.

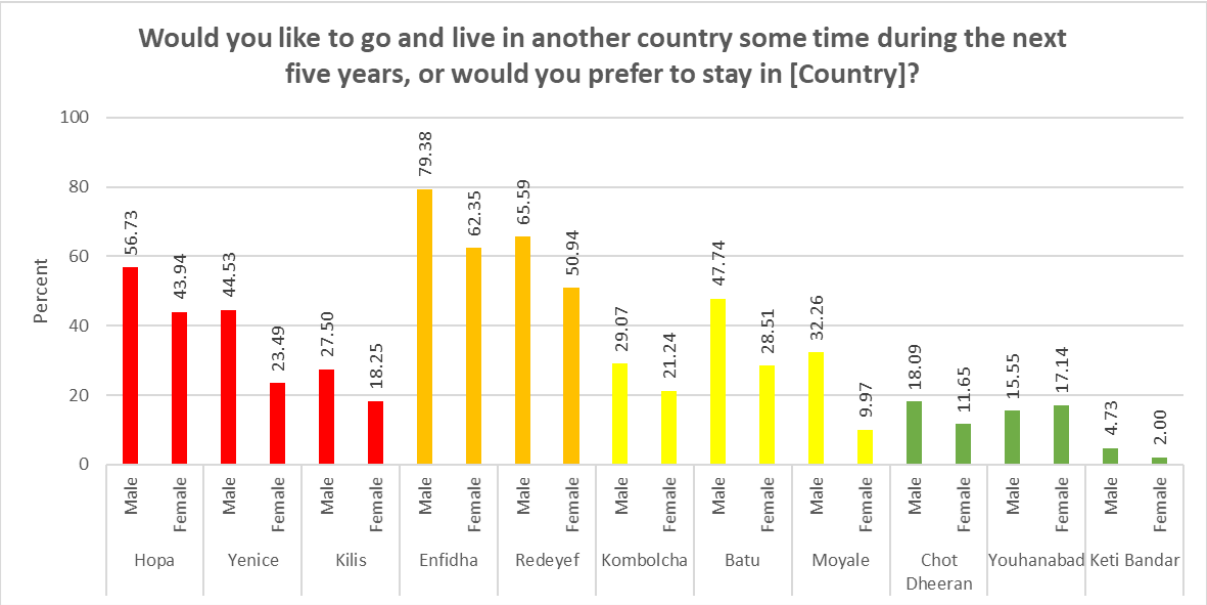

Figure 6. Migration aspirations across 11 research areas in four MIGNEX countries, by gender

Notes: Bars indicate those who would like to go and live in another country.

Source: MIGNEX survey data.

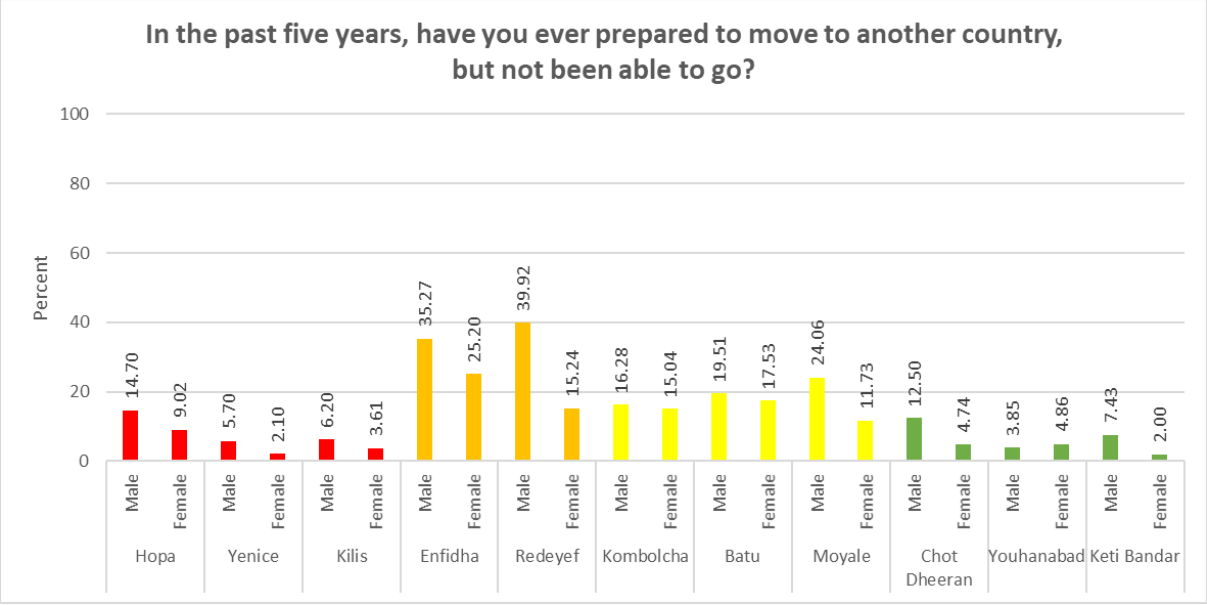

Figure 7. Unrealised migration intentions across 11 research areas in four MIGNEX countries, by gender

Note: Bars indicate those who answered YES.

Source: MIGNEX survey data.

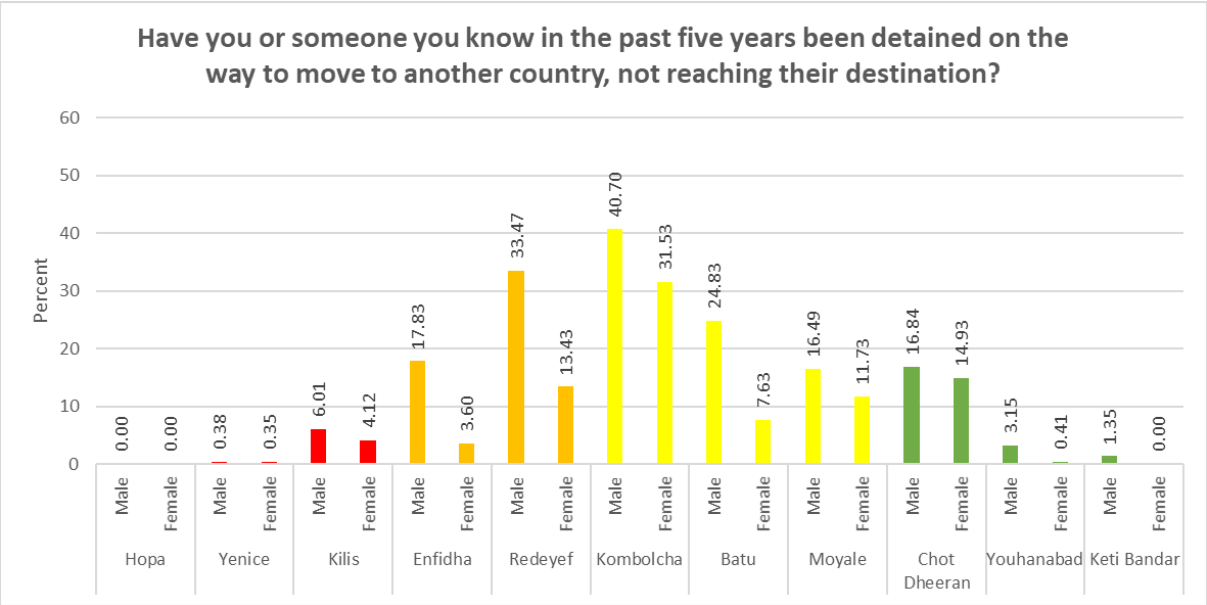

Figure 8. Experiences of direct and indirect transit migration across 11 research areas in four MIGNEX countries, by gender

Note: Bars indicate those who answered YES.

Source: MIGNEX survey data.

4.1 TURKEY

Introduction

Over the last few decades, various mixed migratory flows directed to Turkey have created a complex migration system involving irregular labour migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and regular migrants. Among them, some use Turkey as a stepping-stone to reach other destinations. Currently, Turkey is one of the largest refugee recipient countries and is considered a major transit hub for migrants and asylum seekers originating mainly from Syria, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq (İçduygu and Üstübici, 2014). The label 'transit country' to designate Turkey was first used in the 1980s after the Iranian Revolution, Iran–Iraqi War and internal conflicts in Afghanistan (Oelgemöller, 2011). In this sense, Turkey was one of the first countries identified as a 'transit country'. The country continues to be at the crossroads of irregular migration routes from Asia into the EU, and EU progress reports used the label 'transit country' until 2016 to designate the main migration patterns in Turkey (European Commission, 2016a). The term is used notably less so in later reports where Turkey is mainly referred to as a 'refugee recipient country'. The country hosts nearly 4 million refugees, who are mainly Syrians under Temporary Protection (TP), who are not granted full refugee status.

Target population of transit migration management in Turkey

The lack of reliable data representing the exact volume of transit migration hinders our understanding of the exact picture of transit migration in Turkey. However, the available data help us to identify the migrant profile targeted by transit migration management. As an

indicator of trends in the volume of transit migration, there has been a steady increase in the number of apprehended migrants throughout the country, not only at the borders of Turkey, in the past three decades. The number of migrants apprehended by the authorities increased from 11,000 per year in the 1990s to approximately 100,000 in 2000 and then skyrocketed to a peak of 454,662 in 2019 and afterwards (PMM Statistics, 2022).[4] The largest groups apprehended in 2019 were from Afghanistan (201,437), Pakistan (71,645) and Syria (55,236). While the numbers were relatively lower in 2020 and 2021, partially due to COVID-19 restrictions, the number of apprehended migrants was 247,800 by November 2022 (ibid.). See Figure 9 for the statistics for other years.

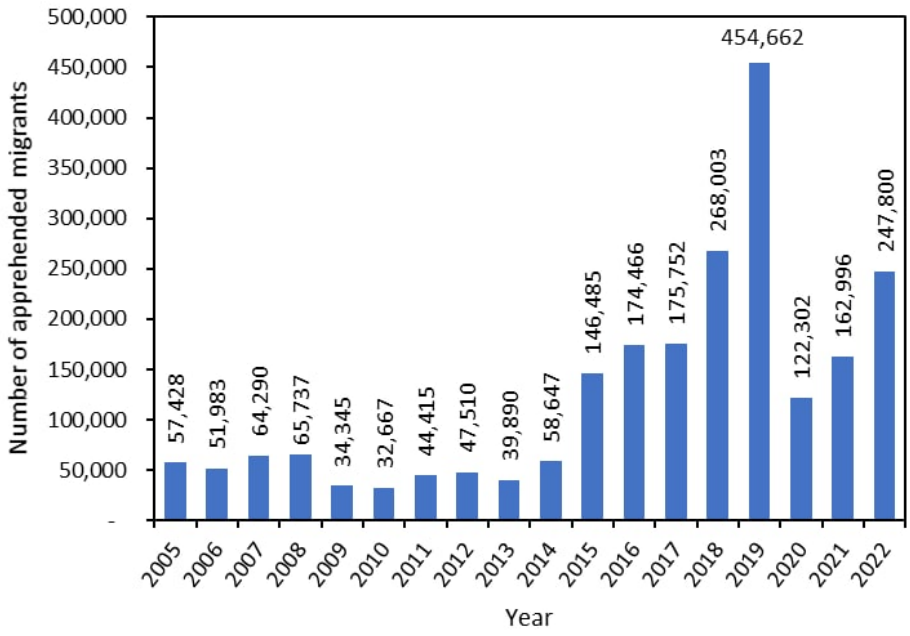

Figure 9. Number of apprehended migrants in Turkey

Source: PMM Statistics.

Note that as the level of securitisation increased in urban centres and at the borders, there has been a rise in raids, apprehensions and detentions in urban areas where undocumented migrants are settled and work in the informal economy (Karadağ and Üstübici, 2021). Research has long indicated that Turkey is also a country of destination for various groups of irregular and regular migrants (Üstübici, 2018). Hence, it is not possible to generalise all apprehended migrants as transit migrants.

Besides apprehended migrants, the number of asylum applications is a good indicator of potential transit migration volumes, as Turkey does not provide a long-term solution to those seeking asylum in its territory. As of November 2022, there were over 4.9 million foreign nationals in Turkey. Among this foreign population, over 330,000 displaced people are under International Protection (IP) in Turkey (UNHCR, 2021b), in addition to almost 3.6 million Syrian

[4] Some sources indicate that 888,457 migrants and refugees (mostly from Syria) moved through Turkey to the EU in 2015 (98% of them arrived in Greece). This number is almost 16 times higher than the figure for 2014 (European Commission, 2016a). However, 2015 was an exceptional year where the border controls both by Turkey and several EU Member States and non-members along the Balkans were temporarily suspended, albeit for a short period of time.

nationals under TP. Meanwhile, it is not accurate to argue that all asylum seekers or apprehended migrants are in transit. Research indicates that those seeking asylum in Turkey may refrain from travelling illegally into the EU (Kaytaz, 2016; Kuschminder et al., 2019; Kirişçioğlu and Üstübici, 2020).

In addition to third-country nationals, the number of Turkish nationals leaving the country is reportedly on the rise. Despite the increase in the number of asylum applications from Turkish nationals in Western European countries since 2016, however, the volume of Turkish nationals fleeing the country through irregular border crossings is still much less than third-country nationals. Frontex risk analysis reports indicate that Turkish nationals use fraudulent papers to enter their final destination or overstay their visas, but a number of them use the land/sea route to cross borders irregularly and try to transit through third countries to arrive at their intended destinations. Hence, they may not be easily detectable in national statistics. In 2021, there were 4,673 Turkish nationals who crossed EU borders illegally both via land and sea routes. This number was 3,947 in 2020 and 7,880 in 2019 (Frontex, 2022).

National policies

Starting with the 1980s, Turkey faced transit flows of migrants. However, this period was associated with the government's neglect of border crossings of both Turkish citizens and third-country nationals through Turkey to the EU. This negligence continued until the 1990s when Turkey was labelled as a transit zone to the EU.

As a result of increased migratory movements and as part of its long-standing EU accession process, Turkey started to adopt more systematic immigration and asylum policies. Turkey has gone through major institutional and policy reforms that have largely shaped transit migration policies. Officially starting with the 2003 Strategy Paper for the Protection of External Borders, the issues of border management, migration management and asylum have been on the table as part of EU membership talks along with policies aiming to contain and reduce transit migration through Turkey. These policies are largely affected by negotiations with the EU under the EU's migration externalisation policies. In such a context, Turkey and Frontex signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2012 and a cooperation plan in 2020 to improve cooperation on border management processes (Turhan and Yildiz, 2022). Since the 2010s, the Turkish state has been engaging in several projects to ensure the security of its borders such as wall and fence constructions and the operationalisation of new security technologies (Toğral Koca, 2022). Moreover, the double use of fencing and new technologies in border controls have been extended to Turkey's eastern borders where security walls have been erected along the Iranian and Syrian borders (Ensari et al., 2023, a).

Transit migration management has been a hot topic in this emerging legal and institutional framework. Turkey enacted the LFIP in 2013 and established the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) in 2014. After the arrival of Syrian refugees, the regulation on Temporary Protection enacted in October 2014 specified the terms of registration and stay in Turkey for Syrians without determining the length of protection. Due to the significant increase in irregular border crossings, in 2018 the Combating Irregular Migration Department was established under the DGMM which carries out policies regarding transit migration (ibid.). Üstübici (2019) has observed a lack of politicisation of transit migration until recently, suggesting that policies and legislation pertaining to immigration and transit migration have been discussed mainly in public and policy circles within the context of the technicalities of the EU accession process.

