

# MIGRANTS IN COUNTRIES IN CRISIS

## COMPARATIVE REPORT

Resilience in the Face of Adversity:  
A Comparative Study of Migrants in  
Crisis Situations

Maegan Hendow, Alessandra Bravi, Albert Kraller,  
Robtel Neajai Pailey, Bernhard Perchinig and  
Katharina Schaur

Edited by Albert Kraller, Oliver Bakewell, Maegan  
Hendow, Jenny Peebles and Lucas Rasche



Project funded by the European Union



Project implemented by ICMPPD



In partnership with IMI





# MIGRANTS IN COUNTRIES IN CRISIS

---

## **Resilience in the Face of Adversity: A Comparative Study of Migrants in Crisis Situations**

**Authors:**

Maegan Hendow, Alessandra Bravi, Albert Kraler, Robtel Neajai Pailey,  
Bernhard Perchinig and Katharina Schaur

**Edited by:**

Albert Kraler, Oliver Bakewell, Maegan Hendow, Jenny Peebles  
and Lucas Rasche

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Gonzagagasse 1

A-1010 Vienna

Austria

[www.icmpd.org](http://www.icmpd.org)

International Centre for Migration Policy Development

Vienna, 2018

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission of the copyright owners.

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

Project funded by the European Union



Project implemented by ICMPD



In partnership with IMI





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

This report was prepared with the indispensable input of research partners and their teams in 12 fieldwork countries: Mahamadou Zongo (Burkina Faso); Henri Yambene Bomono (Cameroon); Remadji Hoinathy (Chad); Maysa Ayoub, Mohamed El Sayeh and Sara Sadek (Egypt); Leander Kandilige (Ghana); Dina Mansour-Ille (Lebanon); James Suah Shilue (Liberia); Francesca Zampagni (Libya); Hamidou Manou Nabara (Niger); Jonathan Crush (South Africa); Kanya Apipornchaisakul and Hassan Boubakri (Tunisia); and Sureeporn Punpuing, Teeranong Sakulsri, Reena Tadee and Alexander Trupp (Thailand).

The authors gratefully acknowledge the input and suggestions of colleagues at the European Commission, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and the International Migration Institute (IMI), which contributed to improve the quality of the report. We particularly thank Harmke Kruithof and Aurélie Sgro.

This publication was produced with the support of the European Union.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ACRONYMS



### 1. INTRODUCTION

5

BACKGROUND  
CASE STUDIES AND OTHER MICIC RESEARCH  
METHODOLOGY



### 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

13

INTRODUCTION  
CRISIS  
CRISIS RESPONSE AND CRISIS GOVERNANCE  
STRATEGIES OF MOBILITY AND IMMOBILITY  
RETURN AND REINTEGRATION  
CONCLUSIONS



### 3. CRISIS

28

INTRODUCTION  
WHAT IS A CRISIS?  
CRISIS AS A 'TIPPING POINT'  
CHRONIC STATE FRAGILITY  
RECURRING AND OVERLAPPING CRISES  
CONCLUSIONS



### 4. SITUATION OF MIGRANTS BEFORE A CRISIS

38

INTRODUCTION  
MIGRANT STATUS AND POSITIONING  
XENOPHOBIA, RACISM AND REPRISALS  
CONCLUSIONS



### 5. MIGRANTS' STRATEGIES OF MOBILITY AND IMMOBILITY DURING AND AFTER CRISES

48

INTRODUCTION  
MIGRANTS' MOBILITY: LEAVING THE CRISIS SITUATION  
IMMOBILITY: BETWEEN ACTIVE CHOICE AND BECOMING TRAPPED  
CONCLUSIONS



### BOX: IMMOBILITY AS AN ACT OF RESISTANCE AMONG MIGRANTS IN TUNISIA

56



## 6. INTERVENTIONS AND ASSISTANCE

58

INTRODUCTION  
CRISIS RESPONSE  
GAPS IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE  
SUPPORT IN THE LONGER TERM  
MIGRANT RECEPTION AND PERCEPTIONS OF ASSISTANCE  
POLICY CHANGE  
CONCLUSIONS



## 7. REINTEGRATION AND REMIGRATION

78

INTRODUCTION  
REINTEGRATION  
REMIGRATION  
CONCLUSIONS



## 8. CONCLUSIONS – A DIVERSITY OF OUTCOMES

87

INTRODUCTION  
THE DIFFERENT SIDES OF CRISIS  
CRISIS AS A CATALYST  
AGENCY, RESILIENCE AND CRISIS  
PERCEPTIONS, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION  
INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CRISES  
RETURN: THE CHALLENGE OF REINTEGRATION



## 9. LIST OF REFERENCES

97





## ACRONYMS

---

CAR	Central African Republic
CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Community
CSO	civil society organisation
ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (EU)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IDP	internally displaced person
IHDL	Initiative Humanitaire pour le Développement Local (Chad)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMI	International Migration Institute (University of Oxford)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LRN	Liberia Returnee Network
LRRRC	Liberia Refugee Repatriation Resettlement Commission
MICIC	Migrants in Countries in Crisis (Initiative and project)
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
START	Stabilizing At-Risk Communities and Enhancing Migration Management to Enable Smooth Transitions in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya (EU project)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization



## BACKGROUND

This report presents the comparative findings of research spanning two years on migrants caught in situations of crisis in a destination country. The research focused on the longer-term socio-economic impacts of these crises on migrants, on their families and on the countries affected by the crisis. It was conducted by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the University of Oxford's International Migration Institute (IMI) and local research partners in the fieldwork countries, in the context of the larger European Union (EU)-funded project "Migrants in Countries in Crisis: Supporting an Evidence-based Approach for Effective and Cooperative State Action" (MICIC).<sup>1</sup> That EU-funded project aims to improve the capacity of states and other stakeholders to assist and provide protection to migrants who find themselves in countries affected by crisis – through in-depth research, consultations with government and other relevant stakeholders and capacity building. With this three-pronged approach, the project contributes to the global MICIC Initiative, a government-led process co-chaired by the governments of the Philippines and the United States. Based on the inputs of states, civil society, international organisations and private sector stakeholders on both the project and the initiative, the MICIC Initiative released its "Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster",<sup>2</sup> to help states and other stakeholders respond to the needs of migrants caught in crisis situations. The empirical research described in this report confirms many of the issues raised and policy priorities recommended in these guidelines.

While previous studies have examined crises and their aftermath, as well as immediate responses, this is the first major research project to examine the subject from a comparative perspective. In particular, we investigated the long-term impact of crises on migrants, on countries of origin and on host countries. Our research, thus, fills crucial gaps in knowledge on this topic. This research focused on three main questions:

- What are the long-term consequences of crises in which migrants are implicated? In particular, what are the impacts on the country experiencing the crisis, the countries of origin to which migrants return and third countries?
- What stakeholders are involved in responding to migrants caught in situations of crisis? What have been their responsibilities?
- What policies have been adopted to respond to situations of crisis, and what kinds of impacts have they had?

<sup>1</sup> For more information, see [www.icmpd.org/our-work/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/](http://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/).

<sup>2</sup> MICIC Initiative. (2016). *Guidelines to protect migrants in countries experiencing conflict or natural disaster*. Retrieved from [https://micicinitiative.iom.int/sites/default/files/document/micic\\_guidelines\\_english\\_web\\_13\\_09\\_2016.pdf](https://micicinitiative.iom.int/sites/default/files/document/micic_guidelines_english_web_13_09_2016.pdf).

Chapter two presents the theoretical framing of the research. Nonetheless, it is constructive here to briefly outline the basic scope of the research, both thematic and methodologic. Overall, our research operated around two fundamental concepts: migrants and crisis. For the purpose of this research, we started out from the definitions provided by the wider MICIC Initiative:

Migrants are defined broadly to include all non-nationals/non-citizens who are present in the country affected by a crisis and who do not benefit from international protection as refugees.<sup>3</sup>

Crises may arise when social, political, economic, natural or environmental factors or events combine with structural vulnerabilities and/or when the magnitude of those events or factors overwhelm the resilience and response capacities of individuals, communities, or countries. [The MICIC I]nitiative focuses on two types of acute crises whose magnitude demands a significant humanitarian response by the authorities of the country in crisis and/or by the international community: those triggered by (1) natural disasters (e.g. hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, and sudden and slow-onset floods); and (2) conflict (e.g. civil unrest, generalised violence and/or international or non-international armed conflict).<sup>4</sup>

We refined these definitions in several ways. With regard to the definition of migrants, first, we included in our research refugees and asylum seekers secondarily displaced by a crisis in their host country, as they may face similar protection issues as other migrants during a crisis. Second, we focused on migrants who planned to stay, or had stayed, in the host country on a long-term basis, as the impacts of crises are acutely felt by those whose longer-term plans and goals hinge on remaining in the country. We thus did not cover the effects of crises on non-citizens and migrants who were in a country for purposes of tourism or short-term business. Lastly, our research recognised that status and legal categories, on the one hand, and rights and benefits, on the other, could be matters of perception: migrants' perceptions of themselves as belonging to a certain group and states' perceptions of migrants as instrumental to an economic strategy, as citizens or aliens and/or as a potential threat. Thus, legal categories can sometimes be fluid and change.

In terms of crises, this research focused on situations identified as a humanitarian emergencies or disasters that threatened the life, health and safety of the people present in the areas directly affected (i.e., both citizens and non-citizens), with those endangered being the target of external assistance (e.g., by international organisations or states) and entailing significant movement of populations during the crisis (of both citizens and non-citizens). Nonetheless, every crisis follows a unique trajectory. We therefore elected to study specific crises in order to examine the particular needs and challenges that arise as a crisis situation escalates. Further theoretical discussion of crises, as well as how they unfold in practice, as revealed by our research, are covered in chapters two and three.

<sup>3</sup> MICIC Initiative. (2014). Frequently Asked Questions About the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative. Retrieved from <https://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/docs/MICIC-FAQs-Final-for-GFMD-5-8-2014.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> MICIC Initiative. (2014).

We proceed first by outlining the methodological tools and approaches employed for this research. The next chapter presents the conceptual framework and scrutinises the main concepts examined in the research, including crisis, mobility and return. Chapter three reflects on the various experiences and perceptions of crisis revealed by the fieldwork and compared to our framework. Chapter four then presents our findings on the contextual and structural factors that contributed to migrants' positioning in the host society and to their responses in times of crisis. Chapter five outlines the empirical results of our research regarding migrants' mobility (and immobility) in response to a crisis situation, both within the crisis country and in other countries, such as the country of origin and transit countries. Chapter six examines the different types of crisis response interventions undertaken by non-migrant stakeholders, including migrants' family members, civil society organisations (CSOs), intergovernmental organisations and states. Chapter seven delves into the particular impacts of crisis-induced return migration on the country of origin, including long-term impacts at the micro and meso level, as well as issues of reintegration and remigration. Chapter eight concludes the report with discussion of the central overarching finding of this research, which is the diversity of outcomes among migrants caught in a crisis, both in the immediate emergency phase and in the longer term. This final chapter draws out six main themes that emerged from our research and improve our understanding of crises, of migrants' and institutional actors' responses to crises and of the varied impacts crises have on these stakeholders. These suggest priority areas for future research and policymaking.

## CASE STUDIES AND OTHER MICIC RESEARCH

---

In the introductory period of the MICIC research, three discussion papers were published setting out the conceptual framework for the case study research.<sup>5</sup> Six cases were selected for in-depth empirical study and analysis. In the preparatory phase of the case study research, six working papers were prepared to refine the choice of fieldwork countries and focus. These served as background materials for the six final case studies. These final case studies, in turn, served as the basis for the current comparative report. Although not taken into account in this comparative report, we also published a separate study on the EU policy framework and institutional structures of EU humanitarian aid and civil protection policies, based on desk research, additional interviews with European stakeholders and information extracted from the case studies.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, an emerging findings report was released in preparation for the September 2016 United Nations (UN) Summit for Refugees and Migrants, concerned with large-scale movements of

<sup>5</sup> Two of these discussion papers were published as research briefs: Perchinig, B. (2016). Actors and stakeholder involvement in crisis mitigation. Retrieved from [www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/ICMPD-Website\\_2011/MICIC/BRIEF\\_Actors\\_and\\_stakeholders\\_final.pdf](http://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/ICMPD-Website_2011/MICIC/BRIEF_Actors_and_stakeholders_final.pdf), and Pailey, R. N. (2016). Long-term socio-economic implications of 'crisis-induced' return migration on countries of origin. Retrieved from [www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/ICMPD-Website\\_2011/MICIC/BRIEF\\_Long\\_Term\\_Implications\\_final.pdf](http://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/ICMPD-Website_2011/MICIC/BRIEF_Long_Term_Implications_final.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Perchinig, B., with L. Rasche and K. Schaur. (2017). Humanitarian aid and civil protection policies in the European Union and the MICIC agenda. Vienna: ICMPD. Available at [www.icmpd.org/our-work/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/research/](http://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/research/).

migrants and refugees.<sup>7</sup> That report presented initial results and analyses from the fieldwork and case studies, with the aim of highlighting the main issues of concern. Table 1 provides an overview of these publications.

Table 1 MICIC research building blocks

TITLE*	METHOD AND FIELDWORK COUNTRIES	CRISIS UNDER STUDY	RESEARCH FOCUS
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	Desk research		Defines the fundamental concepts of the research, including the notions of crisis and mobility, the geographical and temporal focus and the target group
LONG-TERM SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF ‘CRISIS-INDUCED’ RETURN MIGRATION ON COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN	Desk research		Longer-term socio-economic implications, particularly of return, at the micro, meso and macro levels
ACTORS AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN CRISIS MITIGATION	Desk research		Challenges and areas of engagement in crisis mitigation by different stakeholder groups, including migrants
EMERGING FINDINGS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SIX CRISIS SITUATIONS	Comparative analysis of initial case study findings from the six case study countries below		Presentation of emerging findings from the initial case study fieldwork and research, aimed at highlighting main issues

<sup>7</sup>Hendow, M., R. N. Pailey and A. Bravi (2016). Emerging findings: A comparative study of six crisis situations. Vienna: ICMPD. Available at [http://research.icmpd.org/fileadmin/Research-Website/Project\\_material/MICIC/MICIC\\_REPORT\\_final\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://research.icmpd.org/fileadmin/Research-Website/Project_material/MICIC/MICIC_REPORT_final_Fact_Sheet.pdf).

TITLE*	METHOD AND FIELDWORK COUNTRIES	CRISIS UNDER STUDY	RESEARCH FOCUS
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AT A CROSSROADS: SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS OF CRISIS-INDUCED RETURNS TO CAMEROON AND CHAD	Desk research; fieldwork in Cameroon and Chad	<b>2013–2014</b> political unrest in Central African Republic (CAR)	Impact of migrant returns on the socio-economic development of countries of origin
CÔTE D'IVOIRE AT A CROSSROADS: SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS OF CRISIS-INDUCED RETURNS TO BURKINA FASO, GHANA AND LIBERIA	Desk research; fieldwork in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Liberia	<b>2002–2003</b> and <b>2010–2011</b> political unrest	Impact of migrant returns on the socio-economic development of countries of origin
LEBANON CASE STUDY: MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS AND THE 2006 CRISIS	Desk research; fieldwork in Lebanon	<b>2006–present</b> situation of migrant domestic workers	Impact of recent crises in Lebanon, particularly the 2006 war, on the situation of migrant domestic workers in the country
AN UNENDING CRISIS: RESPONSES OF MIGRANTS, STATES AND ORGANISATIONS TO THE 2011 LIBYA CRISIS	Desk research; fieldwork in Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Ghana, Niger and Tunisia	<b>2011</b> political unrest	Situation of migrants who returned to their countries of origin during the Libya crisis or remained stranded in transit countries, with emphasis on longer-term consequences for the socio-economic development of countries of origin and the living conditions of returnees and stranded migrants

TITLE*	METHOD AND FIELDWORK COUNTRIES	CRISIS UNDER STUDY	RESEARCH FOCUS
THE DOUBLE CRISIS: MASS MIGRATION FROM ZIMBABWE AND XENOPHOBIC VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA	Desk research; fieldwork in South Africa and Zimbabwe	<b>2008 and 2015</b> xenophobic violence	Impacts of the xenophobic violence in South Africa in 2008 and 2015 on different migrant groups, with emphasis on those from Zimbabwe. The study sheds particular light on impacts on migrant entrepreneurs in the country and their business strategy responses
MIGRATION AND NATURAL DISASTERS: THE IMPACT ON MIGRANTS OF THE 2011 FLOODS IN THAILAND	Desk research; fieldwork in Thailand	<b>2011</b> flood disaster	Consequences of floods for migrants from Myanmar, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam, as well as the effects of the migrant registration system on migrants' responses to the disaster
HUMANITARIAN AID AND CIVIL PROTECTION POLICIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE MICIC AGENDA	Desk research; findings from the 12 fieldwork countries; interviews in Brussels		EU policy framework and institutional structures of EU humanitarian aid and civil protection policies

*Note: All studies except for the conceptual framework are available via [www.icmpd.org/our-work/cross-cutting-initiatives/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/research/](http://www.icmpd.org/our-work/cross-cutting-initiatives/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/research/).*

## METHODOLOGY

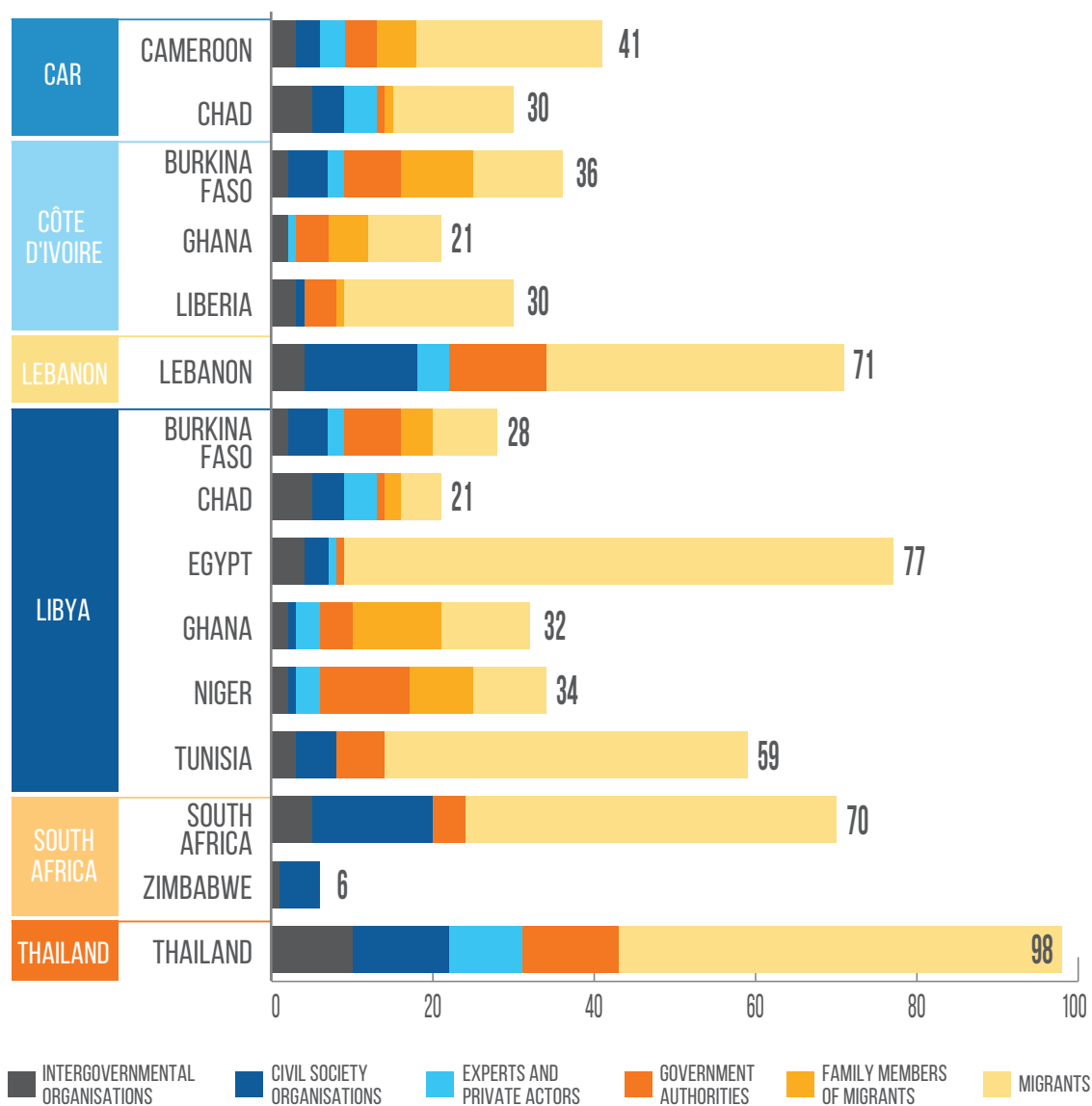
This comparative report is based on an analysis of the six case studies published within this project,<sup>8</sup> supplemented by desk research. All case studies employed similar methodological approaches, including desk research, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. For the Lebanon case study, participant observation was also used. Case study researchers joined events hosted by migrant associations and country of origin authorities at which large numbers of migrants participated. This enabled them to gain the trust of the community and identify potential interview subjects. For the South Africa case study, the authors also analysed findings of the Southern African Migration Programme surveys of migrant enterprises in the informal economy conducted in Cape Town and Johannesburg in 2015.

Research teams from IMI, ICMPD and local partners collected information from more than 650 respondents through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions held between February and September 2016. Uniform fieldwork tools were developed for data collection and analysis in all countries. We particularly targeted six stakeholder groups: migrants, family members of migrants (where relevant and feasible), government authorities (from host, transit and origin countries), experts and private sector actors (including employers, community leaders and academics), CSOs (both international and local) and intergovernmental organisations (such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and EU delegations). For migrant and family member interviews, we adopted a purposive sampling approach, using snowball sampling or a site selection strategy. For other stakeholder groups, expert sampling was used. For the latter, official requests were submitted by letter, email or telephone to organisations to obtain authorisations for interviews, to identify the most appropriate interviewees within an organisation and to arrange meetings. Researchers conducted interviews in the capital city of each fieldwork country, as well as at a small number of other sites in the countries, based on relevance to the target group under study. Figure 1.1 presents the numbers of the different categories of respondents in the six case studies. For more details on methodological approach and fieldwork see the respective case studies.

<sup>8</sup> All case studies are available at [www.icmpd.org/our-work/cross-cutting-initiatives/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/research/](http://www.icmpd.org/our-work/cross-cutting-initiatives/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/research/).



Figure 1.1 Stakeholder categories and numbers of interviewees in the six case study countries



Note: For the interviews conducted with migrants, the numbers reported here for Lebanon and Egypt correspond to the number of individual migrant interviews conducted plus the number of attendees in focus group sessions. In the case of Egypt, some were counted twice, as 15 subjects for in-depth interviews were selected from among the focus group participants.



### INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the study framework, examining the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the themes explored in the subsequent chapters. These include the meaning of crisis (chapter three), the role of migrants' positioning before and at the time of the crisis (chapter four), mobility choices in the context of a crisis (chapter five), policy responses to crises and crisis governance (chapter six) and migrant return and reintegration (chapter seven). Thus, while the following chapters draw on and discuss empirical evidence from our six case studies, this chapter delves into these topics from a conceptual perspective, discussing the meaning of terms and the implications of certain approaches for the research. This helps us to position the empirical results within the broader research field.

### CRISIS

#### THE CONCEPT OF CRISIS

As stated in the introduction, this study adopts by and large the definition of crisis used by the MICIC Initiative. That definition emphasises social, political, economic, environmental and other factors combined with structural vulnerabilities and an event of a magnitude that overwhelms existing capacities.<sup>9</sup> The MICIC Initiative, moreover, distinguishes two types of crisis: (1) natural disasters, such as a hurricane, earthquake, tsunami and sudden or slow-onset flood, and (2) conflicts, including civil unrest, generalised violence and international and domestic armed conflict.<sup>10</sup> This definition of crisis is relational; it relates different types of severe adverse events to their impacts. A crisis, thus, is not merely an event, for instance, a natural disaster or armed conflict, but rather the cumulative outcome of a disaster or conflict situation and the ability of the affected individuals, communities and states to cope.

However, as Lindley argued in a review of the literature on crisis and migration, there is a degree of subjectivity in crisis identification, as the latter “often depends critically on the perceptions and pronouncements of dominant actors, which may reflect to a rather variable extent objectively measurable indicators and people’s real-life experiences”.<sup>11</sup> In addition, “people’s real-life experiences” may in fact be

<sup>9</sup> For the full definition, see MICIC Initiative (2014).

<sup>10</sup> The initiative thus excludes other crisis, such as severe economic crises and non-violent political crises that in terms of impacts on those affected, including migrants, can also be severe.

<sup>11</sup> Lindley, A. (2014). Exploring crisis and migration: Concepts and issues. In: Lindley, A. (ed.), *Crisis and migration*. London: Routledge, p. 1. In fact, in academic and professional debates in the humanitarian field, the term ‘emergency’ is more commonly used. While invoking similar imagery

quite diverse, with different categories of people experiencing the same crisis entirely differently.<sup>12</sup> Against this background, the MICIC concept of crisis as used in this study should be seen, first and foremost, as a heuristic tool to probe the effects of particular “social, political, economic, natural or environmental factors or events” rather than taking crisis situations as given. Indeed, the crises examined in this research were very diverse. They included situations of generalised violence and internal strife (Libya, Côte d’Ivoire and Central African Republic (CAR)), a natural disaster (Thailand), intense and extensive xenophobic violence (South Africa) and a ‘conventional’<sup>13</sup> war lasting several weeks (Lebanon). Inclusion by design of such a wide spectrum of crisis situations casts light on the meaning of crisis and the different implications of a crisis for those affected.

People’s real-life experiences may in fact be quite diverse, with different categories of people experiencing the same crisis entirely differently

In analysing these crises and their implications for migrants and migration, the concepts of ‘tipping point’<sup>14</sup> and ‘critical threshold’<sup>15</sup> can be useful, especially in slow-onset emergencies. These concepts reject the idea of a simple or singular causal link between an extreme event (such as an armed conflict

or natural disaster) and population movement, and of crisis as a static event or episode. Rather, particular events, such as those mentioned above, are framed as processes encompassing pre-existing fragilities and socio-economic circumstances (e.g., poverty and long-standing conflict) which cumulatively ‘tip’ a situation ‘over the edge’. In this sense, the concept of tipping points introduces more subtlety to the causal links in crises, bringing in, for example, the relevance of rising tensions and the multiplicity of factors that shape a crisis as outcome.

This more gradual and inclusive perspective on crisis is particularly relevant to discussions of migrants and non-citizens in countries experiencing a crisis, as these populations may already be in a vulnerable situation before a crisis unfolds. Violent conflict or disaster may compound these vulnerabilities, for example, limiting migrants’ mobility or access to services or making them direct targets of hostilities. Opinions vary on exactly when critical thresholds are considered to have been reached, which again suggests the need for nuanced analysis.

---

as a crisis, portraying certain events as “sudden, unpredictable [...] that require immediate action”, the term ‘emergency’ is more directly linked to policies and interventions. Indeed, to a large extent it is the perceived urgency of a humanitarian response that makes an emergency. The notion of ‘complex emergency’, coined in the 1990s to acknowledge the multiple causes of emergencies, conceptually integrated different types of emergencies (or crisis), stressing the social and political dimensions of any crisis. See Calhoun, C. (2008). The imperative to reduce suffering: Charity, progress, and emergencies in the field of humanitarian action. In: Barnett, M. and Weiss, T. G. (eds), *Humanitarianism in question*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, pp. 83 and passim.

<sup>12</sup> Violence directed against particular groups, including xenophobic violence accompanying a crisis is a case in point.

<sup>13</sup> The war was conventional in the sense that it involved a conventional military operation launched by Israel in Lebanon, even if it was not directed against the Lebanese government as such but at an armed faction within Lebanon.

<sup>14</sup> McAdam, J. (2014). The concept of crisis migration. In: *Forced Migration Review* 45, February, pp. 10–12.

<sup>15</sup> Lindley (2014), p. 2.

At the same time, our conceptualisation of crisis needs to be in line with its usage in the disaster management field and with international instruments focused on crisis response. The next two sections review the changing conceptual framing of crisis and disaster in the field of humanitarian response. Specifically, we focus on the literature on disaster management and the rise of the concepts of vulnerability and resilience in guiding policy responses in the different stages of a crisis.<sup>16</sup>

## THE CHANGING UNDERSTANDING OF CRISIS AND CRISIS IMPACTS

The conceptual framing of crisis and disaster underwent major change in the last quarter of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup> In the 1970s, the disaster narrative focused on the concept of ‘hazard’, understood as an unexpected disruptive event caused by natural powers and leading to severe damage to infrastructure. Remedies centred on technical solutions to reduce the probability of material damage, for example, by improving the quality of infrastructure and infrastructure construction. This ‘end of the pipe’ strategy was latterly accompanied by a focus on risk. The aim in this regard was to reduce the likelihood and impact of hazards. For example, monitoring of potential natural hazards, such as volcanoes, was improved and means were sought to divert potential impacts of hazards to unsettled areas, such as by development of floodplains and construction of polders to mitigate flood damage.

