

## Joint Managing Editors:

- Solon Ardittis (Eurasylum)
- Frank Laczko (International Organization for Migration – IOM)

## Editorial Advisers:

- Joanne van Selm (Eurasylum)
- Karoline Popp (International Organization for Migration – IOM)

## Editorial Coordinator:

- Valerie Hagger (International Organization for Migration – IOM)

## Editorial Assistants:

- Miguel De Lim (International Organization for Migration – IOM)
- Anna Lyn Constantino (International Organization for Migration – IOM)

## Editorial Committee:

- Aderanti Adepoju (Human Resources Development Centre, Lagos, Nigeria)
- Richard Ares Baumgartner (European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the European Union – FRONTEX, Warsaw)
- Peter Bosch (European Commission, Brussels)
- Juan Carlos Calleros (Staff Office of the President of Mexico)
- Howard Duncan (Metropolis, Ottawa, Canada)
- Neli Esipova (Gallup World Poll, New York)
- Araceli Azuara Ferreiro (Organization of American States – OAS, Washington, D.C.)
- Philippe Fargues (Migration Policy Centre – MPC, Florence)
- Lukas Gehrke (International Centre for Migration Policy Development – ICMPD, Vienna)
- Shahidul Haque (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh)
- Maia Welbourne (Citizenship and Immigration Canada – CIC, Ottawa)
- Chris Hedges (United Kingdom Border Agency – UKBA, London)
- Michelle Leighton (International Labour Office – ILO, Geneva)
- William McClure (Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection)
- Jennifer McDonald (Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency, Ministry of National Security, Jamaica)
- Sankar Ramasamy (Department of Labour, New Zealand)
- Dilip Ratha (World Bank, Washington, D.C.)
- Cécile Riallant (EC-UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative, Brussels)
- Nand Kishore Singh (Member of the Indian Parliament, New Delhi)
- Simon Tonelli (Council of Europe, Strasbourg)
- Adriana van Doijeweert (Dutch Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs – ACVZ, The Hague)

# MIGRATION POLICY PRACTICE

A Bimonthly Journal for and by Policymakers Worldwide

ISSN 2223-5248

Vol. IV, Number 2, April–June 2014



IOM trains city welfare and development staff of Cadiz City, Negros Occidental on how to use the IOM Vulnerability Index forms (18 Feb). © IOM 2014 (Photo by Alan Motus)

## CONTENTS

### 2 Introduction

*Solon Ardittis and Frank Laczko*

### 4 For a truly European immigration policy

*Martin Schulz*

### 8 Working with cities on mobility, diversity and prosperity

*Colleen Thouez*

### 16 Migrants or expatriates? US citizens as a migrant group

*Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels*

### 20 Can Big Data help us achieve a “migration data revolution”?

*Frank Laczko and Marzia Rango*

### 30 Publications

### 32 MPP Readers’ Survey

Published jointly by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Eurasylum Ltd.



International Organization for Migration (IOM)



## Introduction

Solon Ardittis and Frank Laczko<sup>1</sup>

“In Europe, we need to get on urgently with the process of managing migration as best we can, in accordance with clear principles, so that migration can benefit our societies and our economies.” In his lead article for this issue of *Migration Policy Practice*, European Parliament President **Martin Schulz** (until 18 June 2014) outlines his vision for the future of European immigration policy. According to Schulz, the management of the European Union’s external borders should be a common European responsibility – not only a Maltese, Greek, Italian or Bulgarian issue. National and European efforts should therefore be stepped up and fully coordinated. At the same time, the EU should uphold the right to international protection, including by making full use of the increased EU funds available for resettlement; testing the joint processing of asylum applications within the EU; focusing more on the integration of refugees in their host communities; and boosting the role of the European Asylum Support Office. In addition, with more than 430,000 asylum applications in the EU last year, and some national authorities being increasingly tested to the limit, the EU Temporary Protection Directive of 2001, which has never been implemented, should become an option where appropriate.

According to Schulz, it is also important to fight the causes of migration rather than the migrants themselves. The EU should go further in developing preventive measures and making migration a key issue in all its international relations, particularly with transit countries in North Africa and countries of origin in the South and in the East. This includes fostering circular migration; working on the recognition of qualifications; focusing more on targeted funding for vocational training; and engaging more with diaspora communities.

On the other hand, according to Schulz, a well-organized, orderly legal immigration should also be supported, with each country accepting its share of migrants, who should be integrated as full members of society, be free from discrimination and be able to contribute to the economy. Europe must get the skills it needs due to its ageing population and shrinking labour force, and European universities should remain magnets for the most gifted foreign students.

The second article in this issue of MPP, by **Colleen Thouez**, from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), discusses the role of cities and regions in facilitating migrants’ access to rights, benefits and services. According to Thouez, the close proximity of local authorities to their constituencies, that is, their direct experience of implementing policy, their potential to initiate multi-stakeholder dialogue and participatory decision-making, as well as the range of skills that they have often developed in spatial development planning, make them important actors on the global migration stage. This is also reflected in the fact that the impact of local government is now likely to be included in the new Sustainable Development Goals, which will emerge from discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. Thouez’s article – which is based on observations resulting from two years of working with local government officials through the dedicated UNITAR training platform established in 2013, participation in closed-door meetings with city officials, partnerships with cities, and conversations with city leaders – provides a range of recommendations for future action at the local and regional levels, including in the context of the first Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration and Development held in Barcelona from 19 to 20 June 2014.

The third article, by **Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels**, Director of the MA Programme in International Migration at the University of Kent in Brussels, discusses a relatively unexplored area of migration policy, namely, the integration patterns and needs for assistance of migrants/expatriates from the North – in this case, US citizens. According to Klekowski von Koppenfels, “in researching migration, it becomes clear that many migrants – from the North, as well as

1 Solon Ardittis is Managing Director of Eurasyllum Ltd. Frank Laczko is Head of the Migration Research Division at IOM Headquarters in Geneva. They are the co-editors of *Migration Policy Practice*.

the South – do not necessarily personify the attributes of their countries of nationality, such as wealth and stability, and may indeed be in need of assistance at some point during their migration trajectory. US citizens are one such group.” Based on Klekowski von Koppenfels’s empirical research, it appears that US citizens overseas do not necessarily embody the characteristics of the United States of America, and many have moved to Europe to be with a partner or spouse rather than, as might be often assumed, to take up jobs as highly skilled professionals. Survey data relating primarily to US citizens living in Europe shows that just over 40 per cent are employed full-time and nearly one-quarter are self-employed. Many remain in situations of underemployment, often working well below their level of education. Klekowski von Koppenfels therefore poses the question of whether US citizens in Europe are the expatriates who they are often seen to be or if, indeed, they should be perceived and treated as migrants, including in terms of access to appropriate services and assistance. According to Klekowski von Koppenfels, while establishing typologies and developing broad generalizations about migrant groups are important, perceiving migrants from the Global North as “something-other-than-migrants” would only limit our understanding of the migration phenomenon overall.

The last article, by **Frank Laczko** and **Marzia Rango** of the International Organization for Migration, explores how “Big Data” (i.e. the collection of large and complex data sets) might help to improve our understanding of migration trends around the world.

The article considers some of the advantages and disadvantages of using such data and illustrates, through concrete examples, the potential uses of Big Data for the study of migration. The article outlines, in particular, ways in which Big Data can be used to track post-disaster displacement using “call detail records”; identify modalities and determinants of mobile money transfers through other kinds of mobile phone data; estimate and predict migration flows and rates through the IP addresses of website logins and sent e-mails; infer migration trends and compare patterns of internal and international migration using geo-located social media data; and analyse transnational networks and diaspora groups or migration-related public discourse through social media content. The article concludes that while Big Data alone is not the solution to the current lack of timely and comparable data on migration, it can nevertheless provide very useful evidence on emerging migration trends. The challenge remains how best to harness the potential of using Big Data in the study of migratory trends within and across countries and how it can inform analyses of the impact of migration on the development of sending and receiving States, as well as on migrants’ well-being.

We thank all the contributors to this issue of ‘Migration Policy Practice’ and encourage readers to contact us with topic suggestions for future articles. **We further invite readers to spare a couple of minutes to participate in a survey which we are launching this month in order to help us identify our readers’ profiles, the institutions they represent and their primary interests in our journal. Should you wish to participate in this survey, please [click here](#).** ■

**“The EU should go further in developing preventive measures and making migration a key issue in all its international relations, particularly with transit countries in North Africa and countries of origin in the South and in the East.”**

**- Martin Schulz**



© European Parliament

## For a truly European immigration policy

*Martin Schulz*<sup>1</sup>

Migration is one of those big questions that call on societies to consider values, humanity, the kind of societies they want to build and their position in the world today and in the future.

In Europe we need a sober assessment of the situation and get on urgently with the process of managing migration as best we can, in accordance with clear principles, so that migration can benefit our societies and our economies – and so that those arriving on our shores are given a chance to play a positive role.

First, I believe that if Europe prides itself on being “the continent of human rights,” we must act on our words and strive to uphold human life and dignity in the face of those who trample it. Every life counts and every single life lost on our shores – man, woman or child – is a stain on our civilization.

Second, I believe that Europe will never be an isolated continent – a fortress – but rather, as I put it before heads of States and governments in October 2013, it is a continent of migration and the sooner we face this fact, the better.

Third, I believe that the European Union provides clear added value in managing migration. How irresponsible it would be to create an area without internal border controls and at the same time leave migration to that area and the management of external borders entirely in the hands of individual countries. A continent of migration without a migration policy is perfectly absurd, and yet that is largely where we stand today.

Fourth, I believe that our common European action should take place in a spirit of loyalty and solidarity, with fair sharing of responsibility among all 28 Member States. We cannot continue with a situation where one country is Europe’s lifeguard and another

is Europe’s refugee shelter, while some others say, “Not in my backyard!” No one should forget that it may be somebody else’s crisis today, but it could be theirs tomorrow.

Fifth, I believe in an orderly, rule-based approach to migration which does everything it can to avoid driving desperate people into the hands of criminals, and which ensures consistent decision-making throughout the European Union.

Sixth, I believe that migration needs a long-term vision to cope with our long-term needs. To be specific, there is a need to:

- a. Make sure that the EU is able to attract the skills which it needs for its labour market;
- b. Develop new relationships with countries in our neighbourhood based on mutual respect and shared interests, especially in the Mediterranean.

Having outlined these six key principles, I consider it important to distinguish a number of issues:

### 1. Humanitarian emergencies and the management of external borders

For each person reaching our shores, we will never know for sure how many more have perished trying to do so. In 2011 an estimated 1,500 people died trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea – a grim record.

We all have in mind last year’s tragedies off the coast of Lampedusa. These people left their homes because of famine and poverty, war and persecution; they handed their savings over to criminal gangs of traffickers and risked everything in the hope that they would find protection and a future in Europe. All they found was death. Yet the political will to make Lampedusa a turning point in the EU’s migration policy is not clear in many places.

As the camera crews leave, the temptation is all too great to let those on the front line deal with the matter.

<sup>1</sup> Martin Schulz contributed this article as President of the European Parliament, a position from which he resigned on 18 June 2014. He is now the President of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament.

Of course Europe cannot take in everyone. But we are the richest continent in the world. We can do more, particularly if we act together, if we look for solutions together, and shoulder our responsibilities together.

Less than 4 per cent of Syrian refugees have sought safety in Europe. Lebanon, with a population of under 5 million, now hosts more than 1 million Syrian refugees. Turkey, on the other hand, has over half a million Syrian refugees. A single camp in Jordan which I visited earlier this year houses one hundred thousand refugees, and they have just opened a new one, with a capacity of 130,000.

I believe that the management of the EU's outer borders is a common European responsibility and not a Maltese, Greek, Italian or Bulgarian issue. Securely and humanely managed external borders – this is a question of solidarity, and a European response is needed.

Those at either extreme of the political spectrum, who would rather do away with Frontex for ideological reasons or not provide it with adequate resources, are making a serious mistake. They are, in fact, advocating renationalization when what we need is common action. The scale of the task is daunting, and we are only starting to develop the right tools.