Whilst the technical tone that dominates Turkey's negotiation with the EU over transit migration continues, the government response to the reception of Syrian refugees has been politicised by the opposition parties (Yanaşmayan et al., 2019). As also noted by international agencies, the 'public discontent with the presence of Syrian refugees has become an election issue and a matter of constant debate' (European Commission, 2022: 20). Several people remarked that the 2018 general elections and the 2019 local elections in the country were turning points where refugee-related topics featured on the agenda of politicians (İrgil and Balcioglu, 2022). Negative attitudes towards migrants and refugees have increased significantly in recent years and with elections looming in June 2023, both the government and opposition parties have started to make pledges to send refugees back to their home countries. Zafer Partisi (Victory Party), a newly established anti-immigrant party, is leading the anti-immigrant rhetoric in the upcoming elections. Although Syrians are at the centre of the controversy, the rising popular resentment is directed at all categories of foreigners, mostly Afghans, because of the videos circulating on social media of mostly young men entering Turkey through its Eastern borders with Iran after the Taliban took control in Afghanistan (ibid.).

Although Turkey was one of the first signatories of the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, the country did not establish its own refugee reception and protection system for several decades. The country still applies the geographical limitation to the 1951 Convention and does not offer refugee status for non-European refugees. Accordingly, refugees recognised in Turkey are given conditional refugee status in order to resettle in third countries. As the global resettlement quotas are low (UNHCR, 2021b), asylum seekers in Turkey are in a legal limbo. Note also that access to asylum has become more difficult in recent years for Syrians and non-Syrians alike as several provinces no longer offer new registrations (Karadağ and Üstübici, 2021; European Commission, 2022).

Against this political landscape, migrants are being criminalised more easily at the border zones and in public spheres. In response to criticism, the Turkish government has had a much more securitised approach to asylum and irregular migration since 2019. As an example, the government and the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) began to disclose statistics on apprehensions and deportations and on the safe return of Syrians using its own website and Twitter account. The return of apprehended migrants has become more prevalent and detention capacity has increased significantly (Kaytaz, 2021).

Migration diplomacy between Turkey and the EU

Over the last 20 years, the external aspects of EU migration practices and policies have influenced the border and legal agenda of Turkey's migration regime and the experiences of migrants within the country (Üstübici and İçduygu, 2019; Üstübici, 2019). Closures of the external borders of the EU have obliged Turkey to play the role of gatekeeper in combating irregular migratory movements. This has led to multiple forms of collaboration and conflict between Turkey and the EU, which has significantly shaped Turkey's policies on transit migration over recent decades.

Starting from the early 2000s, Turkey has been subject to the externalisation of migration management by the EU. As explained above, within the context of EU accession in the early 2000s, Turkey has gone through major institutional and policy reforms that have largely shaped transit migration policies. Along with border controls, these policies include strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Interior and Coast Guards. The process has led to

the institutionalisation and emergence of a bureaucratic cadre focused on immigration in the post-2008 period (Üstübici, 2019).

As in other transit contexts, RAs have been major tools of negotiation with the EU, with Turkey and the EU signing a long-debated RA in December 2013. As part of negotiations over the RA, Turkey has been promised EU funding to be spent on the capacity of removal centres (Global Detention Project, 2021). Although the agreement has provisions both related to nationals and third-country nationals, official sources indicate the provisions regarding 'the readmission of third country nationals included in the agreement have not yet come into force' (PMM, n.d.).

The country is a prominent example of a neoliberal migration state, strategically using 'population mobility as a means of generating revenue' (Adamson and Tsourapas, 2019: 868). Migration diplomacy between Turkey and the EU can be traced back to the earlier years of Turkey's EU accession process, but the issue gained visibility especially in the aftermath of the Syrian displacement (Üstübici and İçduygu, 2019; Üstübici 2019). The arrival of refugees from Syria and their onward mobility to Europe led to more intense negotiations between Turkey and the EU, leading to the EU–Turkey Joint Action Plan of November 2015 and the EU–Turkey Statement on additional action points of March 2016 (Üstübici, 2019). Accordingly, all immigrants who enter Greece illegally since March 2016 are sent back to Turkey, and in exchange for every returned Syrian to Turkey from Greece, EU Member States resettle one Syrian refugee from Turkey. The main focus of the Statement is on the return of third-country nationals to Turkey and the prevention of transit migration. In return, the EU offered financial aid exceeding €6 billion under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRIT), spent over various projects to improve the living conditions of refugees and cooperation on visa liberation for Turkish nationals (Ensari et al., 2023 a). Among these various projects funded under FRIT, the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) is one of the largest cash transfer programmes of its kind with a budget of over €1.7 billion.[5] Through this programme, a modest, but regular, cash transfer is made available to more than 1.5 million refugees in a vulnerable situation in Turkey. In addition to ESSN, there are also longer-term development projects targeting over 330,000 very vulnerable refugees (European Commission, 2021). While action on the visa cooperation has not progressed, Turkish policy-makers regard financial aid as the main inconsistency of the Statement, arguing that it does not provide long-term solutions for Turkey (Lebon-McGregor, et al., 2022).

It is also worth noting that certain incidents in recent years have indicated how policy-makers perceive transit migration and transit migration management in Turkey. In February 2020, Turkey announced that it would no longer control border crossings, as Turkey had not acquired enough support in hosting refugees (Human Rights Watch, 2020). This encouraged many migrants to move to the Greek–Turkish Edirne border, causing them to be stuck there for weeks and facing a violent backlash from Greek border agents. Although migrants were removed from the Turkey–Greek land border at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, according to expert interviews, this incident could have lasted longer if it were not for the pandemic (Ensari et al., 2023 a). Turkey's threat to open its EU borders highlights that its transit migration control is highly influenced by political priorities. After this incident, it has been argued that controls in the Aegean Sea and along the land borders of Greece and Bulgaria have become less strict (Karadağ and Üstibici, 2021).

[5] The allocation of funding under FRIT can be found at https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/facility_table.pdf

Experiences and perceptions on transit migration

MIGNEX conducted fieldwork in three research areas in Turkey: Hopa, Yenice and Kilis (Ensari et al., 2022a; 2022b; 2022c). Hopa is a border district with free trade and mobility opportunities with Georgia, and Yenice is a rural district on the western shores of Turkey offering little prospects for young people. Neighbouring Syria, Kilis has experienced a major economic and demographic transition since the beginning of the Syrian war with the arrival of refugees from Syria and official closure of the border. Currently, nearly 40% of Kilis' inhabitants are Syrians. The characteristic makes Kilis a unique case among MIGNEX research areas to compare the transit migration experience of refugees, in relation to nationals.

Descriptive survey results show the direct and indirect experiences of transit migration in research areas where MIGNEX fieldwork took place in Turkey. These results confirm that Turkish nationals living in these areas have very little experience of transit migration. For respondents from Hopa and Yenice, which are located away from the contested border areas of Turkey, transit migration experiences are quite low (see Figure 10 for more details). In both research areas, the overwhelming majority of residents surveyed did not know anyone who has been injured, died, detained, got stuck or deported while trying to move to their destination country. On the other hand, we can talk about a relative significance of transit migration experiences among respondents in Kilis, located along the southern borders of Turkey. Yet, as we discuss in the following sections, these experiences are still comparatively low with regards to MIGNEX research in Tunisia, Ethiopia and Pakistan.

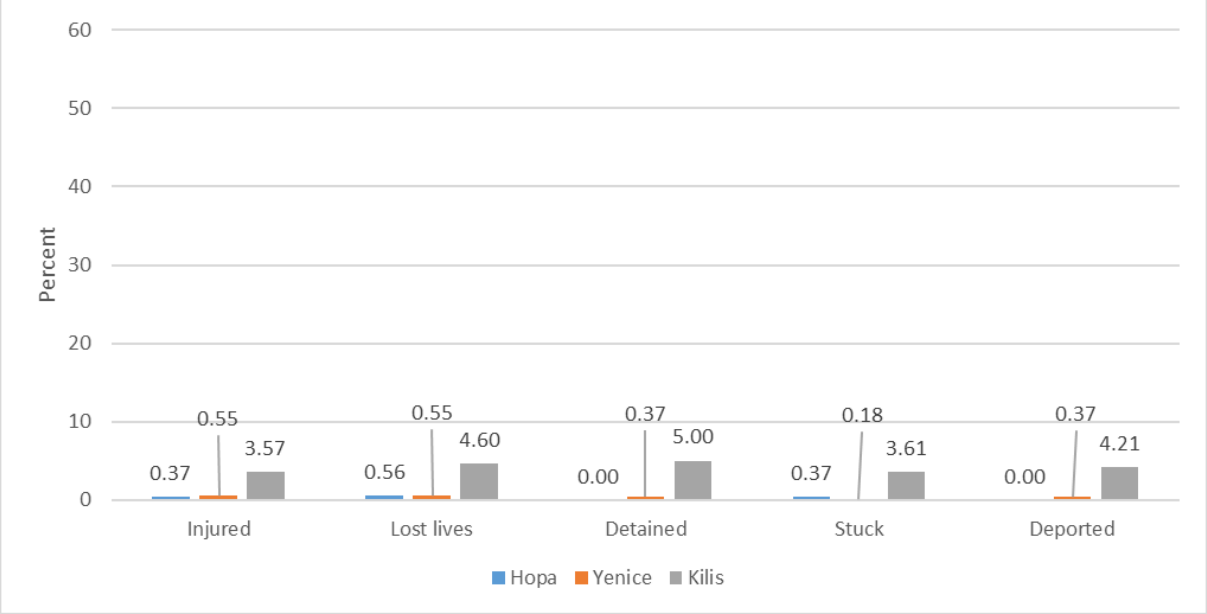

Figure 10. Transit migration experience – MIGNEX research areas in Turkey

Note: Bars indicate those who answered YES to related survey questions explained in Box 3.

Source: MIGNEX survey data.

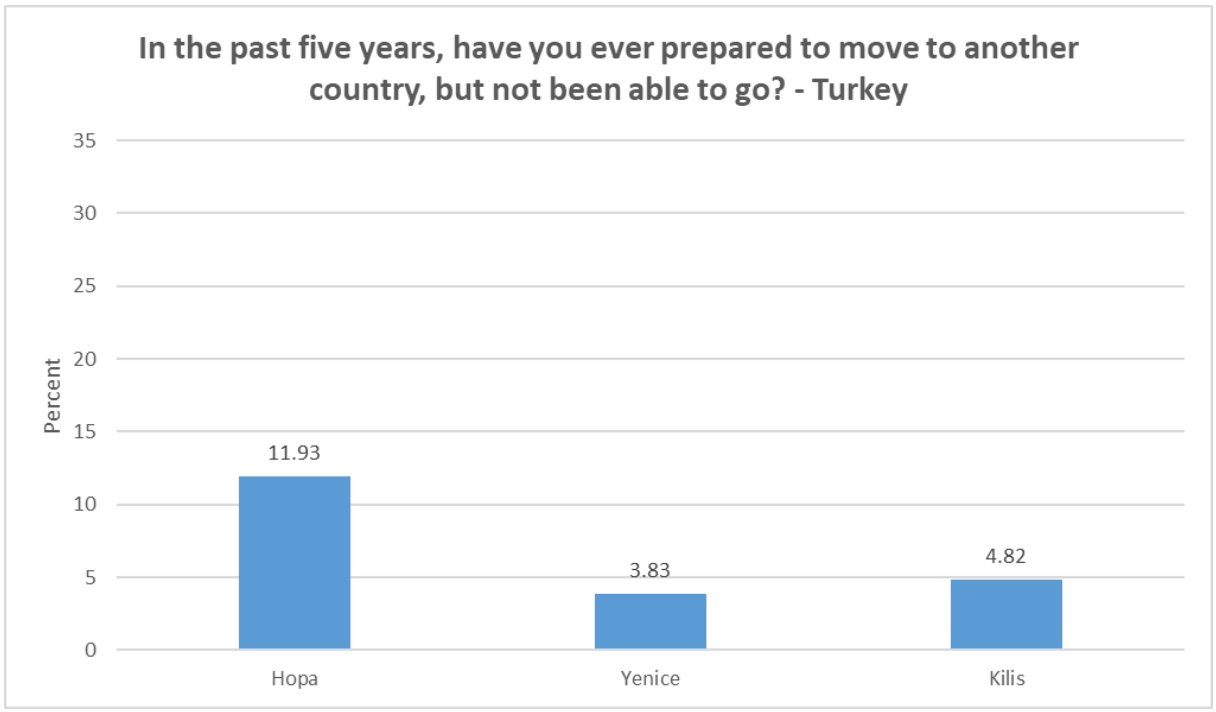

Figure 11. Unrealised migration intentions – MIGNEX research areas in Turkey

Note: Bars indicate those who answered YES.

Source: MIGNEX survey data.

Regarding migration aspirations, MIGNEX research reports that international migration aspirations are relatively low in Yenice but higher in Hopa (see Ensari et al., 2022a; 2022b). Among survey respondents, only 33% of young adults in Yenice and 50% in Hopa indicated aspirations to live in another country (see Figure 5), although aspirations are particularly high among young men in Yenice and Hopa (see Figure 6). Meanwhile, MIGNEX data show that less than 12% of Hopa residents and less than 4% of Yenice residents had made plans to move to another country in the last five years, indicating that the actual migration intention is fairly low (see Figure 11).

As around half of the population in Kilis comprises displaced Syrians, MIGNEX data collected in this area tells us more about transit migration. Respondents from Kilis (nationals but more so Syrians living in Kilis) have relatively higher direct and indirect transit migration experience when compared to the other research areas in Turkey. For instance, nearly 8% of Syrian respondents in Kilis reported that they knew someone who has been detained on their way to move to another country. Overall, not surprisingly, direct and indirect experiences of transit migration are much more common among Syrians in Kilis when compared to Turkish nationals (see Figure 12). Although these percentages are very low in comparison to other MIGNEX research areas covered in this paper, they are relatively high in relation to the other two areas of focus in Turkey.

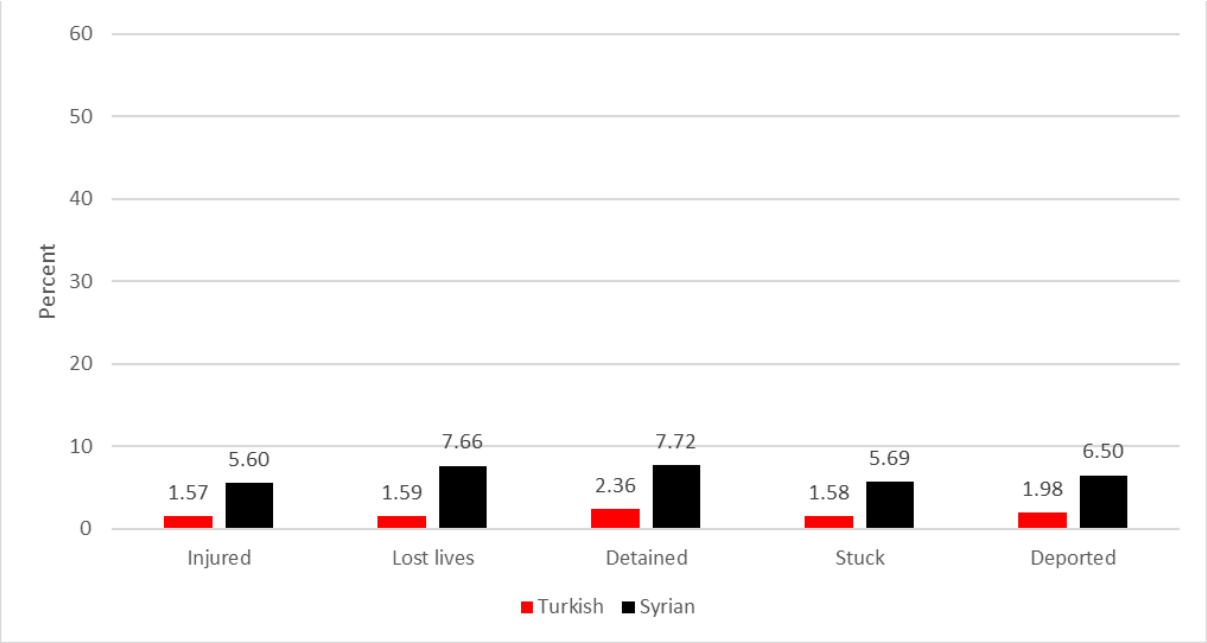

Figure 12. Transit migration experience in Kilis among Turkish nationals and Syrians

Note: Bars indicate those who answered YES to related survey questions explained in Box 3.