Over the 1990s, this technical understanding of disaster and crisis gradually gave way to a sociological definition. Disaster came to be understood as a process of interaction between external forces, such as a natural hazard or armed conflict, and the socio-economic and political conditions in a society. These conditions of certain groups or communities were understood to affect both their risk of becoming victim of a crisis and their capacity to cope. As such, socio-economic and political aspects came to be regarded as major factors neglected in the technical disaster narrative.

The rise of the concept of ‘vulnerability’, defined as “the characteristics of a person or group and their situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard”,<sup>18</sup> similarly shifted the focus away from technical concerns, such as construction of earthquake-safe roads and housing. Yet, greater awareness of the role of vulnerability brought politics into disaster science and raised questions about the effects of (poor) governance and political or military conflict on the social production of vulnerability among certain groups or communities.

The new sociological focus also cast doubt on the notion of ‘abnormality’ that

<sup>16</sup> As hinted in Lindley (2014, p. 2), the fields of disaster management and humanitarian responses to conflict-related emergencies have become increasingly integrated, especially where international humanitarian aid is concerned.

<sup>17</sup> This overview of the conceptual framing of crisis and disaster is based on Frerks, G., Warner, J. and Wejs, B. (2011). The politics of vulnerability and resilience. *Revista Ambiente & Sociedade*, 14(2), 105–122.

<sup>18</sup> Wisner, B., Blaikie, P., Cannon, T. and Davis, I. (1994). *At risk: Natural hazards, peoples’ vulnerability and disaster*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 11., cited in Frerks, Warner and Wejs (2011), p. 107.

was central in the technical understanding of disaster. The prevailing approach had been to accept disasters as exceptional events that disturbed the usual routine. However, the shift in focus to the most vulnerable groups in society contradicted this, as their everyday lives might be shaped by continuous crisis. For them, singular disaster events were “just another hazard in a long line of adversity”.<sup>19</sup>

Greater awareness of the role of vulnerability brought politics into disaster science and raised questions about the effects of (poor) governance and political or military conflict on the social production of vulnerability among certain groups or communities

Chapter three in this report explores findings from our research supporting this notion of multiple, recurring and even overlapping crises. Improving the

living conditions of the most vulnerable groups and reducing their everyday risk thus became significant concepts in disaster risk reduction, linking this policy area more closely to long-term social development and development policy interventions.

The sociological framing greatly influenced the Disaster Risk Index, developed by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2004. That index clearly showed that disasters affect the poorest groups in society most dramatically. The poorest are not only most prone to being hit by disaster, but they are also more likely to lack the necessary means to recover and rebuild.<sup>20</sup> Following this recognition, the ‘vulnerability assessment’, based either on proximity to a place of disaster or predefined individual characteristics (such as gender, age, disability and ethnic minority status), became a major tool in decision-making on humanitarian aid after the 1990s.<sup>21</sup>

The understanding of disasters as interactions between natural forces and vulnerabilities endogenous to societies posed new challenges to humanitarian actors, since the field of humanitarian response is driven by the humanitarian principle of delivering aid based on need alone. Acknowledging the human origins of disaster raised questions regarding post-disaster aid delivery and the need to change the social conditions that produced vulnerabilities. Indeed, during the 1990s, a number of incidents, including the displacement of populations after the genocide in Rwanda, stirred a growing antipathy toward the traditional focus on aid delivery, which was criticised as producing dependency or even prolonging conflicts. New humanitarian approaches argued that aid should be invested in long-term peace building and capacity building to empower affected populations. Many humanitarian organisations rejected this, however, arguing that it brought the risk of subordinating needs-based humanitarian action to politically-motivated agendas, thus undermining humanitarian principles and threatening access to people in need.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Wisner et al. (1994) cited in Frerks, Warner and Wejs (2011), p. 108.

<sup>20</sup> Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR)-UNDP (2004). *Reducing disaster risk: A challenge for development*. New York: BCPR-UNDP, cited in Frerks, Warner and Wejs (2011), p. 108.

<sup>21</sup> Frerks, Warner and Wejs (2011), p. 109.

<sup>22</sup> See De Miliano, C., Faling, M., Clark-Ginsberg, A., Crowley, D. and Gibbons, P. (2015). Resilience: The holy grail or yet another hype? In: Gibbons, P. and Heintze, H.-J. (eds), *The humanitarian challenge*. Cham: Springer Publishing, p. 20.

Although the concept of vulnerability always included an element of agency, the 'vulnerability assessment' developed in the 1990s largely made use of predefined labelling of people as 'vulnerable'. However, the victimisation and disempowerment inherent in external attribution of vulnerability by humanitarian aid providers was increasingly criticised in the early 2000s. Several studies demonstrated that local communities, and not professional aid providers, were usually the 'first responders' in crises. In line with this realisation, both academics and the international aid community shifted their attention to human agency in crisis situations.<sup>23</sup> The focus on human agency and coping strategies resonated with the notion of resilience, which was now adopted as a key concept in disaster sciences.

Resilience had first gained prominence in environmental systems analysis and psychology. But these fields linked different notions to the concept. Environmental systems analysis understood resilience as "the ability of a system to maintain its structure and patterns of behaviour in the face of disturbances" and "to resist any departure from that condition, and, if perturbed, return rapidly to it",<sup>24</sup> thus endorsing the pre-crisis status quo. However, in the field of psychology resilience was related to empowerment and individual coping, describing the capacity of an individual to positively adapt to adverse conditions, including actions to proactively overcome constraints.<sup>25</sup>

Aspects of both characterise the current understanding of resilience in the field of disaster response and humanitarian aid. Although a systems theory-related approach dominates civil protection thinking, understanding of resilience in the field of humanitarian aid has evolved from a focus on the individual to incorporation of broader structural aspects and power relations within a society. Frerks and colleagues suggested that resilience be seen as "the shared social capacity to anticipate, resist, absorb and recover from an adverse or disturbing event or process through adaptive and innovative processes of change, entrepreneurship, learning and increased competence".<sup>26</sup>

Understanding of resilience in the field of humanitarian aid has evolved from a focus on the individual to incorporation of broader structural aspects and power relations within a society

In this understanding, resilience is a key factor determining individual and collective agency in crisis situations, and also clearly linked to vulnerability due to adverse conditions. Thus, conditions producing vulnerability reduce resilience, and strengthening resilience reduces vulnerability. This conceptualisation transforms humanitarian aid from a reconstructive to a transformative undertaking. If strengthening resilience is the key to reducing vulnerabilities, emergency responses

<sup>23</sup> See De Miliano et al. (2015), p. 23.

<sup>24</sup> Holling, C. S. (1986). The resilience of terrestrial ecosystems: Local surprise and global change. In: Clark, W. S. and Munn, R. E. (eds) *Sustainable development of the biosphere*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 292–317, cited in Frerks, Warner and Wejs (2011), p. 112.

<sup>25</sup> Fletcher, D. and Sarkar, M. (2013). Psychological resilience: A review of definitions, concepts and theories. *European Psychologist*, 18, 12–23.

<sup>26</sup> Frerks, Warner and Wejs (2011), p. 113.

cannot be governed only by the goal to rebuild, but instead should be guided by an aim to “rebuild better” in a broad sense, including changing the social and power relations that produce vulnerability.<sup>27</sup>

## INTERNATIONAL AND EU FRAMEWORKS

The previous section discussed theoretical approaches to crisis response within the field of humanitarian assistance, including conceptualisations of vulnerability and resilience. This section positions this discourse within the international institutional arena. In the context of crisis and migration, the concept of vulnerability is often linked to the term ‘mixed migration’, which has become widely used in institutional approaches to migration and refugees, for example, by UNHCR, IOM and the International Labour Organization (ILO).<sup>28</sup> Mixed migration references the fact that along any one migration route, including one precipitated by a crisis, the needs of the people within it vary. Mixed migration flows can thus include economic migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, victims of trafficking, stateless persons, children, disabled persons and the elderly. Moreover, people may have mixed motivations for moving; a combination of fear and uncertainty, as well as hopes and aspirations. As needs and risk levels differ, so too should institutional responses, in order to ensure protection.

In its 10-point plan of action on refugee protection and mixed migration, UNHCR set out its own approach to ensure protection within mixed migration flows, also providing operational tools for this purpose.<sup>29</sup> The approach focuses on the specific protection needs of vulnerable people. Yet the concept of vulnerability is also intrinsically linked to that of resilience, understood as “differences in the degree of damage incurred from (natural) hazards that are manifested for an individual person, a whole community or an entire region”.<sup>30</sup> At an institutional level, both the UN and the EU base their understanding of resilience on a definition by Holling<sup>31</sup> stating, “Resilience determines the resistance of relationships within a system and is a measure of the ability of these systems to absorb changes of state variables, driving variables and parameters, and still persist.”

The concept of vulnerability is also intrinsically linked to that of resilience

Fostering resilience is at the core of the two main disaster risk reduction frameworks of the UN: the 2005 “Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster”<sup>32</sup> and its successor, the

<sup>27</sup> De Miliano et al. (2015), p. 27.

<sup>28</sup> See [www.unhcr.org/mixed-migration.html](http://www.unhcr.org/mixed-migration.html) and [www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/primers/mixed-migration-policy-challenges/](http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/primers/mixed-migration-policy-challenges/).

<sup>29</sup> See [www.unhcr.org/the-10-point-plan-in-action.html](http://www.unhcr.org/the-10-point-plan-in-action.html).

<sup>30</sup> Fekete, A., Hufschmidt, G. & Kruse, S. (2014). Benefits and challenges of resilience and vulnerability for disaster risk management, *International Journal of Risk Sciences*, 5, DOI 10.1007/s13753-014-0008-3, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> Holling, C. S. (1973). Resilience and stability of ecological systems. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, 4, 17.

<sup>32</sup> UNISDR (2005). Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster. Retrieved from [www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/1037](http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/1037).



2015 “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030”.<sup>33</sup> The Hyogo Framework emphasised resilience in its very title, linked to the 2004 definition of resilience by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) as “the capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure”. This definition of resilience, furthermore, has a clear focus on the social system: “This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organising itself to increase this capacity for learning from past disasters for better future protection and to improve risk reduction measures.”<sup>34</sup> The Sendai Framework reiterates the focus on resilience. One of its four priorities is “investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience”.

In both frameworks, vulnerability is understood as “the conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards”.<sup>35</sup> The frameworks thus do not relate vulnerability to certain individual or group characteristics, but instead speak of “people in vulnerable situations”,<sup>36</sup> fostering an understanding of vulnerability as the product of specific economic, social and cultural conditions in a risk-producing situation. Rather than being defined as persons with specific vulnerabilities linked to their migrant status, the Sendai Framework regards migrants as stakeholders in disaster risk reduction, and migrants’ contributions to the resilience of communities and societies are highlighted.<sup>37</sup> The Hyogo and Sendai Frameworks are key reference documents for EU humanitarian aid and protection policymaking.<sup>38</sup> Both the “EU Approach to Resilience”<sup>39</sup> and the “Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries”<sup>40</sup> link resilience building with reducing vulnerability, and define enhancement of resilience as a main aim of both humanitarian aid and development assistance.<sup>41</sup>

This new focus on resilience has also been reflected in the development of indicator systems for decision-making in humanitarian aid. The “Resilience Marker Assessment Card” defines vulnerability by the degree to which population groups are affected by an identified hazard and the coping capacities available to them.<sup>42</sup> The European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

<sup>33</sup> UNISDR (2015). Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Retrieved from [www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework](http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework).

<sup>34</sup> UNISDR (2004). *Living with risk: A global review of disaster reduction initiatives*, vol. 2. New York and Geneva: UN, p. 6

<sup>35</sup> UNISDR (2015), p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> UNISDR (2015), p.4.

<sup>37</sup> UNISDR (2015), pp. 7, 27 and 36.

<sup>38</sup> For more on the European approach, see Perchinig, Rasche and Schaur (2017).

<sup>39</sup> European Commission (2012). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: The EU approach to resilience: Learning from food security crises. Brussels, 3.10.2012, COM(2012) 586 final. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com\\_2012\\_586\\_resilience\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com_2012_586_resilience_en.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> European Commission (2013). Commission staff working document: Action plan for resilience in crisis prone countries 2013–2020. Brussels, 19.6.2013, SWD (2013) 227 final. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/.../resilience/com\\_2013\\_227\\_ap\\_crisis\\_prone\\_countries\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/.../resilience/com_2013_227_ap_crisis_prone_countries_en.pdf).

<sup>41</sup> European Commission (2013), p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> European Commission (2014). Resilience Marker Assessment Card. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/resilience\\_assesment\\_card\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/resilience_assesment_card_en.pdf).



policy guidelines on humanitarian protection<sup>43</sup> link humanitarian aid to civil protection in a common, resilience-based framework. The framework understands vulnerability as a reduced ability to react to adverse impacts, whether caused by life circumstances or by physical or social characteristics: “Vulnerability is not a fixed criterion attached to specific categories of people, and no one is born vulnerable per se.”<sup>44</sup> This understanding, based on coping capacity, recognises that migrants have vulnerabilities, but rejects the idea that people are specifically or generally vulnerable due to their status as migrants.

as migrants. Indeed, this view is confirmed by many examples in the empirical chapters of the current report.

For the purpose of this report, then, we have tried to situate the concept of crisis within the wider field of humanitarian aid, both practically and theoretically. At the same time, the importance of the way stakeholders engage in and respond to crises, as well as their crisis management approach, cannot be underemphasised.

## CRISIS RESPONSE AND CRISIS GOVERNANCE

The concept of ‘crisis governance’, involving a broad range of stakeholders, has largely replaced the idea of ‘crisis management’, executed by a single authority. Following Renn and Walker’s discussion of risk governance, the term ‘governance’<sup>45</sup> is used here to refer to the landscape of different actors, rules, processes and mechanisms involved in the development of a crisis, as well as decision-making on remedial actions and their implementation.<sup>46</sup> Taking a procedural view of how a crisis unfolds and the institutional reactions to it, crisis governance is concerned primarily with collective processes and decision-making structures involving governments, CSOs and the private sector.

Regulatory powers in crisis governance are not, however, equally distributed between governmental and non-governmental organisations. Power, urgency and legitimacy determine stakeholders’ priorities.<sup>47</sup> Migrants seldom have the power to influence decision-makers, nor are they in a position to make claims on their own behalf. As ‘dormant stakeholders’ they need the support of power brokers to become visible.<sup>48</sup> Scholars have argued that it would be beneficial to involve these ‘dormant stakeholders’, by giving them access to a broader range of

<sup>43</sup> European Commission (2016). Humanitarian protection: Improving protection outcomes to reduce risks for people in humanitarian crises. DG ECHO Thematic Policy Document 8. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/.../policy\\_guidelines\\_humanitarian\\_protection\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/.../policy_guidelines_humanitarian_protection_en.pdf).

<sup>44</sup> European Commission (2016), p. 51.

<sup>45</sup> Rhodes, R. A. W. (1996). The new governance: Governing without government. *Political Studies*, 42, 652–667.

<sup>46</sup> Lim, W. K. (2011). Understanding risk governance: Introducing sociological neoinstitutionalism and foucauldian governmentality for further theorizing. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science*, 2(3), 11–20.

<sup>47</sup> Mitchel, R. K., Bradley, R. A. and Wood, D. J. (1997). Toward a theory of stakeholder identification and salience: Defining the principle of who and what really counts. *The Academy of Management Review*, 22(4), 853–886, p. 872.

<sup>48</sup> Mitchel, Bradley and Wood (1997), p. 889.

resources, allowing critical information to circulate and helping decision-makers develop a more realistic understanding of the nature of a crisis.<sup>49</sup>

Successful crisis governance relies on a needs-based approach, as opposed to a status-based approach.<sup>50</sup> Governments have the principal responsibility for managing disasters and assigning roles to different institutions. However, the dominant top-down approach, which understands disaster-affected communities solely as 'victims', has repeatedly failed to meet the needs of those with limited survival resources and little access to social services. Migrants are often among the ones least served. Community empowerment demands the participation of civil society and community leaders in risk assessment, mitigation planning, capacity building and the development and implementation of monitoring systems.<sup>51</sup>

Polycentric decision-making structures, which have many centres of power, have been observed to accommodate the inclusion of local structures,<sup>52</sup> accumulation of social capital,<sup>53</sup> improved adaptation strategies and the development of resilience capacities.<sup>54</sup> Needs-based crisis governance would therefore seem to call for a polycentric and multi-layered governance structure; but it must be well managed or efficiency will be sacrificed.<sup>55</sup> Chapter six reflects on instances in which experience in crisis governance has impacted planning for future crisis governance, as well as cases where no lessons appear to have been learned or have failed to be put into action.

Needs-based crisis governance would seem to call for a polycentric and multi-layered governance structure

Stakeholder responses and approaches have clear impacts not only on the way crises are managed but also, in the context of our research, on the decisions migrants make during a crisis and the mobility options they perceive. The following sections present theoretical background on migrants' decision-making related to mobility, particularly in the context of a crisis, whether this involves moving within a country or region, going to a new country, returning to the country of origin or even remaining in place.

<sup>49</sup> Lewis, D. (2001). *The management of non-governmental development organisations: An introduction*. London: Routledge.

<sup>50</sup> Zetter, R. (2015). *Protection in crisis: Forced migration and protection in a global era*. Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute.

<sup>51</sup> Pandey, B. and Okazaki, K. (2005). *Community based disaster management: empowering communities to cope with disaster risks*. Tokyo: United Nations Centre for Regional Development.

<sup>52</sup> Lebel, L., Anderies, J. M., Campbell, B., Folke, C., Hatfield-Dodds, S., Hughes, T. P. and Wilson, J. (2006). Governance and the capacity to manage resilience in regional social-ecological systems. *Ecology and Society*, 11(1), 111–124.

<sup>53</sup> Djalante, R., Holley, C. and Thomalla, F. (2011). Adaptive governance and managing resilience to natural hazards. *International Journal for Disaster Risk Science*, 2(4), 1–14.

<sup>54</sup> Ostrom, E. (2010). Beyond markets and states: Polycentric governance of complex economic systems. *American Economic Review*, 100(3), 641–672.

<sup>55</sup> Lebel et al. (2006).

## STRATEGIES OF MOBILITY AND IMMOBILITY

Migration is one of a number of possible strategies for responding to a crisis.<sup>56</sup> However, crisis-related migration tends to be morally and politically charged, both in the academic literature and in policy debates. Moral and legal claims to special attention and protection tend to be stressed, at the expense of recognising individuals' agency and acknowledging the choices available in the face of a crisis.<sup>57</sup> The sedentary bias in debates on migration<sup>58</sup> and the related assumption of the 'natural' attachment of individuals to their home country go hand-in-hand with the assumption that migrants would naturally return to their 'home' country in case of adversity. However, mobility, especially in the context of a crisis, is more complex than this.

When thinking about the mobility that results from a crisis situation, it is useful to differentiate crisis stages. From a longer-term, hindsight perspective, it is possible to outline what happened to the people affected by a crisis. Did they stay where they were, voluntarily or involuntarily? Did they find shelter elsewhere within the country, or move across international borders? These are 'mobility outcomes'. Another form of outcome relates to legal status; that is, whether people ultimately received status as a refugee or an internally displaced person (IDP), or

There is a big difference between the desire to move and the actual ability to do so

fell into neither category. Underlying this outcome is the 'mobility process', made up of different stages at which decisions are taken.<sup>59</sup> The mobility process starts with the initial decision to stay or to leave when a crisis hits. It continues through the choice of route, which may include various points at which people are trapped or stay longer than planned, and re-evaluations of initial decisions, and eventually the destination or destinations.

Mobility thus far has been studied mainly in the context of labour migration. There, mobility is understood as a mixture of choice and constraint.<sup>60</sup> Is it appropriate, however, to speak of choice when exploring migrants forced to flee a crisis, as in

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, on adverse environmental change and migration, Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change (2011). Final project report. London: The Government Office for Science.

<sup>57</sup> See Lindley (2014), p. 12.

<sup>58</sup> See Lindley (2014), p. 1, and Bakewell, O. (2008). Keeping them in their place: The ambivalent relationship between development and migration in Africa. *Third World Quarterly*, 29(7), 1341–1358.

<sup>59</sup> Van der Velde, M. and Van Naerssen, T. (2011). People, borders, trajectories: An approach to cross-border mobility and immobility in and to the European Union, *Area*, 43(2), 218–224. Van der Velde, M. and Van Naerssen, T. (eds) (2015). *Mobility and migration choices: Thresholds to crossing borders*. Farnham: Ashgate.

<sup>60</sup> Hagen-Zanker, J. and Mallett, R. (2016). *Journeys to Europe: The role of policy in migrant decision-making*. ODI Insights. London: Overseas Development Institute. Carling, J. (2002). Migration in the age of involuntary immobility: Theoretical reflections and Cape Verdean experiences. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 28(1), 5–42. Carling, J. (2014). The role of aspirations in migration. Paper presented at the Determinants of International Migration conference, International Migration Institute, University of Oxford, 23–25 September. Van der Velde and Van Naerssen (2011, 2015); Keely, C. B. (2000). Demography and international migration. In: Brettell, C. B. and Hollifield, J. F. (eds), *Migration theory: Talking across disciplines*. New York: Routledge, pp. 43–60.

this research? The decision-making processes of migrants forced to leave have been much less studied than those of economic migrants.<sup>61</sup> Chapter five discusses situations of extreme constraint found in this research, in which migrants' only option was to flee a crisis, or where agency was completely taken away from migrants, as they were immobilised by a crisis situation. In other instances, migrants had some limited choice, though the options were all sometimes undesirable scenarios.

In crisis situations, as in other migration decisions, there is a big difference between the desire to move and the actual ability to do so. The list of potential constraints is long, ranging from those produced by individual vulnerabilities, such as lack of resources, to the consequences of international or state-led responses to the crisis, as explored in chapter four and chapter six, respectively. Individual perceptions may also play a role. However, it is important not to misunderstand mobility as the 'correct' choice in every crisis situation, which is merely hampered by such constraints. For instance, during a flood or other natural disaster the choice to stay in place with a sufficient amount of supplies may be a sound one. Thus, while some migrants may be involuntarily immobile (trapped) in a crisis situation, others may have chosen to stay put for good reasons.

After taking the decision to move, the next step is the route, the mobility process. People may flee a crisis situation on foot, by road or by air. Their journey may be arranged through social networks, smugglers, state agencies or international stakeholders. Furthermore, mobility in crisis situations should not be understood as a straight route from point A to a predetermined point B. According to Gill and colleagues, "Displacement itself is [...] best understood not as a one-off event, but as a process that could last many months or years. During this process, a range of different mobilities may be evident."<sup>62</sup> These may include being trapped en route to a desired destination, as this research found among migrants who had fled Libya only to find themselves trapped in Tunisian transit camps. Such outcomes also highlight the role of the governance of a crisis,<sup>63</sup> be it through states or international stakeholders responding to a crisis situation. The way mobility is governed by these stakeholders may well compound the difficulties migrants face. For instance, non-citizens may be ineligible for evacuations,<sup>64</sup> or they may be prohibited from moving on from a certain point in their journey.

Thus, mobility outcomes should be understood as points in an ongoing process, which may change and may include voluntary or involuntary immobility, and also involve migrants moving between the different status categories that are often applied to them, such as refugees, IDPs and returned citizens. Recognising the fluidity of these categories proved particularly relevant in our research, relating as it did to people who were labelled migrants in the country they had moved to, but

<sup>61</sup> But see Lindley (2014); Gill, N., Caletrio, J. and Mason, V. (2011). Introduction: Mobilities and forced migration. *Mobilities*, 6 (3), 301–316; Turton, D. (2003). Conceptualising forced migration, Refugee Studies Centre Working Paper Series 12. Oxford: RSC University of Oxford; Carling (2002, 2014).

<sup>62</sup> Gill, Caletrio and Mason (2011), p. 302.

<sup>63</sup> Adey, Peter (2016). Emergency mobilities. *Mobilities*, 11 (1), 32–48.

<sup>64</sup> Jureidini, R. (2010). State and non-state actors in evacuations during the conflict in Lebanon, July–August 2006. In: Khalid Koser and Susan Martin (eds) *The migration-displacement nexus: Concepts, cases and responses*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.

in some cases were later relabelled as the crisis unfolded. Their mobility outcomes were at times similar to those of host country citizens, for instance, being housed in a shelter during a natural disaster. But migrants were sometimes worse off, for instance, being detained or trapped because of their irregular status. Migrants may even have more options available to them than citizens, for instance, returning to a country of origin. We explore these outcomes further in chapters five and seven, which focus, respectively, on migrants' mobility and immobility strategies during a crisis and their experiences upon return to their origin country.

Some attempt has been made to comprehensively discuss mobility in crisis situations in what is termed 'crisis migration', encompassing all people who move because of a crisis, whatever its nature, and independent of any protection categories that may or may not apply.<sup>65</sup> Martin and colleagues suggested differentiation of three types of movements in a crisis context. First is anticipatory movement, moving pre-emptively in order to avoid a crisis event. Second is displacement, or moving after a crisis has started to unfold. The third category, relocation, describes the movement of those who are unable to move independently and are evacuated from a crisis event.<sup>66</sup>

While this typology is useful, it leaves out a key mobility outcome found in this research; that is, voluntary or involuntary immobility. We found that people's ability to move in a crisis situation was to some extent dependent on the type of crisis they faced. In a natural disaster, such as a hurricane, which has a limited duration, many people may stay at

Mobility outcomes [...] may change and may include voluntary or involuntary immobility, and also involve migrants moving between the different status categories that are often applied to them

or near their place of residence, if they have sufficient supplies and adequate shelter. However, when confronted with widespread violent political unrest, of uncertain duration, many may flee. But the decision to stay or go also hinges on the capacities of the populations affected, as discussed in chapter four on migrants' positioning before a crisis. In short, the poorest may not have the resources to gather supplies in order to stay, and they may be unable to pay for transportation to go.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, mobility outcomes for migrants in crisis situations are highly context-dependent and interact with specific vulnerabilities, the type of crisis faced and the way the crisis is governed. Outcomes are points in an ongoing process, meaning that people who have moved once may move again, and may change categories while doing so. Immobility, whether voluntary or involuntary, must therefore be included in discussions of migrants' crisis mobility. Our discussions in subsequent

<sup>65</sup> Martin, S., Weerasinghe, S. and Taylor, A. (2014a). What is crisis migration? *FMR* 45. Martin, S., Weerasinghe, S. and Taylor, A. (2014b). Humanitarian crises and migration: Causes, consequences and responses. Abingdon: Routledge; Lindley (2014).

<sup>66</sup> Martin et al. (2014a, 2014b).

<sup>67</sup> Black et al. (2013). Migration, immobility and displacement outcomes following extreme events. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 27, Supplement 1, March, S32–S43. Black et al. (2011). The effect of environmental change on human migration. *Global Environmental Change*, 21S, S3–S11.

chapters integrate awareness of these aspects into our findings on crisis impacts and responses.

## RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

In the context of mobility during a crisis situation, we must take note of the circumstances surrounding return migration, beyond the decision-making process as discussed above. As a large portion of the current research focused on the situations of migrants who had returned to their country of origin following a crisis, we also had to consider conceptual issues regarding the impacts of return migration. Return migration prospects, including reintegration and remigration, are inevitably conditional, or as some scholars have argued, situational, contextual and structural.<sup>68</sup> Migrants' prospects upon return, particularly if that return is unplanned, precipitated by a crisis situation, depend on who returns, when they return, where they return, how they return, what they return with and how said return is perceived and received by the migrants themselves, their families, their communities and their states.<sup>69</sup>

Migrants may return for short, medium, long or cyclical time periods, and may thus be classified as "occasional, seasonal or temporary returnees", depending on the prevailing circumstances in the country of origin.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, migrants' access to different forms of capital and their resource profiles may create different 'types' of return or non-return. Return migrants may or may not possess human capital (skills), social capital (networks abroad) and financial capital (savings), although the actual impact of such transfers has proven difficult to measure.<sup>71</sup> Upon return, the potential for successful reintegration and remigration may

Migrants' access to different forms of capital and their resource profiles may create different 'types' of return or non-return

also vary considerably, depending on migrants' preparedness, particularly their willingness and readiness to return to their origin country; for example, whether they had repatriated savings and assets and secured identity documents.<sup>72</sup> According to Cassarino, "the higher the level of preparedness, the greater the ability of returnees to mobilise resources

autonomously and the stronger their contribution to development".<sup>73</sup> Although this assertion also applies to those who do not return, when migrants have decided not to return, it can be argued that their level of preparedness for return in times of crisis may be especially limited.

<sup>68</sup> Cassarino, Jean-Pierre (2004). Theorising return migration: The conceptual approach to return migrants revisited. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 6(1), 253–279.