Last year the EU set up Eurosur (European Border Surveillance System) so that all relevant information can be shared to form a clear picture of the situation. In April 2014 we agreed on binding rules for rescue missions run by Frontex. This year so far, the Mare Nostrum operation, launched under the government of Enrico Letta, has already rescued at sea and disembarked around 15,000 people in Italy.

National and European efforts must be stepped up and fully coordinated. We should convince countries of departure in North Africa to liaise with us in real time on maritime surveillance issues. No shipmaster providing life-saving assistance should be at risk of prosecution. Lastly, all operations must respect the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the principle of non-refoulement.

The management of external borders also has a direct impact on what happens inside the Schengen Area: Recall the Berlusconi–Sarkozy episode in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, during which the Area's lack of governance structures became all too apparent. We have changed this. Under my presidency, the European Parliament fought “tooth and nail” to lay the foundation for a truly common management of

our external borders, with a key role for the European Commission and with tougher evaluations at external borders, including surprise checks.

Where such an evaluation identifies serious deficiencies at a point on the external borders, the Commission can recommend specific actions which may include the deployment of European Border Guard teams. Further technical and financial support is available, for example, through Frontex, the Asylum Support Office and Europol.

As an absolute last resort, where a country puts the overall functioning of the Schengen Area at risk, one or more specific Member States may be asked to reintroduce border controls at all or specific parts of the internal borders.

I believe that our Schengen Area has come out stronger of this crisis, but the next few years will be key. Now, either a strong Commission drives the evaluation process and is outspoken where weaknesses are detected, or we risk falling back to a club of peer evaluation.

## 2. Upholding the right to international protection

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1949 states that “everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.”

The EU has, for some years now, had the ambition of setting up a Common Asylum System. Last summer we added important building blocks to this system, namely:

- a. We protected children from detention and made sure children arriving unaccompanied are properly represented;
- b. We limited the possibilities of detention and provided for alternatives;
- c. We provided for quicker access to the labour market so that asylum-seekers can make a living for themselves and contribute to the economy;
- d. We set clearer rules on how to apply for asylum to make sure that everyone who wishes to request asylum can do so quickly and effectively;
- e. We ensured that asylum requests are dealt with more efficiently, including in some cases by accelerated procedures, and with clear appeal procedures;

- f. We have secured more than EUR 4 billion in EU funding over the next seven years.

All this is still not enough to make a common asylum system. How can we claim to have a common system when the level of pressure is not common and the responsibilities are not evenly divided? When five EU countries deal with 70 per cent of asylum cases? When requests produce wildly different results from one country to another? When the system for determining who is in charge continues to perplex our courts and is perceived by many as lacking the necessary flexibility?

The next European Commission must show the value of these practical steps:

- a. Ensuring that the increased EU funds available for resettlement are fully used;
- b. Testing the joint processing of applications by several Member States and the pooling of reception places – as at any given time, some countries will have spare capacity while others will be full up;
- c. Focusing more on integration of refugees in their host communities;
- d. Boosting the role of the European Asylum Support Office, not only in training and assistance but also in monitoring the quality and consistency of asylum decisions.

### 3. Temporary protection

With more than 430,000 applications for asylum in the EU last year – and some national authorities tested to the limit – we have to realize that asylum is not a tool capable of dealing with migration in a comprehensive way. It was never meant to fulfil this role.

The Lebanese Civil War during the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Kosovo and elsewhere during the 1990s, demonstrated the need for special procedures to deal with mass influxes of displaced persons from conflict zones, that is, to grant them temporarily the right to stay and work in our countries until the conflict has ended.

The EU Temporary Protection Directive of 2001, which was born directly of this experience, has never been used. I am, of course, aware that it is the European Council which triggers the mechanism. However, I also want to underline that it is the Commission

which has the right of initiative. The situation on the ground must be reviewed constantly, and this option of temporary protection should never be off the table.

### 4. Cooperation with countries of transit and origin

What I have been describing to you so far is akin to sticking plaster. We must go further and fight the causes of migration, not the migrants themselves, that is, we must go further in prevention and make migration a key issue in all our international relations, particularly with transit countries in North Africa and countries of origin in the South and in the East. For us and our Mediterranean neighbours, migration and mobility should be shared challenges.

Our partnerships with these countries should be more focused on encouraging reforms in the field of human rights, building capacities and institutions, impartial judicial systems, raising labour standards and narrowing social and economic inequalities.

If we want to make the most of mutual growth opportunities in energy, infrastructure, research, training and education, we must reshape our approach to migration. Specifically, we must:

- a. Foster circular migration;
- b. Work on the recognition of qualifications;
- c. Focus more on targeted funding for vocational training; and
- d. Engage more with diaspora communities.

Take Libya – which has not signed the UN Refugee Convention – as an example. It has no proper asylum system. Thus, it has become a fertile ground for human traffickers.

I want to build on the EU's successes as a leader in development policy by helping countries on the path to social progress and democracy, and reducing the factors which push people to migrate. I want them to see a future for themselves and to invest in their own countries.

Our trade policy must contribute to the protection of labour, social and environmental rights by:

- a. Insisting on corporate social responsibility and respect for social standards by European companies doing business in developing countries;

- b. Fighting speculation on essential food commodities.

## 5. Legal migration

So far the EU has achieved very little in the area of legal migration. We have a Blue Card whose popularity is quite relative. We also have rules for a few specific sectors like seasonal work, but there is no unifying concept and no political will of our countries to move together on this issue.

World regions and countries such as Latin America, the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand and Canada all have a clear system of legal migration. European citizens are themselves benefitting from such systems.

For 20 years I have been supporting an immigration policy which is totally different from the ones which exist today. I have been saying that Europe is a

continent of migration; as such, a system of legal migration with clear criteria is necessary for people to work and live here in Europe. We must also be clear that the possibility of legal migration does not mean that everyone can come.

A well-organized and orderly legal immigration must be supported instead of irregular migration, which is uncontrolled and unfair. In addition, each country should accept its share of migrants, who must be integrated as full members of society, be free from discrimination and be able to contribute to the economy. Europe must get the skills it needs due to its ageing population and shrinking labour force. Our universities must remain magnets for the most gifted foreign students. Finally, Europe must remain the foremost tourist destination in the world – and I will harness the full potential of our visa policy to achieve this. I want us to vie in the global race for talent by attracting scientists, researchers, information technology specialists and entrepreneurs! ■

**“I have been saying that Europe is a continent of migration; as such, a system of legal migration with clear criteria is necessary for people to work and live here in Europe.”**



## Working with cities on mobility, diversity and prosperity

Colleen Thouez<sup>1</sup>

### Why Cities are Important

The maxim “Suddenly...all politics are municipal politics” (Saunders, 2013) holds true in the field of human mobility (or migration). This fact is in no small measure influenced by the “largest migration in human history,” with 3.9 billion people moving to city centres by 2030 (as compared to 309 million in 1950) (Saunders, 2010).

Indeed, with few exceptions around the world, cities and regions facilitate access to rights, benefits and services for migrants. The close proximity of local authorities to their constituencies – their direct experience in implementing policy, their potential to initiate multi-stakeholder dialogue and participatory decision-making, as well as the range of skills that they have often developed in spatial development planning (EC–UN JMDI, 2010) – make them important and, as some argue, “lead actors” on the stage of global migration (Maytree Foundation and Cities of Migration, 2012).

Sarah Collinson once described States’ main preoccupation with migration policy as “threefold”: maintaining control over who enters, for how long and by what means (Collinson, 1994). While cities do not control entry, they act as poles of attraction and, in some cases, have begun to influence federal legislation on issues such as labour market needs and skilled immigrant retention. Examples include New

York City’s Blueprint for Economic Development to support immigrant entrepreneurship and the City of Lisbon’s project, Professional Integration of Immigrant Doctors (Cities of Migration, 2011). Cities are thus influencing the discourse on opportunity – and on the migrant as bearer of prosperity.<sup>2</sup>

In describing cities as the first arrival points for migrants, Saunders evokes a window in which city administrations have little choice but to act. He states, “(Arrival cities) are not just the sites of potential conflict and violence but also the neighbourhoods where the transition from poverty occurs, where the next middle class is forged, where the next generation’s dreams, movements, and governments are created” (Saunders, 2010). To exercise their potential, migrants first depend on local authorities’ ability to evaluate their needs and provide appropriate services. Cities have thus also become pivotal to the story of the migrant – a person with few to no resources ultimately constituting a long term-burden or short-term investment in communal prosperity.

In instances when federal government has stalled, city government has stepped in to govern mobility. Benjamin Barber famously portrays cities as “cross-border problem-solvers going boldly where States no longer dare to go,” in what he calls a “welcome counterpoint” as “the Nation State descends into paralysis and democratic dysfunction” (Barber, 2013). At a meeting of US mayors convened by former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg from 25 to 26 April 2013, this view was echoed from personal experience when one mayor stated that his city had already implemented its version of immigration reform, while Washington was still figuring out what it planned for the country.<sup>3</sup>

1 Colleen Thouez is Senior Research and Training Advisor at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). This paper is based on observations from two years of working with local government officials through the dedicated UNITAR training platform established in 2013, participation in closed-door meetings with City Officials, partnerships with cities, and conversations with city leaders. Any errors are the fault of the author.

A special “Thank you” to Fatima Shama, City of New York (former); Rey Kowalski and Laura Gonzalez, State University of New York (Albany); Honourable Anna Terron, City of Barcelona; Anissa Akhandaf, City of Antwerp; Han Entzinger, Rotterdam University; Cecile Riallant, European Commission–United Nations Joint Migration and Development Initiative; Salvatore Petronella; and research assistant and colleague, Kato Van Broeckhoven, UNITAR and the World Bank KNOMAD Project.

2 Prosperity is purposely open to translation and intended to relate to the concepts of human development and the wellness index, meaning that a monetary value is not the sole criterion.

3 Kasim Reed, Mayor of Atlanta, “Convening of Cities for Immigration Integration: Supporting and Engaging Immigrant Communities,” hosted by the Office of the Mayor, City of New York, 25–26 April 2013.

The influence and impact of city government policies and practices is translating into a place at the table in intergovernmental policy discussions on migration and development. Ten years ago, countries resisted the inclusion of any reference to subnational levels of government in UN resolutions on sustainable development. Eight years ago, the local dimension was marginal in the first the annual Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).<sup>4</sup> Today, by and large, the impact of local government is considered in intergovernmental discussions; indeed, it will likely be included in the new Sustainable Development Goals emanating from discussions on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the UN.<sup>5</sup> During the United Nations General Assembly’s second High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development (HLD) last October 2013, a meeting dedicated to local governments’ role stressed that “local authorities should play a greater role in designing and implementing policies that amplify the development impact of migration.”<sup>6</sup> Similarly, at the GFMD’s seventh gathering, which took place in Stockholm in May 2014, the role and impact of local government was elicited several times both in relation to labour mobility and diaspora engagement.<sup>7</sup>

Evidence of local government’s role is further reflected in dedicated conferences such as the first Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration and Development held in Barcelona from 19 to 20 June 2014 (see write-up in the related text box on this page); the ongoing work

4 Local government is nevertheless referenced in the outcome document of the first Global Forum on Migration and Development with regard to “enhancing policy and institutional coherence and promoting partnerships” (p. 113), and in relation to “diaspora development projects” (p. 106) (GFMD, 2007).

5 As of early June 2014, the draft compilation included references to local government under proposed Goal 11: “Build inclusive, safe and sustainable cities and human settlements” and proposed Goal 16: “Achieve peaceful and inclusive societies, rule of law, effective and capable institutions.” Visit <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4044140602workingdocument.pdf> for more information.

6 Peter Sutherland, “On Local Government, Taking the Migration and Development Agenda Forward” at the UN High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, New York, 4 October 2013. More information available from [www.unitar.org/ldp/facilitating-policy-dialogue](http://www.unitar.org/ldp/facilitating-policy-dialogue).