Source: MIGNEX survey data.

Overall, the MIGNEX research areas in Turkey score much lower than the other research areas analysed in this paper regarding transit migration experience. While the migration aspirations are relatively high, the actual intention to migrate is lower.

Meanwhile, migration aspirations among Syrians and nationals in Kilis are much lower than expected. MIGNEX data indicate that migration aspirations in Kilis are almost similar between Turkish and Syrian respondents, and the aspirations are surprisingly lower than in the other MIGNEX research areas in Turkey. While 22% of Turkish participants would like to go to another country during the next five years, 23% of Syrians aspire to do the same. This reluctance by Syrians to move to another country resonates with the findings of previous studies (e.g., Üstübici and Elçi, 2022; Üstübici et al., 2021). Focus groups conducted in the area reveal that most Syrians and nationals alike feel trapped in Kilis due to limited socioeconomic opportunities, economic instability and discrimination in the education and labour market. Although Syrian refugees' 'permanent temporariness' affects their lives, they rather want to stay in Turkey. Meanwhile, the majority of Syrian informants have family members in Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, France, England, Switzerland, Canada and the US, which contributes to their sense of relative deprivation. Migration abroad for Syrians does not seem impossible, but it is very difficult to realise because of the limited legal pathways to Europe, which is the most desired destination. Instead, Syrians indicated their aspirations to move within the country, to cities like Istanbul for better job opportunities.

Recent research highlights that aspirations to move to third countries are much higher among Afghans than Syrians in Turkey. An online survey conducted in 2020, in the context of an ADMIGOV project, reveals that more than 76% of Afghans in Turkey would prefer to move to another country, whereas this rate is less than 47% for Syrians (Üstübici et al., 2021). On the one hand, the lack of an established international protection system and the high backlog of

applicants in Turkey are push factors for the large number of refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey to move on to European countries through irregular border crossings. But on the other hand, research also reveals that a majority of these displaced people, especially Syrians, are also willing to stay and settle in Turkey (ibid.).

4.2 TUNISIA

Introduction

Tunisia is one of the major countries of transit to Europe for North and sub-Saharan African migrants seeking better economic opportunities and/or escaping from political instability. While Tunisia has historically been a country of emigration and irregular emigration has been a considerable part of this out mobility, non-Tunisian migrants have also started to enter Europe through Tunisia over the past decade, albeit in smaller numbers (Herbert, 2022). After the 2011 revolution, Tunisia has also rapidly become a country of destination for migrants and refugees, particularly for Libyans and Syrians in search of safety, while continuing to be a transit country for migrants from the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa heading to Europe (European Training Foundation, 2020, cited in Ensari et al., 2023 b). Therefore, Tunisia's policies and programmes on transit migration have been shaped largely in relation to the EU's and its Member States' efforts to curb irregular migration by externalising migration controls to outside their territories since the late 1990s (Badalič, 2019). As a signatory country of the 1951 Refugee Convention, Tunisia offers protection status to migrants. However, access to asylum is at stake in the absence of a national law on asylum.

Target population of transit migration in Tunisia

The total number of interceptions by the Tunisian security forces rose from 3,522 in 2017 to 11,789 in 2021, before doubling to 23,251 in 2022 (Herbert, 2022). The number of apprehensions further increased to over 30,000 in the first 10 months of 2022 (Migration Control Info, 2022). It is well documented that the majority of those moving from Tunisia to Italy are Tunisian nationals rather than other nationalities transiting through Tunisia (Institute for Security Studies, 2018). However, the volume of non-Tunisians heading to Europe through Tunisia is still considerable and has increased recently. While driving factors for migrants in Tunisia are rather complex, transit migration is closely linked to the growing number of irregular migrants in Tunisia after the revolution and the risks associated with other transit routes in neighbouring countries, such as Algeria and Morocco (Herbert, 2022). As further discussed in part 3.2, transit migration patterns are susceptible to changes along the whole migration route. Herbert's (2022) study, for instance, suggests that migrants perceive the Tunisia–Italy route to be less risky than alternative routes, such as the Morocco–Spain route.

Between 2016 and 2017, the number of sub-Saharan African nationals who were apprehended along the Tunisian coast in an attempt to reach Europe rose from 71 to 271 (REACH and Mercy Corps, 2018). The number of non-Tunisian migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean from Tunisia more than doubled in 2020 compared to 2019 and continued to increase significantly in 2021. Herbert (2022) reports that Tunisian forces captured 1,257 non-Tunisian migrants on and off the coast of Tunisia in 2019, while the number rose to 2,722 and 7,063 in 2020 and 2021, respectively. Similarly, according to UNHCR data, Italian authorities caught 979 migrants transiting from Tunisia in 2019, 1,816 in 2020, and around 3,700 in 2021 (ibid.). Note that these numbers are modest compared to the volume of border crossings and apprehensions in Turkey as discussed above.

Regarding nationalities, Italian records also show that while Tunisians constitute the majority of sea arrivals to Italy, an overwhelming majority of the 3,700 non-Tunisian migrants transiting from Tunisia to Italy were male and from Côte d'Ivoire (2,240) and Guinea (1,199) in 2021 (ibid.). Other than Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, the nationalities of intercepted migrants between 2018 and 2021 also include Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad, Sudan, Ghana, Gambia, Somalia, Algeria, Morocco, Syria and Iraq (ibid.). As of August 2022, there are 3,438 refugees and 6,193 asylum seekers registered to the UNHCR in Tunisia.

Regarding Tunisia's migrant profile in general, Natter (2019) estimates the immigrant community to be around 600,000, composed of 500,000 Libyan citizens, 53,000 registered immigrants and 25,000 to 50,000 non-Libyan irregular migrants. Europeans are another major immigrant group in Tunisia holding residence permits but also working irregularly or residing on tourist visas (Garelli and Tazzioli, 2017). In addition, it is noted that in 2014, 1.8 million Libyan nationals entered Tunisia and 1.4 million exited (World Bank, 2017).

The figures indicate that there is increasing immigration into Tunisia. Among these immigrants, some have intentions to move on to Europe using irregular means, hence they have become the targets of transit migration management. From 2020 to mid-2021, two-thirds of apprehended migrants in Tunisian shores and a decisive majority of migrants who reached Italian territories in Tunisian shores were Tunisian nationals (Herbert, 2022). Hence, it would be fair to suggest that Tunisians seeking out-emigration are closely affected by measures to curtail transit migration along with third-country nationals, who are associated with transit migration.

National policies

Irregular migration has been securitised in Tunisia since the late 1990s, particularly in response to Italy's demands to increase controls on transit migration from Tunisia through irregular channels. One key policy aspect regarding transit migration management in Tunisia is the criminalisation of non-citizens entering/exiting Tunisian borders without proper documents or overstaying. The Organic Law 1968-7, 1975-40 and 2004-6 impose certain fines, penalties and imprisonment/confinement for up to a year. Exemplifying the EU impact on Tunisian migration policies, the Organic Law 2004-6 was passed by the Ben Ali regime to respond to the EU's call to establish a legal framework to deal with the problem of people smuggling (Cassarino, 2014). The Law tightens existing sanctions for the irregular entry, stay and exit of migrants and criminalizes human smuggling and any form of assistance to irregular migrants, making the fight against human smuggling a part of Tunisia's migration policy (Badalič, 2019).

The context of tightened sanctions against irregular migration is particularly relevant for refugees and asylum seekers who often face difficulties when accessing proper documents in Tunisia. Tunisia has not adopted its draft national asylum and protection legislation, despite it being a signatory of the 1951 Geneva Convention and guaranteeing the right to seek asylum and the principle of non-refoulement in its 2014 Constitution. Although there is ongoing formal cooperation between UNHCR and Tunisia, the Tunisian authorities have been hampering legal rights through several judicial, institutional and practical mechanisms. For example, the Tunisian authorities often refuse to grant residency cards to refugees, and UNHCR protection does not guarantee a residency permit. In practice, this means that potential refugees can also easily fall into the category of irregular migrants, hence they are considered as potential transit migrants.

Asylum seekers and refugees often have trouble accessing legal documentation and decent work, making them particularly susceptible to exploitation and abuse in the informal labour market. Despite legal opportunities on paper, post-revolutionary Tunisian authorities have continued to hamper access to asylum procedures through tactics such as secret detention centres that were also used during the pre-revolutionary era (Badalič, 2019). However, the number of detention centres and the number and nature of deportations are unknown. Deportations are ad hoc, not systematic (Global Detention Project, 2020). It has also been very difficult for irregular migrants to regularise their stay since 2011 (Ensari et al., 2023 b).

The Tunisian authorities mainly stick to their views on Tunisia being a country of emigration and transit, although there is also evidence of a recent increase in the number of authorities considering Tunisia as a country of destination (Natter, 2018). In the expert interviews conducted by the MIGNEX team, one expert with significant knowledge of the migration context in Tunisia shared that the narrative of Tunisia as only a transit country for third-country nationals was no longer relevant, and that Tunisia was de facto both a destination and area of origin, as well as a transit country. However, they also highlighted that the government firmly denies Tunisia's status as a destination country, focusing instead on the narrative of transit migration. This narrative has partly shifted precisely because of the challenges migrants face in moving onwards, as implemented by the Tunisian government under the EU's externalisation policies. The Tunisian authorities, however, have avoided politicising immigration both before and after 2011 (Garelli and Tazzioli, 2017).

Although migration policies have become stricter in Tunisia, immigration largely remains in a state of 'deliberate non-politicization' in the public arena even after the arrival of Libyans escaping the protracted conflict in their country (mostly on tourist visas) (Natter, 2021: 12). Yet, there exists public reactions to this deliberate non-politicisation, despite the securitisation of borders and its implications for third-country nationals and nationals on the route (see Migration Control Info, 2022 for a recent public statement on the deadly implications of Tunisian border controls). For example, after a shipwreck incident that 'missed' 18 migrants and the events that followed, a few thousand people gathered in Zarzis, a coastal city located in south-eastern Tunisia to demonstrate and to mourn Tunisian nationals becoming victims of strict border policies and to protest at the cooperation of the Tunisian government with the EU on this matter (African News, 2022). As Tunisia's post-revolutionary atmosphere has been politically and economically challenged, public discontent has remained high, and transit migration management is likely to become much more politicised despite the government's intention to keep it as a non-politicised issue.

Migration diplomacy between Tunisia and the EU

Another key policy aspect regarding transit migration in Tunisia is the policy interventions of the EU to outsource migration management to third countries. As a clear example of migration diplomacy, under Ben Ali's rule, Tunisia has often sought to derive political and economic benefits from EU countries by threatening to ease border controls and allow local 'terrorist' or 'Islamist' elements to cross into Europe (Natter, 2015; Adamson and Tsourapas, 2019).

Following the Arab Spring in particular, the EU has proposed similar agreements to the new governments in North Africa in order to control irregular migration (Dini and Giusa, 2020). EU Member States have pushed for stronger cooperation on the return of irregular Tunisian nationals as well as third-country nationals in the EU. The latter is much more significant when compared to the EU's financial assistance for Tunisia's development, which the EU seeks to link with effective 'migration management' (Badalič, 2019; Ensari, et al., 2023 a).

The EU's financial assistance has become particularly important for the political, economic and social development of post-revolutionary Tunisia that has been marked by political instability and worsening economic conditions (Badalič, 2019). Between 2011 and 2016, EU funding provided to Tunisia amounted to approximately €2 billion, which was used to support the democratic transition and achieve fiscal stability (European Commission, 2016b). Apart from EU financial assistance for political, economic and social development, Tunisia has also received funding to tighten its migration management operations, particularly to strengthen its border controls. Italy allocated €47 million to fund border controls through Tunisia between 2011 and 2022 to be spent on patrol boats and off-road vehicles, having also provided funding for the construction of migration detention centres in 1998 (Badalič, 2019; Migration Control Info, 2022). In addition, another €30 million was allocated through the European Union Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), for the establishment of an integrated border surveillance system and capacity-building activities (Migration Control Info, 2022). As stated by Ensari et al. (2023 b), migration management operations include preventing people from trying to reach Italian shores, collecting and sharing intelligence on migration flows to the EU with Frontex, criminalising smuggling and trafficking, and accepting the return of irregular migrants (both Tunisian nationals and third-country nationals) (Badalič, 2019).

While Ben Ali avoided signing an MP agreement, the EU and Tunisia signed an Action Plan for 2013–2017 granting Tunisia 'Privileged Partnership' in 2012. The aim was to enhance financial support, trade openings and improve mobility. The two parties agreed to an MP in 2014. This agreement addresses multiple dimensions of migration ranging from legal migration, asylum and integration to irregular migration, human trafficking and border controls (European Commission, 2017). In the end, the MP has paved the way for negotiations for a visa facilitation agreement (VFA) and RAs. Although negotiations could not proceed with a legally binding agreement, the MP still provides an important basis for EU–Tunisia relations in the field of cross-border mobility (Lebon-McGregor et al., 2022).

As mentioned before, individual Member States as well as the EU as a whole also provide financial assistance to Tunisia for equipment and infrastructure (i.e., migration detention centres) (Badalič, 2019). Plus, Tunisia benefits from bilateral and regional funding under the EUTF. EUTF frameworks include a national project with the aim of implementing Tunisia's national migration strategy and six regional projects. Also, as part of the EUTF, the EU sends migration liaison officers to Tunisia to assist with irregular cross-border migration, to establish better protection mechanisms and to improve voluntary return facilitation processes in Tunisia (Lebon-McGregor et al., 2022).

It is claimed that Tunisia prefers separate bilateral agreements with Member States rather than with the EU to enhance its bargaining power in the ongoing migration diplomacy (Limam and Del Sarto, 2015). Since the 1990s, Tunisia has signed bilateral RAs with Italy, France, Switzerland and Germany, among other Member States, although the content of these agreements is not always made public (Ensari et al., 2023 b; Cassarino, 2022). For instance, Italy and Tunisia signed an RA in 1998 after Italy agreed to allocate an annual quota of 3,000 work visas for Tunisian nationals (Natter, 2015). In 2008, based on a similar agreement with Tunisia, France promised work permits for 9,000 Tunisian citizens per year in exchange for cooperation on readmission and the prevention of irregular migration (Badalič, 2019). However, even though Tunisia agreed, in principle, on the return of its own citizens residing irregularly in Europe, these agreements have not been implemented fully (Abderrahim, 2019), partly because of the hesitations of the Tunisian government to collaborate in this area, based on the 'unpredictable consequences' of this cooperation (Carrera et al., 2016: 6). Therefore,

implementation of existing bilateral agreements remains rather sketchy and marked by delays (Abderrahim, 2019).

The Tunisian authorities are reluctant to accept the role of the 'border guard' (Dini and Giusa, 2020), but the EU has threatened to cut its financial support (Limam and Del Sarto, 2015) and has been putting pressure on Tunisia to collaborate on migration management and the readmission of Tunisians and third-country nationals (Ensari et al., 2023 b). Regarding the readmission of third-country nationals, Tunisia has strongly refused to collaborate on their return as this contradicts its domestic and foreign policy interests (Abderrahim, 2019), and also considering that remittances represent an important source of revenue for households and for the national economy. Finally, the new Constitution of Tunisia of 2014 allows nationals to leave and the EU's exclusionary practices can contradict the national legal framework.

