

Migration Governance, and Policy and Programming Responses

Introduction

Migration is old, but its governance is relatively recent. The building of independent States in North and West Africa, the construction of national identities, the extension of States' control over the lives of individuals and the provision of services to the population soon raised the issue of who belongs to the national framework of rights and duties, and who does not; who shares the national identity, and who does not. International migration brought up specific issues. How do States engage with their citizens abroad? Do they grant them political rights such as voting from abroad and political representation? What rights, including those of entry and stay, shall be granted to immigrants, and on what conditions? States have provided very diverse responses to these questions.

Migration often takes place across borders. However, despite growing international policy frameworks, policy competency on migration is still national. States hold sovereign policy competency on migration. They also engage with other States through bilateral and multilateral policy frameworks. They do so at the regional level (for example, through the 1979 Protocol on Free Movement, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Common Approach on Migration) and at the continental level (such as through the Migration Policy Framework for Africa). Increasingly relevant are also transregional policy frameworks, in particular with the European Union. At the global level, most of them have signed the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and further relevant instruments, such as the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, ratification and transposition of these policies at the national level are sometimes slow.

Finally, migration governance goes beyond the movement of people and includes various aspects of the lives of migrants. Governing migration is by essence multisectoral. Migrant integration policies are a case in point, as they span all public policies – from health, education and housing, to communication, security and justice.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted in 2018 by a vast majority of the world's nations – including most countries in the regions covered by this volume – is a non-binding agreement laying out a set of principles and commitments for greater international cooperation on migration.

Most States along the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) are part of free movement areas. The trend towards lifting intraregional border controls has, however, unfolded in parallel with a trend towards tightening external border controls. These two trends have shaped regional and transregional migration governance in West and North Africa and in Europe (Schöfberger, Chapter 30 of this volume). Even though free movement policies were adopted quite early in ECOWAS and the European Union, and discussed

for a long time in the Arab Maghreb Union and the African Union, their implementation remains challenging due to political and socioeconomic differences between Member States, to different migration-related interests and to growing interregional dependencies.

Europe's tightening external border controls, combined with an increasing criminalization of irregular migration in West and North Africa, have had a significant impact on the lives of migrants. While the demand for smuggling services does not appear to have decreased, rising entry barriers have stimulated the criminal organization of irregular migration. Trends recently detected in the region point to the progressive conversion of smuggling activities into thriving trafficking businesses, involving the exploitation of migrants and asylum seekers, and the trade of harmful narcotic drugs (Raineri, Chapter 31 of this volume).

At the national level, States have adopted policies and laws that are directly or indirectly relevant for migration. All North and West African nationality laws give precedence to blood over territorial bonds, so migrants belong more to where they come from than to where they reside. While States are now committed to reincorporating expatriate nationals in the economy and the citizenry of their homelands, full inclusion of immigrants is not part of current political agendas across the region. Irregular migration is increasingly punished by detention and deportation, instead of amnesty and regularization (Fargues, Chapter 32 of this volume). The European Union and its member States' increased engagement with African States on immigration control is to be factored into the criminalization of migrants with an irregular status currently taking place along the entire CMR.

Many migrants abroad and their descendants do still engage with their countries of origin. Recently, these countries have also increased their efforts to engage with them. As with many countries around the world, Member States of ECOWAS have designed diaspora policies that include the establishment of dedicated institutions to foster remittances, transfers of knowledge and diaspora political engagement (Schöfberger, Chapter 33 of this volume). Comparable institutions were set up earlier in North Africa. The facilitation of voting from abroad in national elections has pushed away the territorial boundaries of citizenship (Jaulin, Chapter 34 of this volume). But to what extent State policies actually increase the contribution diasporas have always brought to the economic, cultural and political life in their countries of origin remains to be studied.

Immigrants can appear to locals as people with different manners. They might be regarded negatively, as potential competitors on the labour market, or sources of insecurity, among other things. Prejudices, xenophobia and discriminatory attitudes towards migrants and refugees are commonplace around the world, but tolerance, sympathy and openness are equally common, and a plurality of opinions is the rule. Building a cohesive society is a process of mutual respect and adaptation of newcomers and existing communities. Opinions are shaped by facts and ideas – on the one hand by the actual experience of locals and migrants interacting in the real life, and on the other hand by visions propagated by politicians, opinion leaders and the media. Opinions are also nuanced by the tangible situation of migrants, as locals do not see immigrants whose businesses create employment the same way they see refugees or transit migrants with irregular status (Borgnäs and Acostamadiedo, Chapter 35 of this volume).

Understanding public opinion about international migration and what factors influence perceptions of the phenomenon is important for countries and the international community to foster a constructive and balanced public discourse, and to effectively counter xenophobia and stigmatization of migrants. This section provides examples of two initiatives implemented in North Africa to help balance the migration narrative, one directed at Egyptian youth and one with the aim of training journalists for responsible and evidence-based media reporting on migration (Pace, Shireen and Borgnäs, Chapter 36 of this volume).

In this context, information and awareness-raising campaigns that civil associations and international organizations carry out with the support of the European Union to alert would-be migrants to the dangers of irregular migration must be carefully monitored. Do these campaigns really provide young people with information they would not already have? Do they play any role in reducing the numbers of those risking their lives along the CMR and incite them to make a safer choice (Tjaden, Chapter 37 of this volume)?

Humanitarian action among migrants and refugees travelling the CMR is more necessary than ever. Against this backdrop, data collected by the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) bring the evidence needed for donors, governments and practitioners to make informed decision-making for evidence-based programming and action on the ground. However, the utility of the collected data can be improved by suggesting practical measures at different stages of the data management, information-sharing and coordination (Bonfiglio, Leigh and Zakoska-Todorovska, Chapter 38 of this volume).