<sup>69</sup> Pailey (2016).

<sup>70</sup> Sinatti, G. (2011). 'Mobile transmigrants' or 'unsettled returnees'? Myth of return and permanent settlement among Senegalese migrants. *Population, Space and Place*, 17, 153–166.

<sup>71</sup> Pailey (2016).

<sup>72</sup> Cassarino (2004), pp. 271–275.

<sup>73</sup> Cassarino (2004), p. 275.



There are a number of potentially negative impacts of return to countries of origin, beginning with migrants' own inability to quickly integrate into the labour market.<sup>74</sup> Individual-level reintegration challenges apply even during 'ordinary' times, but they are especially acute during times of crisis. In the case of returns from countries affected by crisis, additional negative impacts may arise at the meso and macro levels.<sup>75</sup> Losses of remittances due to return migration may severely curtail the purchasing power of households accustomed to receiving them, particularly where remittances were used to pay for social services, such as healthcare and education.<sup>76</sup> Migrants may also lose all of their productive assets as a result of a crisis, thereby arriving 'home' impoverished.<sup>77</sup> Chapter seven explores the role of preparedness in reintegration and, in some cases, the remigration of the migrants in our research, as well as how reintegration or remigration is facilitated or constrained by support – or the lack thereof – from various actors.

Migrants who maintain social networks 'at home' and have political and economic ties with their areas of origin may experience less negative impacts of return.<sup>78</sup> Generally, however, poorer migrants sustain fewer such connections over time, compared to migrants with fixed assets such as houses and land in the origin country.<sup>79</sup> Impoverished migrants who are forced to return after a long period, possibly even generations after the initial migration, effectively enter as strangers, with no substantive connections to the community to which they have 'returned'. They likely face the greatest challenges in reintegration.<sup>80</sup>

There are various strands of theory on the reintegration of returnees. The literature tends to focus on refugee reintegration, primarily that organised by formal actors such as the UN, and on diaspora reintegration, primarily facilitated by diasporas themselves. Neither, however, sufficiently captures reintegration mediated by a crisis in a migration country. Indeed, most quantitative analysis has focused on the reintegration of migrants into the labour market. As Gaillard<sup>81</sup> observed, migrants' first concern upon returning to their country of origin is reintegration into working life. In addition to the ability to find suitable work, where returnees resettle and to whom they return has a direct bearing on their prospects for successful reintegration. Reintegration can be arduous for those who return to locations where they have few or no social networks. Research in the field of neoclassical economics has shown that the reintegration of returnees is difficult because they are neither prepared nor expected<sup>82</sup> in many instances. Successful reintegration and contributions to origin country development appear mostly likely when the return is undertaken by the migrants themselves, at their own accord during times of peace.<sup>83</sup> Crisis-induced returns are generally particularly

<sup>74</sup> Pailey (2016).

<sup>75</sup> Pailey (2016).

<sup>76</sup> Pailey (2016).

<sup>77</sup> Pailey (2016).

<sup>78</sup> Pailey (2016).

<sup>79</sup> Pailey (2016).

<sup>80</sup> Pailey (2016).

<sup>81</sup> Gaillard, A. M. (1994). *Migration return: A bibliographical overview*. Occasional Paper. New York: Center for Migration Studies, p. 63.

<sup>82</sup> Nkenne, J. M. (2016). International migration and spatial changes in habitat: The case of the Cameroonian Diaspora in Yaoundé. Doctoral dissertation, p. 87.

<sup>83</sup> Ndione, B. and Lombard, J. (2004). Diagnosis of economic reintegration projects for returning

challenging for migrants, regardless of whether they were in a position to arrange their return themselves.

## CONCLUSIONS

---

The bulk of this report focuses on the empirical results of our six case studies on migrants in countries in crisis. This chapter positioned the research in relation to wider theoretical debates related to crisis, crisis governance and mobility. It covered how crises and disasters are perceived and how they develop, the emergence of crisis management and various crisis governance approaches and how migrants engage mobility options in response to difficult situations and the challenges they face in doing so. Much of this theory is very much in line with the findings and recommendations of our research, as outlined in the subsequent chapters.

---

migrants: A case study in Mali (Bamako, Kayes). *REMI*, 20 (1), 169–195.





### INTRODUCTION

---

Despite clarifying the parameters and conceptualisation of ‘crisis’ prior to the research launch, as discussed in the previous chapter, difficulty remained in pinpointing what exactly a crisis is, particularly in the eyes of migrants themselves. This struggle continued throughout the research and analysis phases in all six case studies. A number of questions repeatedly arose: ‘what crisis’, ‘crisis for whom’ and ‘why this crisis’ (as opposed to another).

Four main points surfaced from the empirical research that reflected the alternative experiences and perceptions of crisis across the case studies and fieldwork countries. First, migrants’ perceptions of a crisis were multifaceted and varied. Some migrants remarked on positive outcomes from the crisis situation, or challenged our selection of a particular event as a crisis, as such characterisation did not reflect their own perspective. Second, the analyses conducted, especially in the Côte d’Ivoire and South Africa case studies, demonstrated that acute violence against migrants emerged and re-emerged as certain ‘tipping points’ were reached, following long periods of growing hostilities, including smaller-scale attacks. Third, migrants and institutional stakeholders observed that some crises lasted for extended periods of time, reflecting broader and chronic state instability, as seen in Libya in particular. Finally, the most salient point to emerge across our research was the idea that a crisis cannot be viewed as a stand-alone event; rather, it often overlaps with other events that migrants, states and other institutional actors must cope with in parallel or in succession.

This chapter delves into these conclusions with the aim of shedding light on migrants’ and institutional stakeholders’ experiences with or perceptions of crises, within and beyond the six crisis situations under study. The experience of these crises coloured the affected populations’ past and future actions, as well as their responses to other challenging circumstances.

### WHAT IS A CRISIS?

---

As noted in chapters one and two, we applied the MICIC Initiative definition of a crisis, which highlights the magnitude of a crisis event and the damage caused by it, be it a natural disaster or armed conflict. Intuitively, we recognise the myriad negative impacts a crisis can have on the well-being of citizens and non-citizens alike, as well as on infrastructure. These were underlined by migrants’ and others’ testimonies of their experiences during crises (presented in more detail in the

following chapters). However, perceiving an event as a crisis was not always straightforward for migrants. In Thailand, although migrants certainly experienced

“

I was so excited and for me it was much fun because I never had this experience before. [Laughing] I was never scared about it at all.

*Female Vietnamese migrant in Thailand*

hardships during the flooding, it was also perceived by some in some instances as presenting opportunities, at least in the initial stages. One migrant interviewed spoke of the excitement brought by the ‘crisis’.

For some, hourly or daily labour became available, helping Thai people or other migrants prepare their homes for the rising waters, for example,

moving items to higher ground and flood-proofing doors and windows. In the aftermath too, there were additional cleaning and clearing jobs for migrants. In a similar vein, during the civil unrest in Libya salaries for migrant workers reportedly increased, offering significant economic opportunity for the migrants still in the country and working.<sup>84</sup> Thus, for enterprising migrants, crises can offer unique opportunities in some cases.

Most of the migrant domestic workers interviewed in Lebanon did not consider the 2006 war as a notable crisis,<sup>85</sup> particularly compared to the many other recurring personal or ‘everyday’ crises they experienced. For them, the real crisis was the difficulties they confronted due to discrimination (often related to their racial or national background), lack of labour protection and structural factors associated with the sponsorship system through which they were employed. Nonetheless, such ‘personal crises’, stemming from persistent inequalities and vulnerabilities to abuse, significantly increase the difficulties faced by migrants during a crisis. This was observed in all six case studies and is discussed in chapter four. Strengthening migrants’ resilience, agency and integration can improve their ability to cope in situations of an acute crisis.

## CRISIS AS A ‘TIPPING POINT’

The notion of a crisis as a ‘tipping point’, coming for example, after a longer period of growing hostilities, emerged from both our fieldwork and the literature.<sup>86</sup> It was particularly evident in the case studies in which xenophobic violence was a key characteristic, if not the key characteristic, of the crisis, namely, in South Africa and

<sup>84</sup> Zampagni, F., Boubakri, H., Hoinathy, R., Kandilige L., Nabara, H. M., Sadek, S., El Sayeh, M., Zongo, M. and Hendow, M. (2017). *Libya case study: An unending crisis – responses of migrants, states and organisations to the 2011 Libya crisis. Insights from Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Ghana, Niger and Tunisia*. Vienna: ICMPD, p. 24.

<sup>85</sup> However, we must note that in our fieldwork we did not interview any migrant domestic workers who were trapped in their houses by their employers during the crisis; their views would likely have differed.

<sup>86</sup> McAdam (2014).

Côte d'Ivoire. In South Africa, the xenophobic attacks in May 2008 were particularly fierce and widespread. Yet, these were neither the first nor the last such attacks. The South Africa case study recounts violent attacks in which Zimbabweans and other foreigners were targeted for perceived wrongdoings as early as the mid-1990s. Mob attacks after 2008 were reported, too, directed particularly at migrant and refugee owners of informal businesses. Such a situation can be described as chronic extreme xenophobia. It is in fact a continuous low-level crisis with ongoing violence directed against foreigners in the country. This goes beyond the experiences in the specific larger-scale attacks in 2008 and 2015. In Côte d'Ivoire, increasing hostility manifested primarily in the revocation of rights previously accorded to non-citizens, such as the right to own property, in the years prior to the 2002–2003 crisis.

During the crises in South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire, simmering hostilities crystallised into acts of extreme violence ranging from destruction of property to the burning of migrants alive. It is important to note that cases of xenophobic violence were reported in all six of our case study countries. It often reflected tensions with and discrimination against certain groups of foreigners, based for example, on ethnic or national profile. These tensions were already established before the crisis erupted (as discussed in chapter four). In South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire, however, in contrast to the other case studies, migrants as well as those perceived to be foreign were the major target of the violence. Migrants in these two countries experienced extreme forms of hostility and violence both prior to and following the acute crisis situations.

During the crises in South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire, simmering hostilities crystallised into acts of extreme violence

## CHRONIC STATE FRAGILITY

State and institutional fragility has created situations in which crisis is perceived as chronic rather than limited to specific points in time. In such cases, migrants and institutional stakeholders interviewed in our research described a 'crisis' as ongoing, or said they experienced crisis situations on a recurring basis. The clearest example was found in the Libya case study. Violence never completely ceased in Libya following the uprising against and fall of Gaddafi in 2011. The literature often identifies the events of 2011, and the immediate responses to those displaced that year, as the 'crisis period'.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, even our research centred on the '2011 Libyan crisis'. Nonetheless, unrest and armed conflict have continued, even erupting into civil war, and the country remains unstable. Our research found that despite the ongoing violence in the country, Libya remains an important

<sup>87</sup> IOM (2013). *Two years after the crisis: Returnees from Libya revisited*. Policy in Brief. Retrieved from [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/policy\\_in\\_brief\\_libya2013\\_6mar2013.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/policy_in_brief_libya2013_6mar2013.pdf); Couldrey, M. and Herson, M. (eds) (2014). *Forced Migration Review*, 45. Crisis Special Issue. Retrieved from [www.fmreview.org/en/crisis.pdf](http://www.fmreview.org/en/crisis.pdf); Martin, S. and Koser, K. (2011). *The migration–displacement nexus: Concepts, cases and responses*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books; Koser, K. (2012). *Protecting migrants in complex crises*. GCSP Policy Paper 2012/2. Geneva: Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP).

destination country for migrants. Thus, even after returning to their countries of origin (or being displaced to Tunisia), many chose to remigrate to Libya. These migrants, and anyone migrating to Libya after 2011, still face dangerous situations. There are state-sanctioned abuses, for example, in detention centres, as well as active criminal and armed individuals and groups, including ISIS. The inability of the Libyan state to ensure the protection of migrants, or even to protect its own citizens, has meant that many of the risks to migrants identified as emerging in the 2011 crisis continue.

Despite the ongoing violence in the country, Libya remains an important destination country for migrants

Institutional stakeholders in Lebanon expressed a similar perception of ongoing crisis. Chronic political crisis, conflict and war has meant that the 2006 war was only one of the many crises experienced by Lebanese institutions and authorities.

A Caritas Lebanon representative called Lebanon “a country of conflict”. “This country is always in crisis”, said an Internal Security Forces official. This sentiment was echoed by a Ministry of Interior representative who told us, “Lebanon is always in a crisis”. Indeed, during the fieldwork period, the country experienced the impacts of various longer-term crises, including the Syrian refugee crisis, a waste crisis and a political crisis that left the country without a head of state.<sup>88</sup>

In such cases, a ‘crisis’ can hardly be conceptualised as taking place within a delimited period of time. While a situation may still be described as a crisis, it may be more chronic or protracted in nature, often as a result of political or economic fragility.

## RECURRING AND OVERLAPPING CRISES

The real crisis for migrants, and others, can actually be one of the many traumas or difficulties they experienced before, during and after the crisis event, in the country of destination, the country of origin or a transit country. The recurrence and overlapping of crises was the most common theme to emerge across all six case studies, arising in a variety of contexts, primarily at the individual level, but also at a larger scale.

### AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Individually, many migrants experienced overlapping or multiple crises due to an insecure situation in their country of origin, which led to their initial migration to the destination country. This initial insecure situation often involved extreme poverty, food crisis, civil unrest or violence, and it sometimes continued while

<sup>88</sup> For further details see UN Lebanon (2016). *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2016*. Retrieved from [www.un.org.lb/english/lcrp](http://www.un.org.lb/english/lcrp); Al Jazeera (2016). *Lebanon struggling with rubbish collection again*. 23 September. Retrieved from [www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/09/lebanon-struggling-rubbish-collection-160923162318470.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/09/lebanon-struggling-rubbish-collection-160923162318470.html); Torbey, C. (2016). *Lebanon: Will new president end political crisis?* 31 October. Retrieved from [www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37821698](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37821698).

the migrant was in the destination country. Thus, the crisis experienced in the destination country, that is, the crisis under study in our research, was in fact at least the migrant's second experience of crisis, and that crisis often unfolded in parallel to the ongoing crisis in the migrant's own country of origin. In the Libya case study, migration from each of the origin countries studied was driven at least in part by an effort to reduce the effects of extreme poverty on households. Many

The crisis experienced in the destination country [...] often unfolded in parallel to an ongoing crisis in the migrant's own country of origin

Ghanaian migrants in Libya were among the poorest in society. Nigeriens reported migrating due to a lack of food, work or income, or simply to reduce the number of mouths that had to be fed.

While the destination countries were chosen largely for economic reasons, they also served as places of refuge from political turmoil, unrest and civil war in origin countries. Zimbabweans who migrated to South Africa after 2000 were driven not only by the desperate economic situation in their country of origin, but also by repression and persecution of political dissidents under the Mugabe regime. For many Zimbabweans caught in the xenophobic violence of 2008 or 2015 in South Africa, the continued economic and political crisis at home meant that return was not an option. Those for whom return is impossible are trapped in a double crisis.<sup>89</sup> Similarly, as of the 1980s, Thailand became an important destination country for refugees and migrant populations – often ethnic minority groups – from Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR, fleeing economic and political uncertainty and conflict. Only recently has the initiation of the peace process in Myanmar led to the first organised refugee returns. This regards ethnic minority groups whose representatives have signed the ceasefire.<sup>90</sup>

Libya, which is a major destination country for migrant workers, also hosted asylum seekers, refugees and migrants from many countries to which return is difficult, including Chad, Eritrea, Iraq, Palestine, Somalia and Sudan. Many came to Libya in search of work, though the turmoil in their country of origin was likely a major contributing factor to their migration. At the time of the 2011 crisis, UNHCR had more than 8,000 refugees registered and 3,000 asylum claims pending in Libya, though there was surely a large number of asylum seekers who had not registered with UNHCR.<sup>91</sup> Armed conflicts in Liberia from 1989 to 1997 and from 1999 to 2003 were the primary reason for Liberians to seek asylum in Côte d'Ivoire, and they remained a barrier to return to Liberia during the first Ivorian crisis in 2002–2003. All but one Liberian interviewed in this study had migrated to Côte d'Ivoire during the intermittent civil wars in Liberia.

<sup>89</sup> Betts, A. (2014). The global governance of crisis migration. In: Martin, S., Weerasinghe, S. and Taylor, A. (eds), *Humanitarian crises and migration: Causes, consequences and responses*. London: Routledge, pp. 349–367.

<sup>90</sup> UNHCR (2016). *First Myanmar refugee returns from Thailand under way*. Retrieved from [www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2016/10/580f1c0d4/first-myanmar-refugee-returns-thailand-under-way.html](http://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2016/10/580f1c0d4/first-myanmar-refugee-returns-thailand-under-way.html).

<sup>91</sup> UNHCR (2011). *UNHCR fears for the safety of refugees caught in Libya's violence*. 22 February. Retrieved from [www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2011/2/4d6393e06/unhcr-fears-safety-refugees-caught-libyas-violence.html](http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2011/2/4d6393e06/unhcr-fears-safety-refugees-caught-libyas-violence.html).

For all these migrants, decisions on whether to return to their country of origin, to attempt further migration or to 'wait it out' in the destination country were extremely fraught. Often, all of these options involved considerable risk to life, and to other fundamental rights. Even where return was physically possible,

“

Life conditions were extremely harmful to girls... [Smugglers] only released those who had money or ask their families for a ransom... I was repeatedly raped on many occasions by the smugglers and their companions. We were transported on cars and trucks to the sea by smugglers who were extremely devoid of humanity. The original destination was Europe but as the ship went down, the Tunisian National Guard rescued us and it was this way that I entered Tunisia.

*Female Eritrean migrant displaced to Tunisia from Libya*

because the origin country was not experiencing large-scale violence or war, it was not always viable or sustainable. Return often meant a loss of income (via remittances) to the migrant's family, in addition to an added mouth to feed. Such a burden was hard if not impossible to bear for families already suffering food insecurity or other difficult circumstances. This kind of decision-making on the part of migrants and their families and the strategies they formed while caught in such dilemmas is examined in more depth in chapters five and seven.

For some of the migrants interviewed, their first experience of crisis was that in the destination country. Several migrants had left the destination country when crisis erupted, only

to return later to the same country, or move on to another, becoming ensnared in yet another crisis, often civil unrest. This was particularly observed among Egyptian migrants in Libya. Libya was historically important as a destination country for Egyptian labour migrants, and circular migration between the two countries was commonplace. In 2014–2015, when violence flared up again in Libya, Egyptian workers fled to Tunisia in large numbers. Indeed, some Egyptian migrants interviewed described themselves as having survived two crises.

“

I know about 10 people personally who have returned [to Libya]. Even though the security situation in Libya is unstable, we still want to go there because we need to earn an income.

*Male Egyptian returnee from Libya*

We found this not only in the fieldwork in Egypt, but also in other countries. Among our interviewees for the Libya case study, a significant proportion of Burkinabe, Ghanaians and Nigeriens who returned to their respective countries after

eruption of the Libya crisis in 2011 reported having travelled back to Libya at least once since 2011, driven primarily by lack of employment opportunities or economic instability in their home communities. Some of these remigration journeys took place just a few months after repatriation. This posed an acute risk, as the continuing unrest in Libya specifically targeted sub-Saharan migrants. A family member of a Nigerien migrant told us how, following a relative's return due to the Libya crisis, the family supported his remigration to Côte d'Ivoire. In this case, the migrant left one country that was experiencing a crisis for another that had just emerged from its own – a precarious situation to say the least.

## AT THE INSTITUTIONAL, STATE AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

Similar findings about recurring, parallel or overlapping crises also emerged at the institutional level. Many states studied in this research had been or were at the time of the fieldwork at the crossroads of multiple humanitarian and international crises. Thus, following one humanitarian crisis or crisis-induced return of their own nationals, these states in many cases either simultaneously or soon thereafter experienced the impacts of another, or even multiple, humanitarian crises. This quick unfolding of events placed significant pressure on institutional and state structures.

For the Libya crisis, it is important to place events in the wider context of the 'Arab Spring'. Two of the fieldwork countries, Tunisia and Egypt, had just undergone revolution and significant political change. Both countries had not only received their own nationals, who were returning from Libya and often in need of specific support, but also simultaneously receiving refugees and third-country nationals, while in the midst of institutional reorganisation and change stemming from their own recent revolutions.

As well as their simultaneity, it is important to reflect on the impact one crisis can have on another. In the case of the Arab Spring, the Tunisian revolution impacted or inspired subsequent uprisings in other Arab states. Two of the most violent have been in Libya and Syria; and both these conflicts continue, with ripple effects of their own. Some states fear that a crisis in another country may reverberate and cause a crisis within their own borders. This has crystallised in Mali, where fears of conflict being fuelled by returnees from Libya turned out to be well founded.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, significant funding was allocated in Niger to deter a potential 'Mali effect' there – both the feared misbehaviour of militarily trained Nigeriens returning from Libya and the risk of the rebellion in Mali spilling over into Niger. Concerns in Lebanon have centred on the possibility that the Syrian refugee crisis could kindle renewed violent conflict within that country.<sup>93</sup> Whether well founded or not, concerns regarding potential spill-over

Concerns regarding potential spill-over effects from crises play an important role in policy-making in countries receiving returnees

<sup>92</sup> Murphy, D. (2012). *Did Libya's revolution topple Mali into crisis?* Retrieved from [www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/Backchannels/2012/0406/Did-Libya-s-revolution-topple-Mali-into-crisis](http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/Backchannels/2012/0406/Did-Libya-s-revolution-topple-Mali-into-crisis).

<sup>93</sup> Fabra-Mata, J., Saeverås, A. and Carter, W. (2015). *The Syrian crisis and its impact on Lebanon: A conflict analysis*. Retrieved from [www.alnap.org/resource/20654.aspx](http://www.alnap.org/resource/20654.aspx); Dionigi, F. (2016). *The Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon: State fragility and social resilience*. LSE Middle East Centre Paper Series 15. London: LSE Middle East Centre.



effects from crises play an important role in policymaking in countries receiving returnees, as well as in countries of transit and destination receiving refugees and other displaced persons.

In some cases, one crisis can precipitate another within the same state. Scholars identify the economic crisis in Côte d'Ivoire in the 1980s and the subsequent austerity policies, which produced rising unemployment among Ivorian employees and graduates, as key contributing factors to the politicisation of identity and belonging, land disputes and eventually the outbreak of violent conflict in the country.<sup>94</sup>

Concurrent crises have also hindered the ability of states and the international community to respond with vigour to the longer-term impacts of any previous crisis situation. Often the more recent humanitarian crisis has to be prioritised, due to new urgent needs in a region. These subsequent or overlapping crises can be those triggered by new refugee flows, as populations flee violence, such as that in the Lake Chad basin and Syria, by health crises, like the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, or by other political crises such as uprisings or coups.

Chad has felt the impact not only of returnees and refugees displaced by the CAR crisis, but also of those displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, as well as the conflicts in neighbouring Libya and Sudan. At the end of 2016, Chad hosted 391,745 refugees, 311,470 of whom were from Sudan, 70,310 from CAR and 8,598 from Nigeria. The Lake Chad basin region alone hosted 121,720 displaced people, the majority of whom were internally displaced, but also including nationals from countries other than CAR and Chad.<sup>95</sup>

CSOs and intergovernmental organisations confirmed that both focus and resources had shifted to the Lake Chad basin region, where the situation was more acute, implying a reduction of support for Chadian returnees

“

Presently all attention is focused on Lake Chad [...] Boko Haram, security, insecurity in that region are important issues. The situation is real; the region is very populated with a high concentration of people. There are four or five countries implicated. We cannot say that the situation of CAR returnees is forsaken but it's no longer a priority.

*Representative of the EU delegation in Chad*

<sup>94</sup> Zongo, M. (2006). Between two Burkinabe communities in a West Ivorian forest: Economic crisis, inter-community relations and membership questions. *Newspaper of Social Science*, 2, 2138; Romano, R. (2015). *Noncitizens caught in crisis: The case of Côte d'Ivoire*. Draft Working Paper. Georgetown University Institute for the Study of International Migration, unpublished; IOM (2009). *Migration en Côte d'Ivoire: Document thématique*, 2009. *Diaspora et participation au développement de la Côte d'Ivoire*. Retrieved from [www.iomdakar.org/profiles/sites/default/files/diaspora\\_developpement\\_cote\\_ivoire\\_2009.pdf](http://www.iomdakar.org/profiles/sites/default/files/diaspora_developpement_cote_ivoire_2009.pdf).

<sup>95</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2016). *Chad humanitarian dashboard (as of 30 November 2016)*. Retrieved from [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/tcd\\_viz\\_dashboardnov2016\\_en\\_20170116.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/tcd_viz_dashboardnov2016_en_20170116.pdf).



from CAR. Moreover, as an oil-producing country, Chad has experienced a sharp economic downturn linked to the recent fall in oil prices. Thus, plans and support for Chadian returnees, whether from Libya or CAR, have been deprioritised in view of the acute humanitarian crisis posed by recent arrivals and the limited resources with which to deal with them.

“

We don't forget [about the other issues, like migrant domestic workers], but donors forget.

*Representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Lebanon*

Similar assertions were heard in Lebanon regarding the deprioritisation of migrant domestic worker issues. This was in part a result of the ongoing political crisis, as a political

stalemate in the country culminated in the inability to elect a head of state between 2014 and 2016. But it was also due to the large influx of Syrian refugees in dire need of assistance. Government and civil society focus and support were devoted to the new crisis as well as, significantly, foreign funding.

Political instability and crisis has certainly hampered policy development and implementation, related to both prior crises and broader migration policy development. While the Chad government did develop its National Plan for Global Reintegration of Returnees in 2015, the economic crisis and the humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad region reportedly side lined the plan's implementation.

Similarly, in 2014–2015 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Burkina Faso planned awareness-raising campaigns for Burkinabe abroad, to assist them in integrating in host countries. However, implementation was interrupted by a national political crisis in 2014 which led to the peaceful overthrow of President Blaise Compaoré. Finally, recent changes in government in Thailand have reportedly hindered migration policy development.

“

There is still no decent long-term migration management [in Thailand], part of the reason has been the political instability, [...] we have not really had a long-term government here over the past decade.

*Representative UNHCR Regional Office, Thailand*

Thus, it is important to view the impacts of crisis, particularly in the longer term, in the broader context of events at the individual, institutional and state levels before, during and after a crisis. As we have seen, multiple crises are often at work, impacting these different levels in a variety of ways, complicating and changing responses among all actors over time, including but not limited to migrants themselves.

## CONCLUSIONS

---

Although our research focused on large-scale humanitarian crises of limited duration, this definition did not always reflect the lived experiences of our interview subjects. While an 'ongoing crisis' may be oxymoronic in terminology, the notion does capture the experiences of numerous migrants and other stakeholders interviewed in our research. We sought not to obscure overlapping or dual experiences of crises. While our research focused on six crisis situations in particular, we recognise that circumstances are not static, and migration journeys often began or overlapped with various forms of hardship that reverberated throughout migrants' later experiences, informing their further decision-making and perceptions.

The aim of this chapter was to highlight situations outside the predefined scope of our research. Migrants and other stakeholders confirmed that the concept of one, acute crisis in a destination country did not always capture their own experiences. We do not, by any means, suggest that the experiences recounted here are representative or encompassing of all migrants' experiences with crises; rather, we hope with this account to emphasise that there are myriad ways in which migrants and other stakeholders experience crises along the migration journey.

## 4. SITUATION OF MIGRANTS BEFORE A CRISIS



### INTRODUCTION

---

In times of crisis, migrant responses can be constrained or facilitated by pre-existing structural and contextual factors, such as legal status, social networks and socio-economic dynamics. Specific configurations of these can improve or worsen migrants' access to services, support and recovery assistance, both during and after a crisis. These factors can thus be crucial in determining migrants' resilience and agency in a crisis situation, as well as their vulnerability to abuse and other crisis-related risks. This chapter discusses the impact of these contextual factors on migrants during and in the aftermath of the crises under study, building on the theoretical concepts of resilience, vulnerability, social networks and transnationalism introduced in chapter two.

The chapter first outlines the factors that this research found to be important in facilitating or limiting migrants' access to services and support, or that played a role in how migrants experienced a crisis situation. Next, it discusses the significance of perceptions. That is, we look at how migrants' perceptions of their opportunities helped to shape their crisis responses, and also how societies' perceptions of migrants put migrants at particular risk, especially of violence.

### MIGRANT STATUS AND POSITIONING

---

In our research, migrants' reasons for migrating, their legal status and their socio-economic position had a direct bearing on their resilience and vulnerability to the threats posed by armed conflict and natural disaster. These factors, in place before the crisis, impacted not only migrants' ability to respond during the crisis, but also the services and support available to them. Moreover, these factors were both tangible and intangible. While the structural constraints migrants faced were all too tangible, their perceptions, though intangible, were a key determinant of the decisions they made.