7 Seventh GFMD Forum Meeting Roundtable 2.2: “Facilitating positive development impacts of diaspora engagement in skills transfers, investments and trade between countries of residence and origin” (Stockholm, 15 May 2014). More information available from [www.gfmd.org/docs/sweden-2013-2014](http://www.gfmd.org/docs/sweden-2013-2014).

of the inter-agency European Commission–United Nations Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMIDI)<sup>8</sup>; the forthcoming IOM World Migration Report on cities entitled *Migrants and Cities: New Urban Partnerships to Manage Mobility* (2015); dedicated global networks such as Cities of Migration and Metropolis; and the publications of authors such as Sassen, Saunders and Barber, among many others.

### Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration and Development

19–20 June 2014, Barcelona, Spain

On 4 October 2013, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, during a side event of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development and the Joint Migration and Development Initiative entitled “On Local Government: Taking the Migration and Development Agenda Forward” (UNITAR, 2013), the Mayor of Barcelona, Mr. Xavier Trias i Vidal de Llobatera, announced that his city would convene the first Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration and Development from 19 to 20 June 2014.

The Mayoral Forum assembled 30 cities from across the globe, including Ankara, Athens, Budapest, Cologne, La Paz, Fez, Lisbon, Madrid, Milan, Quito, Paris and Seoul, as well as representatives from international organizations such as IOM, The World Bank, UNITAR, UN-Habitat, the European Commission and civil society representatives, to work on the challenges and opportunities that human mobility creates at the local level; share a vision for developing a local agenda on human mobility and development; and enhance the visibility of the role played by local authorities in the field of migration governance.

This first Mayoral Forum focused on two related themes:

- a. City government: Its leadership role within and between countries regarding global migration and mobility governance;
- b. Fostering economic prosperity in city centres and peripheries: The “virtuous circle” of migration and development.

8 Migration for Development website: [www.migration4development.org](http://www.migration4development.org).

At the conclusion of the Mayoral Forum, the “Call of Barcelona” was unanimously endorsed. The statement: (a) emphasizes equality of rights, duties and opportunities as core bases for a cohesive society; (b) acknowledges the central role played by local governments in the issues of mobility, migration and development; and (c) reasserts the need for city leadership and related support by national and regional government and other actors.

The Call of Barcelona is expected to lay the foundations for a future local agenda on mobility and development, and serve as an instrument to channel and enhance the visibility of the role played by local authorities in the field of migration governance. The Mayor of Quito has declared his city’s intention to host next year’s Mayoral Forum.

### Cities as Learning Laboratories

Cities have become important learning laboratories for migration policy researchers and practitioners, in which timely observations can be drawn concerning current integration challenges, practical solutions applicable to different city contexts, and inventive approaches in the face of limited material resources. Approaches that national and supranational policy-making have resisted until relatively recently, such as partnering with non-State actors and working across State lines, are being embraced by city governments.

#### *Integrating into what?*

With more diverse cities across the globe, the age-old question in North America – and now in Europe – of assimilation versus integration is secondary in cities where diversity is a central characteristic, judging from their foreign-born: 49 per cent in Toronto, 45 per cent in Antwerp, 48 per cent in Rotterdam, 60 per cent in Atlanta and 40 per cent in New York City. Indeed, for a growing number of cities predominantly composed of minorities, “the best integration policies are urban policies.”<sup>9</sup>

As such, city officials have described an approach favouring non-discrimination and emphasizing

participation over integration, such that “what we do for one community, we must do for all communities.”<sup>10</sup> The AMICALL (Attitudes to Migrants, Communication and Local Leadership) Report (2012) recommends community messaging on tolerance geared towards “telling the story to everyone.”<sup>11</sup> The role of media is non-negligible. It is not only central to providing accurate information, but also to gaining public support for innovative policies.<sup>12</sup> Working with the media is particularly useful in highly charged political contexts in which diversity is still negatively perceived.<sup>13</sup> As Mortimer (2014) stated: “The battle for public opinion does not belong mainly in the law courts. But that only makes it more important to fight it where it does belong, namely, in the media and public debate.”

High diversity is compounded by more circular patterns of mobility, as compared to traditional immigration patterns. City governments must therefore be fluid and flexible in adapting policy to changing circumstances, and in understanding the relationship between different layers of newcomers. In New York City, for instance, migration policies must adapt to a migrant population currently dominated by Latinos and Asians, a population which, 40 years ago, primarily hailed from Europe.

#### *The “service-oriented” front-line*

There is immediacy and a very practical side, service-oriented side, to city governments. With their on-the-ground presence and experience in the day-to-day realities of increasingly diverse societies, local authorities are on the front line in meeting

9 Han Entzinger, “Expert Meeting on the Learning Platform on Human Mobility,” Antwerp, 9–10 July 2012. Available from [www.unitar.org/sites/default/files/Outcome%20Document\\_LPHM%20Expert%20MeetingPLT.pdf](http://www.unitar.org/sites/default/files/Outcome%20Document_LPHM%20Expert%20MeetingPLT.pdf).

10 Ibid.

11 Attitudes to Migrants, Communication and Local Leadership (AMICALL) is an 18-month-old transnational project funded by the European Union’s Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals (European Integration Fund–EIF) under its Community Actions 2009 Programme. Visit [www.compas.ox.ac.uk/research/urbanchange/amicall/#c2211](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/research/urbanchange/amicall/#c2211) for more information.

12 The outcome document from UNITAR’s “Expert Meeting on The Learning Platform on Human Mobility: Capacity Development for Local Leaders” (9–10 July 2012, Antwerp) is available from [www.unitar.org/ldp/strengthening-local-governance](http://www.unitar.org/ldp/strengthening-local-governance).

13 The outcome document from UNITAR’s Learning Platform on Human Mobility (LPHM) Course entitled “Addressing public perceptions of migrants, mastering communication strategies and partnering with the media” (15–16 May 2013) is available from [www.unitar.org/four-corners-world-gathered-antwerp-first-course-unitar-s-learning-platform-human-mobility](http://www.unitar.org/four-corners-world-gathered-antwerp-first-course-unitar-s-learning-platform-human-mobility).

migrants' needs.<sup>14</sup> The Director of the Office of New Americans in the City of Chicago has emphasized how city services should help rather than pose a barrier to migrants; this would "help the City as a whole to thrive."<sup>15</sup> A former immigration commissioner for New York City suggests a reciprocal relationship in which "when you invest in immigrants, they invest in you."<sup>16</sup> A number of cities in Canada, the United States and Europe de-emphasize legal status with "Don't ask, don't tell" policies which encourage migrants to access services regardless of their legal status.<sup>17</sup>

On the whole, newcomers have a tendency to associate more with their municipal identity than with that of the nation. This may be a result of the close association with city life.<sup>18</sup> The report *Freedom in Diversity* indicates that in Britain, France, Germany and the United States, immigrants and members of minorities were found to identify more readily with the city where they live than with the country of which it is a part (Ash et al., 2013). Such may also be a result of past experiences in migrants' homelands, especially those where corruption and State failure result in a populace more receptive to working with municipal authorities.<sup>19</sup>

14 A recent UN World Youth Report outlines the main challenges for migrant youth newcomers to cities as: "finding housing, securing employment, accessing health care services, and adapting to life in a new location...with information dissemination being a central component" (UN DESA, 2013).

15 Adolfo Hernandez, Cities of Migration webinar entitled "Big Ideas: Chicago's New Americans Plan: Building a Thriving and Welcoming City," 5 February 2013. View the webinar video at <http://citiesofmigration.ca/webinar/chicagos-new-americans-plan-building-a-thriving-and-welcoming-city>.

16 Fatima Shama, Former Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs, New York City, "Convening of Cities for Immigration Integration: Supporting and Engaging Immigrant Communities," hosted by the Office of the Mayor, City of New York (25–26 April 2013).

17 "Hamilton (Canada) joins dozens of other cities in (Canada), the United States and Europe by 're-affirming its commitment to ensuring access to services without fear to immigrants without full status or without full status documents'" (Cities of Migration, 2014) and the City of Chicago, for instance, has issued an ordinance so that undocumented migrants can file abuse charges without fear of deportation (Cities of Migration, 2013).

18 As Barber stated: "...We are Londoners or Parisians or Romans as a matter of our core being. Cities are where we are born, where we are educated and grow up, where we work, play, pray and create, where we are married, have children, get old and die. Cities are home, cities are us. Cities are the essence of community and theaters of participation and innovation for all of us" (Barber, 2013).

19 Fatima Shama, Former Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs, New York City, "Convening of Cities for Immigration Integration: Supporting and Engaging Immigrant Communities," hosted by the Office of the Mayor, City of New York, 25–26 April 2013.

If cities are on the front lines, it is with essential social services where the battles are fought. Housing (below), health (including psychosocial health), education and law enforcement – these are the sectors where city officials must understand what the needs are and be open to working in highly diverse, demanding and fluctuating contexts. A poignant example can be drawn from an expert meeting convened by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) from 20 to 21 October 2013, which focused on departing and returning European and American potential combatants in the Syrian Arab Republic. Most apparent when speaking with school officials is the need for an open and holistic approach to education, valuing diversity and students' different backgrounds.<sup>20</sup> Children who are made to feel like foreigners in their own communities would seek out associations elsewhere. Education officials must find the means to promote social confidence among all school children, rather than denigrating and repressing different cultures and religions.

For local authorities, a related essential element constitutes working with non-governmental partners, both in the delivery of services and in partnerships, to achieve common ends. This includes working with faith-based representatives since, in the words of one local authority: "What you say on your pulpit matters: preach tolerance." What is more, local officials, such as those in law enforcement, must be reflective of a city's diversity. As emphasized by Ash et al. (2013): "Democracy begins at the local level, and true local democracy requires the participation of all long-term residents of the community" (Ash et al.) In Germany, for instance, the City of Bremen works to recruit more minority youth for local civil service jobs. In Hamburg, the city's public service department offers more than 500 training posts to youth of migrant origin in six different occupational fields: general administration, law courts, prison, police, fire service and tax authority (Maytree Foundation and Cities of Migration, 2012:34–35).

Local authorities can play a role in strengthening "intra-community" social cohesion, including fostering links with migrants' homelands. Given

20 Meeting documents from UNITAR's Learning Platform on Human Mobility Expert Meeting on Understanding the Underlying Philosophies and Psychological Causes of Extremism, Antwerp, 20–21 October 2013, are available from [www.unitar.org/role-cities-preventing-and-countering-violent-radicalization-central-antwerp-expert-meeting](http://www.unitar.org/role-cities-preventing-and-countering-violent-radicalization-central-antwerp-expert-meeting).

that cities are composed of municipalities, and that migrants often concentrate in localities where fellow countrymen/women reside, transnational links emerge from communities of migrants living within local host communities (EC-UN JMDI, 2010). Far from undermining inclusion in destination cities, celebrating the origins of migrant groups can support a positive dual identity in particular for younger migrants.<sup>21</sup>

### ***“Designing to emancipate”: Place-making for all city-dwellers***

Urban planning is closely tied to gentrification and creating spaces (i.e. “arrival places”) for opportunity and growth. Focusing on communities within municipalities (i.e. within cities), urban planning starts with understanding the competencies and habits of residents, with the recognition that these are in constant flux. Increasingly, cities are looking at how to prioritize good arrival policies in highly diverse neighbourhoods, going beyond classic gentrification tools.