Experiences and perceptions on transit migration

The MIGNEX team has conducted research in Enfidha and Redeyef in Tunisia (Kasavan et al., 2022a; 2022b). Located in north-eastern Tunisia, Enfidha has limited welfare opportunities for its inhabitants despite the nearby industrial area and airport. Although small-scale agriculture is an important economic activity in the region, the Tunisian state's agriculture policies and infrastructural capabilities restrict the potential of this sector. The MIGNEX case study on Enfidha reports that agriculture is rarely considered a livelihood option for young inhabitants (Kasavan et al., 2022a). Redeyef is a small town in Tunisia located at the border with Algeria. As a mining town, its fate has been linked with a mining factory that operates in the region. Since 2008, Redeyef's situation has worsened significantly due to job cuts and corruption. Today, a significant proportion of the inhabitants of Redeyef associate migration with hope (Kasavan et al., 2022b). While Enfidha is not a transit hotspot, there have been groups of sub-Saharan Africans coming to Enfidha for a few months to work on the olive groves, before moving onwards. However, international out-migration is very evident in the thoughts and awareness of people in Enfidha. Almost everyone considers emigrating or knows someone who has migrated abroad, usually to France or Italy. Moving out of Enfidha is an aspiration of most residents, who are mainly Tunisians, but the feasibility of out-migration is indeed low (Kasavan et al., 2022a). In Redeyef, the prominent narrative is that international out-migration, especially to France, is prominent but dangerous for Tunisians (Kasavan et al., 2022b). In both regions, the discussion revolves around the difference between legal and illegal pathways.

Overall, participants of the MIGNEX fieldwork noted that the feasibility of legal migration has diminished significantly compared to past decades and irregular migration has become more costly and risky; however, aspirations remain high. For instance, in Enfidha, most participants stated that if they were provided with an opportunity to migrate legally, they would take it, but that these legal options are nearly impossible to access, except for those who are highly qualified or who have the academic results (and the family financial support) to attend university abroad. On the other hand, despite lower levels of perceived feasibility in terms of risks and costs, irregular migration remains the only possibility for most who aspire to move (Kasavan et al., 2022a). For instance, in Redeyef, initial departure from the region is still relatively easy. People from the town can contact smugglers in Gafsa, the nearby larger mining town, or just make their way directly to the port town of Sfax or other points of transit. However, people get stuck in transit more often than in previous decades, either running out of money on the way or getting caught and being sent back. When people are sent back, they nearly always try again. Participants noted that some people attempted to re-migrate three or four times before making it out of Tunisia to their preferred destination (Kasavan et al., 2022b). Finally, in neither of the regions were there prominent migration information

campaigns to discourage irregular migration that were visible to a large share of the population at the time of the MIGNEX fieldwork.

MIGNEX data reveal that migration aspirations among survey respondents in Enfidha and Redeyef are quite high. Of survey respondents, 71% in Enfidha and almost 58% in Redeyef aspire to move to another country (see Figure 5). Unrealised intentions to migrate are also prominent (see Figure 13). Nearly one-third of the respondents in each research area indicated that they had prepared to migrate in the past five years but were not able to go in the end. This is especially prominent among young men (see Figure 7). MIGNEX fieldwork data also highlight that men and women engage in different types of migration. Irregular migration is associated more with young men whereas women usually migrate along legal pathways, for education or marriage (Kasavan et al., 2022a).

Another important aspect is transit migration experiences. Descriptive survey results show that direct or indirect experiences of transit migration in both research areas are widespread (see Figure 14). For instance, nearly 11% of respondents in Enfidha and 23% in Redeyef know someone who has been detained on their way to move to another country. Knowing someone who has been detained during their migration journeys is more common among men in both research areas when compared to women (see Figure 8). Nearly 15% in Enfidha and 30% in Redeyef know someone who has been stuck in another country while they were on their way to a particular destination. Familiarity with the risk of injury and death are also relatively common in both research areas. Similarly, focus group discussions highlighted that irregular migration has become more difficult and more expensive. However, families in Redeyef give more encouragement to their children to migrate compared to the previous decade because of stagnating or declining conditions in the town. Routes have also changed. While Libya was previously the most common route to Italy (with some migrating to Libya as a destination as well), Morocco is becoming an optional transit route, with migrants from Redeyef then attempting to move onwards to Spain, and onwards to France. Meanwhile, some respondents highlighted that the transit migration route through Morocco has become riskier than the one through Tunisia itself. All in all, MIGNEX data show that transit migration experience is high in Tunisia, and that there are widespread perceptions on the risks involved in transit migration but also continuity of aspirations to migrate to Europe.

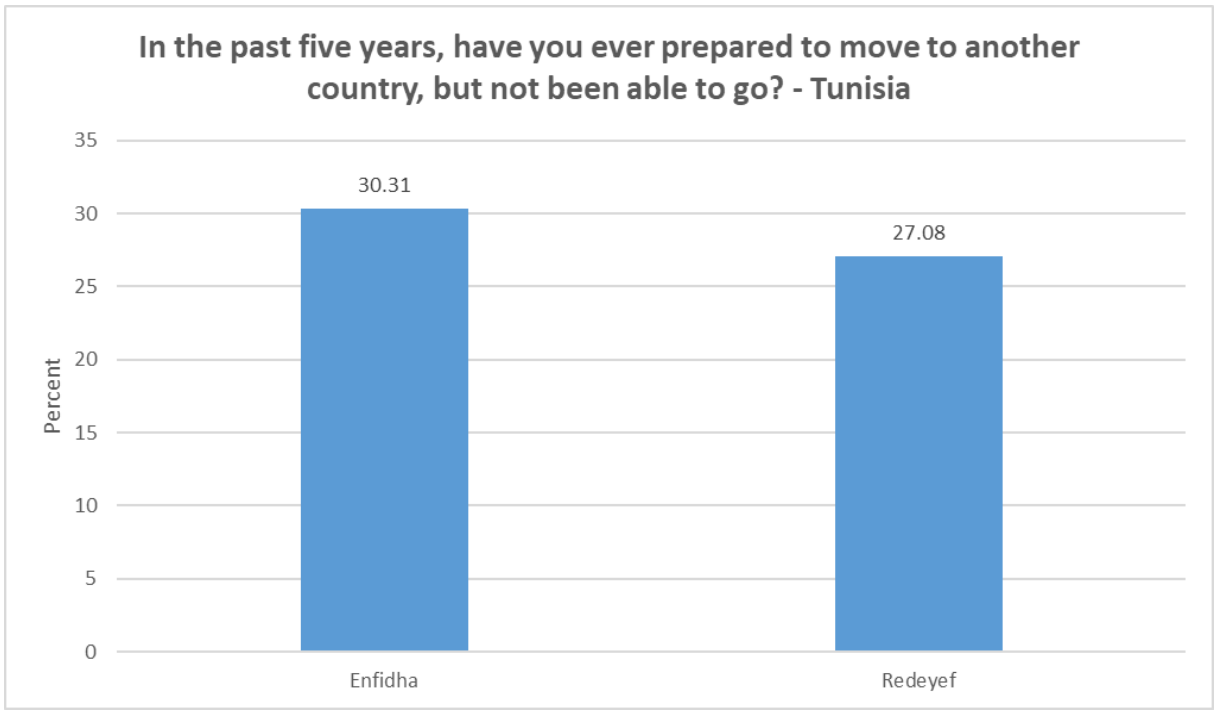

Figure 13. Unrealised migration intentions – MIGNEX research areas in Tunisia

Note: Bars indicate those who answered YES.

Source: MIGNEX survey data.

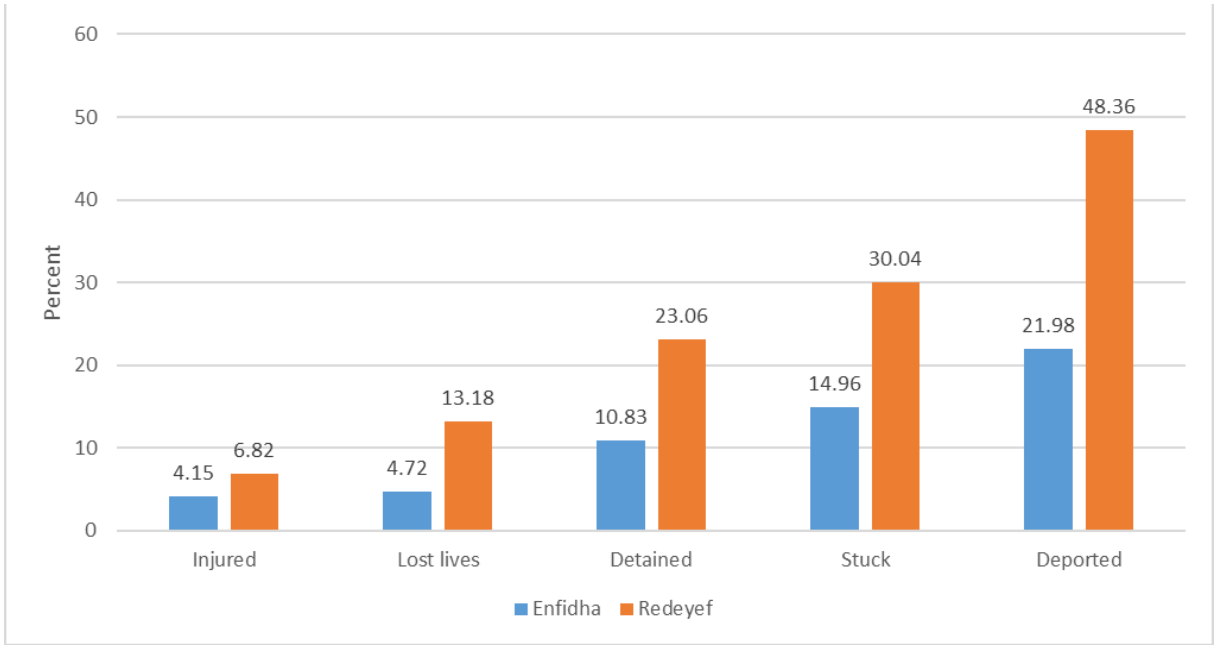

Figure 14. Transit migration experience – MIGNEX research areas in Tunisia

Note: Bars indicate those who answered YES to related survey questions explained in Box 3.

Source: MIGNEX survey data.

4.3 ETHIOPIA

Introduction

Due to its geo-strategic location, historically Ethiopia has experienced mobility and migration flows as a destination, departure and transit country. As a landlocked country bordering Djibouti, Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan and Kenya, Ethiopia therefore faces several challenges. Remarkably, Ethiopia is currently at the epicentre of transit migration, perhaps more so than ever before. This is due to critical geopolitical and geo-economic transitions taking place: a) internally due to the civil war since 2020, b) externally due to urgent food insecurity within Ethiopia, but also in the rest of the Horn of Africa, which is partly attributed to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and also the impact of COVID-19, and c) the unprecedented effects of climate change, including extreme drought and desertification (Gavin, 2022). At the same time, Ethiopia remains a key player and a diplomatic hub in the East African region and the rest of the African continent, hosting the African Union (AU) headquarters in its capital Addis Ababa. Note that the situation in Ethiopia has changed drastically since 2020 due to multiple crises unfolding, which have affected the political situation but also the circumstances of nationals and migrants in the country. Hence, some of the information provided here may not be up to date, depending on the availability of recent and reliable information.

Target population of transit migration management

The circumstances outlined above make Ethiopia an important transit country for (a) Ethiopian nationals, (b) nationals from countries across the Horn of Africa and (c) nationals from other African regions such as the Great Lakes region. Ethiopia can thus be seen broadly as a major hub for migrants, some of whom aim to reach to other sub-Saharan African countries through the Ethiopia–South Africa migration corridor (MIDEQ, n.d.; Estifanos and Freeman, 2022), or the eastern route to the Middle East, Turkey, Europe or other destinations, which may seem more promising for decent living conditions and a better future.

The volume of transit migration is hard to measure due to the nature of transit migration itself. Thus, the numbers of (potential) transit migrants may be estimated under an approximate approach, taking into consideration the recorded data of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Of Ethiopia’s current population of 117.9 million people, 5.21 million (6.1% of the population) are refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs (UNHCR, 2022c). Of these 5.21 million, 4.24 million are IDPs. Around 1.5 million IDPs have been displaced due to the ongoing conflict in northern Ethiopia and other local conflicts in different parts of the country in the last two years (from December 2020 to September 2022) (ACAPS 2021: UNHCR, 2022d). Further, the ongoing drought that began in 2022, which has been recorded as one of the most severe in the last 70 years in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, is forcing local communities to the Ethiopia–Kenya and Ethiopia–Somalia border areas (European Commission and WFP, 2022).

Ethiopia is among the largest refugee-hosting countries in the world and is the third-largest refugee-hosting country in Africa after Uganda and Sudan (UNHCR, n.d.; World Bank, 2021). UNHCR data show that 830,305 of the population are refugees and asylum seekers, mostly nationals of South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan and others including Yemen, who predominantly live in refugee camps (UNHCR, 2022e) (see Figure 15). There are also refugees in urban areas of the country, but most of them are not registered. Plus, the country hosts an unknown number of undocumented migrants. Areas in Ethiopia with the highest recorded numbers of refugees and asylum seekers are Gambella and Somali, which host over 70% of the

refugees in the country (ibid.). Research reveals that onward migration aspirations among some refugees in Ethiopia are high and refugees are an important part of the irregular outflows from Ethiopia (Ogahara and Kuschminder, 2019). As a result, refugees in Ethiopia are seen as the main target of the EU-led transit migration management efforts.

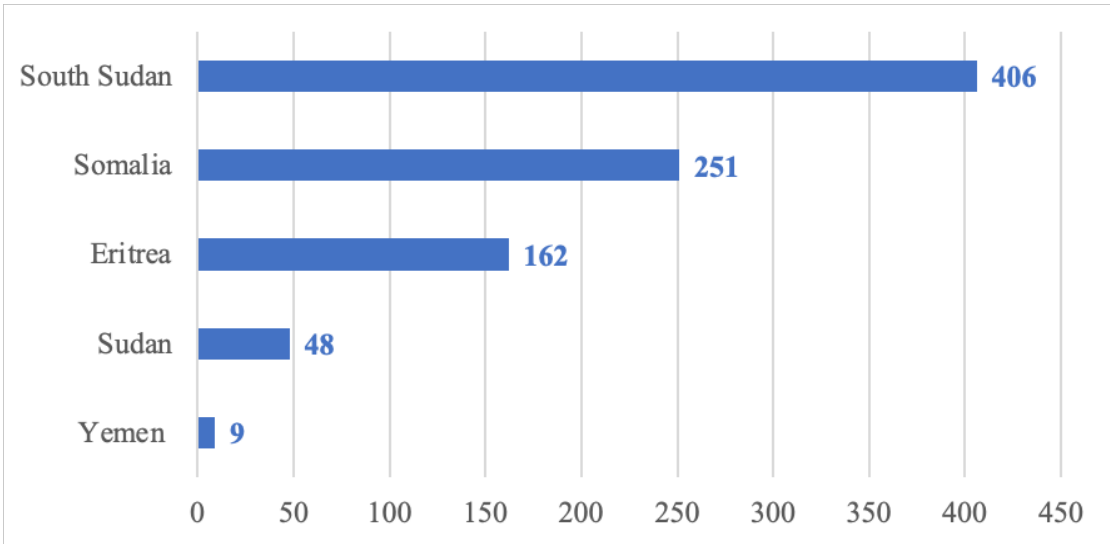

Figure 15. Refugees in Ethiopia by nationality

Note: In thousands, excluding unregistered refugees.

Source: Based on data derived from UNHCR (2022e).