### MIGRANT ASPIRATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The opportunities that migrants perceived – or if they perceived no opportunities at all – was perhaps the most significant factor determining the initial exercise of agency; that is, the decision to migrate. In our research we found that decisions to migrate often involved multifaceted push factors, linked to political and economic crises in origin countries, and the prospect of security and employment in destination countries. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, for example, the migrant-friendly policies instituted from 1960 to 1980 were an important pull factor attracting migrants from Burkina Faso, Ghana and Liberia. Push factors, for Liberians, were

the armed conflicts in Liberia between 1989 and 1997 and 1999 and 2003, which led to mass migration for asylum and economic reasons. Similarly, Zimbabweans migrated to South Africa because of the economic opportunities and security that country offered, in stark contrast to the acute economic crisis and political repression they experienced in their country of origin.

The opportunities that migrants perceived – or if they perceived no opportunities at all – was perhaps the most significant factor determining the initial exercise of agency

Perceived and real lack of opportunities in countries of origin, and in transit countries, were a factor not only in initial decisions to migrate but also in efforts to remigrate post-crisis. In our research, we found that the weighing up of options sometimes resulted in quite extreme dilemmas. For example, migration of Burkinabe to Côte d'Ivoire did not diminish but rather

increased during the crisis, despite the fact that violence in Côte d'Ivoire targeted Burkina Faso nationals. In Libya, daily pay rates doubled during the crisis. This provided significant incentive for migrants to either remain in Libya or to remigrate there following an initial return to their origin country or a stay in a third country.<sup>96</sup>

Perceptions of opportunities and risks and the outcomes of weighing up options have to be understood in the context of individual and family life goals, such as the desire to build or buy a home, to marry, to send children to private schools and to start a business. In Ghana, as in many countries, achievement of such goals signifies a transition from childhood to adulthood. Yet, attaining them can be difficult when origin countries are embroiled in social and economic crisis. In our research, the importance of achieving these goals was underlined by the shame and psychological stress expressed by migrants forced to return home empty-handed. Many Burkinabe returning from Libya, for example, sought the anonymity of the capital Ouagadougou rather than return destitute to their home communities. Post-crisis, many migrants were unable to provide for the needs of their family, and had to depend on the generosity of their extended family. In some cases this led to marital strife, domestic violence, depression, antisocial behaviour and

“

I returned with no money at all! The demand over jobs increased with the high numbers of Egyptians returning... Many people were indebted to pay back the cost of their travel or return. I am now unable to give my children the same pocket money and privileges they used to have, I took out my children from private nurseries and sent them to public ones. I decided to be more creative and I decided to work as a taxi driver.

*Male Egyptian returnee from Libya*

<sup>96</sup> Zampagni et al. (2017), p. 24.

reprioritisation of outlays and needs. Migrants from Egypt, Ghana and Niger, for example, could no longer provide funds for schooling, medical care and marriages.

Social networks also contribute to the direction that migrant journeys take, and to perceptions of opportunities in destination countries. A survey<sup>97</sup> of Zimbabwean business owners in South Africa found that social networks had played a role in half of the respondents' decisions to migrate. In Egypt, too, friend and family networks helped migrants to find jobs and they assisted in the migration process. Kinship networks and cross-border communities provided similar assistance: communities along the CAR–Cameroon border engaged in regular exchanges of goods and services, which facilitated migration, return and reintegration. In CAR, Cameroonians took advantage of ethnic ties to facilitate migration. These were key in helping migrants establish themselves in the destination country, while also proving critical in times of crisis. Transnational networks spanning destination and origin countries disseminated information on the support available. They also raised awareness of the plight of migrants caught in a crisis situation and provided tangible assistance such as financial support for return.

## LEGAL STATUS

The possession of identity documents, including a valid passport and a formal work permit, often determined migrants' ability to gain access to services such as healthcare, social security benefits and labour protection. In some cases, their very freedom of movement was contingent on access to these documents.

While the legal status of migrants was a critical determinant of the services provided by states and international organisations during the crises investigated (associated with evacuation, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration), it is important to note that migrants could shift categories. For example, they might transition from refugee

to IDP or from either of those categories to irregular migrant. Migrants could also fit simultaneously into two or more legal categories. This was the case, for example, for migrant workers internally displaced due to the crises in Lebanon and

“

We had refugee cards while other West African nationals (Ghanaians, Togolese, Burkinaabe, and Nigerians) had a 'Card d'jouré' [national identity card], which the Ivorian authorities wanted us to acquire but it cost €55.27 and we could not afford it. With that card, harassment becomes much less, although you still need to pay little bribes, but not equivalent to a person carrying a UNHCR refugee identity card. As for the Ivorians, they had another form of identity card.

*Male Liberian returnee,  
Côte d'Ivoire*

<sup>97</sup> Surveys by the Southern African Migration Programme were taken into account in the South African case study.

Thailand.<sup>98</sup> This status flexibility reflects the different mandates of the different actors. For example, states are mandated to respond to IDPs, while UNHCR is mandated to respond to asylum seekers and refugees.<sup>99</sup> Nonetheless, we found that migrants demonstrated agency in navigating the legal categories, in order to gain the greatest protection for themselves and their families during and after a crisis.

While migrants exhibited agency in navigating their often precarious legal status, exclusion from certain legal protections adversely impacted their coping strategies and capacities for resilience during the six crises studied in this research. The literature confirms the wide range of negative impacts of migrant irregularity at all stages of the migration process. Discrimination, exclusion from services, exploitation and abuse are frequently reported.<sup>100</sup> Crisis situations, furthermore, exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities. Considering all of the fieldwork countries of origin examined in our Libya case study (Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Ghana and Niger), most migrants who were in Libya at the time of the crisis had either entered irregularly or became irregular by overstaying their visa (typically after entering on a tourist visa). As a result, origin country government authorities, CSOs and intergovernmental organisations reportedly had incomplete information on the number of migrants in Libya at the time of the crisis. This complicated their crisis response planning and implementation. Moreover, under Gaddafi, migrants experienced increasing pressure due to intensified detention and deportation operations targeting particularly irregular migrants from Niger and Ghana. In another example, South Africa did not recognise Zimbabweans as asylum seekers, which limited Zimbabweans' options for legally seeking asylum in the country.

Exclusion from certain legal protections adversely impacted migrants' coping strategies and capacities for resilience during the six crises studied in this research

Although a large proportion of irregular migrants resided in Thailand at the time of the flood crisis, a key legal status restriction tied them to their region or area of residence – despite the dangers of the rising floodwaters. That is, irregular migrants involved in the so-called national verification process were required to stay

put until that process was completed. Thus, when the floods hit, migrants with valid working permits but still awaiting national verification were unable or fearful to leave, even in search of safety. This could jeopardise their status, putting them at risk of deportation or incarceration. Moreover, irregular migrants without a formal residence status or work permit were reluctant to go to government-provided shelters, as they feared being required to register, and any potential follow up, including possible deportation.

<sup>98</sup> Koser, K. (2012).

<sup>99</sup> This is according to the Geneva Conventions and their 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.

<sup>100</sup> EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2011a). *Fundamental rights of migrants in an irregular situation in the European Union*. Vienna: FRA; FRA (2011b). *Migrants in an irregular situation: Access to healthcare in 10 European Union member states*. Vienna: FRA; Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) (2010). *PICUM's main concerns about the fundamental rights of undocumented migrants in Europe*. Brussels: PICUM; PICUM (2005). Ten ways to protect undocumented migrants workers. Brussels: PICUM; Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) (2005). *Migration in an interconnected world: New directions for action*. Geneva: GCIM.

In Lebanon, migrant domestic workers were excluded from the protections contained in the Lebanese Labour Code,<sup>101</sup> and their legal status was tied to a specific employer (sponsor) in the system known as *kafala*.<sup>102</sup> Abuses of power by sponsors were reported, as were the lack of any safeguards against exploitation. While the majority of migrant domestic workers had regular status, those who did not faced innumerable additional obstacles and difficulties. Furthermore, each year a certain number of those with regular status slipped into irregularity because they ran away from the abusive employers to whom their residency status was tied.

Unlike in Lebanon, Thailand and Libya, migrants were able to prosper in countries that had extended citizenship, voting and land-ownership rights to immigrant populations. This was demonstrated in our research by Burkinabe and other migrant populations in Côte d'Ivoire and by Cameroonians and Chadians in CAR.

Migrants were able to prosper in countries that had extended citizenship, voting and land-ownership rights to immigrant populations

However, in some of these cases the citizenship status of migrants had become contested and subsequently revoked. This increased migrants' vulnerability to physical violence during the crises, as experienced by the Burkinabe in Côte d'Ivoire.

Some migrants were able to apply their legal status flexibly to take advantage of origin country evacuation, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration services. For example, some Chadian families that had lived in CAR for many years, even generations, no longer had transnational connections to their origin country. However, during the crisis they were nonetheless able to be evacuated and repatriated to their country of 'origin'. The Chadian state recognised their Chadian origins. As support to Chadian returnees dwindled, however, many resorted to applying for CAR refugee status, using their previously-obtained CAR identity documents. This fluidity of legal status enabled these returnees to obtain critical support from origin states and from international organisations during and after the crisis.

Finally, freedom of movement (or lack thereof) during crises had a direct bearing on migrants' coping strategies, as well as on their capacity for resilience and their exposure to threats. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), for instance, facilitated regional mobility for citizens from member states. Nevertheless, during

<sup>101</sup> The Lebanese Labour Code includes standard labour protection stipulations on the minimum wage, working hours and contracts.

<sup>102</sup> The *kafala*, or sponsorship, system is a customary practice in Lebanon and other Gulf Cooperation Countries by which the migrant worker is required to have an in-country sponsor, usually the migrant's employer, responsible for their residence permit and legal status. The system has been strongly criticised by CSOs. It is said to create opportunities for exploitation of migrant workers, as migrants are less likely to complain about abuses and exploitation by the employer when their legal status is dependent on them. In the case of domestic workers this can be compounded by the fact that domestic workers are required to live in the same domicile as the employer or sponsor.



the crises in Côte d'Ivoire and CAR, mobility was restricted for certain nationalities. For example, although protocols on free movement of persons in theory assured migrant mobility, they did not protect the rights of non-nationals in host countries. This was evident among the Liberian refugees fleeing Côte d'Ivoire and among the Cameroonian migrants fleeing CAR. Their escape was impeded and their right to free movement was hampered in some cases. They reported harassment and intimidation by border security officials who according to legal protocols should have facilitated smooth movement across national boundaries.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

Factors such as geographical proximity, common languages, family ties, social networks and cultural affinities served as major motivators for migration pre-crisis. During crises, these same factors helped migrants to cope. For example,

“

I was [the] owner of a shop that I was managing. In addition, I bought and resold gold and diamonds. Moreover, I was also [the] owner of a herd of cattle.

*Male Cameroonian returnee from CAR*

for Liberians who fled to Côte d'Ivoire during the wars in Liberia, as well as for Ivorians fleeing to Liberia during the political unrest in Côte d'Ivoire, ethnic ties, particularly in the border counties of Nimba, Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Maryland, were an important source of protection and shelter. Ethnic affinities there helped migrants to navigate medium-term obstacles to integration. Similar

cultural affinities were noted in cross-border communities in Niger and Libya, particularly among the Tuareg, Arab, Toubou and Hausa communities. Analogous roles were found for linguistic affinities, existing social networks, the low cost of travel and relatively porous borders, such as those between Egypt and Libya and between Thailand and both Lao PDR and Myanmar, as well as to some extent Vietnam.<sup>103</sup>

Our research found that gender too had a determining role in the jobs open to or commonly associated with migrants. While some female migrant respondents in Côte d'Ivoire and Libya engaged in sex work, their counterparts in Lebanon were domestic workers. Male migrants commonly worked in manual labour, such as construction or on farms, as in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire.

In addition to socio-cultural determinants, legal status in crisis-affected host countries often had a direct bearing on migrants' socio-economic positioning vis-à-vis host country populations. Legal status could thus either strengthen or weaken migrants' capacities for resilience during and after a crisis. For example, in contrast to Burkinabe and Ghanaian migrants and Liberian refugees in Côte

<sup>103</sup> The Tai Kadai language family includes the national language of Thailand (Thai), the national language of Lao PDR (Lao), as well as minority languages in Myanmar (Shan) and Vietnam (Zhuang-Tai). However, the Vietnamese respondents in the Thailand case study were speakers of Vietnamese rather than Zhuang-Tai, and thus did not share a similar language to their Thai hosts.



d'Ivoire, all of whom suffered from labour precarity and inferior socio-economic status compared to Ivorian citizens at the time of the crisis, most Cameroonian and Chadian migrants interviewed for this study had obtained CAR citizenship or residence documents and were doing relatively better economically than their CAR counterparts.

Cameroonian migrant respondents were largely successful farmers, traders and gold and diamond resellers in CAR, though they typically also maintained connections to their origin communities in Cameroon. Chadian migrants were also fairly successful entrepreneurs in CAR; however, unlike Cameroonians, they often migrated as families, established families in CAR or were born in CAR, and very few maintained ties to Chad. While these more entrepreneurial migrants endured greater financial losses than their less economically advantaged counterparts during the crises, the financial capital they had did enable them to flee CAR and begin the process of integration in Cameroon or Chad.

Beyond being economically embedded, as the Cameroonians and Chadians in CAR, being socially embedded eased integration in host countries. In Lebanon, for example, knowledge of Arabic or English, and having a certain level of education

“

I could not speak the Thai language. So, my employer, an old woman, looked down on me. She gave me a daily wage of 200 to 250 baht [€5–6] only while others [Thai citizens] received 350–400 baht [€9–10] with the same skills.

*Female migrant from Myanmar in Thailand*

or knowledge of one's own rights affected migrants' ability to negotiate employment contracts, time off and other aspects of working life. In South Africa, some Zimbabwean migrants made particular efforts to 'fit in' and integrate, learning local languages and emulating local dress codes and cultural practices as a strategy to avoid xenophobic attacks. Yet, this did not always guarantee their protection during mob violence. In Thailand discrimination was reportedly a daily occurrence.

In two cases, the crisis itself contributed to change how migrants perceived their own place in society. Some migrants in Thailand during the floods reported that helping in the emergency response, including protecting houses and factories and assisting in cleaning up afterwards, gave them a sense of belonging to Thai society. Migrants furthermore perceived discrimination as comparatively low during the floods, compared to their usual experiences. However, this feeling of belonging did not last. On the other hand, the 2006 war in Lebanon led migrant domestic workers to realise that they were 'all alone' in the country. Many were thus stirred to self-organise to build solidarity and claim their rights.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>104</sup> See Mansour-Ille, D. and Hendow, M. (2018). From Exclusion to Resistance: Migrant Domestic Workers and the Evolution of Agency in Lebanon. In: *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*.

## XENOPHOBIA, RACISM AND REPRISALS

While the previous section outlined factors that contributed to migrants' positioning within the destination country, including those that led to the initial migration journey, it is important to juxtapose these with how migrants were perceived within the broader society in which they were situated. Our research found that migrants experienced significant barriers related to how they were perceived by the destination country society. These perceptions provoked offenses ranging from everyday slights to large-scale mob attacks. These raised barriers to integration into society at large, while also affecting views and treatment of migrants during the studied crises.

In all of our case studies, migrants reported discrimination and xenophobia in the destination countries and during the crisis situation

In all of our case studies, migrants reported discrimination and xenophobia in the destination countries and during the crisis situation. This exacerbated their vulnerabilities to structural and institutional violence during and after the crisis. It was manifest in racial and religious discrimination, barriers to social and commercial services, inability to access the banking system, differentiation of salaries by nationality, violence, scapegoating and arbitrary arrests and detention. For example, in Lebanon, migrant domestic workers' salaries differed depending on their nationality and race. During the Lebanon crisis in 2006, some Lebanese employers (though not a majority) fled the bombing of Beirut, but locked their domestic workers in their apartments – fully aware that they were putting their workers' lives at risk. As a result, cases were reported of domestic workers leaping from balconies to escape confinement.<sup>105</sup> In Thailand, some migrant respondents were unable to access post-crisis flood relief or were denied assistance outright due to their migrant status.

“

All the Chadians were persecuted when the crisis started. Some have been decapitated because we were told that our president was Gaddafi's support sending him weapons and troops. So the unlucky ones among us got killed or robbed.

*Female Chadian returnee from Libya*

<sup>105</sup> Parvaz, D. (2015). Lebanon's immigrant domestic workers remain vulnerable to abuse. *Al Jazeera America*, 26 June; Hamill, K. (2011). *Trafficking of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon: A legal analysis*. Beirut: Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH), Coordination Committee of the Organizations for Voluntary Service (COSV), KAFA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation and the Permanent Peace Movement (PPM); Jureidini, R. (2010); Jureidini, R. (2009). In the shadows of family life: Toward a history of domestic service in Lebanon. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 5(3), 74–101.

Migrants' vulnerabilities to violence were further amplified if they were perceived as active parties in a particular conflict. For example, there were reprisals against Liberians during the 2002–2003 and 2010–2011 Ivorian crises, and against Burkinabe, Chadians, Egyptians and Nigeriens during the 2011 Libya crisis, because they were considered mercenaries or in some way parties to the conflict. Harassment and beatings were primarily directed at men, while rape was reported as a means of retaliation against women. Discrimination and violence against migrants was both individual and institutional. In Lebanon, Libya and South Africa, respondents reported harassment and misconduct by police and security services, in some cases followed by scepticism or denial of migrants' claims of abuse. In the two case studies focused on crises of xenophobic violence, South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire, xenophobic rhetoric was institutionalised through specific policies and approaches in crisis response. In South Africa, for example, in response to the 2015 violence, the government launched Operation Fiela Reclaim. This was described as follows:

A multidisciplinary interdepartmental operation aimed at eliminating criminality and general lawlessness from our communities. As the word 'Fiela' means to sweep clean, we are ridding communities of crime and criminals so that the people of South Africa can be and feel safe. The ultimate objective of the operation is to create a safe and secure environment for all in South Africa.<sup>106</sup>

Our research indicated that in practice, the operation targeted migrant-owned businesses and focused on deportation of undocumented migrants.

It should be noted that while a crisis can exacerbate xenophobic violence, a pre-crisis escalation of violence against migrants can be an important indicator of

“

They target shops, the owners as well as the goods inside. They only target foreign-owned shops. There is more to that [than robbery], they want us to leave their country because they hate our businesses here and they say we are finishing their jobs.

*Male Zimbabwean migrant in South Africa*

an incipient eruption. In South Africa, for example, there were cases of xenophobic violence against migrant groups in the mid-1990s and 2000s and large-scale deportations of Zimbabweans from 2000 onwards. In Côte d'Ivoire there was violence against and mass deportations of Burkinabe in 1999, 2001 and 2002.<sup>107</sup>

Our research also found migrants being targeted because of erroneously perceived 'advantages' they were said to enjoy over nationals. In South Africa, migrant businesses were

targeted because they were 'robbing South Africans of work'. Thus, while nationality

<sup>106</sup> Government updates on Operation Fiela were posted at [www.gov.za/operation-fiela](http://www.gov.za/operation-fiela).

<sup>107</sup> Steinberg, J. (2012). Security and disappointment: Policing, freedom and xenophobia in South Africa. *British Journal of Criminology*, 52, 345–360; Schwartz, A. (2000). Le conflit foncier entre Krou et Burkinabé à la lumière de l'institution krouman. *Afrique contemporaine*, 193, 56–66.

and ethnicity were important contributing factors to xenophobic violence, mistaken perceptions of advantage were also highly pertinent.

In South Africa and Lebanon, migrant respondents outlined their coping and resilience strategies for dealing with the difficulties they regularly faced. In South Africa, given the unpredictability of outbreaks of mob violence, one Zimbabwean business owner remitted any money he earned immediately, so as not to lose it to potential mob violence. In Lebanon, strategies were enacted at both the individual level and the larger scale to deal with difficult work environments, often involving abusive employers. These ranged from obstruction, lying, attempted escapes and acts of suicide to one-on-one support (e.g., across residence balconies), community work at churches and in apartments and collaboration with CSOs to discuss tactics, to support each other and to socialise.

## CONCLUSIONS

---

Our research revealed how both structural factors and perceptions affected the positioning and treatment of migrants within countries of destination. First, social networks and migrants' aims and goals shaped their decision to journey to a destination country and their access to employment and services once arrived. Migration and border control policies in the destination country determined migrants' status there, which subsequently was instrumental in determining migrants' positioning within the host country in general, as well as how they responded (or could respond) when crisis erupted. Xenophobia and racism constrained migrants' options, putting them in increased danger when violence erupted.

Although many of these constraints may seem beyond the control of individual migrants, migrants did demonstrate agency and resilience in transcending these social and legal barriers, particularly in the context of crises. Where they faced difficulties, they fell back on family, friends and their own ingenuity to gain access to services and support. In many cases, they utilised the same networks that had facilitated their initial migratory journey. Some took anticipatory action to protect their financial capital from theft and violence. Some formed new networks to support each other, as evidenced by many of the examples discussed here. Nonetheless, migrants often remained vulnerable to discrimination, detention and extreme forms of violence. These, despite their best efforts, were hard to avoid or to cope with. They were part of everyday life before the crisis, but were often exacerbated when crisis struck.

Subsequent chapters on mobility options, crisis interventions and experiences of return demonstrate the significance of structural factors and perceptions in migrant mobility, as well as in whether migrants managed to access support and how their situation evolved in their country of origin in the longer term.



### INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines migrants' mobility and immobility in and after crises; that is, whether they stayed or left when a crisis erupted. The chapter is organised in two main sections. The first presents the empirical findings of our research with regard to mobility. It maps the different types of mobility that migrants engaged in while endeavouring to cope with a crisis. It also discusses how migrants organised their journeys and their sources of support along the way, ranging from states and international organisations to family and friends and own means. Different factors are examined that were found in the case studies to constrain migrants' decisions to leave, including their specific vulnerabilities and the role played by migrants' perceptions of the crisis in mobility decisions.

The second section zooms in on cases of immobility from the six case studies. It differentiates between voluntary and involuntary immobility. Indeed, the case studies demonstrate that sometimes migrants voluntarily remained in a crisis country, while in other cases they found themselves trapped in a crisis situation against their will.

### MIGRANTS' MOBILITY: LEAVING THE CRISIS SITUATION

#### TYPES OF MOBILITY

Most of the migrants interviewed in our six case studies left the destination country that was experiencing the crisis.<sup>108</sup> As explored in theoretical chapter two, previous research differentiated three types of movements in a crisis context: anticipatory movement, whereby people move pre-emptively in order to avoid a crisis situation; displacement, whereby people move after a crisis has started to unfold; and relocation, whereby people who are unable to move independently are evacuated from a crisis situation.<sup>109</sup> Our research suggests that we must add a fourth type of crisis-related movement, deportation, to these three.

Our research identified each of these types of movements to varying degrees. The few instances of anticipatory movement found were linked to previous experiences in the country of origin, which had equipped migrants to react promptly to signs of crisis. For example, Liberian migrants decided to leave Côte d'Ivoire on their own initiative, based on their lived experiences of instability in Liberia. Our

<sup>108</sup> This is strongly affected by the design of the sample, since most respondents were return migrants interviewed in their country of origin, and many had been obliged to flee civil unrest and conflict because they were the specific targets of violence.

<sup>109</sup> Martin et al. (2014a, 2014b).

research found relatively few instances of anticipatory movement, perhaps due to our study design. Yet, multiple factors were identified that prevented migrants from leaving early. Particularly, migrants often had limited access to information due to language barriers or isolation, and this lack of information affected their perceptions of the severity of the crisis. Also, most migrant workers had a financial imperative to remain and keep their job. In Lebanon, where the sponsorship system was in common use, migrant domestic workers were not legally permitted to make the decision to leave independently, as departure required the prior approval of the sponsor.

Most of the migrants interviewed in this research were displaced as a crisis unfolded in the destination country. In South Africa, repeated episodes of collective violence against migrants resulted in temporary or permanent forced displacement of migrant entrepreneurs and their families. Some of the interviewed migrants from Libya had been displaced to a third country, such as Tunisia. For some, displacement was a catalyst for a change in status; some irregular migrants and migrant workers who could not return to their country of origin decided instead to apply for refugee status. The 2011 floods in Thailand pushed migrants to move within the country, travelling to shelters designated for migrants or to stay with families or relatives in unaffected provinces.

Cases of voluntary relocation, or evacuation, were also reported in each of our research countries. In terms of numbers of migrants evacuated, ways of fleeing the crisis country and coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders, the evacuation of migrants from Libya was certainly the most significant example found within the scope of our research. In this case, IOM emerged as the main actor managing evacuation procedures, although other intergovernmental organisations, such as UNHCR, also played important roles.

Our research suggests four types of movements in a crisis context: anticipatory movement, displacement, relocation and deportation

Government authorities in transit countries, such as Tunisia, were key in supporting migrant evacuation, and CSOs and embassies were involved as well. These latter worked mainly to provide travel documents. For example, during the 2006 crisis in Lebanon, Caritas facilitated the evacuation of irregular migrant women engaged in domestic work. It arranged travel from the government-run immigration detention centre to the origin countries of the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Ethiopia. In Thailand, some migrants were evacuated to shelters, though not to their countries of origin. Those who did return to their origin country, travelled by road, often with the help of brokers.

Our fourth type of migrant movement during a crisis, deportation, is an extreme form of involuntary movement. Egyptian migrants to Libya reported that they had been deported rather than leaving voluntarily. According to their accounts, deportation practices became more prevalent after 2011, affecting many of those who stayed in Libya or re-entered the country after the initial crisis. South Africa

implemented multiple mass deportations of migrants over the past decades. Between 2000 and 2013, more than 2 million migrants were deported, of whom 960,000 (or 42%) were from Zimbabwe. Deportations peaked in 2007, coinciding with the height of Zimbabwe's economic crisis. More than 200,000 Zimbabweans were deported from South Africa that year. According to CSO representatives interviewed in Thailand, arrests and deportations of migrants continued during the flood crisis.

## ORGANISING THE JOURNEY

Migrants' mobility in crisis situations typically occurs in stages. Some parts of the journey may be organised with the help of family or friends, or smugglers, while others are supported by states and international organisations (discussed in chapter six). Still others are, often precariously, self-organised.

“

When we arrived at the Libyan customs, we had to pay money to be admitted, we had no money left on us, so we stayed for three or four hours being fetched [searched] thoroughly and once they confirmed we had no money, they released us. Our acquaintance had arranged with the drivers to drop us in Salloum as the final stop; we had to change cars before Salloum and in the new car, the driver asked for 500 pounds more and of course we had nothing left with us, so we called our families to prepare money for us. On the way, we met another checkpoint and were asked how much money the driver took from us; initially we thought this man also wanted money but when he knew we agreed on 500, he told us to only pay him 200 and the driver had to accept.

*Male Egyptian returnee from Libya*

Our research found mobility on foot, by bus, by car and by taxi. Migrants moved with the help of smugglers in Tunisia, Egypt and Thailand, either to cross a border or to arrive near a border to make their own crossing on foot. Migrants' departures were affected by the viability of road travel, access to public transport and the general security situation. In Thailand, for example, the main routes were flooded and public transport was interrupted. Even when roads were viable during crises, travel by car presented many challenges, including vulnerability to theft, attack and even death at road blocks and checkpoints, as reported in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire.

Throughout the different stages of the mobility process, it is important to understand that end points and journey trajectories are not always clear from the outset. For instance, in the CAR case study, some Cameroonian migrants made it to their embassy only to discover



that they were ineligible for evacuation since they could not present the required documents verifying their nationality. They then had to consider other options and organise these. Some, for instance, were able to arrange transport to the border, where family members picked them up.

Even when migrants returned to their country of origin, they sometimes decided – often because of hardships faced there – to remigrate, perhaps even back to the country experiencing the crisis. This was especially the case among migrants interviewed for the Libya case study, but also among those from Côte d’Ivoire.

Assistance from family members was often essential. In the Libya and CAR case studies, families provided financial help for return journeys. In Libya, families and friends shared information on what assistance was available to migrants; and in both CAR and Libya migrants’ families helped to arrange the needed identity documents, either bringing them to border checkpoints themselves or sending them through couriers.

## WANTING TO LEAVE: CONSTRAINTS ON MIGRANTS’ DECISIONS

Migrants’ mobility during a crisis depended on the nature of the crisis, migrants’ specific vulnerabilities and their resilience in the context in which the crisis occurred, alongside migrants’ own perceptions of the crisis ahead. The same crisis can have different implications for different people, as it may imply particular constraints and even opportunities for each.

Legal status plays a key role in mobility decisions, as discussed in chapter four. Irregular migrants, particularly, may be afraid of arrest while fleeing a crisis situation. In Thailand, for example, irregular migrants feared detention, and therefore decided not to seek refuge in shelters, even those set up specifically for migrants. Migrant status also played a role in decisions to leave, particularly when violence was targeted at particular ethnic and nationality groups, as in Libya.

Migrants’ legal status also affected the decisions they made during their journey

Xenophobic violence in Côte d’Ivoire caused considerable uncertainty and trauma among Liberian, Burkinabe and Ghanaian migrants. Indeed, the recurrent nature of intolerance and xenophobic violence stimulated many migrants to return to their origin country.