Designing cities from a social perspective is being reinvented in cities such as Antwerp, Belgium, where in recent years there has been a strategy in place to ensure “place-making for all city dwellers” (City of Antwerp, 2012). Within it, migrants are expected to have access to what is needed to prosper: adequate/appropriate housing, viable schools and employment opportunities. Importantly, such plans incorporate local talent and interests. In emphasizing that policymakers become aware of the fact that all major cities have – and, moreover, need – good functioning place(s) of arrival, the city government has been called upon to: “think, plan, envision with courage ... design(ing) (cities) to emancipate.”<sup>22</sup>

### ***Leadership: Defining a city’s “body language”***

Leadership is essential in fostering a process described as “harmonious living.” The AMICALL Report concludes that municipal leadership, while not a sufficient requirement, is a prerequisite criterion for municipalities’ support of migrants’ rights and well-

being, beginning with how migrants are perceived in host communities.<sup>23</sup> Ash et al. (2013) states that: “The feeling of belonging together depends crucially on the social and cultural signals sent and received every day” (Ash et al., 2013). One migration expert refers to this as a city’s “body language.”<sup>24</sup> Signals are, on the one hand, embedded and long-term, with a growing number of European cities like Barcelona having adopted branding to espouse tolerance, inclusion and diversity, and, on the other, explicit and punctual, with the Mayor of Atlanta, for example, declaring: “Our stadiums are also for soccer; this also sends a message.”<sup>25</sup>

At an expert meeting convened by UNITAR in 2012 on this subject, one deputy mayor described a process by which a collective identity and shared values are fostered through the daily lives of city dwellers, living side by side, regardless of origin.<sup>26</sup> Edward Mortimer speaks of “a better common life in today’s diverse societies ultimately depends less on legal compulsion, and more on enabling people of different cultures and persuasions to feel that they actually need to live together, and can do so without feeling threatened, because they are all members of the same society and nation” (Mortimer, 2014).

**“Urban planning is closely tied to gentrification and creating spaces (i.e. “arrival places”) for opportunity and growth.”**

21 Expert Meeting on the Learning Platform on Human Mobility, Antwerp, 9–10 July 2012.

22 “A subsequent challenge becomes that of retention in such arrival cities/communities-so that assets acquired can be passed along to the next generation of migrants.” (UNITAR, 2012)

23 For more information about the AMICALL Project, visit [www.compas.ox.ac.uk/research/urbanchange/amicall](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/research/urbanchange/amicall).

24 Elizabeth Collett, Director, Europe Bureau, Migration Policy Institute, UNITAR “Expert Meeting on The Learning Platform on Human Mobility: Capacity Development for Local Leaders,” 9–10 July 2012, Antwerp. The outcome document is available from [www.unitar.org/ldp/strengthening-local-governance](http://www.unitar.org/ldp/strengthening-local-governance).

25 Kasim Reed, Mayor of Atlanta, “Convening of Cities for Immigration Integration: Supporting and Engaging Immigrant Communities,” hosted by the Office of the Mayor, City of New York, 25–26 April 2013.

26 Ludo Van Campenhout, “Expert Meeting on the Learning Platform on Human Mobility,” Antwerp, 9–10 July 2012. The outcome document is available from [www.unitar.org/sites/default/files/Outcome%20Document\\_LPHM%20Expert%20MeetingPLT.pdf](http://www.unitar.org/sites/default/files/Outcome%20Document_LPHM%20Expert%20MeetingPLT.pdf).

## Leadership: Challenges

Beyond vision, leadership requires support. Externally, a non-negligible challenge for cities is working with related federal and regional powers in cases of “openly hostile environments,” such as for the cities of Atlanta and Phoenix – highly cosmopolitan cities in highly conservative states.<sup>27</sup> City leaders are implementing their own policies as indicated above offering services regardless of legal status, for example, preparing infrastructure for anticipated changes in federal legislation (in the United States, regarding the Dream Act or an amended version thereof),<sup>28</sup> and becoming their own interlocutors beyond national borders, meeting with the executive branch of far-off places on issues such as foreign labour recruitment and education programmes. Nevertheless, strife and opposing objectives between cities and other layers of government on the issue of diversity (and immigration more broadly) can counter aims<sup>29</sup> and also hamstring essential funding sources.

Internally, while the means may change, the vision of harmonious living must be embedded in the bureaucracy, such that city leaders endorsing this process are supported by technical staff that both understand this vision and are open to adapting policies to foster it.<sup>30</sup> In turn, bureaucrats must also

be supported in situations where leadership is less open to diversity and/or where a sudden change in leadership brings on a more negative stance towards diversity. Faced with heightened border security and economic downturns, among others, one mayor’s emphasis is on courage, that is, “maintaining enough political capital to make the right policy decisions; we must believe in order to make the political sacrifices required.”<sup>31</sup> Similarly, the Mayor of Athens at the 2013 UN HLD stressed that his country is “in the process of redefining their (its) place in the world and in the international economy. This has been a painful process, but also a critical turning point, at which local governments and cities have a crucial role to play: upholding human rights, promoting tolerance and multi-ethnic integration, as well as stimulating local economic growth.”<sup>32</sup>

## Recommendations

### In Cities

- a. Host “Heritage/Diversity” Day at City Hall for community leaders, public officials, exemplary youth, school attendants, and so on.
- b. Open a “Welcoming Centre.”<sup>33</sup>
- c. Work on literacy and language access.
- d. Work within school systems to “smoothen the pathway.”
- e. Reserve special attention and interest to migrant youth.
- f. Reserve special attention and interest to the specific needs of refugees.

27 It is important to point out that many regional authorities foster diversity and indeed are supportive of related cities’ efforts in this regard. The State of New York, for instance, has created the Office for New Americans, which assists newcomers with learning English, preparing them for the citizenship examinations, and helping them start and grow businesses so they can fully participate in New York State’s civic and economic life.

28 Kasim Reed, Mayor of Atlanta, has stated: “We are embracing infrastructure now locally, so that when (federal) laws are passed we are ready,” at the “Convening of Cities for Immigration Integration: Supporting and Engaging Immigrant Communities,” hosted by the Office of the Mayor, City of New York, 25–26 April 2013.

29 A stark example is the City of Phoenix’s attitude towards undocumented migrants, and that of the State of Arizona’s controversial immigration enforcement law, “Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act,” which requires state and local law enforcement agencies to check the immigration status of individuals it encounters and makes it a state crime for non-citizens to fail to carry proper immigration documentation. Another unrelated, but nevertheless illustrative example, also from the City of Phoenix, is its buy-back policy for guns, with the State of Arizona summarily re-selling them to Arizonians.

30 As argued elsewhere, success in influencing whether public administrations really get behind a pro-migrant agenda (i.e. enabling policies for migrants) also depends on building empathy. See: Thouez, “Human Development and Human Rights: Challenges for International Migration Policies,” Fourth International Forum on Migration and Peace, New York University Law School, 20–21 June 2013.

31 Kasim Reed, Mayor of Atlanta, “Convening of Cities for Immigration Integration: Supporting and Engaging Immigrant Communities,” hosted by the Office of the Mayor, City of New York, 25–26 April 2013.

32 Georgios Kaminis, Mayor of Athens, “On Local Government, Taking the Migration and Development Agenda Forward” (UN High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, New York, 4 October 2013). More information available from [www.unitar.org/ldp/facilitating-policy-dialogue](http://www.unitar.org/ldp/facilitating-policy-dialogue).

33 One example is that of the Office for New Americans for New York State, which was established in 2013, and goes beyond the role of coordinating services, to actual provision and delivery of services that are free and regardless of legal status. Operating through a network of “opportunity centres” in 27 cities across New York State, it has serviced 30,000 migrants since 2013. Each of these centres is hosted in established neighbourhood-based organizations. Another example is in Michigan State, which has recently opened a similar Office, focusing on helping high-skilled immigrants enter the career field in which they studied in their home country. (Some cities have expanded the concept of the welcoming centre to one that also addresses services required for return.)

**For Cities**

- a. Facilitate access to relevant policy settings where decisions on diversity are taken.
- b. Allow a voice in decisions pertaining to diversity that will have an impact on the local level.
- c. Create infrastructure for regular communication between migrant communities, service providers and their local government.
- d. Enact favourable legislative contexts that facilitate the process of integration and diversity.
- e. Provide support in taking action against racism and xenophobia.
- f. Extend material assistance, including funding for local policy actions supporting diversity.<sup>34</sup> ■

**References**

Ash, T.G., E. Mortimer and K. Öktem

2013 Lesson 6: Cities and Local Communities. In: *Freedom in Diversity: Ten Lessons for Public Policy from Britain, Canada, France, Germany and the United States*. Dahrendorf Programme for the Study of Freedom, Oxford. Available from [www.sant.ox.ac.uk/esc/FreedomRev10.pdf](http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/esc/FreedomRev10.pdf).

Barber, B.

2013 “Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities.” *The Huffington Post*, 1 November 2013. Available from [www.huffingtonpost.com/benjamin-r-barber/dysfunctional-nations\\_b\\_4192366.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/benjamin-r-barber/dysfunctional-nations_b_4192366.html).

**Cities of Migration**

2011 No more doctors as stone masons! Recognition of the qualifications of immigrant doctors and nurses. *Cities of Migration: Good Ideas in Integration*, 16 February. Available from [http://citiesofmigration.ca/good\\_idea/no-more-doctors-as-stone-masons](http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/no-more-doctors-as-stone-masons).

2013 Big ideas: Chicago’s New Americans Plan: Building a thriving and welcoming city. *Cities of Migration: Learning Exchange*, 5 February. Available from <http://citiesofmigration.ca/webinar/chicagos-new-americans-plan-building-a-thriving-and-welcoming-city>.

2014 Hamilton – The last sanctuary city. *Cities of Migration: Conversations in Integration*, 2 June. Available from [http://citiesofmigration.ca/ezone\\_stories/hamilton-the-latest-sanctuary-city](http://citiesofmigration.ca/ezone_stories/hamilton-the-latest-sanctuary-city).

**City of Antwerp**

2012 *Urban Development in Antwerp: Designing Antwerp*. Available from [www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Stadsvernieuwing/9746949\\_urbandevlopment\\_English.pdf](http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Stadsvernieuwing/9746949_urbandevlopment_English.pdf).

**City of New York**

2012 A Blueprint for Immigrant Integration: Economic Development. Available from [www.nyc.gov/html/imm/downloads/pdf/Blueprints/BII-Economic-Development.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/imm/downloads/pdf/Blueprints/BII-Economic-Development.pdf).

**Collinson, S.**

1994 *Europe and International Migration*. Pinter Publishers for Royal Institute of International Affairs, London.

**European Commission–United Nations Joint Migration and Development Initiative (EC–UN JMDI)**

2010 From Migration to Development: Lessons Drawn from the Experience of Local Authorities. Report, EC–UN JMDI. Available from [www.migration4development.org/content/migration-development-lessons-drawn-experience-local-authorities](http://www.migration4development.org/content/migration-development-lessons-drawn-experience-local-authorities).

34 Extracts from “Call of Barcelona,” endorsed by cities participating in the Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration and Development, Barcelona, 19–20 June 2014.

Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)  
2007 Report of the first meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development: Belgium, July 9–11, 2007. Etablissements Emile Bruylant, S.A., Brussels.

Maytree Foundation and Cities of Migration  
2012 *Good Ideas from Successful Cities: Municipal Leadership in Immigrant Integration*. Maytree Foundation, Toronto. Available from <http://citiesofmigration.ca/publications/#sthash.Jn6IVLPN.dpuf>.

Mortimer, E.  
2014 “Is Diversity a Threat to Freedom?” *Cities of Migration*, 2 June. Available from [http://citiesofmigration.ca/ezone\\_stories/is-diversity-a-threat-to-freedom](http://citiesofmigration.ca/ezone_stories/is-diversity-a-threat-to-freedom).

Saunders, D.  
2010 *Arrival Cities: How the Largest Migration in History is Shaping our World*. William Heinemann, London.

2013 “Suddenly, all politics is municipal.” *The Globe and Mail*, 20 July. Available from [www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/suddenly-all-politics-is-municipal/article13319338](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/suddenly-all-politics-is-municipal/article13319338).

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

2013 *World Youth Report: Youth and Migration*. UN DESA, New York. Available from [www.un.org/en/development/desa/publications/world-youth-report.html](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/publications/world-youth-report.html).

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

2012 Expert meeting on The Learning Platform on Human Mobility: Capacity development for local leaders, 9-10 July 2012. Outcome document. Available from [www.unitar.org/ldp/strengthening-local-governance](http://www.unitar.org/ldp/strengthening-local-governance).

2013 “Barcelona Announces Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration and Development.” UNITAR Latest News, 4 October. Available from [www.unitar.org/barcelona-announces-mayoral-forum-mobility-migration-and-development](http://www.unitar.org/barcelona-announces-mayoral-forum-mobility-migration-and-development).



