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CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA)

Joint ECE-EUROSTAT-ESCWA work session
on Migration Statistics*
(Geneva, 8-10 May 2000)

Topic 1

PUSH AND PULL FACTORS INFLUENCING INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Summary

Invited paper by NIDI, Netherlands^{1/}

Purpose of project

1. Why do people move to go and live in another country? Which country do they choose and why? Which strategies do they use to realise their goals? Why do so many people decide not to move? In what way do these non-migrants differ from migrants? These were central questions in the NIDI/Eurostat project on push and pull factors determining international migration flows, funded by the European Commission. The objective of the study was to gain internationally comparative insight into the growth, direction, composition, and continuation of international migration flows to the European Union.

1/ Prepared by Jeannette Schoorl.

* The documentation for this work session will be processed as for seminars.

Results

2. First results from the project were presented at a Conference held in Brussels 25-27 October 1999. Topics for the meeting were:

- Recent migration: who moves and who stays?
- Why and where to move: migration motives and destinations.
- Mechanisms of migration I: networks and information.
- Mechanisms of migration II: documented versus undocumented migration.
- Impacts of migration (receiving countries).
- The future of migration: intentions and potential.

3. Conclusions from the meeting centred on the following broad topics:

- a need for improvement of statistical data bases;
- further utilisation and extension of the migration survey approach and methodology developed;
- dissemination of results in countries of origin and destination;
- further analysis of relevant policy issues, such as those related to return migration and re-integration; undocumented migration and the functioning of networks; the role of information; migration intentions and integration; the role of women in migration; etc.

4. The following reports have been prepared within the framework of the project:

- a series of individual country reports for each of the eight countries participating in the project;
- a comparative report covering results for all participating countries.

5. Publication of the reports (by Eurostat) is foreseen for April/May 2000.

Countries included

6. For the purpose of the project, primary data have been collected on individuals, their households and their communities in a number of migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries, focussing on South-North flows to the European Union. Co-ordinated by NIDI, seven research teams located in Mediterranean and West-African countries participated in the project: predominantly migrant-sending countries Turkey, Morocco, Egypt, Senegal, and Ghana, and the newly immigrant-receiving countries Italy and Spain.

7. The selection of the five sending countries was based on the wish to capture typical migration flows in the region from the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Africa. The selection criteria included:

- a differentiation between long-established and more recent migration flows to Europe;
- the magnitude of outmigration;
- a differentiation between the levels of development;
- a representation of Francophone and Anglophone Sub-Saharan African countries;
- the possibility of finding populations of emigrants from these countries in selected receiving countries in the European Union.

8. As countries of destination, Italy and Spain were selected, primarily because of the limited availability of data in these countries and because of the fairly recent presence of sizeable populations from the selected sending countries. Although lack of funds precluded carrying out costly surveys in other, established migrant-receiving countries in Europe, in a number of these countries existing surveys contain good data on migrants. For one of these, the Netherlands, secondary analyses were carried out on available survey data, within the scope of the project.

9. The inclusion of the countries mentioned above allows for the coverage of migration flows both at the point of origin and at the point of destination, such that in each of the two receiving countries in which primary data collection was carried out for the project, a Mediterranean and a Sub-Saharan country of origin is included: Ghanaian and Egyptian migrants in Italy, and Senegalese and Moroccans in Spain. Analysis of secondary data from the Netherlands includes migration from Turkey and Morocco.

Project features

10. The project's data collection focuses on determinants of recent migration, with a retrospective time perspective set at ten years. Unique features of the project are:

- inclusion of both migrants and non-migrants;
- inclusion of both sending and receiving countries;
- micro-and macro-level data collection;
- international comparability.

11. In close consultation with the respective country teams NIDI developed the research instruments for the project and provided methodological and technical feedback. Apart from discussions between NIDI and the various country teams, actions and decisions in virtually all aspects and stages of the project took into account the advice of external experts.

12. The main research instrument is a micro-level questionnaire, which covers a broad range of migration-related topics at the level of the

individual and the household. In addition, macro-level data have been collected at the community, regional and national levels to cover contextual backgrounds of individual moves.

13. The sampling procedures and data-processing programmes developed are geared to the specific characteristics and problems of the project. In the sending countries, the sample size consisted of 1,600-1,800 households. In principle, in each of these countries the stratified samples are distributed over four regions, identified on the basis of the level of socio-economic development and the history of international migration. Italy and Spain have opted for different sampling approaches because of the financial implications of screening households and the lack of appropriate sampling frames. Moreover, the requirement to incorporate undocumented immigrants further complicated the matter in receiving countries. Sample sizes were about 1,200 in Spain and Italy, each.

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