Migrants’ legal status also affected the decisions they made during their journey. For example, some of the migrants stranded in Tunisia after fleeing Libya in 2011 were not recognised as refugees. They therefore had no clear legal framework for their stay in Tunisia and decided to leave, either returning to Libya or moving on to Italy.

Our findings regarding restrictions on the free movement of migrants in crisis situations are of particular concern. Liberian respondents reported violations of



the ECOWAS regional protocols on free movement during the Ivorian crises of 2002–2003 and 2010–2011. Mobility restrictions in Thailand limited migrants to their province of registration, leading many to stay where they were during the floods.

Socio-economic factors also created vulnerabilities that constrained migrants' ability to leave. The financial investment made in the original migration, as well as the risk of being unable to return to the host country or losing a job there, were factors found in the case studies to delay departures until leaving was perceived as unavoidable. In this regard, the nature of migrants' work played an important role. Domestic workers in Lebanon tended to live in isolation, with little contact with migrant networks; and their employer often retained their identity documents. Gender and nationality were also important, as emerged among Liberian men fleeing the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. They were confronted with violent reprisals during both the 2002–2003 and the 2010–2011 Ivorian crises. Because Liberian mercenaries were recruited as parties in the conflicts, all Liberian men were perceived as involved. Reprisals were thus targeted against them, which pushed many to return to their country of origin.

The financial investment made in the original migration, as well as the risk of being unable to return to the host country or losing a job there, were factors that delayed migrants' departures

In some cases, socio-economic factors created opportunities that enabled migrants to gainfully remain in the crisis-affected country. For example, Vietnamese migrants working in cleaning jobs in Thailand were hired during the crisis to build barricades and secure houses; then, as the floodwaters receded, they were employed to clean up.

Our research also found cases of involuntary migrant mobility. In Lebanon, domestic workers were reportedly moved to the mountains outside of Beirut or to a hotel, at the will of their sponsor. Other examples of involuntary mobility were the deportations reported in Libya and Thailand.

## THE ROLE OF PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions played a major role in migrants' decisions to stay or to leave in a crisis. Perceptions pertained to both the crisis and to the options migrants' considered available for coping and their assessments of opportunities and constraints.

In general, perceptions differ depending on the nature of the crisis. A natural disaster is perceived differently than a war.<sup>110</sup> During a natural disaster government authorities and institutions are seen as united in attempts to resolve the situation and support the affected populations. Procedures and contingency plans are often followed and, while there may be a state of emergency, there are no obvious

<sup>110</sup> Martin, S. (2016). Conflict or natural disaster: Does it matter for migrants? MICIC Issue Brief. [https://micicinitiative.iom.int/sites/default/files/brief/issue\\_brief\\_conflict\\_vs\\_natural\\_disaster\\_0.pdf](https://micicinitiative.iom.int/sites/default/files/brief/issue_brief_conflict_vs_natural_disaster_0.pdf).

aggressors. During a natural disaster, the government, ministries and institutions are perceived as continuing with their functions, insofar as they are able. Once the emergency is over, the focus moves immediately to reconstruction. In Thailand, while there was considerable dissatisfaction with the government's handling of the situation, the state was still generally considered as being in control. This can be very different in situations of civil unrest, as the relationship between government and population may shift.

Migrants' perceptions of crisis can also be influenced by previous experiences of similar crises, whether in their own country or in a destination country. Liberians

in Côte d'Ivoire, for example, perceived the signs of the crisis early on, recognising them from their previous experiences in Liberia. Most therefore decided to leave.

“

Actually, I had no idea. I went to work that day and nobody informed me or warned me about the flood. When I came back from work, the flood had already reached the market. I was completely shocked.

*Female Cambodian migrant interviewed in Thailand*

Among the interviewed migrants who had been caught in the floods in Thailand, most reported never having experienced such a natural disaster before. They did not recognise early indicators of the crisis as worrisome, and clearly underestimated the disastrous impact the flooding would have. Interestingly, when migrants were

asked what they would do if a similar crisis occurred, most said they would return to their country of origin. This underlines the role of personal experience in crisis perceptions and decision-making.

Finally, when a crisis is perceived as being an everyday event, as in contemporary Lebanon, leaving the country is a less likely response. Here, migrant domestic workers developed other strategies to cope.

Overall, the feasibility of cross-border mobility is an important consideration in decisions to stay or to go. Indeed, migrants' ability to return to their country of origin hinges on their ability to cross a border, even as a crisis unfolds. The option of return is not always desired, however, as it often implies tremendous economic losses and opportunity cost for the migrant. Losses of income experienced by migrants leaving Libya resulted in many returnees becoming financially dependent on family members, which brought feelings of shame. To avoid losing face, some migrants opted for the relative anonymity of a capital city instead of their home community. Burkinabe returnees from Libya are a case in point. If countries of origin and destination do not share a common border, return migrants risk being stranded in a third country with their options severely curtailed. These are all reasons why some migrants elect to stay in the crisis-affected country, as explored in the next section.

## IMMOBILITY: BETWEEN ACTIVE CHOICE AND BECOMING TRAPPED

In each of our six case studies, we found situations in which people were immobile, either voluntarily or involuntarily. That is, during or after a crisis they remained in place, at their residence or at some point along a journey elsewhere. As discussed in the theoretical overview in chapter two, a choice–constraint spectrum is involved in these immobility outcomes. This section discusses these outcomes, drawing on the case studies.

An example of extreme constraint on mobility was found in Lebanon: employers locked migrant domestic workers in their apartments while they themselves left the city under fire. We found similarly extreme constraints in Libya, where migrants were reportedly detained and tortured in (militia) prisons or arrested

“

[As a] Muslim, I was threatened by Anti-Balaka. I was forced to run away and take refuge in the church for three weeks... I left my home to rush for refuge to the church. My home and shop were looted... MSF [Médecins Sans Frontières] has supported us during our stay in church.

*Male Cameroonian returnee  
from CAR*

and detained at borders. Here, migrants' agency was effectively revoked through the equivalent of imprisonment. In such cases, the governance of crisis is often a critical factor, as it is often state power, or international laws and regulations enacted through international agencies, that immobilises migrants.

Moving some degrees away from this extreme constraint, we found instances in which migrants had some agency, but because there were no options left open to them, they were

trapped involuntarily. For instance, in Thailand, some migrants were completely uninformed about the impending floods. When they saw the waters rise, they thought a flash flood was coming, which would recede quickly, as is common in Thailand. By the time they realised that the water levels would not drop any time soon, it was too late for them to move. The Libya case study produced numerous examples of migrants being stuck in transit camps, waiting for borders to open, for evacuations, for asylum claims to be processed and for resettlement.

Immobility sometimes represented a temporary predicament in an overall strategy to move. In Côte d'Ivoire, migrants had to hide from militia violence, sometimes repeatedly, before finally succeeding in leaving the country. In CAR, some migrants were able to find temporary refuge in churches before moving on to Chad or Cameroon.

Mobility is less constrained when migrants have options, however limited they may be. For instance, in Thailand some migrants moved in with others in upper-storey apartments in their building. Some learned of the impending floods early on and were able to stock up sufficiently with supplies and wait out the floods at home. Among those migrants who fled from Libya to Tunisia during the 2011

crisis, some found employment there or crossed the sea to Italy. These migrants may still consider themselves trapped, as they have been hindered in pursuing their personal aspirations, and the only choices open to them involve considerable risk of destitution, harm, violence and even death (see box “Immobility as an act of resistance among migrants in Tunisia”).

Some migrants, of course, deliberately choose to stay in a host country, regardless of the ongoing crisis. In South Africa, most Zimbabwean migrant entrepreneurs who were targeted in xenophobic attacks did not wish to return to their country of origin (or could not do so). Instead, they developed strategies for living with the constant or recurring violence, such as storing part of their stock elsewhere and hiding at home. These strategies allowed them to stay in place and continue to pursue their goals. In Thailand, some migrants actually found new employment opportunities by staying in place during the floods, as noted earlier.

## CONCLUSIONS

---

As this chapter demonstrated, migrants’ reactions to crises are dependent on the nature of the crisis, migrants’ specific vulnerabilities in the context in which the crisis is unfolding and their perceptions of the crisis. As such, the same crisis can have different implications for different people.

Our research demonstrated that both mobility and immobility may be viable strategies for migrants to sustain their livelihoods and survive in a crisis

Migrant mobility in crisis situations typically occurs in multiple stages. In our research we found that some stages may be organised by a state or international organisation, while others may be assisted by family and friends and still others are, often precariously, self-organised. Trajectories and plans typically change throughout a journey, and even after

reaching the end destination. After fleeing a crisis, migrants may re-evaluate their decision later, sometimes opting to migrate again.

Furthermore, some constraints were found in this research to affect migrants’ decision to stay or to leave a crisis situation. During a crisis, it is vital for migrants to have the same opportunity to leave as host country citizens. In some cases, we found that migrant mobility was restricted by policy, with severe consequences for migrants’ ability to cope. Restricted mobility especially concerned irregular migrants, as they were often afraid that they would be arrested while attempting to flee. Returning to the country of origin was a preferred option for many of the migrants interviewed in our cases, though we saw that it was not feasible for all.

Mobility is often assumed to be an almost natural reaction to a crisis. However, our research demonstrated that both mobility and immobility may be viable strategies for migrants to sustain their livelihoods and survive in a crisis. We demonstrated that while many migrants had to flee a crisis situation, others were able to stay in place, even in the context of the same crisis. Our research also showed that people



Migrants who fled from Libya to Tunisia faced a range of immobility outcomes over the years of the ongoing crisis. Their experiences illustrate particularly well how the governance of crisis and specific vulnerabilities and opportunity structures come together to make immobility an outcome for migrants caught in a crisis situation.

Between 2011 and 2013, migrants who had fled Libya were hosted mainly at the Choucha camp in southern Tunisia, waiting for their asylum claims to be processed. This situation of immobility has already been criticised by migrants and CSOs, as UNHCR was seen to be processing claims too slowly. Numbers of rejected claims were also said to be too high. Many of those who were recognised as refugees were successfully referred to resettlement programmes. However, when UNHCR officially closed the camp in 2013, rejected asylum seekers and those refugees who had not accepted resettlement<sup>1</sup> were left stranded, the responsibility of neither UNHCR nor IOM. They came to be regarded as irregular by the Tunisian state<sup>2</sup>. As irregular migrants in Tunisia they were ineligible for work permits, which left them without a viable income. This particular form of immobility, then, was not shaped by detainment but by the negative impact of laws and international regulations. It left migrants vulnerable to exploitation from employers and to discrimination from service providers.

Some remained at the disbanded camp of Choucha. Their immobility can be seen as an act of resistance, though of course, perspectives differ. Many of the migrants caught in this situation felt trapped in their life trajectory. Others adjusted to the situation, settling in to a life of meagre subsistence based on donations from CSOs and income from occasional jobs.

After a lull in the conflict in 2013, there was a new wave of violence in July 2014, which resulted in Tunisia closing its border with Libya. Many Egyptian migrants fleeing the violence were trapped on the Libyan side until the Egyptian government eventually evacuated them by air.

Today, various state practices in Tunisia have resulted in migrants' immobility. Migrants irregularly entering Tunisia are detained upon entry, tried in court and usually sentenced to between 15 days and one month of jail. Afterwards, UNHCR investigates their asylum claims while they are under the care of the Tunisian Red Crescent Society. Access to asylum procedures, however, depends on their nationality. Syrians, for instance, automatically receive refugee status, while Egyptians may not claim asylum and are immediately returned to Egypt. All other migrants, including rejected asylum seekers, live in the country irregularly.

All of the choices open to them are unappealing: continuing to live under irregular status in Tunisia; voluntary repatriation by IOM, which is rarely welcome; returning to Libya to seek work and perhaps encounter the same situation which they had fled, not least, the risk of violence, torture and death; or trying the often deadly sea crossing to Italy. Irregular migrants therefore live clandestine lives, since if they are arrested again, they would be detained and deported. Thus, many migrants are effectively trapped in Tunisia; that is, involuntarily immobile.

<sup>1</sup> This mostly concerned migrants who refused to be involved in the UNHCR 'local integration' programme in urban areas in Tunisia, being afraid of losing any opportunity to benefit from a new resettlement operation.

<sup>2</sup> Similarly, a camp was set up for displaced non-Egyptian and non-Libyan nationals in Egypt. This Salloum Refugee Camp opened in 2011. Similar issues were found regarding its closure as revealed in Tunisia. See, for example, [www.alaraby.co.uk/english/features/2015/8/3/in-cairo-a-limbo-for-refugees](http://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/features/2015/8/3/in-cairo-a-limbo-for-refugees).

may be immobilised by crisis governance, particularly if policies are implemented that limit or proscribe mobility in some way.<sup>111</sup> For instance, eligibility criteria for evacuations may leave many people trapped. Being trapped, furthermore, remained a risk during the process of migrants' escape, as they could become "trapped in transit".<sup>112</sup> Irregular migrants face particular risk of becoming trapped. Overall, mobility options and implications are different for migrants than for citizens. Migrants with irregular status may risk arrest and are also more likely to be bypassed by international stakeholders and states in their crisis response.<sup>113</sup> Finally, immobility can be an act of defiance, as demonstrated by the unrecognised migrants who refused to leave the disbanded Choucha camp in Tunisia. It can signify resilience, as demonstrated by the migrants in South Africa who moved their possessions and hid in their homes until the xenophobic violence had subsided, then started up their livelihoods again. Thus, immobility can be voluntary or involuntary, depending on the context and the resources available to the affected migrants. Our research found that migrants who were not on the move were likely to be overlooked as a population at risk. Nonetheless, protection and support should be extended to all migrants, including those who are immobile and in need of help.

Our findings regarding migrants' mobility and immobility in situations of crisis cast doubt on the idea of inherent human sedentariness, and also refute celebratory accounts of the mobility of migrants. The migrants in our research demonstrated highly context-dependent preferences with regard to staying or leaving. It was evident in many examples throughout our case studies that migrants seldom received sufficient support in their attempts either to flee a crisis or to find a way to stay in place. Chapter six discusses the crisis response and assistance interventions of non-migrant stakeholders, including destination and origin countries and international stakeholders, and how they could better support migrants making mobility decisions in a crisis. With the help of the MICIC guidelines and subsequent initiatives, international cooperation to tackle these issues could be intensified, to improve the situations of migrants – whether mobile or immobile – during times of crisis.

<sup>111</sup> Black, R. and Collyer, M. (2014), Populations 'trapped' at times of crisis. *FMR* 45, February; Lubkemann, S. C. (2008). Involuntary immobility: On a theoretical invisibility in forced migration studies. *Journal of Refugee Studies Special Issue: Invisible Displacements* 21(4), 454–475.

<sup>112</sup> Gill, Caletrio and Mason (2011), p. 309; Humble, A. T. (2014). The rise of trapped populations. *FMR* 45, February; Black and Collyer (2014), p. 55.

<sup>113</sup> Polzer, T. and Hammond, L. (2008). Invisible displacement. *Journal of Refugee Studies Special Issue: Invisible Displacements* 21(4), 417–431.

## 6. INTERVENTIONS AND ASSISTANCE



### INTRODUCTION

---

This chapter maps the actions and interventions undertaken in response to migrants caught in the six crises under study, in countries of origin, transit and destination. In all six cases, government authorities, CSOs, private actors and even migrants and their families responded to crises differently, based on national and crisis-specific factors. This meant that migrants depended on different actors to different extents in the various cases studied. Nevertheless, all these responses were framed by the mandates of institutional actors, which were similar across the countries of study.

This chapter draws out salient similarities and differences in responses, as well as identifies key gaps in crisis and policy responses. The chapter starts by outlining empirical results from the case studies regarding the main actors and forms of intervention during the emergency crisis phase and in the immediate aftermath, followed by longer-term assistance. Key challenges and gaps in assistance are examined in the short and longer term. We found that migrants and their families played an important role in filling these gaps. Migrants' and other actors' perceptions of institutional responses are also addressed. Finally, we examine policy changes that have taken place since the crisis period in the research countries, particularly the potential of these changes to effect greater protection for migrants if crisis were to strike again.

### CRISIS RESPONSE

---

#### DIVERSITY IN RESPONSES ACROSS THE CASES STUDIED

In all of the cases studied, multiple governmental and non-governmental stakeholders were involved in responses to migrants in the crisis. Many of these same actors were active in helping the host country population as well. Among the entities that targeted their support specifically to migrants were embassies and consulates, other representatives of origin countries, migrant networks, employers, CSOs and intergovernmental organisations with a mandate or expertise on migrants and migrant workers. Accounts of the extent of this support varied across the different crises, countries of origin, stakeholders and individual migrants interviewed in the course of our research.

The multiple stakeholders involved in crisis response developed systems of cooperation during the emergency. In most cases, no mechanisms existed specifically for support to migrants before the crisis hit. This cooperation was



thus established as an element of the general crisis response, or more commonly, sprang up spontaneously during the crisis response operations. Countries of origin relied on international organisations, such as IOM, to finance and support evacuation of their nationals from the conflicts in Libya, CAR and Côte d'Ivoire. The Tunisian government received help from intergovernmental organisations and foreign authorities to set up camps

In most cases, no mechanisms existed specifically for support to migrants before the crisis hit

where migrants could be housed and supported. Morocco, for example, provided a military hospital and Qatar provided medical assistance in Tunisia to both migrants and Libyans fleeing the violence. During the 2006 Lebanon crisis, migrant domestic workers were evacuated mainly through a cooperative effort involving Caritas, migrant networks, diplomatic organisations, such as embassies and consulates, and the Lebanese government.

As noted previously, the experiences of migrants caught in violent conflicts differed in some essential aspects from those of migrants caught in a natural disaster, though some of the differences in coping strategies we found might reflect our research design.<sup>114</sup> In the cases of conflict most of our respondents left the crisis zone. In the natural disaster studied, most of the respondents remained in the country. Coordination in the acute and post-crisis phase was more straightforward in the natural disaster. After the floods in Thailand, actors and institutions were relatively quick to resume their functions and focus on recovery. In the cases of civil unrest, national institutions were often severely affected or reorganised after the conflict or unrest. Moreover, in countries affected by armed conflict or political violence, foreign governments (e.g., countries of migrant origin and donor countries), intergovernmental organisations and civil society actors were much more wary of how and to whom assistance was distributed, as they sought to avoid influencing the conflict in any way.

## SUPPORT DURING EVACUATION

Countries of origin played various roles in supporting their nationals. Our research confirmed that some countries were more (or more able to be) engaged than others in assisting their nationals living abroad. Here, a number of determining factors could be identified: a diplomatic or consular presence in the host country, the number of migrants present in the country, the proportion of migrants registered with the consular authorities and the financial and human resources at the consulate's disposal. In Tunisia, where the Libya crisis left many non-Tunisian and non-Libyan nationals stranded, responses varied. In particular, the assistance that low-income countries, such as Bangladesh, Sudan and Chad, could provide to their nationals paled in comparison to that provided, for example, by China, the Philippines, Turkey, Sri Lanka and EU states.

Burkinabe in Libya received logistic assistance from their consulate to obtain travel documents and airplane tickets. Similarly, in Côte d'Ivoire the governments of

<sup>114</sup> Most of the migrants interviewed for our research had returned to their country of origin or, as in Thailand, Lebanon and South Africa, they were still in the destination country at the time of the fieldwork.



Burkina Faso and Ghana played an important role in supporting their nationals during the crises of 2002–2003 and 2010–2011, in contrast to the government of Liberia. This was partly because some of the Liberians present in Côte d'Ivoire were actually refugees and therefore the legal responsibility of UNHCR. It also stemmed from the fact that Liberia itself was embroiled in armed conflict in 2002–2003, and later constrained by post-war reconstruction priorities in 2010–2011. It therefore lacked the wherewithal to respond to its citizens abroad during either crisis. Regarding the targeting of Zimbabweans during the xenophobic violence in South Africa, Zimbabwe had not only limited capacity and resources, but also lacked the political will to help its citizens abroad. Indeed, these expatriates were viewed by their origin government with unease and distrust.

If a country of origin does not share a border with the country of destination, or if the only safe way to leave a country in crisis is by crossing into a third country, transit countries become important in supporting migrants and other civilians fleeing an emergency. In this regard, our research found that Tunisia played a central role in assisting populations on the move due to the war in Libya. Government authorities, including several ministries and local authorities in the southern region, immediately moved to establish several camps between February and May 2011. Egyptians lauded the assistance they received from the Tunisian government and civil society during their stay in Tunisia before their evacuation to Egypt.

“

When we arrived in Tunisia, we felt at home. We were met with food and shelter. The Red Cross helped us contact our families by phone, so did the Tunisian army, families and volunteers.

*Male Egyptian returnee from Libya*

Migrant destination countries, which have primary responsibility for the safety of all persons in their territory, were also involved in evacuations, including facilitating operations led by origin countries. During the 2006 war in Lebanon, the Lebanese officer in charge of the government immigration detention centre offered to release all 500 inmates and declare an amnesty for the irregular migrants “on the condition [that] they leave the country and not return for at least five years”.<sup>115</sup> During the 2011 floods in Thailand, the government ordered the police to facilitate migrant workers’ return to their home countries. However, there were problems in implementation of this order, and CSOs and migrants reported various conflicting experiences and perspectives indicating uneven practices throughout flood-affected regions.

Many intergovernmental organisations assisted migrants during the evacuation and return to their country of origin. This included UN agencies, such as IOM, UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WFP), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), ILO, the World Health Organization (WHO) and others. They not only provided transportation, but also set up basic health facilities

<sup>115</sup> Jureidini, R. (2010), p. 13.

and vaccination programmes, in addition to supplying water and food. IOM and UNHCR were the main actors managing migrant and refugee evacuations during all six crises under study here. Their contributions were particularly noted by migrants and other stakeholders in the cases of CAR, Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and Thailand.

IOM played a leading role in the evacuation of migrants from Libya and in arranging the departures of third-country migrants from Tunisia and Egypt. The Libya crisis resulted in a hitherto unprecedented level of coordination and cooperation between

IOM and UNHCR were the main actors managing migrant and refugee evacuations during all six crises under study

IOM and UNHCR. UNHCR focused on refugee determination and resettlement. Both organisations co-managed the Tunisian camps for displaced persons (including those awaiting the outcome of refugee status claims), with the support of civil society and government authorities.

CSOs were important actors in all of the case study countries, albeit to varying degrees based on how actively migrant-focused CSOs were in the respective countries at the time of the crisis. In Lebanon, for example, Caritas played a central role in liaising with foreign posts, Lebanese authorities, IOM, churches and other CSOs to arrange the issuance of travel documents and organise evacuations. For Ghanaians in Libya, a local radio station used phone-in sessions with migrants to raise awareness of their plight among Ghanaians, to establish communication between migrants and their families in Ghana and to pressure government authorities to respond to their stranded nationals. In Burkina Faso, local associations negotiated with local authorities and community leaders to provide returnees access to land and services. In Chad, Niger, Egypt and Liberia, however, there were reportedly few CSOs focused on migrants or returnees at the time of the crises. CSOs thus had minimal involvement in crisis responses in those countries. Considering that the interviews in eight of our 12 fieldwork countries focused on the situation of and assistance to migrants upon return, our results pertain mainly to the role played by CSOs in supporting migrants' return, rather than the role they may have played in the actual evacuation.

Support from the private sector was also found to vary across the crises, and was most evident in the evacuations from Libya. For example, some Western companies in Libya paid for return airplane tickets for their Nigerien migrant employees. Landlords also emerged as key private sector actors supporting migrants during evacuations. In Libya, for example, some landlords incurred considerable personal risk to extract trapped migrants from hiding places. They also drove migrants to airports so they could board the chartered flights arranged by IOM, UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

## SUPPORT IN THE COUNTRY EXPERIENCING CRISIS

As noted previously, the design of our research, in particular the emphasis on longer-term impacts of crisis-induced return, meant that our overall sample is dominated by migrants who chose to leave the country during the crisis situation. However not all migrants returned to their country of origin during the crises.

Some stayed in place, as particularly observed in the Lebanon, South Africa and Thailand case studies.

Migrants remaining in the crisis-affected country received most of their support from CSOs. In South Africa, CSOs, alongside religious groups and ordinary citizens, provided the majority of aid, including shelter, food and other basic requirements, to displaced migrants. During the 2011 floods in Thailand the government set up a shelter specifically for migrants on the outskirts of Bangkok and distributed humanitarian aid packages and water to those affected. CSOs, however, were more successful in reaching migrants, especially the most vulnerable, as many had previous experience working closely with migrant networks. In Lebanon, migrants depended largely on their employers and on other migrants for safety and shelter. Some reported shelters organised by their countries of origin, though these were primarily for pre-evacuation housing.

## GAPS IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

---

Despite the significant degree of intervention during the emergency phase of the crises studied, our research identified limitations and gaps in support, in part related to difficulties in communication, coordination and information provision.<sup>116</sup> Moreover, longer-term interventions were by and large lacking. Migrants lamented the inadequacy of the support received, in terms of accessibility, purpose and duration. Particularly, virtually all support was short term in nature. This section highlights the kinds of gaps identified in short-term assistance, as well as how migrants and their families helped to fill some of these gaps.

### LACK OF INFORMATION

Lack of information about those in need, including migrant communities, hindered institutional emergency response. Nationals often did not register with their embassy in the host country, sometimes because they mistrusted their own government. For both countries of destination and origin, irregular migrant populations were difficult to assess in terms of size and needs, precisely due to their hidden nature. This meant that stakeholders faced obstacles from the start in reaching affected migrants to distribute aid and for evacuations. Nor could the amount of aid needed be accurately assessed. This lacuna was mentioned by governmental, intergovernmental and civil society stakeholders in all of our case studies, but particularly in CAR, Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, Lebanon and Thailand.

### COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

A major gap in the emergency responses during the crises related to communication and cooperation among the various actors involved. There was no clear division of labour and a lack of agreement on even what government ministry or department

<sup>116</sup> Some of these same issues also emerged during the regional consultations with states. Summary reports of these consultations are available at [www.icmpd.org/our-work/cross-cutting-initiatives/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/consultations/](http://www.icmpd.org/our-work/cross-cutting-initiatives/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/consultations/).

was responsible for migrants. Evacuation and repatriation procedures were similarly confused, and there was an overall absence of protocols and mechanisms

“

When we were first putting together those contingency plans, to assist these Ghanaian nationals to return [from Libya], I think MFA came up with the figure as close to 5,000... Then they made us scale it up to 8,000, then they said to be on the safe side let's look at up to 12,000. That would be the maximum. Now, as you know close to 19,000 did arrive... It was a major, major challenge.

*Representative of IOM, Ghana*

for engaging civil society actors (reported in Côte d'Ivoire, Thailand, Libya and South Africa). Furthermore, there was limited information sharing (reported in Thailand); an absence of an overarching communication strategy with instead fragmented approaches across ministries (reported in Thailand); lack of established focal points for external actors (reported in Thailand); lack of oversight of and coordination with shelters run by non-government entities (reported in Thailand); lack of means for conveying official communications to migrant communities, in a language they could understand, to inform them of the crisis progression

and ways to access to support post-return (reported in Thailand and Egypt-Libya); difficult or limited coordination of evacuation and repatriation (reported in Libya); and lack of coordination of longer-term advocacy work (Lebanon).

Lack of clear communication, both from government agencies to migrants and among government agencies, had a negative impact on migrants. In Thailand, the lack of an overarching communication strategy meant that confusing information was disseminated on the state of the emergency and recommendations for personal safety measures to be taken. As an example, the government issued two communications regarding assistance to migrants during the crisis. One requested the Royal Thai Police to facilitate migrant returns to their countries of origin. The other, from the Ministry of Public Health, requested hospitals to provide medical services to all patients regardless of migration status. Reports indicate, however, that these directives were not always followed. Some migrants were arrested and detained when trying to return to their country of origin; and some hospital workers remained unaware of the order and thus did not provide needed medical services.

“

It was found during the discussion about lessons learned that no organisation involved was clear about what their role was during the flood, they didn't see the big picture.

*Representative of the the Bureau of Strategy, National Institute of Emergency Medicine, Thailand*

## LACK OF SUPPORT OR LACK OF ACCESS

Finally, migrants had difficulties accessing the support that was offered, while also reporting instances where assistance was absent. Liberians (during the Ivorian crises), Ghanaians and Egyptians (during the Libya crisis) and Zimbabweans (during the South African crisis) criticised their respective origin countries as failing to support them during the crises. Egyptians noted that army representatives in Tunisia encouraged them to start a hunger strike to put pressure on the Egyptian government to provide the needed assistance. Ghanaians used social media and radio broadcasts to try to embarrass their government into action. Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa, too, found themselves without support from their country of origin.

“

The Zimbabwean government does nothing. I have never heard them comment or say anything about these attacks. They do not help us at all. They do not send anyone to come and see how we are living and even provide us with assistance. There is no government that helps us.