## Migrants or expatriates? US citizens as a migrant group

Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels<sup>1</sup>

### Might an expatriate be in need of assistance from IOM?

IOM seeks to provide assistance to migrants in need. This assistance is often broadly assumed to be provided to South–North migrants, while those from the Global North – often referred to as “expatriates” – are, on the other hand, assumed to rarely, if ever, be in need of assistance. This assumption may need to be re-examined. In researching migration, it becomes clear that many migrants – from the North, as well as the South – do not necessarily personify attributes typically associated with their countries of nationality, such as wealth and stability, and may indeed be in need of assistance at some point during their migration trajectory. US citizens<sup>2</sup> are one such group.

Estimated at somewhere between 2.2 and 7.6 million, overseas Americans are a larger group than often thought (Klekowski von Koppenfels and Costanzo, 2013), corresponding to between 0.8 and 2.6 per cent of the domestic US citizen population. These Americans have migrated to be with a partner or spouse, search for employment, study and more. Some were born abroad to US citizen parents – the United States’ *jus soli* citizenship policy is accompanied by a *jus sanguinis* component. A close look at US citizens overseas reveals that they are a diverse group and that there is, perhaps, no “typical” overseas American.

It is perhaps particularly important in light of increasing North–South migration (see Laczko and Brian, 2013) that assumptions about North–South – and, indeed, North–North – migrants be carefully examined. Many may indeed be lifestyle migrants, seeking to find warmer climes and affordability in

retirement (cf. Dixon et al., 2006; O’Reilly, 2000), while others are originally from the Global South and are returning “home” (Laczko and Brian, 2013) when they undertake North–South migration. Yet many others are originally from the North, leaving in search of better economic opportunities, for marriage, or for some other reasons. In some cases, either the search for employment or the marriage ends poorly.

Often assumed to be reflective of the United States itself, with its broadly assumed wealth and power, Americans overseas do not necessarily embody the characteristics of the United States. Indeed, my research shows that a plurality of Americans moved to Europe to be with a partner, and are, correspondingly, not moving as highly-skilled professionals within their professions as might be most often assumed (see Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2014). Of the Americans who responded to my survey, and who were primarily living in Europe, just over 40 per cent were employed full time, and nearly one quarter were self-employed (Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2014:80). Many others remain in situations of underemployment, often working well below their level of education. While many were indeed highly skilled and working in their preferred fields, others were not – teaching English by the hour, translating or running small businesses. Over one quarter of my respondents remitted money to the United States, and nearly 30 per cent received funds from friends or family back home; 7 per cent had done both (Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2014:90).

Yet Americans, like many others from the Global North, are almost inevitably referred to as “expatriates” rather than “migrants,” each of these terms evoking certain associations. IOM notes that the term “migrant” is “usually understood to cover all cases where the decision to migrate was taken freely by the individual, concerned for reasons of ‘personal convenience’ and without intervention of an external compelling factor” (IOM, 2011). The distinction here is made against the term “refugee,” which refers to most, if not all, migrants from the Global North. My research shows that Americans move to Europe for many of the same reasons that many individuals from the Global South countries do – primarily to be with a

1 Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels is the Director of the MA Programme in International Migration at the University of Kent in Brussels. She is the author of *Migrants or Expatriates: Americans in Europe*, published by Palgrave in 2014.

2 The term “US citizen” is here, as it is elsewhere, used interchangeably with “Americans,” despite its inaccuracy, given that Mexicans, Brazilians and Canadians are also “Americans.”

partner, pursue studies, or take up employment (see Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2014:50).

“Expatriate,” on the other hand, is a status that is “accompanied by associations of luxury, leisure or moral decline, in historical as well as contemporary contexts” (Fechter, 2007:3). Despite this primary association, the term has several definitions with the most accurate one – that is, “an individual who has renounced one’s citizenship” – used least often. More common is a narrow sociological definition, namely, that of someone on a short-term (usually three to five years) “expatriate assignment” outside one’s country of citizenship or birth, either as an intra-company transferee or by working for a multinational company or international organization.<sup>3</sup> The assumption that those from the Global North are a homogenous group, uniformly working on a temporary basis, with the intention of returning to their home country, seems to underlie the broader application of this term to all of those from the Global North (see Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2014 for further discussion).

The term has, however, been expanded to refer more broadly to all of those from countries of the Global North (or the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation). In this usage, the term has certain neo-colonial overtones, as does the concept of the “lifestyle migrant,” that is, an individual who is migrating in search of “a better way of life” (Benson and O’Reilly, 2009b:609). Lifestyle migrants, thus, by definition, do not move for employment or partnership. At the same time, the distinction between a lifestyle migrant and a migrant seeking employment may not be able to be precisely determined. It is clear that a refugee flees for safety from persecution. On the other hand, there are those who are clearly lifestyle migrants, such as many of the British migrants on the Costa del Sol and the US citizens in Mexico (cf. Croucher, 2009). But what of migrants who choose to seek highly skilled employment in order to improve their skills or earn higher salaries? An Indian IT worker in Silicon Valley? Or an American banker in London? The line between “economic” migrant and lifestyle migrant may not be so easily drawn.

3 The term “expatriate” is increasingly being used more widely to refer to a broader range of migrants. Both academically and more colloquially, however, the terms continue to be used to apply to migrants from the Global North and Global South, respectively.

## “Lifestyle migrants, thus, by definition, do not move for employment or partnership.”

My research poses the question as to whether Americans in Europe are the expatriates that they are often seen as or if, indeed, they might be viewed as migrants. Elspeth Guild offers a useful perspective on defining “expatriate,” that is, that expatriates are “defined by reference to where they came from rather than who they are. This arises from the difference-in-power relationship between the country of origin ... and the host country” (Guild, 2009:20). As such, a US citizen in Viet Nam working for a large multinational company might be referred to as an expatriate, as might a German working for a large German company in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela or India. In the case of Americans living in Europe, however, this “difference-in-power” is less strong.

What about an American freelance translator in Berlin, perhaps one living from contract to contract? Is he a migrant or an expatriate? More likely than not, he will be referred to as an expatriate. What if you learn that the freelance translator – let’s call him Michael – is gay, and is unable to live in the United States with his German husband? Michael’s husband no longer has the legal right to live in the United States, but Michael holds a residence visa in Germany as the spouse of a German. Michael, perhaps, is not who we might think of as a “typical American” – or maybe even a migrant. Similarly, Betty, whom I also interviewed in Berlin, came from what she called “a very difficult family situation.” When she was able to come to Germany and work as an au pair, she saw a good way to get out of a bad situation. She stayed in Berlin to study at a university, met a partner, married, and has now been in Berlin for nearly 20 years.

Neither Betty’s nor Michael’s case is unusual; in the course of my research, I came across many Americans who had moved to Europe for reasons far removed from the assumptions of focused and planned career advancement, intra-company transfer or glamorous renovations of rural homes in southern Europe. Many certainly did do so, and many also travelled in search of adventure and expanding horizons. Michael’s situation is one that has only recently changed: prior

to June 2013, gay and lesbian Americans with foreign partners were unable to sponsor their partners for a spousal Green Card, forcing them to live abroad – often in Europe – in order to form a family. Yet in June 2013 the United States v. Windsor decision allowed gay and lesbian Americans to sponsor their foreign partners for Green Cards, which means that such so-called “love exile” situations now arise less often.

Finally, we end this commentary with the question with which it began: Might a US citizen need to avail him or herself of the assistance of IOM? In 2013 over 30 US citizens did just that, returning to the United States with the assistance of IOM’s AVRR programmes. The US State Department also assists US citizens in returning home, providing passports valid for travel back to the United States only, as well as emergency repatriation loans – which must be repaid before a new passport can be issued. In fiscal year 2012, similar to 2011, over 1,000 US citizens were assisted to return to the United States by the US State Department (US State Department, 2013). In that same year, the Americans Overseas Domestic Violence Crisis Center (AODVC) assisted 550 American women living overseas, many of whom were married to local nationals, to leave situations of domestic abuse (AODVC, 2012). These are Americans overseas who have sought and found help – they do not include, however, those who were able to find help from friends or family, or those who remain in difficult situations. In short, perhaps our assumptions concerning US citizens – one group of migrants from the Global North – are not entirely accurate. If so, then the question which follows is whether our – media, government and researchers – assumptions concerning other migrants may be based on similar assumption and generalizations.

While establishing typologies and developing broad generalizations about migrant groups are important –in order to provide services, as well as establish an understanding of the phenomenon – we need to take care to avoid seeing migrant groups as homogenous entities. In the case of migrants from the Global North, they are often seen as “something other than migrants.” Including them in the broader understanding of migration will contribute to our understanding of the phenomenon overall. ■

## References

- American Overseas Domestic Violence Crisis Center (AODVC)  
2012 *Annual Report 2012*. AODVC, Portland, OR. Available from <http://866uswomen.org/Docs/AmericansOverseasDVCrisisCenter2012AnnualReport.pdf> (accessed June 2014).
- Benson, M. and K. O’Reilly  
2009 Migration and the search for a better way of life: A critical exploration of lifestyle migration. *Sociological Review* 57(4):608–625.
- Croucher, S.  
2009 *The Other Side of the Fence: American Migrants in Mexico*. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Dixon, D. et al.  
2006 *America’s Emigrants: US retirement migration to Mexico and Panama*. Migration Policy Institute, Washington, D.C. Available from [www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/americas\\_emigrants.pdf](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/americas_emigrants.pdf) (accessed June 2014).
- Fechter, M.  
2007 *Transnational Lives: Expatriates in Indonesia*. Ashgate, Aldershot.
- Guild, E.  
2009 *Security and Migration in the 21st Century*. Polity, Cambridge.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
2011 *Key Migration Terms*. Webpage available from [www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/about-migration/key-migration-terms-1.html#Migrant](http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/about-migration/key-migration-terms-1.html#Migrant) (accessed June 2014).
- Klekowski von Koppenfels, A.  
2014 *Migrants or Expatriates? Americans in Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Klekowski von Koppenfels, A. and Costanzo, J.  
2013 "Counting the Uncountable: Overseas Americans." *Migration Information Source*, May 2013. Available from [www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?ID=951](http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?ID=951) (accessed June 2014).

Laczko, F. and T. Brian  
2013 North–South migration: A different look at the migration and development debate. *Migration Policy Practice*, 3:14–19. Available from [http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/MigrationPolicyPracticeJournal11\\_22July2013.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/MigrationPolicyPracticeJournal11_22July2013.pdf) (accessed in June 2014).

O'Reilly, K.  
2000 *The British on the Costa del Sol: Transnational identities and local communities*. Routledge, London.

United States State Department  
2013 *Repatriate Loans Program Account*. Program document, available from [www.state.gov/documents/organization/208998.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/208998.pdf) (accessed June 2014).



## Can Big Data help us achieve a “migration data revolution”?

Frank Laczko and Marzia Rango<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

“Big Data” is generated every time we send a text message, make a mobile phone call, run an Internet search, transfer money online or interact on social media. This article looks at the potential of using such data to improve data on migration at a time when there are growing calls to improve the migration evidence base. To what extent can such new data sources provide policymakers with more timely and comparable data on migration?

At the 2013 UN High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development, it was widely agreed that policymakers needed much better data on migration and development. For example, the best migration data often comes from censuses, which can be several years old and, thus, outdated. Only 12 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have conducted a census in the last decade. The lack of migration data often leads to public misperceptions about the scale of migration and its impact. Poor official statistics on migration makes it difficult for decision makers around the world to develop effective policies. The lack of robust migration data also makes it more difficult to argue for the inclusion of migration indicators in the post-2015 development agenda.

Calls for better data on migration are not new, but they come at an important time when the development community is recommending the need for a “development data revolution” (UN High-level Panel report on the post-2015 development agenda, 2013). Bill Gates, for example, recently argued that improving the lives of the poor will require a revolution in development data:

*“Ultimately, the better the data available in the development field, the higher the quality of people’s lives in poor countries.”<sup>2</sup>*

A “data revolution” would mean developing new approaches, new partners and new sources and uses of data, and could add impetus to calls for better data on migration and development. As the 2013 High-level Panel (HLP) report notes:

*“This is not just about governments. International agencies, CSOs and the private sector should be involved. A true data revolution would draw on existing and new sources of data to fully integrate statistics into decision-making, promote open access to, and use of, data and ensure increased support for statistical systems.”* (HLP, 2013).