In addition to IDPs and refugees, Ethiopian nationals are among potential transit migrants as many find themselves stuck in transit countries such as Libya or Yemen on their way to the Gulf region or to Europe (Andersson, 2022). It should be noted that Ethiopian nationals recently arriving to the EU are relatively limited when compared to those seeking employment or refuge in other countries in the region. Between 2017 and 2020, at least 400,000 Ethiopian migrants reached the Arabian Peninsula through irregular migration (ACAPS, 2021). However, following a decision by the Government of Ethiopia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the return of 100,000 Ethiopian migrants was expected in 2022 with an estimated need of assistance amounting to $11 million (IOM, 2022a). There are 141,961 Ethiopian refugees in neighbouring countries such as Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Djibouti, South Sudan and Eritrea (UNHCR, 2022e). According to UNHCR data for March 2022, over 68,500 Ethiopian nationals have sought asylum in countries in the East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes region, including at least 59,000 who have been received in eastern Sudan since the start of the civil war in Ethiopia in November 2020 (UNHCR, 2022e). However, only a minority of these reach Europe to apply for asylum. In 2021, 3,190 Ethiopian, 16,675 Somalian and 9,895 Eritrean migrants applied for asylum in Europe (European Council, n.d.). Frontex's 2022/2023 risk analysis report indicates that forced returns are temporarily suspended to Ethiopia due to growing insecurities in the country (Frontex, 2022), and the civil war in Ethiopia is increasing concern among some European politicians (Rettman, 2021). Also, it is reported that Eritrean nationals have been trafficked for labour exploitation in some EU Member States (Frontex, 2022).

National policies

Ethiopia is a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention with reservations to some of its articles, the Convention's 1967 Protocol and the 1969 Organization of African Unity Refugee Convention, which was designed to target the 'refugee problem' in Africa. However, Ethiopia's national migration policy relies on several declarations, proclamations and legal documents, rather than a comprehensive national migration policy (Andersson, 2022). Ethiopian political authorities admit structural limitations over the establishment of an institutionalised migration policy (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2020).

As a result of ethnic heterogeneity and a fragile political atmosphere, transit migration management or immigration policies at large are not a priority area in Ethiopia. This is despite the increasing number of migrants in the country, mainly due to conflicts in the wider region and to Ethiopia's open-door policy for refugees. Meanwhile, little is known about the domestic political discussions regarding Ethiopia's open-door policy (Andersson, 2022). Ogahara and Kuschminder (2019) note that the Eritrean government has only occasionally opened the land border with Ethiopia, while arrivals from Eritrea have continued in a fluctuating manner. While known for its porous borders with neighbouring countries, in recent years Ethiopia has improved its border control capacity through international support (IOM, 2020). Also, the country has negotiated border control cooperation with neighbouring countries such as Sudan (Takpiny, 2021; *Sudan Tribune*, 2022).

Policies aimed at the local integration of refugees are considered part of transit migration management, with most projects internally funded projects aiming to curb the aspirations of refugees to move on (Lebon-McGregor et al., 2022). Significant steps have also been taken since 2016 through international and European support for Ethiopia's migration and refugee policy. Ethiopia's external partners have facilitated institutional, legal, financial and policy frameworks for the country. For example, UNHCR initiated the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), including Ethiopia as one of 15 participating members in 2017, with the aim to facilitate support to Ethiopia's nine pledges announced at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees in New York in 2016 (UNHCR, 2018). Partly, the CRRF facilitated the initiation of Ethiopia's National Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy (NCRRS) in 2018 and the introduction of a new legal framework, the Refugee Proclamation 1110/2019 (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2019). The latter includes clauses enabling refugees to live outside of camps and to participate in the labour market. Yet implementation has been limited and depends on subsequent legislation at the regional state level (Lebon-McGregor et al., 2022). Plus, the civil war and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic have further challenged the implementation of such incentives to integrate refugees.

Migration diplomacy between Ethiopia and the EU

As Ethiopia is situated at the crossroads of refugee routes from the Horn of Africa and hosts a relatively high number of refugees in the African continent, it is one of the EU's partners on transit migration management in the region. Ethiopia has taken part in the Rabat Process since 2006 and is a member of the Khartoum Process launched in 2014, a platform for political cooperation for countries situated along the migration route between the Horn of Africa and Europe in an effort to establish dialogue on migration and mobility and address trafficking and smuggling. The country also participated in the Valletta Summit on Migration, which took place in November 2015. Within these negotiations, the EU's migration policy constitutes a significant part of the Africa–EU agenda. These negotiations take place either multilaterally through the EU and the AU or bilaterally.

When the EU started dealing with high volumes of arrivals at its borders in 2015, it signed the Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (CAMM) with Ethiopia, noting 'the importance of Ethiopia as a key country of origin, transit and destination of irregular migrants and refugees from the Horn of Africa on the route to Europe' (European Commission, 2015). In 2016, Ethiopia became a priority country under the Migration Partnership Framework (MPF) among the five countries initially included, together with Mali, Nigeria, Niger and Senegal. The aim was to reward countries willing to cooperate on migration management issues through various compacts and compensations (European Commission, 2016c).

The EU's main financial instrument with Africa in the field of migration, the EUTF for Africa, provides a total of more than €4.5 billion for all regions and sectors (Oxfam, 2020). The European Development Fund (EDF) provides additional funding of €500 million (Kipp, 2018). After Somalia and Libya, Ethiopia receives the third-largest financial support from the EUTF, with €270.2 million between 2015 and 2019 (Oxfam, 2020). Slightly less than half of this amount since 2017 (€110.15 million) has focused on the reintegration of Ethiopian returnees from Europe, protection programmes against human trafficking and smuggling, as well as the creation of economic opportunities and improved living conditions in Ethiopia. The priorities of funds include supporting the economy, the labour market, building resilience capacity, and improving state capacity to prevent conflicts and establish a better migration management regime (Kuschminder et al., 2021). With other support from international development organizations, the EU also supports Ethiopia through the Job Compact initiated in 2016 within the framework of the CRRF. The Job Compact, one of the most significant projects funded under the EUTF for Africa in Ethiopia, aims to enhance job opportunities for nationals and refugees. The programme aims to offer 70,000 jobs for Ethiopian nationals and 30,000 for refugees (DFID, 2019). While the programme has a noteworthy emphasis on migration, it aims to reduce transit migration to Europe by enabling better living conditions in Ethiopia (Ruaudel and Morrison-Métois, 2017). Despite these efforts to reduce onward mobility, however, the effects have been limited on aspirations among refugees and nationals in Ethiopia. Experts note that low-waged job creation in newly established and not fully operationalised industrial zones does not immediately improve the integration capacity of the country (Andersson, 2022).

Even though the EU and Ethiopia have no official RA, they did agree upon 'procedures' of readmission in 2017. Abebe (2020) states that this informal cooperation raises concerns over transparency and accountability on forced returns, however. Also, sharing personal data of Ethiopian nationals with the intelligence bodies of Ethiopia may put some political dissidents at risk. Finally, the author suggests that the formalisation of an RA may trigger political sensitivities in the country (ibid.).

EU–Ethiopia relations in the context of migration policy have been described as 'positive, political conditionality' (Lebon-McGregor et al., 2022). In other words, migration diplomacy in the EU–Ethiopia negotiations is part of the agenda among other major themes such as trade, aid and investments. Yet, these conditionalities are not always fully welcomed by the Ethiopian authorities due to their high level of sensitivity over Ethiopia's sovereignty. Moreover, the Ethiopian government has been criticised by the EU for avoiding the requirements of the EU conditionality through strategic use of the country's federal structure and for allowing the entrance of new donors like China (ibid.). For instance, the eruption of the Tigray conflict led the EU to make its €88 million funds conditional on enabling the access of humanitarian agencies to the Tigray region. Yet, considering the significance of Ethiopia as a regional hub for transit migration, the strategic importance of EU–Ethiopia relations will likely remain despite the challenges (ibid.).

The above relatively slow and weak developments within EU–Ethiopia migration negotiations along with the negative perception of migration both in the countries of origin and in the recipient countries indicate that there is space for progress. This is particularly so at the political level, which will of course have an impact on the ground. Moreover, the EU–Ethiopia negotiations are often received with distrust by the Ethiopian population, taking into consideration that their standards of living remain stable or even may get worse in the near future especially for the poor and marginalised such as pastoralists, farmers and the displaced population. The Danish Institute for International Studies published an interview by Gezahegne Kiya (Donovan, 2022), an academic based in Ethiopia, stating that 'the EU has an interest in ensuring refugees settle in Ethiopia rather than seeking asylum in Europe and spends millions on this'. In another comparative study of migration coverage in the media of 11 countries including Ethiopia, the authors conclude that European destination countries focus on border security and migration policy, while both the African and European media ignore the causes of migration (Fengler et al., 2020). Some authors note that 'the migration crisis has created a significant amount of animosity toward Europe, where growing racism and xenophobia in domestic politics have alienated Ethiopians' (Balfour et al., 2022: 22). Last but not least, thousands of deaths and disappearances recorded on the migration routes in the East and Horn of Africa regions since 2014 (IOM, 2022b) fuel such resentment towards EU-led transit migration management. As the very limited legal opportunities for migration continues, it is quite likely that the vicious cycle of tragedies during migration journeys will continue (Van Houtum and Bueno Lacy, 2020).

Experiences and perceptions of transit migration

The MIGNEX team conducted research in three research areas in Ethiopia: Batu, Kombolcha and Moyale (Kasavan et al., 2022c and 2022d; Adhanom and Murray, 2022). Located in the north-centre of Ethiopia, Kombolcha gained important momentum for developments through industrialisation and international investment (Kasavan et al., 2022d). Yet, the MIGNEX team reports that limited opportunities for regular employment and low wages have encouraged inhabitants to migrate via risky routes. Although regular means of mobility are available for some in Kombolcha, some women still prefer to choose irregular routes, mainly to work abroad as domestic workers, because of the difficulties of satisfying the legal requirements of migration. Batu, a small town in Ethiopia, has developed in recent years through foreign investments mostly in the agricultural sectors. Half of young adult respondents of the MIGNEX research in Batu have ties abroad. Nevertheless, high risk awareness of irregular mobility has led them to avoid risky forms of international out-migration. Just like in Kombolcha, women tend to prefer international out-migration more than men in Batu (Kasavan et al., 2022c). Moreover, MIGNEX research reveals that political instabilities in the country reinforce the insecurities and anxieties of all ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Finally, located at the cross-roads of certain migration routes in south Ethiopia, Moyale has also been developed in recent years like Kombolcha and Batu. Besides this development trend, however, Moyale has an established culture of mobility due to its proximity to Kenyan border towns (Adhanom and Murray, 2022). Thus, Moyale has turned out to be a spot for international migrants and internal migration routes in recent years. The MIGNEX team reports that the political tensions and environmental dynamics like drought pose challenges for the development process of Moyale.

In these three research areas, migration aspirations are highest in Batu (38.81%), followed by Moyale (17.84%). In comparison, unrealised migration intentions in the last five years are also relatively high: the percentage of people who have planned to move abroad but have been unable to do so is 15.58% in Kombolcha, 16.10% in Mayole and 18.59% in Batu (see Figure 16). The gender differential is striking when it comes to unrealised migration intentions – this is

much smaller in Batu and Kombolcha when compared to other MIGNEX research areas covered in this paper (see Figure 7). In Batu, for instance, out-migration is more common among women than among men. MIGNEX fieldwork findings suggest that while women can find work opportunities in Gulf countries and travel with or without documents, men are more likely to migrate internally (Kavasan et al., 2022c).

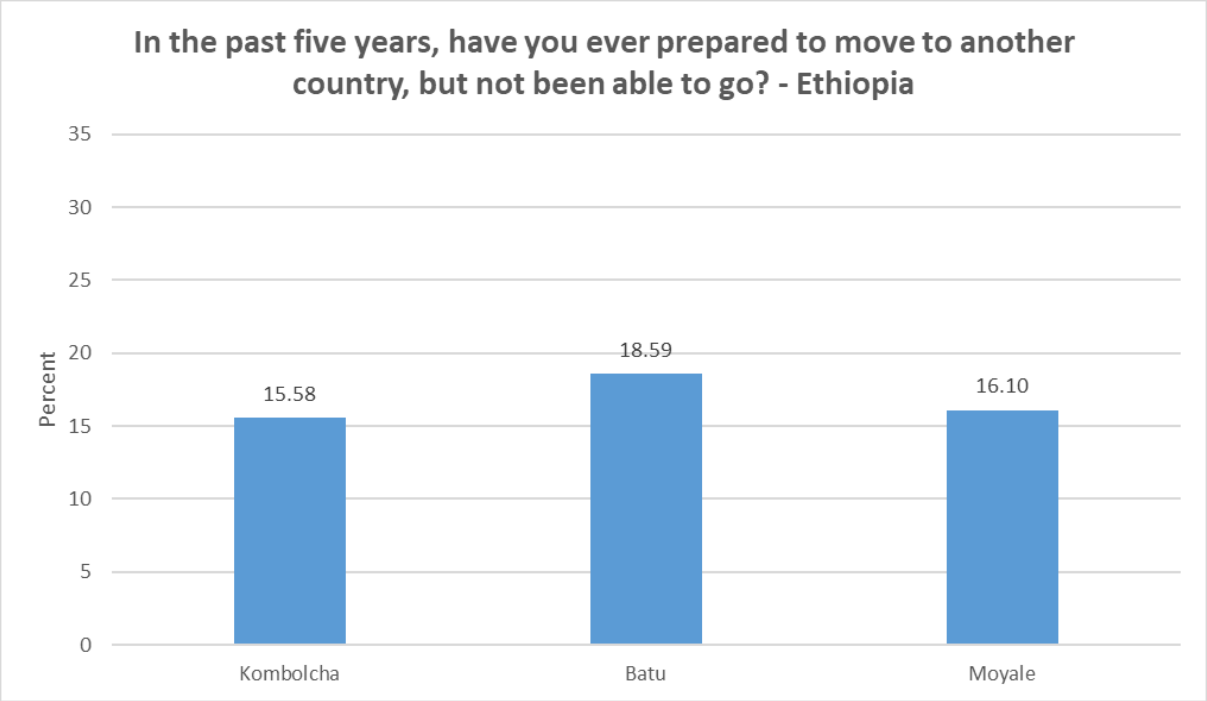

Figure 16. Unrealised migration intentions in MIGNEX research areas in Ethiopia

Note: Bars indicate those who answered YES.

Source: MIGNEX survey data.

MIGNEX qualitative data also indicate that recent positive developments in Kombolcha have made some young inhabitants hopeful about the future (Kasavan et al., 2022d). Although the respondents associate migration with positive indicators like increased savings or gaining independence, migration is considered as a last resort only, especially for young women. Respondents in Moyale also seem hopeful about the future and are unlikely to choose international out-migration except to Kenya (Adhanom and Murray, 2022). Nevertheless, the MIGNEX team reports that border disputes cause anxiety among inhabitants of the region, despite the positive developments due to cross-border trade and free mobility. Finally, as in Moyale, respondents in Batu also have also limited aspirations for international out-migration (Kasavan et al., 2022c). Here, the research reveals that internal migration is preferred to transit migration. The MIGNEX team reports low aspirations in each of these three research areas when considering the dire living conditions in Ethiopia; however, the aspirations to move on are still higher relative to MIGNEX research areas in Pakistan.

The percentage of respondents who answered yes to five indicators of transit migration experiences vary between 12.13% and 20.90% in Batu and Moyale (see Figure 17). Although the MIGNEX research is not representative in Kombolcha, it seems that Ethiopians living in Kombolcha have a higher level of direct or indirect experience of transit migration compared

to those in Batu and Moyale – 50.75% of respondents in Kombolcha report knowing someone who has been deported back to Ethiopia and 35% of survey participants mentioned knowing someone who has been detained while migrating. These rates are dramatically high compared to respondents in Batu and Moyale. Overall, transit migration experience is more prominent across the MIGNEX research areas in Ethiopia when compared to other MIGNEX research areas in Turkey or Pakistan, but less prominent than research areas in Tunisia.