*Male Zimbabwean migrant in South Africa*

In South Africa, migrants and the South African Human Rights Commission reported little if any contact with or help from the South African government

during or following the xenophobic violence. In fact, some violence-affected displaced persons were forcibly deported during the crisis.

In some of the countries under study, no CSOs concerned with migrants and migrant-related issues had as yet developed. In others, the organisations had no budget for responding, as they had no independent, consistent or non-project-related funding. Thus, little or no CSO support was available for Chadian migrants in CAR and Libya, Liberian migrants in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghanaian migrants in Libya and all migrants in Thailand and Lebanon.

Even when assistance was offered, migrants noted difficulties accessing it. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, the Ghanaian embassy in Abidjan provided shelter and

evacuation transport, but some migrants could not get to the location, due to the intensity of the fighting. Thus, those in peripheral regions crossed the border on their own rather than risk travelling to the capital to seek consular support.

In Lebanon, some migrant communities,

such as the Nepalis and Cameroonians, had only honorary consulates in the country. There was thus no official representation from their countries of origin to provide assistance. In Thailand immediately after the crisis, migrants were largely ineligible for financial assistance as only property owners could claim

Even when assistance was offered, migrants noted difficulties accessing it

compensation. The migrants in our sample did not, by and large, own property, though they were not legally barred from doing so.

Difficulties in accessing services was also linked to a lack of information about their provision. Information dissemination was predominantly in the national language of the country experiencing the crisis. This meant that even when assistance was offered, migrants did not know about it, as they did not speak or understand the national language. This was particularly evident in Thailand, where information on the progression of the floods and access to government and CSO services, particularly emergency shelters and hospital healthcare, was provided only in Thai.

At the same time, during the crises studied here, migrants were not always certain from whom they received assistance. Unless given by someone in uniform, it tended to be unclear where the support came from. In Thailand and Egypt, support provided by CSOs and intergovernmental organisations was reportedly not clearly identifiable.

## MIGRANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES: FILLING GAPS IN THE SHORT TERM

To fill gaps in assistance, migrants often took matters into their own hands, or called on friends and family to help. They paid for their own transport out of the crisis situation, drained their resources to reach their home communities after evacuation and supported themselves without recourse to external assistance.

To fill gaps in assistance, migrants often took matters into their own hands, or called on friends and family to help

Many migrants reported organising and paying for their own transportation at some point during their return journey.

Indeed, this was the norm among the migrants who left Libya, CAR and Côte d'Ivoire. They travelled on foot, by bus or in rented cars or taxis. Many counted on family members to assist them, with this assistance often proving essential. Families provided financial help to aid the return process (reported in CAR and Libya).

“

From CAR to Cameroon I paid myself the transport and other costs. From Cameroon IOM helped us.

*Female Chadian returnee from CAR*

They relayed information on evacuation assistance (reported in Libya), and even obtained and relayed identity documents to help migrants access evacuation services (reported in the case of Cameroonians returning from CAR).

In some cases this assistance put migrants into debt (reported by Egyptians, Nigeriens and

Chadians returning from Libya), in addition to the loss of investment in their initial migration journey and various financial responsibilities.

In the Libya crisis in particular, the cost of leaving the country skyrocketed due to increased demand and risk. In Tunisia, Egypt and Thailand, migrants employed smugglers to assist them in leaving, either to transport them across the border or to take them near the border so they could make their own crossing on foot.

Family assistance also came with drawbacks. In Libya, Côte d'Ivoire and CAR, large numbers of migrants returned to their country of origin and were supported by family. As further discussed in chapter seven, while families were relieved to see their relatives alive and well, their return put considerable strain on household finances and resources, including food. Many of the families that were relied upon had before themselves been dependent on migrant remittances to make ends meet. These families' altered circumstances placed a heavy psychological burden on returned migrants. Many felt a loss of self-worth, because of their lack of income; some experienced marital conflict due to their changed role within the family unit.

“

I and others in similar circumstances have been indebted for so long to repay the costs of our trip, our return and other things. I still have a sister to prepare for marriage, which is very challenging.

*Male Egyptian returnee from Libya*

Migrants also sought safety and assistance from other migrants, friends, employers and landlords. Migrants reported sharing money, food and shelter and providing each other moral support. In Thailand, migrants moved in with friends in higher-storey apartments, or found shelter with friends or employers in less-affected areas. In Ghana, a local pastor and landlord offered free accommodation for stranded migrants displaced by the Ivorian crises. Ghanaian migrants in Libya reported depending on landlords' local knowledge and understanding of the ethno-political situation when making decisions on where to go and how to avoid violence. Faith-based community centres such as mosques and churches served as shelters and volunteers provided moral support to the displaced, as seen among migrants in Lebanon, among returnees in Ghana, and in Liberia during both Ivorian crises.

Migrants themselves played an important role in bridging the information gap, acting as points of contact to pass on information. This was particularly evident in the case of Lebanon, where migrant focal points became an important pillar of the Philippines' contingency plan in cases of crisis. "It would be a nightmare if we couldn't contact [focal points and community leaders]", one embassy official in Lebanon told us.

In addition to the significant amount of support given to migrants during the emergency phase of the crises, longer-term support was also needed in the post-



crisis phase. The next section discusses the longer-term support identified in our research, as well as the gaps identified by migrants and stakeholders.

## SUPPORT IN THE LONGER TERM

### LONGER-TERM SUPPORT NEEDS

Our research found little evidence of targeted long-term support for migrants from governments or international stakeholders. Families and CSOs did step in to fill this gap as best they could. Among the more institutionalised forms of support found, social support programmes for returnees and transit migrants were the most prominent. Such programmes were implemented in Niger, Chad, Egypt and Tunisia. However, in the case study countries, these programmes were either small in scope, reaching proportionally few migrants, or short in duration, leaving migrants still dependent on family support or in need of new strategies, such as remigration, including returning to a crisis-affected, and sometimes still unstable, destination country. For instance, in Niger, the return of Nigeriens from Libya coincided with the return of Nigeriens from Côte d'Ivoire, increasing pressure on all stakeholders and making an adequate response more difficult. In Egypt, IOM implemented the EU-funded START project (Stabilizing At-Risk Communities and Enhancing Migration Management to Enable Smooth Transitions in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya) from 2012 to 2014,<sup>117</sup> but the conflict in Libya was still ongoing after this time and the prospects for most returned migrants had not substantially improved. Chapter seven looks in more detail at the assistance provided to migrants to support their reintegration upon return to their countries of origin.

Few of these programmes actually targeted migrants who had been affected by a specific crisis, and those that did were limited in scope. A major factor underlying

Our research found little evidence of targeted long-term support for migrants from governments or international stakeholders

these deficiencies was, in some cases, the start of a different crisis which shifted attention and funding elsewhere. In Chad, attention and funding was redirected from returnees from CAR to the insurgency in the Lake Chad region and the resulting displacement. The Côte d'Ivoire case study found that the Ebola outbreak of 2014 played a similar role in diverting

attention and funds. In the Lebanon case study, the Syrian crisis and influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon became the focus of attention, especially after 2011, though the issues confronting migrant domestic workers have not changed, or seen any substantial improvement. Continued or renewed political instability was a factor in CAR and Libya, as well as in Thailand, which experienced a coup d'état in 2014. In many countries, there appeared to be little political will to tackle issues

<sup>117</sup> IOM, (2016). Stabilising at-risk communities and enhancing migration management to enable smooth transitions in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya (START). Retrieved from <https://egypt.iom.int/sites/default/files/START%20Publication.pdf>.



affecting low-skilled migrants, neither migrants present in host countries or those who had returned 'home'.

Other long-term efforts to support migrants have included raising awareness of migrants' needs. In Lebanon, civic activity in migrant support groups increased. A swell in civic organising in Tunisia in the wake of the Tunisian revolution produced a number of CSOs supporting migrants stranded in Tunisia. They have also raised awareness and lobbied for migrants' rights and needs, as well as providing legal counselling. Lobbying on behalf of migrants by CSOs and international stakeholders also increased after the intense xenophobic violence in South Africa in 2008 and 2015, though it has had a limited impact on the government's actions. CSOs and international stakeholders do now run support programmes at the community level, but these are still small in scope.

## GAPS IN LONG-TERM SUPPORT

The inadequacy or absence of long-term assistance from states and other stakeholders, including intergovernmental organisations and civil society, for migrants who had been in a crisis situation was abundantly clear in all of the cases studied. This was the case for those who had remained in the destination country, for those who had moved to and stayed in a country of transit and for those who had returned to their origin country.

“

I'm not satisfied with the role of the NGOs. At the beginning they helped us but all of a sudden they disappeared and we are still wondering why they closed the camp!

*Male Sudanese migrant  
displaced to Tunisia from Libya*

Moreover, some migrants received no support or only minimal assistance after the immediate emergency response. Upon return, too, there was little or no help available. Burkinabe returnees from Côte d'Ivoire and Chadian returnees from Libya lamented returning to their rural communities, perceiving that others who had remained

in the capital cities of Ouagadougou and N'Djamena had better access to support and assistance from government agencies and CSOs, for example, food donations and healthcare.

The need for, yet lack of, psycho-social support was noted in several fieldwork countries, particularly with regard to returnees. In Liberia, for example, returnees were reportedly a primary reason for the rising incidence of social and security problems and were linked to pervasive drug abuse, alcoholism and prostitution. At the institutional level, little funding had been made available to governments, intergovernmental organisations and CSOs for longer-term support. As noted, continuing responses to the last crisis must often be relinquished in the face of more pressing issues, such as a subsequent humanitarian crisis.

## MIGRANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES: FILLING THE GAP IN THE LONG TERM

Given the dearth of medium and long-term assistance in all of our research countries, particularly for socio-economic reintegration, support provided by individuals and families to migrants has been crucial. In Niger, wealthy families helped their return migrant relatives to start new businesses or hired them in family companies. In Cameroon, relatives housed migrants following their return from CAR. In Ghana, some family members provided counselling and practical support to relatives who had returned from Libya. In South Africa, migrants whose businesses were destroyed in xenophobic mob violence often restarted their trade with the financial help of family and friends. In Liberia, local communities provided returnees land to farm.

“

My community people gave us land to farm for some time and food before we started on our own in the [Bartejam Gold] camp here. Other community dwellers were in sympathy with me and my children as they have already been staying with my sister some weeks before I returned to join them.

*Female Liberian returnee from Côte d'Ivoire*

The remittances sent by migrants and the investments they made while abroad were in some cases helpful and could be productively utilised upon return. Chadians returning from Libya, for example, could live in houses built while they were in Libya. Some could access cash they had remitted to help rebuild their lives.

Once again, an important aspect of these resources was the constrained circumstances in which they could be allocated, as the loss of remittances often severely reduced family incomes. In many cases, pressure was keenly felt even on food reserves. Moreover, some families experienced reduced social standing within their community. Relatives of some Chadian returnees from CAR were reluctant to provide support, as they could ill afford the additional burden and assumed that the returnees were receiving help from the Chadian government. Chapter seven discusses issues related to return and reintegration in more detail.

Remittances sent by migrants and the investments they made while abroad were in some cases helpful and could be productively utilised upon return

Migrants fashioned individual strategies to support themselves and their families in the longer term. In Libya, some Ghanaian returnees took up new forms of work like, small-scale farming. In Tunisia, rejected refugees and stranded migrants combined several sources of income and various means of livelihood: charity, trade,

aid from non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations and temporary, often precarious, employment, for example, in construction and gardening.

## MIGRANT RECEPTION AND PERCEPTIONS OF ASSISTANCE

The scale and type of assistance provided during and after a crisis situation was clearly critical to migrants caught in a crisis. However, the way institutional responses were perceived by migrants also impacted how effectively different stakeholders could deliver support and how support was received by migrants. Migrants' legal status and the type of crisis they were caught up in, together with the migrants' previous experiences of stakeholders' behaviour toward them in times of peace, affected migrants' perceptions and even willingness to ask for and receive help during the crises. This was particularly evident in situations of xenophobic violence.

CSOs and IOs who were not clearly identifiable were apt to be mistrusted, as migrants reportedly mistook them for state officials

Irregular migrants lacked trust in state officials, particularly police and security services, in countries where detention and deportations were frequently implemented. This distrust continued during the crisis. In Lebanon, migrant domestic workers felt intimidated by and distrustful of the police and security

agents. In South Africa, Zimbabwean migrants assumed that South African officials and police were complicit in, or at best unconcerned with, their welfare during the xenophobic attacks. They did not rely on police protection or redress, and in fact avoided reporting incidents or identifying perpetrators for fear of reprisals. This fear and mistrust was not limited to times of crisis, as also discussed in chapter four. Irregular migrant domestic workers in Lebanon and irregular migrants in Thailand expressed fears of detention and deportation, including in the midst of the crisis. In Thailand, irregular migrants reported being afraid to go to shopping centres where dry rations and relief goods were distributed, and there were reports of migrant arrests during the crisis. Migrants' suspicions of government authorities cast a shadow even on CSO volunteers and representatives of international organisations who came to offer support and services. Those who were not clearly identifiable were apt to be mistrusted, as migrants reportedly mistook them for state officials.

“

There is a lot of corruption [in embassies and consulates]. We hear this from migrant domestic workers themselves.

*Representative of the NGO  
Migration Services and  
Development, Lebanon*

This distrust sometimes extended to representatives of the country of origin. In Egypt, Ghana, Thailand and Lebanon, migrants reported corruption and favouritism in the distribution of assistance by origin country representatives.

Migrants' perceptions of the support received from countries of origin seems to have been influenced by their presumption of their origin country's disinterest in supporting them prior to the crisis. In some cases this even led to retaliations. Two cars belonging to the Ghanaian ambassador in Libya were destroyed by Ghanaian migrants during the 2011 crisis. The incident was an outburst of a broader dissatisfaction and lack of trust in the Ghanaian missions abroad, as these were often perceived as agents for deportations. Several migrants were particularly critical of their country of origin, comparing their actions (or perceived inaction) unfavourably to those of, for example, a transit country or other countries of origin that in their view had provided appropriate support for their nationals. For example, during the Libya crisis, Egyptians lauded the support provided by the Tunisian army and civil society; and Nigeriens noted a visit by an ambassador from Mali to Malian nationals. CSO representatives in Lebanon reported misgivings about origin country missions too.

A variance between the way institutional stakeholders described their actions in support of migrants and how these were perceived by the migrants emerged in all of the case studies and across multiple stakeholders. Regarding the Ivorian crises in 2002–2003 and 2010–2011, there seemed to be a disconnect between intergovernmental organisations' claims of support provided to returnees and returnees' own claims that assistance was minimal or absent. However, this could be attributed to the fact that intergovernmental organisations were engaged at higher levels and not in assistance on the ground, while CSOs were more visible in support provision. Or intergovernmental organisations may not have been identifiable as such.

In some cases, migrants' perceptions of the assistance received was coloured by misinformation spread during and after the crisis. Several Ghanaians claimed that IOM had informed them they would receive US \$500 upon return from Libya, while in fact they received much less. Egyptians also noted that following their return from Libya, government authorities informed them multiple times of various compensation schemes, job opportunities and services for which they could apply. However, none of the applicants ever heard anything back.

Trust in some actors worked as an enabling factor, allowing some stakeholders to promptly support migrants. Positive perceptions of and general trust in CSOs and international organisations such as UNHCR, whose representatives are clearly recognisable because they wear UNHCR vests, enabled these organisations to work productively during the crises. In South Africa, migrants' trust in CSOs and religious groups made it possible for them to provide help at a time when the government's emergency management of displaced persons was delayed, weak and rather ineffective. Similarly, in Thailand migrant networks succeeded in identifying and therefore supporting migrants trapped in flooded areas.

Although CSO assistance was favourably perceived by migrants throughout the crisis situations in our studies, some interviewees were critical of perceived favouritism. In Ghana, for example, the inclusion of some vulnerable members of the local communities in reintegration support for returnees to the Brong Ahafo

region generated accusations of bias and favouritism. Thus, while the inclusion of local community members in development projects and assistance could be useful to avoid perceptions that return migrants, or refugees, are privy to greater support than the local population, it could also backfire and be perceived as a means of favouritism for certain members of the local community.

## POLICY CHANGE

This chapter has identified a number of significant challenges to and gaps in crisis responses and longer-term interventions. While new policy has already addressed several of these challenges, our research has shown that some of these new policies have been inadequate or even detrimental.

Institutional stakeholders' experiences in crisis response enabled them to learn more about and to reform crisis management practices.

Collection and analysis of knowledge regarding their own responses, as well as their own identification of gaps and needs, is the first step in actually addressing these. This was acknowledged by government actors, international organisations and CSOs in Chad, Niger and Thailand.

There have been several policy changes linked directly to countries' experiences with crisis and the return of nationals from a crisis-affected country. New contingency plans were formulated or endorsed in Ghana, Lebanon, Thailand and

The training that was conducted in flood-prone areas has helped communities learn how to help themselves more effectively. They learned how to act first instead of waiting for relief to arrive.

*Representative of the NGO  
Labour Rights Promotion  
Networks, Thailand*

“

It is not enough to have crisis management experience, but it is also necessary to plan and organise in advance.

*Representative of IOM, Tunisia*

Tunisia. In Chad, Egypt and Niger new response structures have been established for returnees or migrants. These are all concrete ways in which countries have changed their policies in view of potential future crises. Emergency funding lines have been established (e.g., IOM's Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism and Ghana's Disaster Management Fund Facility), as

the lack of these proved a major hindrance in previous crisis responses. While most of these changes were instituted many years after the crisis, a few followed more closely. Adjusting border management and migration policies in the midst

of the crises provided authorities immediate means to facilitate evacuations, as was seen in the evacuations from Lebanon via Syria and from Libya via Tunisia. Efforts have also included improvement of data on migrants present in a country, so as to be better able to account for them in times of crisis. Thailand, Ghana and Burkina Faso have all implemented data-gathering initiatives. In these latter two countries, such programmes were established with the support of international stakeholders.

At times, policy changes and institutional learning have been evident in responses to a subsequent crisis. The flaring up of violence in South Africa in 2015 and in Libya in 2014–2015 triggered improved responses, in particular faster responses to urgent needs and better coordination of those responses. The Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism established by IOM in 2011 in response to the Libya crisis has already been used to assist migrants caught in several crises, for example, in Yemen and Syria.

Integrating migrants into disaster responses is one way in which some government actors have concretised previously informal engagement

Integrating migrants into disaster responses is one way in which some government actors have concretised previously informal engagement. In Thailand, the Ministry of Public Health plans to propose new legislation to provide work permits to migrants working as volunteer translators. In Lebanon,

Filipino migrants were engaged in an ad hoc manner during the 2006 crisis. Nowadays, the Philippines embassy has established migrant focal points as part of its contingency planning for information dissemination.

In several countries, the issues that faced nationals caught in a crisis abroad precipitated national discussions on migration and protection of citizens abroad in general. The Philippines and Ethiopia went so far as to ban emigration of their nationals to Lebanon following the 2006 crisis. The Philippines lifted this ban, though only partially, after signing a memorandum of understanding with Lebanon clarifying protections and minimum standards for, as well as information sharing on, Filipino workers in Lebanon. However, these bans have been somewhat counter-productive: migrants still arrive in Lebanon from the Philippines and Ethiopia, yet they reportedly lack access to pre-departure training and information. Moreover, they were more fearful of coming forward for assistance and more vulnerable to exploitation by recruiters or traffickers. Ethiopia is currently laying the groundwork to lift the ban, reassessing its labour migration legislation with a view to improving protection of its citizens abroad.

Other relevant efforts to support own nationals in cases of an emergency abroad include diaspora engagement programmes, as seen in Burkina Faso, the Diaspora Support Unit in Ghana and the pre-departure migration information centre set up in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana.

Our research identified policy developments that could impact responses to a future crisis abroad, though not stemming directly from countries' previous experiences with crisis. Such policy developments include efforts in Thailand to change the migrant registration and regularisation systems; Burkina Faso's establishment of a national strategy on migration in 2008 and that country extending voting rights to nationals abroad in 2009; and establishment in Ghana of the Diaspora Affairs Bureau to improve relations between the state and its diaspora.

Two driving forces for these policies can be identified. First, migration and border management policy has become increasingly politicised globally, particularly in the context of the EU and 'migrant sending countries' in the Middle East and Africa. Second, past crisis events, such as examined in our six case studies, have contributed indirectly to stimulate broader discussions on migration and border management within countries.

Civil society advocacy on behalf of migrants, migration policy and migrant and refugee rights has particularly flourished

Expansion of civil society involvement and advocacy on behalf of migrants has also been a key development. Advocacy on behalf of migrants, migration policy and migrant and refugee rights has particularly flourished. Migrant and returnee associations, faith-based

organisations and local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working on behalf of migrants have flourished or ramped up their efforts in countries including Niger and Ghana (for returnees from Libya), Lebanon (for migrant domestic workers of diverse backgrounds), South Africa (for migrants and refugees affected by xenophobia) and Tunisia (for stranded migrants from Libya). In Lebanon, the 2006 crisis has been characterised as a 'wake-up call' that helped galvanise migrant domestic workers to organise and lobby for their own rights.<sup>118</sup> In Lebanon and Tunisia, CSOs are increasingly working to coordinate their actions and advocacy, to increase their impact and efficiency. In South Africa, NGO efforts, including court cases, have helped to roll back some government policies that negatively impacted migrant-owned businesses. However, the impact of CSO interventions has been limited in some countries, often due to the 'constricted space' they must operate in, often related to anti-foreigner attitudes.<sup>119</sup> CSOs have also become important partners in policy implementation. In Chad, state efforts to reduce returnee statelessness have been assisted by engagement of a local NGO to register returnees, with a view toward provision of national identification documents.

However, even when institutional actors develop plans for responding to a crisis and related issues, these plans sometimes remain incomplete or unimplemented. Recommendations for changes may be ignored or significantly watered down, as with the recommendations of the South African Human Rights Commission following

<sup>118</sup> Mansour-Ille, D. and Hendow, M. (2018).

<sup>119</sup> Pugh, S. A. (2014). Advocacy in the time of xenophobia: Civil society, the state, and the politics of migration in South Africa, *Politikon*, 41(2), 227–247, p. 243.



the 2008 violence.<sup>120</sup> Similarly, South Africa's National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance ultimately included very few concrete steps and no comprehensive recommendations for addressing xenophobic violence. In other cases, funding for plan implementation has been unavailable. Again, this is sometimes related to the eruption of a new humanitarian crisis, with urgent new needs diverting focus and funds elsewhere. Chad's National Plan for Global Reintegration of Returnees was starved of funding, as was Niger's national migration policy and intervention plan for Nigerien returnees from Libya. In Lebanon an interviewee noted that there was not much funding from donors for issues beyond responses to Syrian refugees.

In still other cases, policy changes have been stalled in political processes. Again in Lebanon, the lack of a president and cabinet has delayed policy regarding migrant domestic workers. In Liberia, a draft migration policy submitted to the President in 2013 was, as of this writing, not yet fully endorsed. There may simply be a lack of interest from, or inertia among, government partners. In Egypt, for example, respondents from an NGO and an international organisation commented on the Egyptian government's lack of engagement on issues related to returnees from Libya, despite work on contingency planning for this target group. This indifference was also seen in Lebanon, where some interviewees noted a lack of will to address issues relevant to migrant domestic workers' situation. Similarly, in Cameroon, a new migration policy has been 'in development' since 2008.

In many cases there seems to be a lack of learning and policy change in general. Even years after a crisis many (in some cases most) issues still need to be comprehensively addressed, including contingency planning and specific policies on evacuation of own nationals, overall migration policy, access to accurate migration data on stocks and flows, communication plans that account for migrant languages and reintegration programmes such as employment schemes and psycho-social interventions. In Lebanon, an interviewee from the government security agency said that since 2006 "nothing has changed" in terms of how they would respond to a new crisis. Indeed, the same stakeholder noted that any future crisis would be far more difficult to deal with, given that the option of a land evacuation via Syria, as was used in 2006, is no longer feasible due to the ongoing conflict in that country.

Increasingly strict and heavy-handed migration and border control policies can be viewed as an attempt by governments to demonstrate to citizens that it is proactively addressing the 'problem' of migration

In one case, our research found that post-crisis policy change had exacerbated the situation. In South Africa, the government's policy response following the xenophobic violence of 2008 and 2015 can be seen as misguided at best or an

<sup>120</sup> More information on the original recommendations is included in the South Africa case study and the South African Human Rights Commission's own report. See Crush, J., Tawodzera, G., Chikanda, A., Ramachandran, S. and Tevera, D. (2017). *The double crisis: Mass migration from Zimbabwe and xenophobic violence in South Africa*. Vienna: ICMPD; South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) (2010). *Report of the SAHRC investigation into issues of rule of law, justice and impunity arising out of the 2008 public violence against non-nationals*. Pretoria: SAHRC.



exploitation of the crisis at worst. There were increased arrests and deportations of Zimbabweans and other migrant business owners (e.g., in operations 'Hard Stick' in 2013 and 'Fielá' in 2015), as well as denials of any xenophobia in the country at all. Furthermore, communications and debate sought to delink the violence from prejudice and discrimination, pointing instead to increased competition due to migration, irregular or otherwise. The increasingly strict and heavy-handed migration and border control policies can be viewed as an attempt by the government to demonstrate to South Africans that it is proactively addressing the 'problem' of migration. In some sense, and in the opinion of many local CSOs, this has validated xenophobic sentiment.

With respect to increased control measures on migration and border management, other African fieldwork countries were also implementing policy changes analogous to those found in the South African case. These were not directly related to the crises under study, but rather linked to broader global pressures to limit irregular migration, particularly toward Europe. This is evident in several cooperation agreements between the EU and North African countries. To a certain extent, the recent 'migration and refugee crisis', as perceived in Europe, has pushed changes in policy in non-European countries with regard to migration opportunities for their own nationals and migrants in their own country.<sup>121</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

This chapter discussed the kinds of support offered to migrants caught in crisis situations, also pointing out where this support was not aligned with migrants' needs. The most successful interventions were those that were flexible and accounted for migrants' needs in the short and long term and those that entailed coordination of different stakeholders at multiple levels. This finding supports the call for needs-based interventions linked to a polycentric and multi-layered governance structure.

The harshest criticisms in terms of lack of support were directed at government representatives or entities. Migrants and civil society actors felt that states should have provided much greater support during the crisis and in the longer term, and this critique emerged from all case studies in one way or another. However, it is also clear that states had different levels of financial and human resources with which to respond during a crisis, and resource constraints were compounded by parallel or overlapping priorities in the post-crisis phase. Other stakeholders to some extent stepped into this breach as non-traditional crisis response actors. Where assistance was absent, migrants acted independently and with support from friends and family to find solutions. Despite being 'dormant stakeholders', as discussed in chapter two, in many fieldwork countries migrants' interests have been conveyed through their own organisations and through CSO advocacy in the years of and following the crises studied. Newly-formed migrant and returnee associations are examples in this regard.

<sup>121</sup> For a discussion on this in the context of the relationship between the EU and Libya, and subsequent policy priorities, see Zampagni et al. (2017), pp. 78–79.

Findings from all of our case studies confirm that responses were strongly linked to countries' (real or perceived) legal and political obligations, as well as the resources and opportunity structures – or lack thereof – available to them at the time of the crisis. This research identified large disparities in this regard across the fieldwork countries. Disparate and largely lacking response capacities were found both in short-term emergency assistance, such as evacuation, as well as longer-term reintegration efforts.

## 7. REINTEGRATION AND REMIGRATION



### INTRODUCTION

The previous two chapters described migrants' experiences during and following a crisis in their destination country. The ways migrants responded were outlined, as well as the support migrants received in countries of destination, transit and origin. As noted, the majority of our fieldwork was conducted in countries to which migrants returned following a crisis. The research was designed in this way purposely, to enable examination of the longer-term impacts of return in origin countries. This chapter thus delves into more detail on migrants' experiences following return, and the implications return had for their own personal development, as well as their families and communities.

The resource accumulation strategies that migrants pursued abroad during times of peace and migrants' general lack of preparedness for an emergency departure greatly affected the reintegration options available to them upon their return to their country of origin.<sup>122</sup> Constraints experienced once home led some to remigrate back to host countries, even before the crisis they had fled fully subsided. This chapter explores why and how some migrants reintegrated in their origin country, while others opted to remigrate, even after traumatic experiences in the destination country. The case studies of Libya, Côte d'Ivoire and CAR, in particular, serve as examples because the crises in these countries produced mass returns on a scale much greater than the emergencies in Thailand, Lebanon and South Africa.

### REINTEGRATION

The most prevalent migrant response to the crises in Libya, Côte d'Ivoire and CAR was return, though reintegration in origin countries presented major challenges.

Labour market reintegration was the greatest challenge

Generally speaking, although the states of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, Ghana and Niger were directly involved in the short-term evacuation and return of their nationals from Libya, Côte d'Ivoire and CAR, some of these countries

appeared to be less committed to long-term support for reintegration, primarily due to funding constraints.