Given this context, governments and the development community are becoming increasingly interested in exploring the potential of using Big Data, the unprecedentedly large amount of data automatically generated through the use of digital devices or web-based platforms and tools. The UK Government, for example, plans to spend over USD 100 million on research to explore the potential of using such data. Innovations in technology and reductions in the prices of digital devices worldwide mean that digital data is being produced in real time and at an unprecedented rate. In particular, there are now more than 6 billion cellular phones, 5 billion of which are used in developing countries. There has been exponential growth in mobile phone penetration in developing countries, reaching 89 per cent in 2013.<sup>3</sup>

This article explores how Big Data might help to improve our understanding of migration trends around the world. We consider some of the advantages and disadvantages of using such data and illustrate through concrete examples its potential uses in the study of migration. The article outlines ways in which Big Data can be used to: (a) track post-disaster displacement using call detail records (or “CDRs”); (b) identify modalities and determinants of mobile money transfers through other kinds of mobile phone data; (c) estimate and predict migration flows and rates through the Internet protocol (IP)

1 Frank Laczko is Head of the Migration Research Division at IOM Headquarters in Geneva; Marzia Rango is a Research Intern in the Migration Research Division at IOM Headquarters in Geneva.

2 Visit [www.adb.org/features/big-data-vital-statistics-development](http://www.adb.org/features/big-data-vital-statistics-development) for more information on Big Data.

3 See [www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/ICTFactsFigures2013-e.pdf](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/ICTFactsFigures2013-e.pdf) for more information.

addresses of website logins and sent e-mails; (d) infer migration trends and compare patterns of internal and international migration using geo-located social media data; and (e) analyse transnational networks and diaspora groups or migration-related public discourse through social media content.

### Defining “Big Data”

The term “Big Data” usually refers to the vast amount of data generated by the use of digital devices and web-based tools and platforms (Latouzé, 2012). Big Data can also come from other types of digital sensors and meters, such as satellite imagery. More broadly, Big Data also refers to the growing analytical capacity and increasingly powerful computation methods available today to analyse complex and huge amounts of digital data. The main characteristics of Big Data are commonly referred to as the “Three Vs”: volume, velocity and variety (Laney, 2001), with the recent addition of a fourth “V,” standing for the potential and, typically, financial value that can be extracted from the collection, aggregation and analysis of Big Data.<sup>4</sup>

The exponential growth in the use of mobile phones, social media and Internet-based services worldwide means the “volume” of data available is larger than ever before in human history, but Big Data does not exclusively owe its name to its size. In fact, any “passively collected data deriving from daily usage of digital services” constitutes Big Data – a phenomenon also known as “data exhaust” (Latouzé, 2012). “Velocity” refers to the unprecedented speed with which data is generated, and “variety” to its complexity, as Big Data is constituted by structured and unstructured data – an example of the former are CDRs, which can be objectively arranged and analysed, while any type of social media content constitutes unstructured data, as it is subjective and non-verifiable.

4 McKinsey Global Institute estimated the financial value that can potentially be extracted from the use of Big Data across different sectors: Gains would be in the order of USD 300 billion for the US health-care sector each year, and EUR 250 billion for the European public administration sector (McKinsey Global Institute, 2011).

### Growing interest in the potential of using “Big Data”

Since the mid-1990s, when the concept of Big Data in its present connotation was arguably first introduced,<sup>5</sup> businesses, academics and policymakers have paid increasing attention to ways of harnessing the potential of this kind of data in their respective fields. Interest in using Big Data in the field of international development has exploded in recent years. There has been a surge of publications dedicated to Big Data and international development such as, notably, the World Economic Forum’s “Big Data, Big Impact: New Possibilities for International Development<sup>6</sup>” and the UN Global Pulse’s “Big Data for Development: Challenges and Opportunities.”<sup>7</sup> The UN Global Pulse initiative was established in 2009 with the specific purpose of “exploring how digital data and new real-time analytical technologies can provide a better understanding of changes in human well-being and emerging vulnerabilities.”<sup>8</sup> Research from UN Global Pulse focused, among other aspects, on the use of social media as early warning signals for commodity price volatility or spikes in unemployment rates in specific countries, and there are plans to set up a network of “Pulse Labs” aimed at establishing public–private partnerships to harness the potential of Big Data in development program planning and monitoring. Big Data could also be used to improve decision-making in health care, natural disaster and resource management, and economic productivity (Hilbert, 2013). Institutions, including the Harvard School of Public Health and the Qatar Computing Research Institute, offer useful resources on Big Data for international development.

### Potential uses of Big Data to study migration

Discussion of the potential uses of Big Data to fill migration data gaps is still in its infancy. Papers presented at the 2014 Global Forum on Migration and Development and the UN High-level dialogue on

5 See <http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/02/01/the-origins-of-big-data-an-etymological-detective-story> for more on the history of Big Data.

6 This report may be downloaded from [www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_TC\\_MFS\\_BigDataBigImpact\\_Briefing\\_2012.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TC_MFS_BigDataBigImpact_Briefing_2012.pdf).

7 This report may be downloaded from [www.unglobalpulse.org/sites/default/files/BigDataforDevelopment-UNGlobalPulseJune2012.pdf](http://www.unglobalpulse.org/sites/default/files/BigDataforDevelopment-UNGlobalPulseJune2012.pdf).

8 UN Global Pulse official website: [www.unglobalpulse.org](http://www.unglobalpulse.org).

Migration and Development in 2013 barely mentioned the subject. The number of migration studies drawing on Big Data is still relatively limited but rapidly increasing. Some examples are presented below (see Table 1 for a summary of the different types of studies which have been conducted in the migration field).

#### *CDR data to track forced displacement or infer internal migration patterns*

CDRs are digital records automatically generated and collected by mobile network operators every time a mobile phone call is made. They generally include information about the time and duration of the call, the calling and receiving numbers and, most important for migration research, the approximate locations of the caller and the receiver (i.e. the locations of the cell towers to which the SIM cards connect during the call). The identification of either location is more or less accurate depending on the distance between cell towers (smaller in urban areas relative to rural areas).

Several studies have used CDR data to track population movement in the aftermath of disasters, given the rapid and uncontrolled character of this kind of displacement, and detect patterns of internal and circular migration, which are typically hard to capture using traditional sources of data like national censuses and household surveys. Bengtsson et al. (2011) estimated the magnitude of and the trends in population movements out of Port-au-Prince following the 2010 Haiti earthquake. The authors obtained (anonymized) records from one of the country's largest mobile network operators on 2.8 million SIMs that made at least one call during the pre- and post-earthquake periods. Records included the location of the mobile phone tower to which each SIM connected during the call, which made it possible to follow mobile phone subscriber's movements. The estimates were close to early estimates by the national civil protection agency in terms of number (though quite different in terms of distribution). More importantly, they were similar to retrospective population-based data, showing the predictive power of geo-referenced mobile phone call data. A parallel study was carried out in New Zealand after the Christchurch earthquake with similar results (ACAPS, 2013).

CDR data uses are not confined to studies on post-disaster displacement. For example, Blumenstock (2012) used mobile phone records to infer internal migration patterns in Rwanda. The potential of Big Data for the study of internal and circular migration

**“Records included the location of the mobile phone tower to which each SIM connected during the call, which made it possible to follow mobile phone subscriber's movements.”**

is particularly significant, given that traditional data collection tools such as government censuses and household surveys do not typically capture such patterns. Along the same lines, Eagle et al. (2009) looked at differences in movement between rural and urban residents. Also, Frias-Martinez et al. (2010) studied the impact of socioeconomic status on migration in one Latin American city by looking at ICT-generated data, and Lu Wetter et al. (2013) analysed the predictability of human mobility using a similar methodology.

#### *Identify modalities and determinants of mobile money transfers using mobile phone data*

Apart from call records, existing research shows that other kinds of mobile phone data can also be collected, analysed and used in several ways. Blumenstock et al. (2013) collected the comprehensive log of all mobile phone activity – calls, text messages, money transfers and purchases – of 1.5 million subscribers from Rwanda's primary telecommunications operator during a four-year period. More specifically, they used data from interpersonal transfers between subscribers of the network – date, time, value and anonymized identifiers for senders and receivers – to understand how money sent through phones is used to share risk in the aftermath of natural disasters (in particular, the 2008 Rwanda earthquake) and the determinants of mobile money transfers.

#### *Using IP addresses of website logins and e-mail sending to estimate international migration trends*

State et al. (2013) and Zagheni and Weber (2012) provide examples of innovative approaches to estimate migration flows using Big Data in the form of IP address-based location data. In the first paper,

short- and medium-term migration flows were estimated using IP addresses from repeated logins to Yahoo! Services by over 100 million anonymized users during a one-year period. The authors constructed the sample following a data-cleaning protocol aimed at reducing the inaccuracies (“noise”) normally associated with the use of IP geo-location data – for instance, users might use a proxy server to connect to the Internet, in which case their physical location would not correspond to the IP-based geo-location. By constructing a statistical model for the prediction and analysis of migrant (as well as short-term tourist) flows, the authors were able to infer global mobility patterns on the basis of “conditional probabilities of migration,” or else the likelihood that a migrant from one country will go to another country. This model was also able to capture patterns of circular or “pendular” migration which cannot be identified using traditional data sources such as national censuses or household surveys.

In Zagheni and Weber (2014), IP addresses were used to map the geographic locations from where 43 million anonymized users sent e-mail messages within a given period. The authors linked such information to users’ self-reported age and gender information to estimate age- and gender-specific migration rates, with the assumption that a user’s country of residence is the one from where he or she sent most of his or her e-mails. In order to correct for selection bias – the fact that the sample considered is normally quite large, but not necessarily representative of the whole population due to differences in Internet usage patterns across countries and age groups – the researchers constructed a model which took into account differentials in Internet penetration rates by age and gender across countries. The reason for this is that in countries where Internet penetration is low, Internet users might be a select group of highly educated or mobile people, and, thus, mobility might be overestimated. As the authors argue, this type of research has the potential to revolutionize the way in which migration statistics are compiled, given its global scale, the relatively short time-frame in which it can be carried out given the velocity of data generation, the real-time collection, and the limitations associated to the use of demographic registration systems, as migrants often do not register in the destination country (when they do, there is often a lag between their movement to the destination country and actual registration).

### *Using geo-located social media (Twitter) data to infer migration trends*

Social media is becoming an important source of information to study migration trends, as it makes it possible to identify and (anonymously) follow users over time through geo-referenced posts. Zagheni et al. (2014) used geographic information (latitude and longitude) derived from Twitter posts to estimate migration in countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In particular, the researchers downloaded geo-located “tweets” (i.e. Twitter posts) of about 500,000 users who posted at least one tweet in the sample period using Twitter Application Programming Interface, and mapped users to countries, dividing them into those who “tweeted” from one, two, three countries or more. They then selected a sample of users for which they had detailed and consistent information over the period considered – at least three geo-located tweets in each of the four-month periods over two years – scaling down the sample to about 15,000 users. Their main methodological innovation is the use of a difference-in-difference strategy to reduce the “selection bias” inherent in the use of social media data for statistical inference, given that Twitter (as well as other social media platforms) users do not constitute a representative sample of the whole population. In other words, assuming that the composition of Twitter users changes in a similar way across countries, one can extrapolate migration trends by comparing relative changes in migration rates for a single country with relative changes for the group of reference at two points in time.

Geo-referenced Twitter data allows for comparisons between patterns of internal and international migration, because it makes it possible to differentiate between country residents, that is, those who post tweets from the reference or origin country, and migrants, that is, those who “tweet” from another country. Also, this data has great potential in migration forecasting because it is available well before information from national censuses or surveys. More work from the scientific community is needed, however, first, to overcome selection bias in the use of social media to track mobility, thereby ensuring the external validity of studies based on this kind of data; and second, to make it possible to predict mobility patterns with highly complex, unstructured and hard-to-verify social media data.