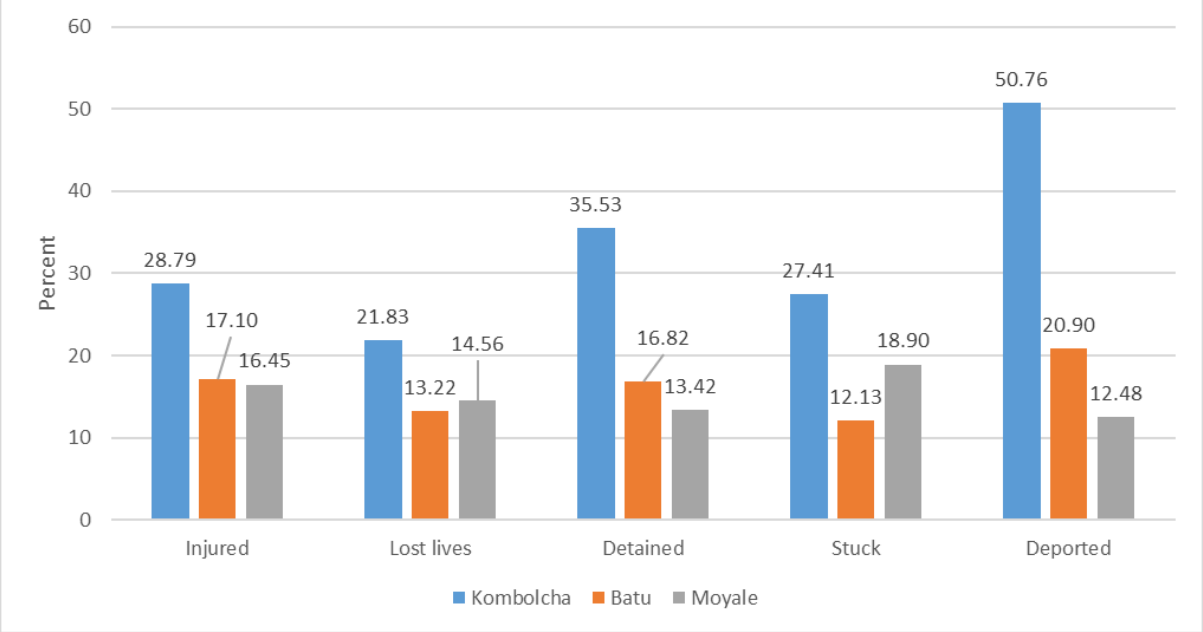

Figure 17. Transit migration experience in MIGNEX research areas in Ethiopia

Note: Bars indicate those who answered YES to related survey questions explained in Box 3.

Source: MIGNEX survey data.

Other studies also confirm this high exposure to transit migration experience and the high level of risk perceptions among Ethiopians. In a study conducted by Ethiopian academics, it is found that 'the journey is often dangerous, involving physical assault, sexual abuse, kidnapping, robbery and even death. In most destination areas, illegal migrants face restricted mobility, exploitative working conditions and harassment of various kinds' (Mulugeta and Makonnen, 2017: 53). Especially for women, the securitisation of transit migration comes at a higher price, taking into account their traumatic experiences and their high risk of exposure to violence (Gerard and Pickering, 2013). Post-traumatic stress disorder and even a tendency to commit suicide may be common among migrants in transit (Vlamis, 2018). It should be stressed that people experience such difficulties due to the insecurity and the fragility in the country. These experiences involve, in many cases, long periods of uncertainty and idleness, which may lead to the need for psychological support. It is very important to note that some migrants are willing to risk their lives to overcome their current situation.

Another study highlights the desperation of young Eritreans in Ethiopia, who generally experience Ethiopia as a transit country 'within longer migration trajectories to their desired destinations' (Massa, 2022: 1). A comparative survey shows that Eritrean migrants significantly aspire to move abroad more than Ethiopian citizens (Kuschminder et al., 2021). This survey

highlights that the majority of Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia who participated in the study aspire to migrate and that their target countries are the US, Canada and to an extent European states (ibid.). Nevertheless, in some cases, it can take years before they reach their final destination. Yet, high aspirations for onward migration among Eritreans are not always the case for all migrants in Ethiopia. For example, South Sudanese migrants are not as interested in onward migration (Andersson, 2022). Rather, they are interested in returning to their home countries. In short, the migration aspirations vary between nationals and non-nationals in Ethiopia, and among refugee communities; although all of these communities have direct or indirect experience of transit migration management.

4.4 PAKISTAN

Introduction

Pakistan is categorised as a country of origin, transit and destination, given its experiences with international migratory flows (IOM, 2019). Given Pakistan's geo-political relationships with countries such as India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and China, the country has not only received migrants from these countries, but it has also been a source of out-migration for millions of Pakistanis who find livelihood opportunities in the Middle Eastern region. Historically, migratory flows and patterns in Pakistan have been influenced under a context of fragility because of tensions with East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, and with India and Afghanistan. In the aftermath of the 1965 Kargil war with India and the 1971 war with Bangladesh, Pakistan experienced various waves of migration. Following the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, the first waves of migration from Afghanistan began in 1979, whereas the subsequent waves of migration began after the rise of the Taliban in the 1990s. The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021 has produced another wave of migration into Pakistan, in a context where border crossings between the two countries have been rendered much more difficult and the focus of the government has shifted to return and repatriation since the 2000s (EUAA, 2022).

Target population of transit migration management in Pakistan

The Government of Pakistan does not share data on immigration publicly and getting an accurate estimate of the volume and characteristics of transit migration can be difficult. Out of a total population of 220 million people, international migrants constitute about 1.7% (IOM, 2020). This is mainly due to the presence of refugees from Afghanistan. Hence, a major group associated with transit migration in Pakistan are refugees from Afghanistan. As of June 2022, Pakistan hosts over 1.2 million Afghan refugees registered with UNHCR, plus possibly over 500,000 undocumented Afghans not registered with the Pakistani authorities (EUAA, 2022). According to UNHCR figures pertaining to 2022, Pakistan is, globally, the fourth-largest refugee recipient country (UNHCR, n.d.). Taking into account that refugees are categorised into those who are registered and those who are unregistered, some sources estimate that there are 3 million Afghans living in Pakistan (European Commission, n.d.; Qaisrani et al., 2021; TRAFIG, 2021).

Refugees who are registered in Pakistan and have proof of registration (PoR) are eligible to receive state benefits such as access to health and education. Of the total number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan in 2019, about 1.3 million had a PoR (IOM, 2019). About 58% of these refugees reside in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 23% in Baluchistan, 12% in Punjab, 5% in Sindh and 2% in Islamabad (ibid.). Since 2021 and the Taliban takeover of political power in Afghanistan, about 145,000 Afghans have arrived in Pakistan who need international protection (ECHO,

2022). Note that the number of registered refugees fluctuates from one period to another as the borders of Pakistan and Afghanistan are porous but subject to different cyclical movements of Afghan refugees. Considering the trend of Afghan migration due to the Taliban takeover in 2021, Pakistan will likely continue to be a hub for refugees from Afghanistan, some of whom aspire to move to Europe, North America or Australia. However, the number of Afghans reaching Europe after staying in Pakistan is relatively low considering that, in 2021, there were 98,685 asylum applications overall from Afghan nationals, and at least some of these will have been to Pakistan before journeying to Europe (European Council, n.d.).

In addition, Pakistan currently hosts 104,000 people who are registered as IDPs, due to military and insurgent operations. There are also refugees from Afghanistan who are affected by internal displacement (ECHO, 2022). Besides Afghans, the number of refugees from other countries is marginal: Somalia (247), Yemen (63), Syria (50) and Iran (48). Migrants from other countries include nationals of Bangladesh, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Sri Lanka and Palestine (IOM, 2019). Over the years, there has also been an increase in immigration notably from Myanmar and China. For example, there has been an increase in Rohingya Muslims migrating to Pakistan. About 400,000 people from Myanmar have the status of stateless individuals (Latif, 2020). Thousands of Uyghur Muslims from China have also migrated to Pakistan because of cultural and religious persecution, while the country has also recently experienced a flux of migrants from neighbouring China as a result of the Belt and Road Initiative. These are primarily workers involved in infrastructure projects. There has also been an increase in Chinese citizens who have set up small business ventures (such as salons and language centres) in Pakistan (Qaisrani et al., 2021). In 2016, about 70,000 people from China entered Pakistan, of which 27, 596 were given visa extensions (Jaffrey, 2015).

Among these migrants with varying legal status and motivations, an unknown number of migrants use Pakistan as a transit state before moving on elsewhere. The route to Europe which connects Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Greece is mainly used by Pakistani, Afghan and Bangladeshi nationals (Kamali-Chirani, 2021). Although the number of undocumented migrants who come to Pakistan to stay (for some time) and/or pass through it is not known reliably, it is estimated that around 300,000 per year use smugglers' networks (ibid.). This category of irregular migrants also includes women who are trafficked for prostitution from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Central Asian Republics and Myanmar; however, the information on trafficking in Pakistan is scarce, and thus requires further research (Qaisrani et al., 2021).

Pakistani nationals are also potential targets of transit migration management in the country. As a source country for refugees, Pakistan ranks fifth in terms of the volume of asylum applications per country filed in the EU. In 2021, there were 24,820 asylum applications from Pakistani citizens (European Council, n.d.). But among these, those who receive a negative decision on the asylum application and those who are detained and to be deported are also common (Qaisrani et al., 2021).

Transit migration management in Pakistan also targets the country's own nationals emigrating to Middle Eastern countries and those returning on a temporary basis. The majority of Pakistani workers who work in the Middle East are employed in low-skilled jobs in the transport and construction sectors. This type of migration is temporary as most of the workers are contracted for about two to three years (ibid.). Therefore, Pakistanis working in Middle Eastern countries particularly in semi-skilled sectors will have to return to Pakistan, albeit for a temporary period, because Gulf and Middle Eastern countries do not enable permanent settlement or naturalisation. Pakistan has also been at the receiving end of a large number of

deportees, primarily from Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia (Shah et al., 2020). Some of these migrant Pakistanis also resort to 'irregular' channels to emigrate to Europe (Qaisrani et al., 2021).

National policies

At the national level, transit migration management is not a key policy concern for Pakistan, but rather the focus is on emigration for labour. Pakistan's efforts are largely directed towards ensuring a transparent and smooth transfer of foreign remittances which are generated by the bulk of its workers in Middle East and Gulf countries. Foreign remittances have in fact played a significant role in reducing Pakistan's current account deficit, as well as in reducing poverty in rural areas (Shah et al., 2020). Hence, Pakistan's institutional set up for migration is primarily directed towards the promotion of emigration, the protection of emigrant workers' rights, as well as the transparent and less costly flow of remittances and diaspora engagement. There has also been a recent interest in the reintegration of returnees (Qaisrani et al., 2021). The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD) coordinates the procedures and institutional arrangements relating to overseas workers between the provinces and international organisations (ILO, 2016, cited in Qaisrani et al., 2021).

It is well recognised in policy circles that Pakistan does not have a robust policy and programming for migration. Policy-makers and stakeholders recognise gaps in data on return migration and have initiated a draft National Emigration and Welfare Policy for Overseas Pakistanis, which aims to tackle the challenges returnees face in host countries (Qaisrani et al., 2021). Pakistan has been partnering with international agencies such as UNHCR, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), ICMPD, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and IOM. In particular, ICMPD, in the context of the Budapest Process, closely collaborated with the Government of Pakistan to develop a comprehensive migration policy, where issues such as the return of nationals, border management and discouraging irregular emigration are also addressed.

The sizable community of Afghan refugees and the porous borders between Afghanistan and Pakistan, coupled with the visibility of undocumented Pakistani migrants on the way to Europe and the Middle East, directly and indirectly shape transit migration management in Pakistan. Pakistan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1954 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons or the 1961 UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The implementing arm for refugee-related matters in each of the provinces is the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR). Although there are mechanisms set up by international agencies to document registered and unregistered Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan, there are hardly any data on Bangladeshi, Burmese and other migrants who don't have any legal status in the country (Shah et al., 2020). Additionally, registration services, which are available for Afghan refugees, are not available for those from countries such as Myanmar and Bangladesh (Qaisrani et al., 2021). Those without proper documents are not eligible for public and essential services such as education, healthcare or access to the formal job market. Pakistan does not provide the right to citizenship to refugees, even those who have lived in the country for most of their lives. Further, Pakistan does not provide citizenship to individuals who are the children of refugees or those who are recognised as being 'stateless'. The right of citizenship in the 1951 Pakistani Citizenship Act is not applicable to refugees (ibid.).

Given Pakistan is not a signatory to any of the international refugee conventions, there are no laws for international protection. Refugees are therefore not eligible to attain citizenship as a durable solution (ibid.). Despite the lack of interest from the state in integrating those without citizenship status, however, international agencies have directed a lot of effort in the country. UNHCR is the main international agency that works with Pakistan's Ministry for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) to support the protection of Afghan refugees in Pakistan (ibid.).

Transit migration is not politicised by the Pakistani government, but it is likely to become politicised due to the EU's interventions. It is interesting to find that even though most emigrants are concentrated in the Gulf and Middle East, 'the majority of the foreign-funded migration projects run by the … ICMPD, IOM and UN are concerned with migrants, potentially going to Europe' (Qaisrani et al., 2021). Despite this assessment, there are various instances where this issue has been securitised by the government, especially regarding the presence of Afghan refugees in the country.

Since the 2000s, the repatriation and return of Afghans has been the focus of policy-makers and of institutions even though the majority (approximately 60%) of these individuals have spent more than 30 years in Pakistan (IOM, 2019). Through the Voluntary Repatriation Programme under the 2003 Tripartite Agreement with UNHCR and the Afghan government, Pakistan has promoted the return of Afghan refugees, which was then suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic (APRRN, 2020). In 2020, a repatriation programme between UNHCR and international organisations such as the IOM was initiated to ensure that Afghans were assisted in returning to their home country (Kamali-Chirani, 2021).

In recent years, the migration of Afghans has become securitised both by Pakistani officials and some segments of the public (Qaisrani et al., 2021; TRAFIG, 2021). A report by the TRAFIG project (2021) shows that Afghans are subject to widespread policing practices including, among others, extortion, harassment and violence by law enforcement authorities in the country (Micinski, 2021). Following terror attacks in 2014, the government passed an anti-terrorism plan which made the situation of Afghan nationals more vulnerable, regardless of their legal status (Roehrs, 2015). This trend consolidated in the country after the new arrivals from Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover in 2021 (Rehman, 2021).

Besides these instances of the securitisation of Afghans in Pakistan, the securitisation of border controls has also been reinforced in the country. Even if most of Pakistan's borders are protected, Afghans still seek to migrate to the country (Joles, 2021). It has been stated that 90% of the 2,600 km border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is already fenced by Pakistan (DAWN News, 2021). Nevertheless, border disputes between Afghanistan and Pakistan continue to cause tensions, and lead to the detention and death of refugees (Siddique, 2022). Finally, Pakistan plans to increase its encampment capacity in border zones to immobilise Afghans from onward mobility (TRAFIG, 2021). In short, Afghan migrants have been subject to different forms of securitisation in Pakistan over the years.

Migration diplomacy between Pakistan and the EU

Since the mid-2000s, the EU and Pakistan have negotiated several migration-related agreements and projects (Lebon-McGregor et al., 2022). In terms of migration management, a major development between Pakistan and the EU has been to set up opportunities for dialogue on migration and mobility. These include an RA signed in 2009 and entered into force in 2010; however, the Agreement has been suspended a few times due to accusations by the Pakistani authorities on the 'blatant misuse' of deportations in Europe in the context of the European refugee crisis in 2015 (Lebon-Mcgregor et al., 2022; DAWN News, 2015). Drafted with the

assistance of UNHCR in 2012, Pakistan is also part of the Quadripartite Steering Committee of the Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees' (SSAR) to address the problems of Afghan refugees in the region. This is a platform where EU bodies assist to address migration challenges in relation to Afghan migration. Moreover, Pakistan became a participant of the Budapest Process for the Silk Routes Project on Migration Management in 2013. Finally, the EU–Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan was signed in 2019 with emphasis on 'full and effective' implementation of the RA, efforts to address the benefits of regular migration on development, regional cooperative frameworks like the Budapest Process and tackling 'protracted' refugee problems (European Council, 2019).