Returnees identified labour market reintegration as the greatest challenge, remarking that the loss of livelihood was a constant threat. The literature confirms that reintegration of returnees, especially in the labour market, is not always

<sup>122</sup> Cassarino (2004).

smooth.<sup>123</sup> For instance, being accustomed to steady incomes and relatively comfortable lifestyles in CAR, Cameroonian returnees in particular found it difficult to adapt after the years spent abroad. Reduced professional status was

“

If I find another activity [employment], I could stay in Cameroon. Otherwise, I will return to CAR. The mototaximan work is hard. In Cameroon work is hard, while in CAR we easily make money.

*Male Cameroonian returnee  
from CAR*

another aspect of returnees' predicament. Cameroonian returnees were often reduced to jobs considered inferior to the positions they previously held as employers in CAR. Most relied on marginal activities, for example, as night watchmen or motorcycle drivers, to generate incomes, albeit below what they had earned in CAR.

The Chadian returnees from Libya similarly encountered major reintegration obstacles, starting with finding employment

or securing capital to start a business. While some could draw on investments they had made while in Libya, others lived, and continue to live, in precarious circumstances, reliant on family and without livelihood sources. Egyptian returnees from Libya were met with fewer job opportunities and lower daily wages, again leading to major losses of income.

In Niger, too, returnees experienced difficulties integrating economically and finding jobs. Returnees from Libya swelled the ranks of the unemployed and jobseekers, though Niger already had few economic prospects to offer. Even migrants who had saved enough to start a business faced socio-economic and administrative hurdles, including corruption, lack of appropriate legislation, bureaucratic delays and low dynamism of local economies.<sup>124</sup> Returns to rural communities produced land disputes in some cases. In pastoral areas, such as Tchintabaraden, development of agriculture by returnees brought about conflicts between farmers and stock-breeders. There were also increased reports of anti-social behaviour, delinquency and petty crime in some host areas, such as Tahoua, Agadez, Zinder and Diffa. Returns from Libya were linked to increases in armed robberies, banditry, drug use and general insecurity. Returns also intensified youth unemployment.

The unplanned return of family members from Libya pressed already poor migrant-sending households to stretch their meagre resources even further. Financial pressures negatively affected household health, nutrition and education

<sup>123</sup> Ammassari, S. (2004). *Management of migration and development policies: Optimise the benefits of international migration in West Africa*. International Migration Papers. Geneva: ILO; Schaeffer, F. (2001). Myth of the return and reality in 'the between two': The retreat in France or Morocco? *REMI*, 17(1), 165–176.

<sup>124</sup> Ndione, B. & Lombard, J. (2004); Petit, V. (ed.) (2007). *International return migrations and countries of origin*. Paris: Centre Population et Développement (CEPED); Fall, A. S. (2003). *Issues and challenges of international migration of work in West Africa*. International Migration Papers. Geneva: ILO.

All these effects undermined prospects for long-term reintegration.



As explored in chapter six, most migrant returnees became dependent on their relatives for financial support due to the loss of their previous livelihoods. At the same time, however, remittance streams ceased. An IOM study found that migrant-hosting households in the Brong Ahafo and Northern regions of Ghana already tended to be in the lower well-being categories in the country.<sup>125</sup> These regions were marked by a whole range of constraints: dependence on subsistence farming, low education and skills levels, low employability, large household sizes, a low income and assets base, little or no entitlements and limited livelihood choices. These characteristics reveal the

serious livelihood challenges faced by the communities that hosted returnees. The unplanned return of family members from Libya pressed already poor migrant-sending households to stretch their meagre resources even further, compromising the amounts that could be spent on food, shelter and clothing.<sup>126</sup> The ensuing financial pressures reportedly negatively affected household health, nutrition and education.

Household and community reintegration was not always impossible, however, as some of our case studies illustrated. For example, Burkinabe migrants who returned to their villages were welcomed by their extended families and provided shelter and food, as one Burkinabe traditional chief recounted.

Despite most migrants returning to Liberia without assets or skills, communities in Grand Gedeh in particular welcomed them with open arms and even gave them land to farm.

Similar to Cameroonians and Liberians, Egyptians relied on their social networks for reintegration assistance. Returnees were said to help each other find temporary jobs as day labourers.

Our living conditions have deteriorated. We live thanks to the help of benefactors and of the selling of planks, activities which I converted recently. A year after coming back from CAR, I had nothing remaining from the money I came back with. A Muslim lady offered me the *zakat*, handing me a sum of 50,000 CFA [€76]. This money has allowed me to launch the trade of planks, [an] activity which enables me today to feed the family, even though revenues are still below our requirements.

*Male Cameroonian returnee from CAR*

<sup>125</sup> IOM (2013), p. 2.

<sup>126</sup> IOM (2013), p. 2.

Crisis-induced returnees who had not maintained transnational ties while abroad found reintegration more arduous than their more socially or politically embedded counterparts.

“

For returnees, we did our best. We asked landowners to find fields for some of them and it was done. For those who wanted to stay in town, we helped them to find plots. I clarify that help in some cases was individual but mostly it was collective.

*Village chief, Burkina Faso*

For instance, reuniting with families and communities upon their ‘return’ to Chad was especially difficult for families that had lived in CAR for generations. Although most of the Chadian returnees interviewed could identify their origin towns, cities or villages in Chad, some were unable to establish contact due to their long absences. They seemed to have migrated without any intention of ever returning to Chad.

In some cases, returnees were repatriated not to their regions, provinces, cities or towns of so-called origin, but to places in which they had no social ties. While the lack of social embeddedness challenged full reintegration for some, it did not hinder others. Most Burkinabe migrant returnees from Côte d’Ivoire settled in provinces different from their provinces of origin. These returnees benefited from the support of residents, earlier returnees and traditional authorities, as well as Burkinabe associations. These helped them acquire land and seedlings for agriculture, offered them food and provided financial credit for economic activities. However, in some places, like south-western Burkina Faso, competition arose between internal migrants and returnees, leaving returnees severely disadvantaged in access to land, as observed by a Burkinabe government representative.

“

There is the problem of access to land. At the beginning as there was still space, native people offered their land, but now the tendency is the withdrawal of those lands. Conflicts also [arise] related to farm boundaries.

*Representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Development, Burkina Faso*

In addition to limited access to land, Burkinabe migrants faced other difficulties too. In rural areas, food insecurity was a major problem, and civil society and government support was irregular. In cities, returnees faced, in addition to food insecurity, housing scarcity and a lack of access to healthcare. Those who stayed in towns were generally no better off. Most could not fall back on any substantial family support. Instead they depended on the limited food donated by charitable organisations and government.<sup>127</sup> Facing

<sup>127</sup> Zongo, M. (2008). Reception and insertion of ‘rapatriates’ in rural areas of Burkina Faso: Example of Cascades region. In: Cambrézy, L. et al., (eds) *L’asile au Sud*. Paris: La Dispute, pp. 139–161.

difficulties, some Burkinabe were forced to either leave for another province in Burkina Faso or to remigrate to Côte d'Ivoire.

Although most returnees lamented receiving limited reintegration support from external sources, particularly origin states and international institutions, we found evidence that governments and international institutions did provide support in varying capacities. In Chad, for instance, local authorities in rural areas provided returnees some acreage for farming, and seeds were given by humanitarian agencies and NGOs such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), WFP and the Initiative Humanitaire pour le Développement Local (IHDL). These returnees were thus helped to begin agricultural activities, though many of them were educated, had previously lived in an urban area, like Bangui and Bozoum in CAR, and were more accustomed to trade and other non-agricultural enterprises. All of the Chadian returnees interviewed in our research mentioned provision of some basic social services for returnees, like schools and health dispensaries, by humanitarian agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP and the Red Cross. These agencies also provided food assistance (maize or sorghum flour, rice, oil, milk, sugar and canned food) and cash vouchers, although this assistance has since dwindled.

Most origin states lack as yet any institutionalised policies and programmes to support the reintegration of returned migrants

One Liberian government institution, which opted for anonymity, provided reintegration packages to Liberians upon their return. These included plots of land based on availability, scholarships to attend vocational or academic education and micro-loans. It also provided employment referrals. The agency reportedly even distributed household utensils and mattresses, and assisted returnees in retrieving property through the courts and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

“

Most of my friends with whom we returned home or some of them brought by the UN repatriation programme do not learn any skill. They are suffering, begging people for money and nobody has time for them.

*Female Liberian returnee from Côte d'Ivoire*

The few Liberian respondents who had resettled in the capital of Monrovia sought support from local Liberian CSOs, like the Liberia Returnee Network (LRN), as well as from government agencies, such as the Liberia Refugee Repatriation Resettlement Commission (LRRRC), and from intergovernmental organisations, including UNHCR and the United Nations

Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). These organisations were more easily accessible than the returnee-oriented services in the border county of Grand Gedeh. Returnees in Monrovia could thus receive vocational and entrepreneurial

training in cosmetology, events decoration, business development or agriculture (e.g., animal husbandry/pig farming and vegetable cultivation/cabbage production). However, completion of the training was no guarantee of consistent, full-time employment. Post-training, no job placement assistance was available, nor did programme participants receive living accommodations, scholarships for further studies or the expected land and start-up funds for agricultural enterprises.

Even with the support provided, returnees arriving home without relevant skills and education were vulnerable, as noted by a Liberian interviewee who had fled Côte d'Ivoire in 2010.

Most origin states lack as yet any institutionalised policies and programmes to support the reintegration of returned migrants. This has rendered long-term

Despite major hurdles, many returnees have made significant contributions to the socio-economic development of the areas to which they returned

prospects uncertain for most returnees. Chad attempted to overcome this hurdle in 2015 by formulating the National Reintegration Plan for Returnees, budgeted at more than US \$300 million (€285 million). However, at the time of this writing, the plan had not yet been implemented and the country faced a new influx of returnees and IDPs fleeing

the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and some isolated parts of the Lake Chad basin.<sup>128</sup> The National Reintegration Plan for Returnees describes economic support to returnees to enhance their resilience. However, the recent sharp decline in oil prices has increased financial pressure on the Chadian government. It remained hopeful that international partners would support the plan, but said support had not yet been forthcoming.

Despite major hurdles, many returnees have made significant contributions to the socio-economic development of the areas to which they returned, thereby strengthening their prospects for full integration. Young repatriates in Burkina Faso, for instance, returned to cultivate their coffee and cocoa plantations after experiencing multiple crises in Côte d'Ivoire. Similarly, Burkinabe migrants with vocational training and skills have contributed to create new livelihood activities, such as sewing and catering, and also brought increased agricultural earnings by introducing palm oil production, tree farming and the processing of cassava into *attiéké*. These activities provide opportunities for both returnees and non-returnees, particularly women, to earn incomes. Similarly, Nigerien returnees have developed enterprises such as welding and mechanical workshops, employing young people in these businesses. Some migrants saved enough while abroad to open a business or start a trade or taxi service upon their return. Returnees in Niamey and Tchintabaraden organised themselves in associations and cooperatives to assist in the reintegration of their members.

<sup>128</sup> OCHA (2016).



## REMIGRATION

Remigration in many instances can be construed as the result of a failure to meaningfully reintegrate, particularly a lack of socio-economic embeddedness. Lack of full reintegration, for instance, enticed about 30%<sup>129</sup> of our Cameroonian respondents to return to CAR, despite the atrocities they experienced and haunting memories of the crisis period.

Remigration can be construed as the result of a failure to meaningfully reintegrate, particularly a lack of socio-economic embeddedness

Some returnees received very little help from family, apart from reception and accommodation, compelling them to remigrate.<sup>130</sup> Although the Government of

“

We started everything from scratch, I mean the two of us. No support from the church, no support from the community, no support from government, no support from the Assembly, no support from anywhere... Now the major challenge is that he is unemployed. Aside from farming he does not do anything... Oh yes I want him to go back! At least it is better than staying here. Like I told you, things were much better when he was in Libya. I would like him to go back. You can see from his demeanour. Everything shows he is not a happy man.

*Wife of Ghanaian returnee from Libya*

Burkina Faso was able to organise the evacuation and repatriation of Burkinabe nationals during the Ivorian crises, with the support of intergovernmental organisations, long-term socio-economic reintegration programmes received insufficient funding,<sup>131</sup> catalysing some returnees to remigrate. Burkinabe nationals who fled Libya during that country's crisis admitted returning to Libya even before the conflict waned.

Just as Cameroonians and Chadians did not stop migrating to CAR during its crisis, the Ivorian crises did not significantly reduce migration of Burkinabe to Côte d'Ivoire. Rather, migrant numbers swelled, even before the Ivorian crises ended.<sup>132</sup> After the Linas Marcoussis Agreement was signed in 2003 between the Ivorian government and rebels,

<sup>129</sup> These are the opinions expressed during the interviews with returning migrants, which are difficult to verify. However, despite the return to constitutional order, the security situation in CAR remained a subject of great concern.

<sup>130</sup> Bredeloup, S. and Zongo, M. (2005). When Burkinabé brothers of the Small Jamahiriyya stop in Tripoli. *Autrepart*, 4(36), 127–147.

<sup>131</sup> Bredeloup, S. (2006). Relocation of Burkina Faso returnees from Côte d'Ivoire to Ouagadougou. *Contemporary Africa*, 217, 185–201.

<sup>132</sup> Bredeloup and Zongo (2005).

bringing the first crisis to an end, many Burkinabe returnees left again for Côte d'Ivoire, especially those who wanted to reclaim farms and property they had abandoned. The Government of Burkina Faso estimates that in 2007 more than two thirds of the Burkinabe migrants previously resident in Côte d'Ivoire returned to that country.<sup>133</sup> In this, Burkinabe migrants were not unique, as Ghanaian returnees also remigrated to Côte d'Ivoire, citing lack of employment and reintegration programmes at home as the reason. Similarly, two thirds of the Nigerien returnees interviewed had already remigrated to Libya, citing the lack of employment prospects in Niger as the major motivator.

Interviews with a range of respondents in the course of our research pointed to the propensity of donors to allocate funds during emergencies, but to overlook longer-term support for returnee reintegration.<sup>134</sup> This leaves remigration as the only durable solution, as most families are in no position to provide sufficient support and few repatriates are prepared for their emergency return. This predicament highlights the longer-term relation between provision of economic opportunities and reduced international migration, although the migration literature indicates that development initially causes increased migration flows in the short to medium term.<sup>135</sup>

Despite evidence provided by our respondent pool on remigration to the countries affected by crisis, it is important to emphasise that migrants who chose to remigrate were in the minority. For instance, many migrants who returned from Libya have been reluctant to remigrate because of the security situation there, despite the country's economic enticements. An Egyptian returnee from Libya observed that most, as yet, perceived remigration there to be entirely too risky.

“

It's unsafe to go to Libya now, but if the conditions became better and I was able to afford the cost of travel, I will go. But you need to know those who left to Libya can only go to Libya; they became familiar with the environment and work venues. They would never go to Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, not only because they are more expensive but more because they are not familiar with them. Also, the Libyan exchange rate compared to the Saudi one is much better with less travel costs.

*Male Egyptian returnee from Libya*

<sup>133</sup> Bredeloup, S. (2009). Burkinabe 'returnees' from Côte d'Ivoire: Domestic relocations and new migratory projects. In: Baby-Collin, V. et al., (eds). *Migrants from the South*. Bondy: IRD Editions/PUM, p. 183.

<sup>134</sup> Ouedraogo, T. (2005). Migration of return in a crisis context: Case of the Bayiri operation in Burkina Faso. Master's thesis. University of Ouagadougou, p. 90; Bangré, E. (2011). Burkinabe of Côte d'Ivoire, Burkinabe in Côte d'Ivoire: Organisational relations with the host country and the country of origin. In: Zongo, M. (ed.), *The issues around the Burkinabé diaspora, Burkinabe in foreign, foreigners in Burkina Faso*. Paris: L'Harmattan, pp. 113–144.

<sup>135</sup> De Haas, H. (2005). International migration, remittances and development: Myths and facts. *Third World Quarterly*, 26(8), 1269–1284.

## CONCLUSIONS

---

This chapter situated 'post-crisis' return and reintegration as part and parcel of the crisis cycle. It argued that socio-economic embeddedness in countries of origin is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for sustainable and successful return and reintegration. Although short-term, ad hoc emergency assistance and repatriation support was provided by families, origin country governments, intergovernmental organisations, civil society and private sector actors, medium to longer-term socio-economic reintegration support has been rather absent in the aftermath of the crises in Libya, Côte d'Ivoire and CAR. This has compelled some migrants to return to these crisis-affected countries even before hostilities completely subside. This points to a broader need for actors to move beyond mere ad hoc emergency responses to a planned, sustainable approach that includes reintegration when responding to the needs of migrants caught in crisis situations. As discussed in chapter six, few long-term support programmes for migrants have focused on those returning due to a crisis. Future programmes, whether through national or international systems, should be cognisant of already fragile contexts and possibly include local host populations as recipients of support, depending on their need.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS – A DIVERSITY OF OUTCOMES



### INTRODUCTION

A central overarching finding of this research is the diversity of outcomes among migrants caught in a crisis, both in the immediate emergency phase and in the longer term. In part, this is due to the heterogeneity of the crises that were the focus of this comparative research. The crises we investigated were very different in nature. One was a natural disaster, while the others concerned armed conflicts and other forms of mass violence and public disturbance. Our cases also related to and affected migrants differently and evolved differently over time. We examined both slow onset and rapid onset crises, as well as short-lived, protracted and recurrent ones. The diversity of outcomes found among migrants was also a result of the different settings in which these crises occurred and the different settings to which the displaced migrants returned. This highlights the role of wider structural factors in shaping migrants' agency. Last, migrants' individual characteristics and their social embeddedness impacted how they experienced and responded to crises, in both the short and the longer term.

What we frame here as 'diversity of outcomes' is in line with an extensive literature in the fields of migration studies, disaster management, humanitarian aid and conflict studies. Previous authors, too, have underlined the importance of structural, social and individual<sup>136</sup> mediating factors in shaping outcomes of

Our findings point to the need for a deeper, more contextualised understanding of crises, how they play out and what their short- and longer-term consequences are for different categories of people

particular events or series of events (such as a disaster or a violent conflict), and related processes (such as return). Nonetheless, these facts have received insufficient attention in debates on migrants in countries experiencing a crisis, despite the acknowledgement that migrants caught in a crisis cannot be seen as static victims. Our findings point to the need for a deeper, more contextualised understanding of crises, how they play out

and what their short- and longer-term consequences are for different categories of people. Such a deep and contextualised understanding is important to identify appropriate courses of action and relevant target groups for developing and improving policy responses.

As such, these conclusions draw out six main themes that emerged from our research and improve our understanding of crises, responses to crises by migrants and institutional actors and the varied impacts that crises have on these same

<sup>136</sup> What we call structural factors are factors at the macro level. Social factors relate to social embeddedness and relationships at the meso level, and individual factors entail individual-level characteristics at the micro level of individuals.

stakeholders. The six themes are the following: (i) diversity in understandings and experiences of a crisis; (ii) the transformative impacts of crises on people and societies; (iii) the significance of micro, meso and macro factors for migrants' agency and resilience; (iv) the influence of perceptions on the actions of migrants and institutional actors and their 'possibility space'; (v) institutional actors' approaches to crises and the capacity limitations they experience; and (vi) the emergence and persistence of hardship and obstacles in the context of return migration. In addition to the discussion of these themes in this chapter, our summary paper elaborates further on these main themes, in addition to providing concrete guidance and recommendations for policymakers in each area.<sup>137</sup>

## THE DIFFERENT SIDES OF CRISIS

As demonstrated by this research, crises are very much social facts, and their meaning and impacts are socially mediated.<sup>138</sup> Thus, a crisis cannot be construed as an external, objective event or force that impacts on those affected in a simple and easily predictable way. Rather, a crisis must be seen as an interplay between adverse events, the threat that these events pose to the resilience of individuals, communities and states and the ways that individuals, communities and states respond. A crisis arises only when adverse events pose a fundamental challenge to and lead to the breakdown of social and political order, threatening the well-being and physical integrity of the individuals and communities affected and overwhelming their ability to cope. The MICIC Initiative recognises this situational and very contextual nature of crisis, defining a crisis as the result of adverse events,<sup>139</sup> instead of equating crises with the events themselves.

A crisis must be seen as an interplay between adverse events, the threat that these events pose to resilience and the individual and institutional responses

As discussed in chapter three, we found considerable variation between interviewees in what they perceived as a crisis, how they concretely understood crisis and how they experienced crisis. An acute crisis event, such as the xenophobic violence in South Africa, was in some cases experienced as a culmination of a longer period of hostilities, including smaller-scale attacks. In other words, a crisis event may be experienced merely as a climax of a process that has been ongoing for a longer period of time. Similarly, in situations characterised by state fragility, economic weakness, generalised insecurity or recurrent waves of violence, crisis can be experienced as broader than any definitive period in the evolution of events. Furthermore, an ongoing crisis with outbursts at different points in time will be experienced differently by different categories of people. For instance,

<sup>137</sup> Hendow, M. (2018). *Improving our responses to migrants caught in crises: Conclusions and policy recommendations for global policy-making*. MICIC Comparative Summary Paper. Vienna: ICMPD. Available at [www.icmpd.org/our-work/cross-cutting-initiatives/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/research/](http://www.icmpd.org/our-work/cross-cutting-initiatives/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/research/).

<sup>138</sup> Searle, J. R. (1996). *The construction of social reality*. London: Penguin.

<sup>139</sup> See chapter two and MICIC Initiative (2014).

many of the Egyptian interviewees in this study remarked that the initial period of violence in Libya in 2011 was less difficult to cope with than the resurgence of violence in 2014. In this latter episode, Egyptians themselves became targets of violence committed by Islamist groups. Despite the severe impact of the 2006 war in Lebanon on migrants, it was not by and large perceived as a crisis by the migrant domestic workers interviewed for this study. For many of them, the ongoing challenges of their isolation and precarious legal and social status were much more significant. Rather than a tipping point, the crisis was experienced as a passing episode that only underlined the constraints and precariousness of their daily lives in Lebanon.

Our research covered several case studies in which migrants already had experience of crisis in their country of origin. These previous experiences informed their assessments of the crises in the study countries and their responses to it. For returnees, concurrent crises in countries of origin, for example, the instability caused by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin, meant that relief efforts were quickly diverted to new challenges, reducing the support available to them.

## CRISIS AS A CATALYST

Crises can be an important catalyst for transformative change, initiating both positive and negative developments. In Lebanon, for example, the 2006 crisis was a catalyst for solidarity and mobilisation among migrant domestic workers. Initiatives to rescue and support migrant workers left behind by their employers or otherwise trapped in a situation of distress provided impetus for activism and solidarity networks that lived on beyond the end of the war. In other cases, experiences of solidarity and joint efforts in responding to a crisis contributed to migrants' sense of belonging, as in Thailand after the floods.

However, our research also demonstrates that crises can be a catalyst for a further deterioration of migrants' conditions. Our case studies showed increased levels of xenophobia, scapegoating, discrimination and violence against migrants during a crisis, particularly when migrants were perceived as being part of the conflict, such as in Libya and in Côte d'Ivoire. Some migrants, such as Cameroonians in CAR, became targets of opportunistic violence, stemming in part from perceptions among host country nationals that migrants had benefited from unfair advantages. In South Africa, episodes of intense violence against migrants reinforced the government's determination to deport irregular migrants. Migrants reported that this reinforced a negative dynamic. Negative feedbacks were also identified at the governmental level. Fearing the effects of return migration from Libya and spill-overs of conflict and radicalism, fed in part by the spectre of the Mali crisis,<sup>140</sup> countries of origin adopted an increasingly securitised view of migration and prioritised resources accordingly.

Crises can initiate both positive and negative change

<sup>140</sup> See chapter three and Murphy (2012).

# AGENCY, RESILIENCE AND CRISIS

As noted, the impact of crises on migrants, and others, is to a large extent shaped by individuals' capacity to act in the face of adverse events or conditions, in other

Resilience is not only a key determinant of individual and collective agency in crisis situations, but it is also clearly linked to vulnerability to harm caused by adverse conditions

words, by their resilience. This research has demonstrated that even in adverse conditions, there are different possibilities available for responding to and coping with crisis. However, these options are not evenly distributed. The extent to which different paths of action indeed prove feasible depends on a variety of factors. As argued in chapter two, resilience is not only a key determinant of individual and

collective agency in crisis situations, but it is also clearly linked to vulnerability to harm caused by adverse conditions. Thus, conditions producing vulnerability reduce resilience, while strengthening resilience reduces vulnerability.

## INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL FACTORS

A first set of factors impacting resilience and vulnerability relates to individual-level characteristics. These are important in shaping migrants' perceptions of their options and their own ability to act. They thus relate to the individual pole of 'possibility spaces', defined as the range of options that migrants see as possible and feasible.<sup>141</sup> Relevant individual-level characteristics include, but are not limited to, the stock and type of economic resources that migrants have, their level of education, their familiarity with and knowledge of how to handle interactions with relevant institutions and their language skills. These interact with situational characteristics that are socially mediated and therefore relate to the concept of social embeddedness.

## SOCIAL EMBEDDEDNESS AND RESPONSES TO CRISIS

A second factor, at the meso and macro level, is migrants' overall social embeddedness<sup>142</sup> in the country experiencing the crisis. This comprises their socio-economic integration, their length of residence, their legal status and their relationships and interactions with the local population, including discrimination and attitudes toward migrants, as well as the nature and scope of the social

<sup>141</sup> This use of the term is drawn from Vogel, D. and Kraler, A. (2017). *Demand-side interventions against trafficking in human beings: Towards an integrated theoretical approach*. DemandAT Working Paper. Forthcoming at [www.demandat.eu](http://www.demandat.eu). Vogel and Kraler (2017) draws on Leiprecht, R. (2001). *Alltagsrassismus. Eine Untersuchung bei Jugendlichen in Deutschland und den Niederlanden*. Münster: Waxmann. The concept of 'possibility space' was originally coined by the social psychologist Klaus Holzkamp.

<sup>142</sup> The notion of social embeddedness emphasises that social actors do not operate in a vacuum but are embedded in different ways in a social context that shapes their social action. See Granovetter, M. (2001). Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology*, 91(3), 481–510.



networks that link migrants to the local population, co-nationals, families and communities in the origin country. Our research demonstrated that all of these networks can be a source of support in crisis situations.

The role of migrants' legal status in shaping their capacity to respond to adverse conditions warrants particular emphasis. In our case studies, we found that a particular legal status had tangible implications, for example, in terms of eligibility or ineligibility for support from state agencies and restrictions on movements, for instance, if migrants' legal status was tied to employers or limited to a particular region. Legal status also had wider implications for migrants' lived experiences. Irregular status often dictated a precarious existence and vulnerability to abuse by individuals and groups, which limited migrants' capacity to respond to adverse conditions.

Networks that link migrants to the local population, co-nationals, families and communities in the origin country are a source of support in crisis situations

## SOCIAL EMBEDDEDNESS AND RETURN

Importantly, migrants' social embeddedness continued to be a relevant factor after migrants returned to their country of origin. Indeed, migrants' decisions to return or, conversely, to stay in the host country or to remigrate after an initial return, despite continuation of a crisis, were influenced by their social embeddedness in the country of destination and origin. Some had family and other social ties in the origin country that they could easily activate for support. Some had access to employment or other sources of livelihood in either the host or the origin country. For instance, many Egyptians, Nigeriens, Ghanaians, Burkinabe and others did not leave Libya immediately, and some remigrated to Libya after an initial brief return to their origin country, despite the ongoing instability in Libya. In this case, the opportunities available in Libya overrode concerns regarding the security situation and other effects of the crisis.

Migrants' mobility choices in the face of a crisis are not uniform

Migrants' mobility choices in the face of a crisis are thus not uniform. All decisions reflect a significant degree of agency, even when made in contexts of severe constraint, such as when individuals are trapped or detained. Migrants, furthermore, make differential assessments of the options at hand.

The case of Chadians returning from CAR is also instructive with regard to agency. Some Chadian families had been in CAR for generations and as a result no longer had active ties to relatives or communities of origin. These migrants were reliant on informal support from networks, but they also tended to 'return' to areas designated by the Chadian government for returnees or to cities, rather than their actual region or community of origin (see chapter seven).



# PERCEPTIONS, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

## THE ROLE OF PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions are crucial in determining how migrants respond to and cope with a crisis. Perceptions delimit migrants' 'possibility space', defined as the range of options that migrants see as possible and feasible. Perceptions are important in steering migrants' mobility choices as well. Migrants assess the risks and threats of exposure to a crisis, while also considering conditions in their country of origin, alongside other more personal aspects, such as possible feelings of shame stemming from the failure of the migration project. Perceptions, furthermore, play a key role in the strategies adopted for reintegration upon return.

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND ADEQUATE COMMUNICATION

Perceptions may be mistaken, for example, when migrants with irregular status were denied or did not seek access to emergency relief. Ensuring access to relevant information and effective communication is thus crucial. This research found that migrants often lacked key information. The fact that migrants were often uninformed or ill-informed may have contributed to the misalignment found between migrants' perceptions of the support offered and claims by government and other actors of the relief provided.