### *Alternative uses of social media content in migration research*

Social media represent another Big Data source of useful information for migration studies. As previously explained, social media platforms such like microblogging site Twitter can be used to infer mobility patterns using the geographic information linked to users' posts. However, the potential of social media data in the field of migration studies is not confined to the identification or prediction of mobility trends. Social media contain unstructured and often publicly available data (unlike e-mail messages, which are private in nature), which can be used in a variety of ways as a growing academic literature shows.

A special issue of the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* entitled "Migration and Diaspora in the Age of Information and Communication Technologies" (No. 9, Vol. 38, 2012) was entirely dedicated to issues that emerge from the intersection of ICTs and migration, such as diaspora and transnationalism, as well as to ways in which ICTs impact migrants' lives. Empirical studies have investigated the role of social media platforms in the construction of transnational networks (Nedelcu, 2012). Social media have been found not only to ease communication between migrants, but to actively transform the nature of migrant networks and, in some instances, facilitate migration: potential migrants can use social media to establish ties with people already residing in the potential destination country, or to collect information through informal channels (Dekker and Engbersen, 2013). Social media can also be useful to investigate the political activism of migrants and minority groups (Conversi, 2012; Kissau, 2012), migrants' integration into the host society (Rinnawi, 2012), as well as the transformation of family relationships and the impact of migration on migrants' well-being, for example.

Lastly, social media can be rich sources of information for analysing people's attitudes towards immigrants and immigration, as well as migrant integration in the host society. For instance, the project Unite Europe aims to analyse social media content generated by citizens to inform local integration policies.<sup>9</sup> However, there are serious challenges associated with this kind of research, as information gathered on social media might represent a very small sample of public opinion or might be exaggerated or in any case not correspond to people's actual views (Mc Gregor and Siegel, 2013).

To sum up, the most common applications of Big Data in the context of migration seem to be in the use of mobile phone call data to track and assist displaced populations in regions exposed to disaster risk. There are several ongoing studies of this type. Academic researchers at the Flowminder Foundation work to improve public health outcomes in disaster-, conflict- and disease-affected regions through the collection, aggregation, analysis and dissemination of mobile phone data to track displacement and therefore improve relief responses.<sup>10</sup> The United Nations University's project, "Mobile Data, Environmental Extremes and Population" (MDEEP), seeks to use mobile phone call data, among other sources, to study the impact of cyclones and household responses in Bangladesh. A current project led by Maastricht University is focusing on the potential of using new technologies in responding to human displacement.<sup>11</sup> Georgetown University and the University of Sussex are jointly conducting research on the uses of Big Data to create an early warning system to prevent forced population displacement.<sup>12</sup>

**"As previously explained, social media platforms such like microblogging site Twitter can be used to infer mobility patterns using the geographic information linked to users' posts."**

9 Unite Europe official website: [www.uniteeurope.org](http://www.uniteeurope.org).

10 Flowminder Foundation official website: [www.flowminder.org](http://www.flowminder.org).

11 See "ICT and population displacement: potentials of new technologies in responding to human displacement" at [www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/Main/Education/InnovationAndExcellence/ExcellenceProgrammes/PREMIUM/Projects1.htm](http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/Main/Education/InnovationAndExcellence/ExcellenceProgrammes/PREMIUM/Projects1.htm).

12 See [www.georgetown.edu/research/news/isim-forced-migration-warning-system.html](http://www.georgetown.edu/research/news/isim-forced-migration-warning-system.html) for more information.

Table 1: Summary of the alternative uses of Big Data in studying migration trends

Big Data type	Description	Examples of past uses	Pitfalls/Challenges	Further potential
Call detail records (CDRs)	Digital records automatically generated and collected by mobile network operators every time a mobile phone call is made. CDRs include information about the time and duration of the call, the calling and receiving numbers and the approximate locations of the caller and the receiver.	<b>Tracking post-disaster displacement</b> Bengtsson et al. (2011) estimated the magnitude of and the trends in population movement out of Port-au-Prince following the 2010 Haiti earthquake through an anonymized location records on 2.8 million SIMs that made at least one call in the pre- and post-earthquake period.	Privacy and ethical issues; personal security issues in conflict situations; selection bias and external validity; data collection and analysis; integration of innovative with traditional data; contextual knowledge.	Creation of early warning systems for forced migration and population displacements <sup>13</sup> ; migration forecasting; studying internal and temporary/circular migration patterns.
Other types of mobile phone data	Log of all mobile phone activity, including calls, text messages, money transfer and online purchases.	<b>Identifying modalities and determinants of mobile money transfers</b> Blumenstock et al. (2013) used data on interpersonal money transfers between 1.5 million subscribers to Rwanda's main telecommunication operator (date, time, value and anonymized identifiers for senders and receivers) to understand how money is used to share risk in post-disaster situations (in this case, the 2008 Rwanda earthquake) and identify the determinants of mobile money transfers.	Privacy and ethical issues; security issues in conflict situations; selection bias and external validity; data collection and analysis; integration of innovative with traditional data; contextual knowledge.	Studying patterns of remittance-sending activities.
IP addresses of website logins and sent e-mails	Geo-referenced data based on IP-addresses of repeated logins to the same website or e-mail-sending activity.	<b>Estimating and predicting migration flows/rates</b> State et al. (2013) estimate short- and medium-term migration flows from repeated logins to Yahoo! Services website of over 100 million anonymized users during a one-year period. They also built a model to infer global mobility patterns based on the likelihood of migrants moving. Zagheni and Weber (2012) estimated age- and gender-specific migration rates using IP-addresses to map the geographic locations from where e-mails were sent and the self-reported age and gender information of 43 million anonymized users.	Privacy and ethical issues; selection bias and external validity; data collection and analysis; accuracy of IP-based geographic information at the local and regional levels; integration of innovative with traditional data.	Migration tracking and forecasting; studying internal and temporary/circular migration patterns.

13 Visit [www.georgetown.edu/research/news/isim-forced-migration-warning-system.html](http://www.georgetown.edu/research/news/isim-forced-migration-warning-system.html) and [www.ehs.unu.edu/mdeep](http://www.ehs.unu.edu/mdeep), respectively, for more information about Georgetown University's and United Nations University's current research projects.

Big Data type	Description	Examples of past uses	Pitfalls/Challenges	Further potential
Geo-located social media data	<p>Geographic information (latitude and longitude) derived from users' geo-located posts on social media.</p>	<p><b>Inferring migration trends and comparing patterns of internal and international migration</b></p> <p>Zaghenei et al. (2014) estimated migration trends in OECD countries using geo-located posts on Twitter of 15,000 users with an established minimum level of activity and for which they have consistent information over time, distinguishing between residents, who were tweeting from one country, and migrants, who were tweeting from different countries.</p> <p><b>Analysis of transnational networks and diaspora groups</b></p> <p>Nedelcu (2012) investigated the role of social media in the construction of transnational networks by considering Internet use by Romanian professionals in Toronto and their transnational families.</p> <p>Oiarzabal (2012) analysed 90 websites used by the Basque diaspora in 16 countries as part of his research on the influence of online activities on offline Basque diaspora members.</p> <p><b>Analysis of migration-related public discourse</b></p> <p>The project Unite Europe aims to analyse social media content generated by citizens to inform local integration policies.</p> <p>The Oxford Migration Observatory (2013) conducted a quantitative analysis of the language used by 20 British newspapers over two years to determine prevalent migration discourse in the United Kingdom.</p>	<p>Privacy and ethical issues; selection bias and external validity; data collection and analysis; accuracy and truthfulness of self-provided information; integration of innovative with traditional data.</p>	<p>Migration tracking and forecasting; study of internal and temporary/circular migration patterns; creation of early warning system for forced migration and conflict-induced displacement.</p>
Social media content	<p>Data generated by users' activity on social media (posts, comments, pictures, etc.), partly publicly available.</p>	<p>Analysis of migrants' networks, political mobilization, community and identity formation; assessment of migrant integration in the host country; analysis of public attitudes towards immigrants and immigration; evaluation of public confidence in government immigration policies.</p>	<p>Privacy and ethical issues; selection bias and external validity; accuracy and truthfulness of self-provided information and social media content; data collection and analysis of complex unstructured data.</p>	<p>Analysis of migrants' networks, political mobilization, community and identity formation; assessment of migrant integration in the host country; analysis of public attitudes towards immigrants and immigration; evaluation of public confidence in government immigration policies.</p>

### Using Big Data to study migration: Issues and challenges

The use of Big Data in migration research comes with significant challenges. First, there are serious privacy, ethical and human rights issues related to use of data inadvertently generated by users of mobile devices and web-based platforms. Risks to individual rights to privacy can even threaten personal security in conflict situations (Letouzé, 2012). Public concerns over the use of Big Data for any purpose, including research, need to be identified and adequately addressed by policymakers, perhaps through the creation of a regulatory system setting out conditions and limits to access to and use of certain kinds of data.

There are also more general concerns associated with the selectivity and partiality of Big Data. This is sometimes referred to as the “Digital Divide,” which refers to the fact that populations’ access to and use of digital data tend to vary according to factors such as age, gender and financial condition. The availability of a potentially very large sample does not ensure that the sample will be representative, because data only refers to ICT users – a self-selected sample of the whole population. The risk of “selection bias” inherent in the use of ICT-generated data in migration research undermines the external validity of such studies – although the normally large sample size makes them more likely to be accurate. As a consequence, policies could be informed by partial evidence and non-representative data.

In specific cases, such as in the analysis of information gathered from social media, the impossibility of verifying the truthfulness of the information provided by users can also threaten the internal validity of empirical studies. Data collection and analysis constitute particularly challenging tasks, given the complexity, velocity and volume of Big Data. Further challenges are represented by the integration of innovative kinds of data with traditional ones, the insertion of new studies in existing migration theoretical frameworks (or the creation of new ones) and, more generally, the need to ensure that Big Data-derived knowledge is put in context for policymaking purposes. Finally, infrastructural challenges in data-sharing, management and security require more work and communication between researchers and policymakers (King, 2011).

### Conclusions

It is widely recognized that policymakers lack timely and comparable data on migration. It is also the case that much migration data is scattered within and between countries and is not always used effectively by policymakers. Big Data alone is not the solution to these challenges, but the examples presented above suggest that Big Data can provide very useful evidence on emerging migration trends. The challenge remains how best to harness the potential of using Big Data. There are still many questions, including how we can make greater and more effective use of Big Data in the study of migratory trends within and across countries, and how Big Data can inform analyses of the impact of migration on the development of sending and receiving States, as well as on migrants’ well-being.

The opportunities presented by Big Data in migration research are matched by an equally significant number of issues and challenges which need to be tackled: individual privacy and ethical issues; personal security issues in conflict situations; selectivity and partiality of collected data; infrastructural challenges hindering data collection, aggregation and sharing among researchers for replication of studies; on the methodological side, selection bias and external validity issues; integration of innovative with traditional kinds of data for comprehensive analysis; contextual knowledge for informed policymaking; and, finally, accuracy and truthfulness of users’ self-provided information on social media. ■

### References

#### ACAPS

- 2013 *Call Detail Records: The use of mobile phone data to track and predict population displacement in disasters*. Available from <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=5445>.

#### Ben-David, A.

- 2012 The Palestinian Diaspora on the Web: Between de-territorialization and re-territorialization. *Social Science Information*, 51: 459–474.