At the international level, the EU seeks to identify comprehensive ways of migration management, such as legal pathways for migration to Europe, particularly with respect to curbing irregular migration and smuggling. Through a number of EU-sponsored programmes, Pakistan's government is partnering with the EU to streamline migration management by 'enforcing stricter border controls, discouraging irregular migration, and creating pathways for return and reintegration' (Qaisrani et al., 2021: 3). Among other international donors, the EU has occupied a strategic position through various programmes and bilateral efforts over the years to advance the peace process specifically with respect to the Afghan population in Pakistan.

Pakistan is one of the major countries where the EU invests under the international humanitarian–development nexus and the Strategic Engagement Plan (SEP) framework under which the EU provides funding for the integration and repatriation of the refugee population. Yet, it is difficult to decipher the exact contribution of the EU towards the integration of refugees in Pakistan because funds are channelled from its development stream as well as humanitarian aid schemes. So far, official sources report that the EU has spent over €100 million under the SEP on areas of peace and security, democracy, rule of law, human rights and infrastructures such as energy since 2016 (ECHO, 2022). Within this scheme, another €37 million has been spent from the EU's development budget towards Afghan refugees in Pakistan, in 2018. During the COVID-19 pandemic, an additional €10 million was available with the objective of boosting UNHCR's efforts in assisting Afghan refugees in the short and medium term (UNHCR, 2020). Also, the EU has recently announced that it will spend €265 million on green inclusive growth, human capital and governance, including the rule of law and human rights for the next five years (Pakistan Today, 2022).

In Pakistan, much of the EU funding on refugee integration is focused on the Afghan refugee population. Yet, only registered refugees are catered to for services such as health, livelihood opportunities, legal protection and education for refugee children. These efforts include the provision of funding mostly for Afghans who potentially seek to move Europe, and the implementation of the RA with Pakistan as mentioned above. Often these activities have the aim of keeping Afghan refugees in Pakistan or encouraging them to return to Afghanistan. The main regions where EU programmes are concentrated include Khyber Paktunkhwa, Balochistan and Gilgit Baltistan. These are the provinces within which Afghan refugees are largely concentrated (European External Action Service, 2021)

Another initiative of the EU regarding Afghan migration is the Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP). A key objective of the MIP is to develop social cohesion in Pakistan for the Afghan population. Using skill-building initiatives and job-creation opportunities, the MIP promises to ensure the safe integration of Afghan refugees by addressing issues of irregular migration. The MIP platform will be used to initiate dialogue between Pakistan and the EU on overall migration management, with broader migration management, support to Afghan

refugees, and effective and efficient border control being key focus areas of the programme. According to the MIP, the 'EU will continue to advocate for a comprehensive migration policy and institutional arrangement' (European Union, n.d.). The EU's interest is focused on curbing irregular networks and channels. In this regard, the EU representative on migration lauded Pakistan's efforts in curbing irregular migration, trafficking and smuggling over certain routes by enforcing stricter measures at the border. Pakistan, while agreeing to implement stricter measures, is advocating the possibility of out-migration of its younger population (Shafqat, 2022). Broadly speaking, it has been stated that the EU mostly imposes negative financial political conditionality to Pakistan (Lebon-McGregor et al., 2022).

Additionally, ICMPD's partnership with the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) reflects the EU's priority of developing a readmission and reintegration mechanism for returning Overseas Pakistanis. Projects claim to focus on protecting the rights of migrant workers, and discouraging irregular migration, human trafficking and smuggling. As stated by Qaisrani et al. (2021), the EU faces resistance on an approach solely focused on return. So, the EU decided to build the capacities of the national government to control irregular migration. EU funding in Pakistan has also been used for awareness campaigns regarding the perils of irregular routes and to facilitate regulated routes (that are mainly aimed towards the Gulf, instead of Europe). According to Qaisrani et al. (2021), considering that irregular migration trends are mainly from Pakistani districts that are comparatively better off, livelihood-oriented strategies may not inhibit the culture of migration. Rather, as local experts highlight, safe and legal routes should be increased.

Besides migration-related projects, the EU has expressed its support for facilitating a peaceful process of advancing bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Through the Afghanistan–Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS), Pakistan and the EU agreed that efforts for a successful peace process will be Afghan-led (European External Action Service, 2019). The entity European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) is one of the main bodies within the EU that undertakes strategic decision-making and lobbying with the government authorities in Pakistan on the issue of migration and displacement, under the humanitarian theme. The APAPPS is considered to be a key platform for overcoming challenges and improving bilateral relations.

Overall, the EU's interest is to ensure that Afghan refugees either move back to Afghanistan or stay within Pakistan because of the risk of them moving to European countries. Relatedly, Micinski (2021) argues that Pakistani officials have used the extension of registration cards for Afghan refugees as a foreign policy tool against international donors such as the EU, US and Japan, in an attempt to receive more aid for Afghan refugees in the country. Therefore, much of the efforts by Pakistan are geared towards the repatriation of refugees or using non-repatriation as a leverage point to raise funds.

Experiences and perceptions on transit migration

MIGNEX research took place in Chot Dheeran, Keti Bandar and Youhanabad in Pakistan (Erdal et al., 2022b; 2022c; 2022d). Chot Dheeran, which is a small town in Pakistan's Punjab province, includes a majority of communities whose members have relatives in European countries (Erdal et al., 2022b). The MIGNEX research team reports that the nexus between international ties and on-the-ground development is quite important for Chot Dheeran in relation to remittances, family ties and circular mobilities. Also, 50% of survey respondents in Chot Dheeran stated that they are in regular contact with someone abroad. In fact, respondents have significant ties with France, Belgium and Italy (ibid.). Despite the limited availability of

regular pathways, inhabitants of Chot Dheeran still consider migration to Europe as feasible through irregular means like smuggling. This consideration is especially visible in the case of young men (ibid.).

As a port town, the economy of Keti Bandar is based on fishery and related activities. Due to the effects of climate change such as rising sea levels in the region, the area receives internal migrants (Erdal et al., 2022c). In contrast to Chot Dheeran, respondents in Keti Bandar showed no interest in either regular or irregular pathways to migration. In fact, few currently hold passports and have experienced migration. MIGNEX survey data reveals that only 3.63% of respondents in Keti Banbar would prefer to live in another country (see Figure 5). Nevertheless, the emerging impacts of climate change may affect the future of the region.

Youhanabad, another MIGNEX research area in Pakistan, is the largest Christian majority neighbourhood located in northern Pakistan and has experienced in-migration through church networks (Erdal et al., 2022d). Some indicators of development like education and infrastructural investments yield some positive results. Meanwhile, migration aspirations are also widespread in Youhanabad as in Chot Dheeran. While around 13% of MIGNEX survey respondents in Chot Dheeran aspire to live in another country, this rate stands at over 16% for respondents in Youhanabad, and interestingly it is slightly higher among women than men in Youhanabad (see Figure 6). Remarkably, aspirations are not so high as in other MIGNEX research areas. All three MIGNEX research areas in Pakistan have the lowest aspiration rates compared to MIGNEX research areas in Turkey, Tunisia and Ethiopia.

Regarding migration intention, across the three research areas in Pakistan, few respondents indicated unrealised efforts to migrate to another country in the last five years (see Figure 18). The survey conducted in Chot Dheeran shows that 6.24% of respondents had intentions to move to another country but had not been able to go, in comparison to 5.24% of respondents from Keti Bendar. Unsurprisingly, previous migration intentions among young men in Chot Dheeran are more than double those of women in the area (see Figure 7). This figure stands at only 2% among women in Keti Bendar, illustrating the gendered feature of out-migration (see Figure 7). The lowest intention rate is in Youhanabad, where only 4.32% of the survey respondents stated previous intentions to migrate. Again, in Youhanabad, unlike other MIGNEX research areas in Pakistan, slightly more women than men indicated that they were prepared to move abroad but were not able to go (see Figure 7). Broadly speaking, fewer people in the Pakistani research areas have made plans to move on in the last few years compared to research areas in Tunisia or Ethiopia, for example.

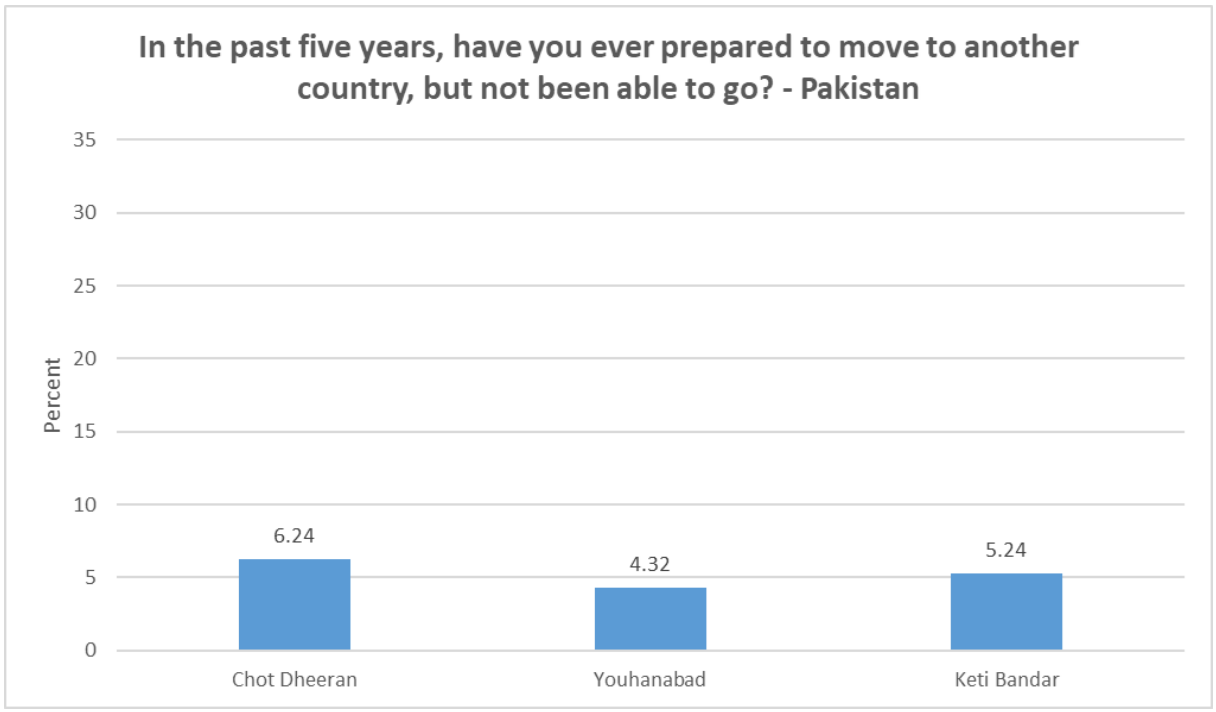

Figure 18. Unrealised migration intentions in MIGNEX research areas in Pakistan

Note: Bars indicate those who answered YES.

Source: MIGNEX survey data.

Despite the relatively low number of people who intended to move abroad in all three research areas in Pakistan, transit migration experiences are higher in Chot Dheeran, compared to Youhanabad and Keti Bandar. In Chot Dheeran, respondents indicated that they have travelled or know of people who have travelled irregularly towards Europe using the routes of Iran and Turkey. The MIGNEX survey data (see Figure 19) show that about 15% of the respondents from Chot Dheeran indicated instances of detention, loss of lives and injuries experienced by their community. The number of respondents who know someone who has become stuck while migrating (11%) and deported back to Pakistan (about 9%) in Chot Dheeran reveals that the use of irregular channels and networks of smugglers and being exposed to harsh journey conditions is a common experience here (Erdal et al., 2022b). Meanwhile, the MIGNEX research team has found that risk awareness is higher than the perceptions of the benefits of migration in Chot Dheeran (ibid.). This may explain the relatively low intentions and aspirations to migrate and the comparatively higher experiences of transit migration. Respondents from Youhanabad and Keti Bandar indicated relatively fewer direct or indirect experiences of transit migration management along migration trajectories (see Figure 19).

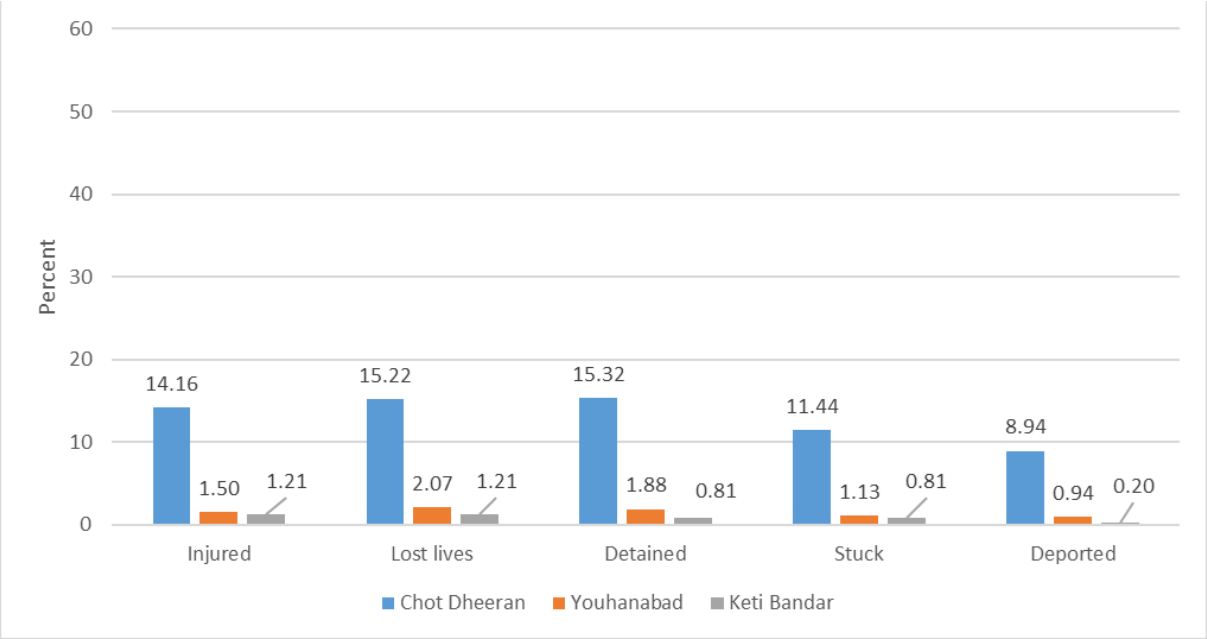

Figure 19. Transit migration experience in MIGNEX research areas in Pakistan

Note: Bars indicate those who answered YES to related survey questions explained in Box 3.

Source: MIGNEX survey data.

To better understand the transit migration aspirations in Pakistan, a closer look at the Afghan population in the country is also necessary, as this group is considered to be the main target of Pakistan's transit migration policies. Afghan migration to Pakistan has become a structural phenomenon in the country in the last 40 years and has once again become a critical issue after the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in 2021. Mielke and Etzold (2022) state that second and third generations of educated Afghan migrants aspire to move from Pakistan to European countries due to growing difficulties in the former. Precarious legal and socioeconomic conditions in Pakistan encourage some people coming from Afghanistan, Myanmar and Bangladesh to choose the Iran and Turkey route (Qaisrani et al., 2021). Ironically, it is claimed that the targeting of Afghan nationals in Pakistan has become another partial reason to seek asylum in Europe in recent years (Mielke and Etzold, 2022).

Conclusion

In line with the overall research objectives of MIGNEX to generate new knowledge on migration, development and policy, this background paper provides a birds-eye view of transit migration management around the world and along specific migration routes. This enables us to better situate transit migration management in individual MIGNEX countries under scrutiny.