Lack of knowledge of the local language is a major reason for the dearth of relevant information (as discussed in chapter six). In this regard, aid organisations and governments need effective means and strategies of communication, to reach migrants in languages they understand. In the cases investigated in this research, other actors often stepped in to mitigate the lack of effective communication. In Ghana, for example, a local radio station set up a phone-in programme with migrants in Libya to establish their whereabouts and needs, as well as to spur the Ghanaian government into action. As documented in this study, countries of origin, which in principle have primary responsibility to inform their nationals, are often limited in practice by capacity and resource constraints. Another obstacle is lack of information about the number and whereabouts of migrants. The Ghanaian government had little idea of the number of its nationals present in Libya at the time of the crisis. Numbers of actual returnees were in fact far higher than initial estimates (see chapter six).

Ensuring access to relevant information and effective communication is crucial

## CREDIBILITY AND TRUST

Credibility and trust are key in how migrants construe information. They are determined in part by migrants' previous experiences with the institutions providing

the information. Migrants interviewed in this research expressed considerable mistrust of state institutions in both the host country and the origin country. This was an obvious obstacle to effective communication with migrant populations affected by the crises. As discussed in chapter six, distrust of public officials sometimes extended to other actors, such as CSO volunteers and representatives of intergovernmental organisations who were not clearly identifiable.

## INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CRISES

---

Policy responses documented by this research focused on emergency relief and evacuation. Some assistance was also provided for initial reintegration in cases of mass returns, but relatively little longer-term support was identified.

### STATES' CAPACITY TO RESPOND

The capacity of states to respond to crises was highly variable. In countries affected by conflict and internal strife, the integrity of the state itself was often in question. As a result, state institutions ceased functioning, collapsed or were embroiled in conflict, becoming themselves a source of instability. In such contexts, our research suggests that non-governmental actors such as landlords, employers, migrant networks, faith-based groups and others can fill important gaps, especially in initial responses, including provision of information, shelter and food.

With respect to countries of origin, the lack of capacity and resources emerged as an important factor constraining state responses, although political will was also an issue, as was distrust of state officials, as discussed above. International support complemented and at times substituted for limited origin country support. However, this study suggests that these efforts did not reach all those in need. Large numbers of migrants were left to their own devices. They had to return without assistance, which required them to draw down their own resources and call upon family support. As in the Libya

Non-governmental actors such as landlords, employers, migrant networks, faith-based groups and others can fill important gaps, especially in initial responses

crisis, fees charged by private transport companies and smugglers skyrocketed during the acute phase of the crisis. This left returnees destitute and often in debt, without resources for reintegration upon their return.

The points made above regarding migrants' access to information and communication also pertain to the uneven coverage of help and support. Also, there is a need for basic data on migrants for the humanitarian community and relevant state actors.

As repeatedly observed, this research found very limited longer-term support for returnees and stranded migrants. Here, too, access to support was uneven. Less

support was available farther from capital cities and reception sites, where such sites had been established. Some programmes and strategies were never followed up and implemented, such as Chad's National Plan for Global Reintegration of Returnees, which was superseded by developments and pressing needs in the Lake Chad basin region.

Limited availability of assistance, lack of opportunities for income generation and experiences of downward mobility were important reasons for some to consider remigration

Migrants' families and informal networks often stepped in to provide assistance, though frequently in circumstances of constraint. Limited availability of assistance, lack of opportunities for income generation and experiences of downward mobility were important reasons for some to consider remigration.

## THE NEED FOR COORDINATION

In all of the cases studied, crisis response involved multiple actors, including CSOs, intergovernmental organisations and private sector actors. Governments and intergovernmental organisations were nonetheless the most important players in scale of operations. Coordination between these different actors was often lacking, as discussed in chapter six. The involved actors therefore operated without a clear understanding of their own and others' roles in the crisis response, unaware of procedures in place to share information and without agreements on cooperation and division of labour. This impaired the delivery of relief and access to migrants who needed help. In part, the lack of coordination reflected an absence of prior contingency planning, coordination mechanisms and procedures.

## LESSONS LEARNT: POLICY CHANGES

Some of the gaps and deficiencies identified in this research have been noted and addressed in subsequent efforts by relevant actors. Emergency response plans and other mechanisms have been set up to improve crisis responses (e.g., IOM's Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism), support is now provided to migrants abroad through diaspora engagement plans and pre-departure training has been implemented to ensure that migrants are better informed before they leave. Some of these measures have a wider focus, but offer infrastructures that can be activated as a means of crisis response.

## RETURN: THE CHALLENGE OF REINTEGRATION

Migrant returnees' experiences of return were thoroughly covered in three of our six case studies and in eight of our 12 fieldwork countries. Here, too, outcomes were variable. A common denominator for many returnees was the precarious settings in which they found themselves, with limited economic opportunities and, as a corollary, reliance on family support, aid and donations, as sketched in

chapter seven. As this study showed, family support was not equally available to all returnees in need of support. Returnees relocating to urban areas seemed, by and large, to have had less access to family support. This was linked to their relocation to a location other than their origin area, often due to their long-term absence and even birth in the destination country. These expatriates often lacked active ties to their country of origin.

Many migrants experienced deskilling and downward social mobility upon their return. In rural contexts, access to land emerged as an important issue. This points to the need to more carefully consider land issues in the context of large-scale returns. In our case study countries, many of the factors that led to the initial migration often persisted and, albeit in a minority of cases, made remigration to the country that experienced the crisis a desirable option, despite ongoing instability or violence. However, our research also documented instances of successful return and reintegration. Indeed, we observed returnee entrepreneurship and innovation, especially where migrant resources could be productively invested and skills developed upon return, as in Burkina Faso and Niger.

We observed returnee entrepreneurship and innovation, especially where migrant resources could be productively invested and skills developed upon return

Support for returnees was generally limited to their initial reception. Assistance was similarly short-term for migrants stranded in Tunisia. In some of the countries under study, including Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana and Liberia, some longer-term support measures for returnees were identified, such as access to land and agricultural inputs (especially seeds and tools). In Liberia, scholarships and micro-loans were offered. However, such support tended to be uneven and small in scale. This was a function of the constraints under which local and national governments and CSOs operated and an absence of relevant government policy. While far-reaching plans to assist returnees were initially adopted in several of the countries in our study, including Chad and Liberia, these schemes were superseded by pressing needs related to concurrent or subsequent crises, most notably, the Boko Haram insurgency in the Lake Chad basin in the case of Chad and the Ebola health crisis in the case of Liberia. Where state or international programmes were established to assist returnees, longer-term support was nonetheless quite limited, compared, for example, to the scale of support provided to refugees. This is largely due to the greater availability of international aid for the latter, reflecting established traditions and principles of international responsibility sharing. It is also a result of years of advocacy and support for economic self-sufficiency and local integration as one of the most promising durable solutions for refugee questions. Thus, support for refugee integration is underpinned by an international aid rationale.<sup>143</sup> By contrast, responsibility for citizens returning to an origin country lies primarily with the respective governments; there is no comparable principle of international solidarity and responsibility sharing in response to returning

<sup>143</sup> The need to promote local integration as one of the durable solutions, notably for protracted refugee situations, has recently been re-endorsed by the New York Declaration and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework included in it as Annex 1.

nationals.<sup>144</sup> As a consequence, fewer resources are available from international sources for longer-term support of nationals. Given that all of the countries in this research that experienced large-scale returns of nationals are relatively poor, the lack of international support almost inevitably translated into limited resources committed to returnees nationally. Chadians who also had CAR identity documents often switched categories, in order to benefit from the comparatively more favourable assistance provided to refugees. Differences in the availability of support for different categories of people, however, raises broader questions. In particular, in a context of chronic economic fragility and widespread poverty, implementing longer-term programmes that target a particular group to the exclusion of others presents issues of equity in access. Ultimately, such approaches may prove counterproductive. Instead, combinations of territorial and sectoral approaches could be suggested, which consider a variety of target groups but do not focus exclusively on any of these.

<sup>144</sup> This is different in the case of returned refugees, who fall under the population of concern to UNHCR and may be assisted for longer periods of time.

# LIST OF REFERENCES



Adey, Peter (2016). Emergency mobilities. *Mobilities*, 11 (1), 32–48.

Al Jazeera (2016). *Lebanon struggling with rubbish collection again*. Accessed 23 September. Retrieved from [www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/09/lebanon-struggling-rubbish-collection-160923162318470.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/09/lebanon-struggling-rubbish-collection-160923162318470.html)

Ammassari, S. (2004). *Management of migration and development policies: Optimise the benefits of international migration in West Africa*. International Migration Papers. Geneva: ILO.

Bangré, E. (2011). Burkinabe of Côte d'Ivoire, Burkinabe in Côte d'Ivoire: Organisational relations with the host country and the country of origin. In: Zongo, M. (ed.), *The issues around the Burkinabé diaspora, Burkinabe in foreign, foreigners in Burkina Faso*. Paris: L'Harmattan, (pp. 113–144).

Bakewell, O. (2008). Keeping them in their place: The ambivalent relationship between development and migration in Africa. *Third World Quarterly*, 29(7), 1341–1358.

Betts, A. (2014). The global governance of crisis migration. In: Martin, S., Weerasinghe, S. and Taylor, A. (eds), *Humanitarian crises and migration: Causes, consequences and responses*. London: Routledge, 349–367.

Black, R. and Collyer, M. (2014). Populations 'trapped' at times of crisis. *Forced Migration Review*, (45).

Black et al. (2013). Migration, immobility and displacement outcomes following extreme events. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 27, Supplement 1, March, S32–S43.

Black et al. (2011). The effect of environmental change on human migration. *Global Environmental Change*, 21S, S3–S11.

Bredeloup, S. (2009). Burkinabe 'returnees' from Côte d'Ivoire: Domestic relocations and new migratory projects. In: Baby-Collin, V. et al., (eds). *Migrants from the South*. Bondy: IRD Editions/PUM, p. 183.

Bredeloup, S. (2006). Relocation of Burkina Faso returnees from Côte d'Ivoire to Ouagadougou. *Contemporary Africa*, 217, 185–201.

Bredeloup, S. and Zongo, M. (2005). When Burkinabé brothers of the Small Jamahiriyya stop in Tripoli. *Autrepart*, 4(36), 127–147.

Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR)-UNDP (2004). *Reducing disaster risk: A challenge for development*. In Frerks, Warner and Wejs (2011), *The politics of vulnerability and resilience* (p. 108) *Revista Ambiente & Sociedade*, 14(2).

Calhoun, C. (2008). The imperative to reduce suffering: Charity, progress, and emergencies in the field of humanitarian action. In: Barnett, M. and Weiss, T. G. (eds). *Humanitarianism in question*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, p. 83.

Carling, J. (2014). The role of aspirations in migration. Paper presented at the Determinants of International Migration conference, International Migration Institute, University of Oxford, 23–25.

Carling, J. (2002). Migration in the age of involuntary immobility: Theoretical reflections and Cape Verdean experiences. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 28(1), 5–42.

Cassarino, J.P. (2004). Theorising return migration: The conceptual approach to return migrants revisited. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 6(1), pp. 253–279.

Couldrey, M. and Herson, M. (eds) (2014). *Forced Migration Review*, 45. Crisis Special Issue. Retrieved from [www.fmreview.org/en/crisis.pdf](http://www.fmreview.org/en/crisis.pdf)

- Crush, J., Tawodzera, G., Chikanda, A., Ramachandran, S. and Tevera, D. (2017). The double crisis: Mass migration from Zimbabwe and xenophobic violence in South Africa. Vienna: ICMPD.
- de Haas, H. (2005). International migration, remittances and development: Myths and facts. *Third World Quarterly*, 26(8), 1269–1284.
- De Miliano, C., Faling, M., Clark-Ginsberg, A., Crowley, D. and Gibbons, P. (2015). Resilience: The holy grail or yet another hype? In: Gibbons, P. and Heintze, H.-J. (eds), *The humanitarian challenge*. Cham: Springer Publishing.
- Dionigi, F. (2016). The Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon: State fragility and social resilience. LSE Middle East Centre Paper Series 15. London: LSE Middle East Centre.
- Djalante, R., Holley, C. and Thomalla, F. (2011). Adaptive governance and managing resilience to natural hazards. *International Journal for Disaster Risk Science*, 2(4), 1–14.
- EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2011a). *Fundamental rights of migrants in an irregular situation in the European Union*. Vienna: FRA.
- EU Agency for Fundamental Rights FRA (2011b). *Migrants in an irregular situation: Access to healthcare in 10 European Union member states*. Vienna: FRA.
- European Commission (2012). *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: The EU approach to resilience: Learning from food security crises*. Brussels, 3.10.2012, COM(2012) 586 final. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com\\_2012\\_586\\_resilience\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com_2012_586_resilience_en.pdf)
- European Commission (2013). *Commission staff working document: Action plan for resilience in crisis prone countries 2013–2020*. Brussels, 19.6.2013, SWD (2013) 227 final. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/.../resilience/com\\_2013\\_227\\_ap\\_crisis\\_prone\\_countries\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/.../resilience/com_2013_227_ap_crisis_prone_countries_en.pdf)
- European Commission (2014). *Resilience Marker Assessment Card*. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/resilience\\_assesment\\_card\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/resilience_assesment_card_en.pdf)
- European Commission (2016). *Humanitarian protection: Improving protection outcomes to reduce risks for people in humanitarian crises*. DG ECHO Thematic Policy Document 8. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/.../policy\\_guidelines\\_humanitarian\\_protection\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/.../policy_guidelines_humanitarian_protection_en.pdf)
- Fabra-Mata, J., Saeverås, A. and Carter, W. (2015). *The Syrian crisis and its impact on Lebanon: A conflict analysis*. Retrieved from [www.alnap.org/resource/20654.aspx](http://www.alnap.org/resource/20654.aspx)
- Fall, A. S. (2003). *Issues and challenges of international migration of work in West Africa*. International Migration Papers. Geneva: ILO.
- Fekete, A., Hufschmidt, G. and Kruse, S. (2014). Benefits and challenges of resilience and vulnerability for disaster risk management. *International Journal of Risk Sciences*, 5, DOI 10.1007/s13753-014-0008-3, p. 5.
- Fletcher, D. and Sarkar, M. (2013). Psychological resilience: A review of definitions, concepts and theories. *European Psychologist*, 18, pp. 12–23.
- Frerks, G., Warner, J. and Wejs, B. (2011). The politics of vulnerability and resilience. *Revista Ambiente & Sociedade*, 14(2), 105–122.
- Gaillard, A. M. (1994). *Migration return: A bibliographical overview*. Occasional Paper. New York: Center for Migration Studies, p. 63.
- Gill, N., Caletrio, J. and Mason, V. (2011). Introduction: Mobilities and forced migration. *Mobilities*, 6 (3), 301–316.
- Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) (2005). *Migration in an interconnected world: New directions for action*. Geneva: GCIM.



- Granovetter, M. (2001). Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology*, 91(3), 481–510.
- Hagen-Zanker, J. and Mallett, R. (2016). *Journeys to Europe: The role of policy in migrant decision-making*. ODI Insights. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Hamill, K. (2011). *Trafficking of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon: A legal analysis*. Beirut: Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH), Coordination Committee of the Organizations for Voluntary Service (COSV), KAFA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation and the Permanent Peace Movement (PPM).
- Hendow, M. (2018). Improving our responses to migrants caught in crises: Conclusions and policy recommendations for global policy-making. MICIC Comparative Summary Paper. Vienna: ICMPD. Available at [www.icmpd.org/our-work/cross-cutting-initiatives/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/research/](http://www.icmpd.org/our-work/cross-cutting-initiatives/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/research/)
- Hendow, M., R. N. Pailey and A. Bravi (2016). *Emerging findings: A comparative study of six crisis situations*. Vienna: ICMPD. Available at [http://research.icmpd.org/fileadmin/Research-Website/Project\\_material/MICIC/MICIC\\_REPORT\\_final\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://research.icmpd.org/fileadmin/Research-Website/Project_material/MICIC/MICIC_REPORT_final_Fact_Sheet.pdf)
- Holling, C. S. (1973). Resilience and stability of ecological systems. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, 4, 17.
- Humble, A. T. (2014). The rise of trapped populations. *Forced Migration Review* 45.
- In Cairo, a limbo for refugees. Retrieved from [www.alaraby.co.uk/english/features/2015/8/3/in-cairo-a-limbo-for-refugees](http://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/features/2015/8/3/in-cairo-a-limbo-for-refugees).
- IOM, (2016). Stabilising at-risk communities and enhancing migration management to enable smooth transitions in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya (START). Retrieved from <https://egypt.iom.int/sites/default/files/START%20Publication.pdf>
- IOM, (2013). *Two years after the crisis: Returnees from Libya revisited*. Policy in Brief. Retrieved from [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/policy\\_in\\_brief\\_libya2013\\_6mar2013.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/policy_in_brief_libya2013_6mar2013.pdf)
- IOM, (2009). *Migration en Côte d'Ivoire: Document thématique, 2009. Diaspora et participation au développement de la Côte d'Ivoire*. Retrieved from [www.iomdakar.org/profiles/sites/default/files/diaspora\\_developpement\\_cote\\_ivoire\\_2009.pdf](http://www.iomdakar.org/profiles/sites/default/files/diaspora_developpement_cote_ivoire_2009.pdf)
- Jureidini, R. (2010) State and non-state actors in evacuations during the conflict in Lebanon, July-August 2006. In: Khalid Koser and Susan Martin (eds) *The migration-displacement nexus: Concepts, cases and responses*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.
- Jureidini, R. (2009). In the shadows of family life: Toward a history of domestic service in Lebanon. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 5(3), 74–101.
- Keely, C. B. (2000). Demography and international migration. In: Brettell, C. B. and Hollifield, J. F. (eds), *Migration theory: Talking across disciplines*. New York: Routledge, pp. 43–60.
- Koser, K. (2012). Protecting migrants in complex crises. GCSP Policy Paper 2012/2. Geneva: Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP).
- Lebel, L., Anderies, J. M., Campbell, B., Folke, C., Hatfield-Dodds, S., Hughes, T. P. and Wilson, J. (2006). Governance and the capacity to manage resilience in regional social-ecological systems. *Ecology and Society*, 11(1), 111–124.
- Lewis, D. (2001). *The management of non-governmental development organisations: An introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Lim, W. K. (2011). Understanding risk governance: Introducing sociological neoinstitutionalism and Foucauldian governmentality for further theorizing. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science*, 2(3), 11–20.
- Lindley, A. (2014). Exploring crisis and migration: concepts and issues. In: Lindley, A. (ed.), *Crisis and migration*. London: Routledge.



- Lubkemann, S. C. (2008). Involuntary immobility: On a theoretical invisibility in forced migration studies. *Journal of Refugee Studies Special Issue: Invisible Displacements* 21(4), 454–475.
- Mansour-Ille, D. and Hendow, M. (2018). From Exclusion to Resistance: Migrant Domestic Workers and the Evolution of Agency in Lebanon. In: *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*.
- Martin, S. (2016). Conflict or natural disaster: Does it matter for migrants? MICIC Issue Brief. Retrieved from [https://micicinitiative.iom.int/sites/default/files/brief/issue\\_brief\\_conflict\\_vs\\_natural\\_disaster\\_0.pdf](https://micicinitiative.iom.int/sites/default/files/brief/issue_brief_conflict_vs_natural_disaster_0.pdf)
- Martin, S. and Koser, K. (2011). *The migration–displacement nexus: Concepts, cases and responses*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.
- Martin, S., Weerasinghe, S. and Taylor, A. (2014a). What is crisis migration? *Forced Migration Review*, (45) 5.
- Martin, S., Weerasinghe, S. and Taylor, A. (2014b). Humanitarian crises and migration: Causes, consequences and responses. Abingdon: Routledge.
- McAdam, J. (2014). The concept of crisis migration. In: *Forced Migration Review* 45, February, pp. 10–12.
- MICIC Initiative. (2016). *Guidelines to protect migrants in countries experiencing conflict or natural disaster*. Retrieved from [https://micicinitiative.iom.int/sites/default/files/document/micic\\_guidelines\\_english\\_web\\_13\\_09\\_2016.pdf](https://micicinitiative.iom.int/sites/default/files/document/micic_guidelines_english_web_13_09_2016.pdf)
- MICIC Initiative. (2014). Frequently Asked Questions About the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative. Retrieved from <https://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/docs/MICIC-FAQs-Final-for-GFMD-5-8-2014.pdf>.
- Mitchel, R. K., Bradley, R. A. and Wood, D. J. (1997). Toward a theory of stakeholder identification and salience: Defining the principle of who and what really counts. *The Academy of Management Review*, 22(4), 853–886.
- Murphy, D. (2012). *Did Libya's revolution topple Mali into crisis?* Retrieved from [www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/Backchannels/2012/0406/Did-Libya-s-revolution-topple-Mali-into-crisis](http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/Backchannels/2012/0406/Did-Libya-s-revolution-topple-Mali-into-crisis).
- Ndione, B. and Lombard, J. (2004). Diagnosis of economic reintegration projects for returning migrants: A case study in Mali (Bamako, Kayes). *REMI*, 20 (1), 169–195.
- Nkenne, J. M. (2016). International migration and spatial changes in habitat: The case of the Cameroonian Diaspora in Yaoundé. Doctoral dissertation, p. 87.
- Ostrom, E. (2010). Beyond markets and states: Polycentric governance of complex economic systems. *American Economic Review*, 100(3), 641–672.
- Ouedraogo, T. (2005). Migration of return in a crisis context: Case of the Bayiri operation in Burkina Faso. Master's thesis. University of Ouagadougou, p. 90.
- Pailley, R. N. (2016). *Long-term socio-economic implications of 'crisis-induced' return migration on countries of origin*. Retrieved from [www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/ICMPD\\_Website\\_2011/MICIC/BRIEF\\_Long\\_Term\\_Implications\\_final.pdf](http://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/ICMPD_Website_2011/MICIC/BRIEF_Long_Term_Implications_final.pdf)
- Pandey, B. and Okazaki, K. (2005). Community based disaster management: empowering communities to cope with disaster risks. Tokyo: United Nations Centre for Regional Development.
- Parvaz, D. (2015). Lebanon's immigrant domestic workers remain vulnerable to abuse. *Al Jazeera America*.
- Perchinig, B., L. Rasche and K. Schaur. (2017). *Humanitarian aid and civil protection policies in the European Union and the MICIC agenda*. Vienna: ICMPD. Available at [www.icmpd.org/our-work/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/research/](http://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/research/)
- Perchinig, B. (2016). *Actors and stakeholder involvement in crisis mitigation*. Retrieved from [www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/ICMPD-Website\\_2011/MICIC/BRIEF\\_Actors\\_and\\_stakeholders\\_final.pdf](http://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/ICMPD-Website_2011/MICIC/BRIEF_Actors_and_stakeholders_final.pdf)

- Petit, V. (ed.) (2007). *International return migrations and countries of origin*. Paris: Centre Population et Développement (CEPED).
- Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) (2010). *PICUM's main concerns about the fundamental rights of undocumented migrants in Europe*. Brussels: PICUM.
- Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants PICUM (2005). *Ten ways to protect undocumented migrants workers*. Brussels: PICUM.
- Pugh, S. A. (2014). Advocacy in the time of xenophobia: Civil society, the state, and the politics of migration in South Africa, *Politikon*, 41(2), 227–247, p. 243.
- Polzer, T. and Hammond, L. (2008). Invisible displacement. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(4), 417–431.
- Rhodes, R. A. W. (1996). The new governance: Governing without government. *Political Studies*, 42, 652–667.
- Romano, R. (2015). *Noncitizens caught in crisis: The case of Côte d'Ivoire*. Draft Working Paper. Georgetown University Institute for the Study of International Migration, unpublished.
- Schaeffer, F. (2001). Myth of the return and reality in 'the between two': The retreat in France or Morocco? *REMI*, 17(1), 165–176.
- Schwartz, A. (2000). Le conflit foncier entre Krou et Burkinabé à la lumière de l'institution krouman. *Afrique contemporaine*, 193, 56–66.
- Searle, J. R. (1996). *The construction of social reality*. London: Penguin.
- Sinatti, G. (2011). 'Mobile transmigrants' or 'unsettled returnees'? Myth of return and permanent settlement among Senegalese migrants. *Population, Space and Place*, 17, 153–166.
- South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) (2010). *Report of the SAHRC investigation into issues of rule of law, justice and impunity arising out of the 2008 public violence against non-nationals*. Pretoria: SAHRC.
- Steinberg, J. (2012). Security and disappointment: Policing, freedom and xenophobia in South Africa. *British Journal of Criminology*, 52, 345–360.
- Torbey, C. (2016). *Lebanon: Will new president end political crisis?* 31 October. Retrieved from [www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37821698](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37821698)
- Turton, D. (2003). Conceptualising forced migration, Refugee Studies Centre Working Paper Series 12. Oxford: RSC University of Oxford.
- UNHCR (2016). *First Myanmar refugee returns from Thailand under way*. Retrieved from [www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2016/10/580f1c0d4/first-myanmar-refugee-returns-thailand-under-way.html](http://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2016/10/580f1c0d4/first-myanmar-refugee-returns-thailand-under-way.html)
- UNHCR (2011). *UNHCR fears for the safety of refugees caught in Libya's violence*. 22 February. Retrieved from [www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2011/2/4d6393e06/unhcr-fears-safety-refugees-caught-libyas-violence.html](http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2011/2/4d6393e06/unhcr-fears-safety-refugees-caught-libyas-violence.html)
- UNISDR (2015). *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*. Retrieved from [www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework](http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework)
- UNISDR (2005). *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster*. Retrieved from [www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/1037](http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/1037)
- UN Lebanon (2016). *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2016*. Retrieved from [www.un.org.lb/english/lcrp](http://www.un.org.lb/english/lcrp)
- UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2016). *Chad humanitarian dashboard (as of 30 November 2016)*. Retrieved from [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/tcd\\_viz\\_dashboardnov2016\\_en\\_20170116.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/tcd_viz_dashboardnov2016_en_20170116.pdf)

Van der Velde, M. and Van Naerssen, T. (2011). People, borders, trajectories: An approach to cross-border mobility and immobility in and to the European Union, *Area*, 43(2), 218–224.

Van der Velde, M. and Van Naerssen, T. (eds) (2015). *Mobility and migration choices: Thresholds to crossing borders*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Vogel, D. and Kraler, A. (2017). Demand-side interventions against trafficking in human beings: Towards an integrated theoretical approach. DemandAT Working Paper. Forthcoming at [www.demandat.eu](http://www.demandat.eu)

Zampagni, F., Boubakri, H., Hoinathy, R., Kandilige L., Nabara, H. M., Sadek, S., El Sayeh, M., Zongo, M. and Hendow, M. (2017). Libya case study: An unending crisis – responses of migrants, states and organisations to the 2011 Libya crisis. Insights from Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Ghana, Niger and Tunisia. Vienna: ICMPD.

Zetter, R. (2015). *Protection in crisis: Forced migration and protection in a global era*. Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute.

Zongo, M. (2008). Reception and insertion of ‘rapatriates’ in rural areas of Burkina Faso: Example of Cascades region. In: Cambrézy, L. et al., (eds) *L’asile au Sud*. Paris: La Dispute, pp. 139–161.

Zongo, M. (2006). Between two Burkinabé communities in a west Ivorian forest: Economic crisis, inter-community relations and membership questions. *Newspaper of Social Science*, 2, 21–38.

## COMPARATIVE REPORT

### SUMMARY OF REPORT

---

This report presents the comparative findings of two years of research on migrants caught in situations of crisis in a destination country. The research focused on the longer-term socio-economic impacts of these crises on migrants, on their families and on the countries affected by the crisis. The findings are based on an analysis of six case studies: Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Lebanon, Libya, South Africa and Thailand. Fieldwork for these six case studies was conducted in 12 countries. The case studies present examples of different types of crises, different time periods and different locales.

The research was conducted by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the University of Oxford's International Migration Institute (IMI) and local partners in the 12 fieldwork countries. The research was part of the larger EU-funded project "Migrants in Countries in Crisis: Supporting an Evidence-based Approach for Effective and Cooperative State Action" (MICIC).

### SUMMARY OF PROJECT

---

In 2015, the European Union (EU) launched 'Migrants in Countries in Crisis: Supporting an Evidence-based Approach for Effective and Cooperative State Action', a four-year project implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). This EU-funded project is a contribution to the global Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) initiative, a government-led process co-chaired by the governments of the Philippines and the United States, which shares similar goals. The project aims to improve the capacity of states and other stakeholders to assist and provide protection to migrants who find themselves in countries affected by crisis, as well as address the long-term implications of such situations. Within the project, six regional consultations with states and other relevant stakeholders have been conducted, contributing to the development of the MICIC initiative 'Guidelines to protect migrants in countries experiencing conflict or natural disaster', which provide guidance for states and other stakeholders in responding to the needs of migrants caught in crisis situations. In addition, the project also develops capacity building activities to follow up on key recommendations that have emerged over the course of the project.