- Bengtsson L. et al.  
2011 Improved response to disasters and outbreaks by tracking population movements with mobile phone network data: A post-earthquake geospatial study in Haiti. *PLOS Medicine*, 8(8): e1001083, doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1001083.
- Blumenstock J., N. Eagle and M. Fafchamps  
2013 *Motives for Mobile Phone-Based Giving: Evidence in the Aftermath of Natural Disasters*. Available from [www.jblumenstock.com/files/papers/jblumenstock\\_mobilequakes.pdf](http://www.jblumenstock.com/files/papers/jblumenstock_mobilequakes.pdf).
- Dekker, R. and G. Engbersen  
2013 How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration. *Global Networks*, doi: 10.1111/glob.12040.
- Eagle, N., Y. de Montjoye and L.M.A. Bettencourt  
2009 Community computing: Comparisons between rural and urban societies using mobile phone data. *Computational Science and Engineering*, 4:144–150. Available from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?rep=rep1&type=pdf&doi=10.1.1.183.1723>.
- Hilbert, M.  
2013 Big Data for Development: From Information to Knowledge Societies. Available from <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2205145>.
- King, G.  
2011 Ensuring the data-rich future of the social sciences. *Science*, 331(11):719–721, doi: 10.1126/science.1197872.
- Kirkpatrick, R.  
2013 Big data for development. *Big Data*, 1(1):3–4, doi:10.1089/big.2012.1502.
- Laney, D.  
2001 3D Data Management: Controlling Volume, Velocity, and Variety. META Group File 949. Available from <http://blogs.gartner.com/doug-laney/files/2012/01/ad949-3D-Data-Management-Controlling-Data-Volume-Velocity-and-Variety.pdf>.
- Latouzé, E.  
2012 “Big Data for Development: What May Determine Success or Failure?” OECD Technology Foresight presentation, October 22, 2012, Paris. Available from [www.oecd.org/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=O7fS9xGecB](http://www.oecd.org/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=O7fS9xGecB).
- Lu, X., et al.  
2013 Approaching the limit of predictability in human mobility. *Scientific Reports*, No. 3, Article 2923. Available from [www.nature.com/srep/2013/131011/srep02923/full/srep02923.html](http://www.nature.com/srep/2013/131011/srep02923/full/srep02923.html).
- Mc Gregor, E. and M. Siegel  
2013 Social Media and Migration Research. UNU-MERIT Working Paper Series #2013-068. Available from [www.merit.unu.edu/publications/wppdf/2013/wp2013-068.pdf](http://www.merit.unu.edu/publications/wppdf/2013/wp2013-068.pdf).
- Nedelcu, M.  
2012 Migrants’ new transnational habitus: Rethinking migration through a cosmopolitan lens in the Digital Age. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(9):1339–1356.
- Oiarzabal, P.J.  
2012 Diaspora Basques and online social networks: An analysis of users of Basque institutional diaspora groups on Facebook. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(9):1469–1485.
- Oxford Migration Observatory  
2013 Migration in the News: Portrayal of immigrants, migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees in national British newspapers, 2010-2012. Report. Available from <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/reports/migration-news>.
- Rinnawi, K.  
2012 ‘Instant nationalism’ and the ‘Cyber Mufti’: The Arab Diaspora in Europe and transnational media. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(9):1451–1467.

State B., I. Weber and E. Zagheni

- 2013 “Studying international mobility through IP geo-location.” In: Proceedings of the sixth ACM international conference on Web search and data mining, pp. 265–274.

UN Global Pulse

- 2012 *Big Data for Development: Challenges and Opportunities?*, UN Global Pulse, New York Paper. Available from [www.unglobalpulse.org/sites/default/files/BigDataforDevelopment-GlobalPulseMay2012.pdf](http://www.unglobalpulse.org/sites/default/files/BigDataforDevelopment-GlobalPulseMay2012.pdf).

UN High-level Panel

- 2013 Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda 2013. Available from [www.un.org/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=pV59d7bffc](http://www.un.org/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=pV59d7bffc).

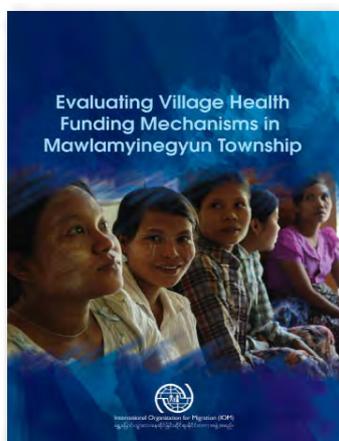
Zagheni, E. et al.

- 2014 Inferring International and Internal Migration Patterns from Twitter Data. *WWW 2014 Companion*, 7 – 11 April 2014.

Zagheni, E. and I. Weber

- 2012 “You are where you e-mail: Using e-mail data to estimate international migration rates.” In: ACM Web Science Conference proceedings, 25 June 2012.

## Publications



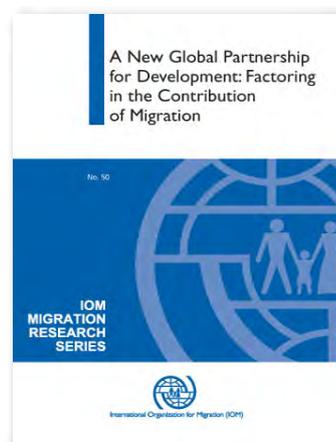
### Evaluating Village Health Funding Mechanisms in Mawlamyinegyun Township

2014/66 pages

English

[Available for PDF download](#)

The overall objective of this research is to analyse the existing community-based health financing mechanisms in 60 villages in the Ayeyarwady Delta, Myanmar which were previously given access to grants to establish “Village Health Funds” following cyclone Nargis. The evaluation report investigates existing community mechanisms in the township that enable communities to support emergency referrals of pregnant women and children to access health care, in order to provide a basis for further expansion and improved community case management. The outcomes of the research are intended to inform ongoing support for community-based health financing and make recommendations on how to improve their use and sustainability, in order to reduce financial barriers for health access in vulnerable communities. The research uses qualitative and quantitative data and analysis to investigate and report on the following factors: fund status and activities; fund utilization; community perception and contribution; sustainability; and the role of partners. The research reveals that in more than half of the villages, the health funds are still maintained and functioning two years after they were initially set up. This report includes several recommendations regarding successful intervention strategies and suggestions on how support to community-based health financing can be improved.



### A New Global Partnership for Development: Factoring in the Contribution of Migration

2014/84 pages/English

ISBN 978-92-9068-693-4/ISSN 1607-338X

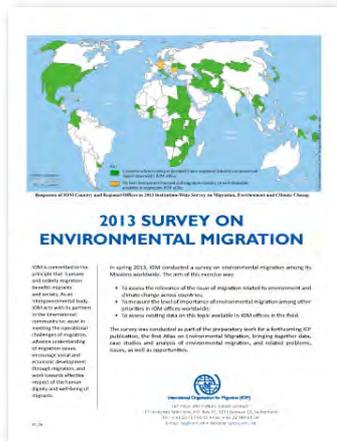
[Available in hard copy and for PDF download](#)

International migration is frequently discussed in association with development. There are some 232 million international migrants in the world (UN DESA, 2013), and when internal mobility is included this number jumps to one in seven people on the planet. These numbers emphasize the increasing significance of migration. Yet the topic remains a complex phenomenon. Great variations in the conditions faced by migrants are mirrored in its developmental impacts. Furthermore, migration can also be seen as a product of development. From the early movements of hunter-gatherers, to urbanization processes triggered by the industrial revolution, to the movement of health workers triggered by ageing populations, mobility is a core part of the human experience.

When we talk about migration and development in policy circles we tend to focus on how we can enhance the positives and mitigate the negatives. In doing so, there is often more of a focus on the more tangible channels through which migration can impact development: remittances, diaspora engagement and the highly skilled, and less so on other less tangible areas such as social remittances, and the reverse relationship between migration and development, where development impacts migration.

However, these areas merit further investigation, because they lead us to consider what the evidence tells us about how migration, like technology or international trade, transforms realities. Additionally, internal migration has not been given the recognition it deserves within international frameworks, particularly given that urbanization processes are inherently linked to both migration and development.

It is clear that migration should be part of the discussions for the post-2015 development agenda. However we should tread with caution. Migration is also a topic that questions national sovereignty and, as such, an emotive and controversial topic in parliaments across the world.



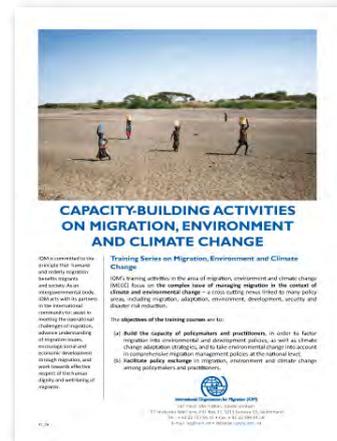
### 2013 Survey on Environmental Migration

2014/2 pages

English

[Available for PDF download](#)

In 2013, IOM conducted a survey on environmental migration among its missions worldwide, as part of IOM's institutional knowledge management efforts and ongoing policy and research work in the area of migration, environment and climate change. The survey reveals the increasing importance and relevance of the issue in many countries and for many IOM offices worldwide. It also demonstrates considerable gaps and needs in terms of data collection and policy response.



### Capacity-building Activities on Migration, Environment and Climate Change

2014/6 pages

English

[Available for PDF download](#)

IOM has launched a series of capacity-building trainings targeting mid to senior level policymakers and practitioners active in environmental and/or migration areas. The trainings seek to provide participants with a basic understanding of migration, environment and climate change concepts and terminology as well as concrete tools that can support national and regional policymaking processes. This initiative is in line with the overall IOM's goal to support the integration of human mobility issues within climate change and environmental policies, and, vice versa, the inclusion of climate and environmental concerns within migration processes.



### Centre Africain de Renforcement des Capacités - Synthèse des activités pour 2012-2013

2014/24 pages

Français

[Peut être téléchargé uniquement en PDF](#)

Cette publication résume les activités du Centre Africain de Renforcement des Capacités en 2012-2013. Etabli en 2009 à la demande des Etats Africains Membres de l'OIM, les activités du ACBC relèvent de trois piliers distincts mais étroitement liés. En premier lieu, le Centre fournit une expertise technique en termes de gestion de la migration et des frontières sous la forme d'évaluations, de formations, d'ateliers ainsi que le développement et l'installation du Système d'Analyse de l'Information et des Données Migratoires (MIDAS, auparavant connu sous le nom de SIRP -Système d'information aux frontières développé par l'OIM). Ensuite, le Centre est engagé dans la recherche sur les migrations et le développement d'outils de gestion de la migration. Enfin, le Centre s'efforce de sensibiliser sur les questions de migrations et de gestion des frontières à travers des actions de plaidoyer et de nombreux partenariats.



### Las Bases del Derecho Internacional sobre Migración

2014/578 pages

ISBN 978-92-9068-680-4

Español

40 dólares EE.UU.

[Disponible en formato papel o puede ser descargado en formato pdf](#)

El derecho internacional sobre la migración es un importante ámbito del derecho internacional, que ha despertado un enorme interés en los últimos años. Este libro se ha escrito teniendo en mente toda una gama de perspectivas para quienes desean comprender el marco jurídico que rige la migración. Va destinado a quienes carecen de conocimientos en este ámbito de estudios y que desean tener una idea general de sus numerosos componentes, así como a quienes poseen conocimientos especializados en una determinada rama del derecho internacional sobre migración pero necesitan comprender el modo en que su especialización se interrelaciona con las demás ramas de esta disciplina, es decir: a quienes se dedican al estudio del derecho y la migración, a los encargados de la formulación de políticas, al personal de los servicios diplomáticos y consulares, así como a las organizaciones internacionales.

Además, ha sido escrito por especialistas en derecho sobre migración, bajo la conducción de expertos internacionales de renombre, lo que ha permitido combinar los conocimientos en derecho internacional sobre migración y políticas de esferas académicas, internacionales, intergubernamentales, organizaciones regionales y no gubernamentales, así como de gobiernos nacionales. También comprende estudios de casos, mapas, recuadros narrativos y referencias sobre las fuentes, que propician una comprensión cabal del derecho en este contexto.

## MPP Readers' Survey

*Migration Policy Practice* was launched almost three years ago and the editors would now like to invite readers to spare a couple of minutes to participate in a short readers' satisfaction survey.

The purpose of this survey, which can be taken anonymously, is to help us identify our readers' profiles, the institutions they represent and their primary interests in our journal. The survey's responses will contribute, in particular, to adjusting and improving, as appropriate, MPP's content and style, and thus the reader's experience.

Should you wish to participate in this survey, please [click here](#).

Thank you.