Despite various contestations around the term 'transit migration', it has become a part of the migration experience, particularly for migrants from origin countries where there are very few opportunities for legal migration. Indeed, the concept gradually came to the fore in the 1990s within the political, academic, and even public spheres with the growth and complexity of migratory movements from the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa to Europe

(Castagnone, 2011; Düvell, 2006). Hence, the term has mainly been used to describe (irregular) stepwise migration to the EU, North America and Australia. Due to its general association with irregular migration, transit migration has often been – implicitly or explicitly – stigmatised in policy documents or narratives on migration management.

As discussed in Part 2, transit migration management has become a main pillar of externalisation in different regions of the world. Meanwhile, the level of engagement by popular destinations in the Global North with transit migration management in other countries associated with transit migration differs from one region to the other. Despite the development of strict policies to prevent those transit movements in the three geographies briefly examined in Part 2, the decades-long continuation of transit migration shows that this type of migratory movement is becoming structurally institutionalised within international migration regimes or systems that have been established globally. In the European context, migration management, especially in relation to irregular migration and asylum, is highly dependent on policy approaches to transit migration. Transit migration management has also become a key policy area where the EU and its Member States are required to cooperate closely with third countries to ensure the effective management of irregular migration directed to Europe (Lebon-McGregor et al., 2022).

Against this background, we have scrutinised transit migration and policy patterns in four MIGNEX countries, namely, Turkey, Tunisia, Pakistan and Ethiopia. The paper situates the discussion of transit migration management concerning these four countries, as well as two major transit routes within which these four MIGNEX countries are included. These are transit migration routes linking Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey; and those linking Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Libya and Tunisia. Embracing a trajectory approach to transit migration, we call for more comprehensive approaches to the analysis of transit migration, paying attention to the initiation and perpetuation of migration flows and migrants' experiences of journeys and settlement, in the context of restricted migration policies that heavily affect not only South–North migration but also South–South migration.

We should also consider that countries that are associated with transit migration are historically or newly emerging places of immigration for some migrants. In other words, not all migrants in countries such as Mexico, Tunisia and Turkey (which are considered mainly as transit countries) are indeed transiting. Some have moved to those countries with the purpose of work or study or to seek asylum. The four countries of focus in this paper host a considerable number of international migrants of various legal categories. Turkey is host to over 3.6 million Syrian refugees, around 400,000 refugees of other nationalities and an unknown number of irregular migrants from its wider region. Similarly, Tunisia hosts African and Libyan nationals and became a de facto destination despite official denial of its categorisation as an immigration country. Ethiopia is a major recipient of refugees in Africa, with a high number of Eritrean and Sudanese refugees along with its own IDPs. Meanwhile, Pakistan has received waves of Afghans in the last decades, making it a top recipient country for asylum, along with newly arriving migrants from neighbouring countries. Among these migrant groups of various legal status, some may consider onward migration and some may not. Note also that, historically and also currently, these countries are places of origin for potential migrants who aspire to move to other countries to seize better opportunities for themselves. However, in the absence of legal opportunities to migrate to most popular destinations, mainly European countries but also to the Middle East, to varying degrees nationals of these countries resort to migration through irregular means, and hence they may be identified as transit migrants despite their diverse migration trajectories.

The questions that we have tackled in this paper is how we can understand and compare migration management in relation to transit migration in these four countries and how we can situate this comparison in the literature on transit migration and in wider global policy debates. Despite contextual differences, what is common among these countries, for the aims of this background paper, is that: 1) they have been targeted by EU funds to prevent onward migration of displaced people within their territories, 2) they experience irregular border crossings of all types (own nationals, irregular entries, transit), and 3) their own nationals are also affected by transit migration management. Yet, major differences exist in the way they manage transit migration and in their level of engagement with transit migration management as a policy concern. Such variation relates to geographical location, internal dynamics of emigration and immigration, state migration management capacity, political will to engage in transit migration management, and their priorities in negotiations with donors, mainly the EU.

Transit migration management in the European neighbourhood: Turkey and Tunisia

Comparing Turkey and Tunisia in relation to their approach to transit migration management is not straightforward. These countries both have sea borders with the EU and they are both situated on the final leg of the transit migration route to the EU. From a structural perspective, their state capacity, economic standing and the political priorities of current governments are different. Moreover, they also widely differ in their current emigration and immigration dynamics. Yet, it is still possible to compare these countries with regards to their transit migration management according to our working definition presented in Part 1. While Table **2** summarises the main findings of our comparative research on Turkey and Tunisia, below we highlight some striking differences in both countries in their approach to transit migration management and the effects on targeted.

Both countries have utilised similar tools to prevent irregular border crossings. However, regarding the target population of transit migration management, the effects of these policies on nationals and non-nationals differ in those countries. Tunisians are a major group who are apprehended while travelling to the EU; in Turkey, apprehended migrants are third-country nationals, mainly Afghans, Syrians and Pakistanis, despite the rising number of Turkish nationals trying to reach their intended destination through stepwise migration. Regarding immigration statistics, Turkey has become a country of asylum and of immigration. Tunisia, in comparison, is a de facto immigration country. The number of international migrants (including asylum seekers and refugees) is much lower here and there are few incentives on the ground to integrate them. In relation to the decreased feasibility of out-migration along both legal and irregular pathways, the narrative of the Tunisian government has partly shifted from Tunisia being a transit not a destination country, since migration to Europe has become more challenging and therefore migrants have had to remain in Tunisia (Ensari et al., 2023 b).

Regarding national policies, Turkey developed its own legislative framework on immigration and asylum partly through its own internal dynamics but also through its involvement with the EU access process as a candidate country. The cooperation with the EU on migration management issues continues, despite the fact that Turkey's prospects for EU membership have long since faded away. Tunisia, in comparison, does not have its own immigration and asylum legislation and officially denies being a country of immigration. In approaches, Turkey has embraced a more securitised and politicised approach to transit migration, while the Tunisian government seems to be pursuing a deliberate depoliticised approach despite societal contestations over the loss of lives on the route to Europe.

On migration diplomacy, Turkey and Tunisia have different priorities in managing transit migration as part of their relations with the EU. Turkey has used migration diplomacy to attract aid for its own capacity-building of migration management and for the integration of refugees. However, officials would officially deny the importance of EU aid and rather would use migration diplomacy to pursue their interests in foreign and domestic policy. Tunisia mainly seeks funding from the EU for its own economic and political development and its economy depends on migrant remittances. EU-led reforms in Tunisia, especially with regards to border management issues, gained momentum in the aftermath of the 2011 Revolution where the Tunisian government was arguably caught institutionally, politically and economically weak and unable to purse its own agenda through migration diplomacy with the EU (Zardo, 2017). The main priority of Tunisia in its migration diplomacy with EU Member States is to gain privileges for the mobility of its own citizens. Turkey had a similar agenda of initiating visa free travel for its citizens, but this no longer appears to be a priority issue in the ongoing Turkey–EU migration diplomacy.

Regarding experiences of transit migration management, MIGNEX WP3 survey results in selected MIGNEX research areas confirms that Tunisia is predominantly a country of emigration, with high aspirations to migrate and notable experience of the violent aspects of transit migration. An important difference between the MIGNEX research areas in Turkey and those in Tunisia is observed with regards to unrealised migration intentions, where in Tunisia the MIGNEX team recorded a higher rate of potential migrants who made preparations to leave the country but were unable to do so. As a policy implication, one should acknowledge here that transit migration management has direct consequences for Tunisian nationals, along with third-country nationals in Tunisia. On the contrary, in Turkey, transit migration management is not seen as a policy area that affects nationals directly, despite the statistics on apprehensions in Europe indicating a rising number of Turkish nationals as potential transit migrants.

Table 2. Comparative experiences of transit migration management in Turkey and Tunisia

	Target populations	National policies	Migration diplomacy	Experiences and perceptions
Turkey	Third-country nationals (Afghans, Syrians, Pakistanis) Rise in the number of Turkish nationals	Legal, institutional and policy reforms since the 2000s YET No durable solutions for refugees More securitised and policitised since 2015	Ongoing cooperation over transit migration management since 2000s RAs with the EU signed in 2013 but not fully implemented 2016 Turkey-EU Statement Administrative and financial support for border management and capacity-building EU financial support to improve conditions of refugees Refugees as leverage in Turkey-EU relations	Low level of direct and indirect experiences in MIGNEX research areas (relatively higher among Syrians) Relatively high migration aspirations BUT much lower intentions

Tunisia	**Tunisians** **Third-country nationals, mainly from Libya and sub-Saharan Africa**	**Non-refoulment in 2014 Constitution** **BUT** **No national asylum law in place** **Deliberate non-politicisation**	**Bilateral agreements** **MP signed in 2014** **Positive political conditionality through bilateral and multilateral agreement** **Leverage for mobility privileges of its own citizens, reception of the EU aid for economic and political development**	**Widespread experiences regarding transit migration in MIGNEX research areas** **High aspirations and high intentions to migrate to Europe despite awareness of risks involved**

Source: The authors.

Transit migration management along migration trajectories: Pakistan and Ethiopia

Similarly to countries in the European neighbourhood, there are also noticeable similarities and differences among two MIGNEX countries along migration trajectories, namely, Ethiopia and Pakistan (see Table 3). Over decades, both countries have become a hub for migrants in their regions. This is especially the case for Ethiopia where the country hosts refugees from Eritrea, South Sudan, Somalia and other countries, mainly due to its – albeit not so clear – open border policy. Although the presence of Afghan refugees is significant in Pakistan, there are also other third-country nationals coming from countries like Bangladesh who are considered as potential transit migrants. Regarding its own nationals, Pakistan is a major country that exports a male labour force, mainly to the Middle East. While Ethiopia also sends labour migrants, including women as domestic workers to the Middle East, it is also a refugee-producing country. Hence, both its own nationals and third-country nationals have become the target of transit migration management.

Yet, despite the significant presence of migrants in both countries, Ethiopia and Pakistan have different levels of engagement with immigration issues in general and with transit migration management in particular. Comparatively, Ethiopia has been active in establishing a refugee reception mechanism, at least until the eruption of the Tigray conflict in 2020 which has significantly destabilised Ethiopia's social order – although it should be noted that even before the civil war, the implementation of the national-level refugee reception framework was a challenge due to low state capacity and the federal administrative structure. Meanwhile, the Pakistani authorities are quite reluctant to offer comprehensive schemes for migration management particularly over issues concerning transit migration and refugee reception. Moreover, in recent years, the securitisation of Afghan refugees has been observed, coupled with increased fencing and securitisation along Pakistan's historically porous border with Afghanistan.

Another difference between Ethiopia and Pakistan is evident in their use of migration diplomacy with the EU. Whereas Ethiopian political authorities try to use migration to raise funds in the form of foreign aid, Pakistan prioritises emigration policies and mobility rights for its own nationals. The latter has signed an RA with the EU but implementation has been suspended several times due to claims by Pakistan of the misuse of return procedures by the EU that undermines the rights of Pakistani nationals. Conversely, Ethiopia has not signed a formal RA with the EU but informal cooperation on this matter is a source of concern for the international community, primarily because returns might jeopardise the security of those who left Ethiopia due to political dissent. In Pakistan, while EU funding prioritises the

integration and protection of Afghan refugees in the country, the government's priority is repatriation. Meanwhile, Pakistan may also use the threat of repatriation of Afghans to attract more international funding.

Finally, the aspirations, intentions and transit migration experiences of migrants and nationals vary significantly in the two countries, and even among the different MIGNEX research areas within each country. Our comparative research highlights the differences that are visible at many levels among communities. In general, the MIGNEX research areas in Ethiopia show higher aspirations and relatively high intentions to migrate to another country when compared to the research areas in Pakistan. It is especially striking that aspirations are widespread among young women in the MIGNEX research areas in Ethiopia, and, not surprisingly, young men in the research areas in Pakistan are more willing to migrate. Meanwhile, respondents in the MIGNEX research areas in Pakistan have a relatively low rate of unrealised migration intentions when compared to the respondents in the research areas in Ethiopia. While transit migration experiences are common among survey respondents in Ethiopia, only one research area in Pakistan – Chot Dheeran, where irregular emigration is common – shows a relatively high level of transit migration experience. And here, it is interesting to note that aspirations in Chot Dheeran are relatively low when compared to other research areas in Pakistan and those in Ethiopia. Plus, while Eritreans in Ethiopia and some segments of Afghan migrants in Pakistan have significant aspirations to move onwards, South Sudanese nationals in Ethiopia and a significant proportion of Pakistani nationals have no such aspirations. These nuances derive from local dynamics like investments in a region or the impact of climate change, and they have notable impacts on the decision-making processes of individuals. It should also be noted that environmental degradation clearly affects internal migration patterns both in Pakistan and Ethiopia – which may also have a derivative impact on out-migration patterns.

Table 3. Comparative experiences of transit migration management in Ethiopia and Pakistan

	Target population	National policies	Migration diplomacy	Experiences and perceptions
Ethiopia	Ethiopians (as refugees, as economic migrants) Third-country nationals from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan	Open-door reception policy Recent progress in developing its migration policy Political and economic dynamics prevail over transit migration management Recent initiatives for local integration of refugees along with poor segments of society	Bilateral and multilateral agreements and funding for multiple development and migration projects CAMM signed in 2015 Priority country under the MPF signed in 2016 Reliance on foreign aid Positive political conditionality	High transit migration experiences in MIGNEX research areas Relatively low aspirations in MIGNEX research areas High aspirations among refugees, especially Eritreans, despite high risk perceptions

Pakistan	Pakistanis Third-country nationals, mainly Afghans	Lack of robust national policy on migration Policy focus on emigration rather than transit migration No national asylum law Recent border enforcement Increasing securitisation and repatriation of Afghan refugees	RA signed in 2010 EU funds mostly target Afghan refugees Negative financial and political conditionality	Relatively high transit migration experiences in Chot Dheeran Aspirations are low in MIGNEX research areas Relatively high perception of risks associated with transit migration

Source: The authors.

Ways forward

MIGNEX aims to address the main challenges of migration by translating the links between migration and development into policy implications. To this end, WP8 complements the two previous Work Packages (WP6 and WP7) by focusing on specific policy areas necessary for a comprehensive migration management framework. This includes the proper management of transit migration and the links between migration legislation and new policy tools.

The most commonly shared assumptions about migration to Europe, in particular, are that migration is a phenomenon that involves a person moving from one country of origin to another country of destination, from the Global South to the Global North. This reveals a strong Eurocentric bias (Castagnone, 2011), with a goal of permanent settlement and no desire to return to the country of origin. In this simplified logic that renders transit migration a linear process, aspects remain little documented – the movement between intermediate countries, the episodes of temporary return, the changes in trajectory, the random immobilisations, as well as the interactions between migrants and local populations at each stage. Clearly, transit migration is a matter of life and death for migrants on the route, who are looking for a better life. If they succeed, they may have the opportunity to start their lives over. If they fail and return home, they risk rejection by their community or, worse, not being able to return home or of being persecuted. In turn, they may have to work hard to cover the financial losses they face as a consequence of their failed journey. And despite these circumstances, migrants may want to try again until they achieve their dreams.

Within this context, this Background Paper calls for transit migration to be examined as an integral part of mobility strategies. As a final note, we invite further research to:

- explore and explain in more systematic ways the various regional approaches to transit migration management in different parts of the globe
- document and discern the impact of transit migration management on individual countries, on state and non-state actors, and on migrants themselves along migration routes
- compare and explain how national contexts can be better equipped to tackle the challenges of transit migration management, addressing national priorities, relations with the EU, and the needs of migrants and non-migrants

– recognise and further document the impact of transit migration management on refugees and other migrants on the route as well as non-migrants whose (potential) migration plans are jeopardised
– devise policy suggestions that will lead to a fairer distribution of responsibility to address emerging protection needs in so-called 'transit countries'.

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