



**MIGRATION IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA:
NATIONAL PROFILES FOR STRATEGIC
POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

**Enhancing Data on Migration
in West and Central Africa**



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Enhancing Data on Migration in West and Central Africa

**The Utilization of Household
Surveys for the Measurement
of Migration in West and Central Africa:
Past, Present, and Future.**

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For the International Organization for Migration (IOM),
as part of their Standardized National Migration Profiles Project
July 2008



IOM International Organization for Migration

Foreword

IOM, with financial support from the European Commission, is implementing a research and capacity building project among governments in several West and Central African countries to promote effective migration management policies. Target countries include the Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The key objective of this project is to produce National Migration Profiles to improve the use of information by governments as a tool for effective migration management policy. These target countries, all major source, transit, and destination countries for migrants, need improved data on migration to better understand how migration and other policies affecting migration impact one another.

“Enhancing data on migration in West and Central Africa” is the first of a series of thematic papers and other studies to be published as part of this project. The Thematic Paper Series provides a state of the art review of existing research on issues of common concern to target countries, highlighting the key implications for policy.

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Abbreviations

DHS	Demographic Health Surveys
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Commission of West African States
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
LSMS	Living Standards Measurement Surveys
MAFE	Migration between Africa and Europe
NESMUWA	Network of Surveys on Migration and Urbanization in West Africa

Executive Summary

There is common agreement that existing migration statistics in West and Central Africa tend to be scarce, unreliable, invalid, and susceptible to problems of comparability. The weakness of current data in the region, particularly administrative data, increases the potential of using surveys to fill these gaps. This paper assesses the degree to which questions on migration have been incorporated into household surveys in the countries of the Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), as well as how pre-existing (or newly created) surveys could be improved to better measure migration. It also assesses the strengths and weaknesses of using household surveys to measure migration, reviews the content of pre-existing household surveys in the eight target countries, and provides recommendations on how household surveys could be better utilized to improve the measurement of migration in African countries.

While there have been many household surveys conducted over the past 15 years, overall there is a paucity of survey data in the region, particularly at the national level. Some countries like Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria have conducted far more surveys than others like Niger, DRC, and Mauritania. Political instability in Côte d'Ivoire and DRC has reduced the capacity to conduct quality surveys in these countries. The frequency of surveys, as well as the amount of migration information collected varies widely by country. Even among decennial Censuses there was wide variation in the types of questions asked, question wording, and response categories used. Limited geographic data for place of birth, nationality, and previous residence restricts the types of analysis which can be performed, especially with regard to international migrant stocks or flows by country of origin.

Given the long-standing need for improved migration data in West and Central Africa, household surveys have the most potential for collecting accurate and timely data in the region. However, given the limitations faced by household surveys, it would also be in the best interest of countries to try and better develop other administrative data sources at their disposal, though given the high prevalence of irregular migration in the region, this is limited. Quality survey sample and questionnaire design is needed, as is funding to sustain such work. Ideally, a national migration survey would include all countries in the region (not just our target countries), using similar methodologies and questionnaire design, much as was done in the 1993 NESMUWA study. Without migration data from the entire region, the complete picture will remain unclear and the ability to effectively inform migration policy diminished.

Introduction

As international migration continues to become increasingly important on a global scale so does the need to improve the collection and quality of migration data. This need is a result of many factors, including difficulty accepting common definitions of migration, data collection issues (e.g. migration is a relatively rare event), difficulty measuring the true size of migration, as well as lack of information to measure the impact of migration for both receiving and sending countries. To alleviate this dearth in information, household surveys can play an important role in collecting and improving data on migration, particularly with regards to the impact and characteristics of current and former migrants.

IOM, with financial support from the European Commission, has implemented a research and capacity building project among governments in several West and Central African countries to promote effective migration management policies. Target countries include the Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The key objective of this project is to produce National Migration Profiles to improve the use of information by governments as a tool for effective migration management policy. These target countries, all major source, transit, and destination countries for migrants, need improved data on migration to better understand how migration and other policies affecting migration impact one another.

The objectives of this paper are to assess the degree to which questions on migration have been incorporated into household surveys in these African nations, as well as how pre-existing (or newly created) surveys could be improved to better measure migration, including its size, characteristics of migrants, and its impact on both sending and receiving countries. It will assess the strengths and weaknesses of using household surveys to measure migration, review the content of pre-existing household surveys in the eight target countries, with respect to questions asked and methodologies used, and provide recommendations on how household surveys could be better utilized to improve the measurement of migration in African countries.

Data Sources and Household Surveys

A number of different data sources can be used to measure migration, including national surveys (such as population censuses or labour force surveys), administrative registers (such as population registers or registers of foreigners), other administrative sources (such as residence permits, work permits, or asylum applications), and border collection data (visa types, at entry or exit from a country). Administrative records and border data come from government departments which collect data for a particular function, which is normally not the measurement of migration. In some West and Central African countries, immigrants and emigrants can be measured based on work and residence permits, social security data (pensions received or sent), workers employed abroad, and consular data from other countries. Entry and exit data come from border police, though these are mainly collected at air and seaports, with limited reporting from terrestrial frontier posts.¹ Unfortunately there are huge gaps in these sorts of data, and our target countries have little technical capacity to exploit or process them to accurately measure migration, making administrative data imprecise, unreliable, invalid, and incomparable for the measurement of migration. Given these administrative and border collection sources for migration data are underdeveloped in West and Central Africa, survey instruments are an important tool for collecting migration data in these areas.

Survey instruments can be a powerful tool for collecting data on migration. At the most fundamental level, surveys collect information by asking questions of people interviewed. The most popular example of a survey is a Census, which is typically conducted every ten years, though this is often not the case in West and Central Africa. Population and Housing Censuses typically survey the entire population of a country (though some people are inevitably missed). Alternatively, some larger countries collect information via a sample of the population (e.g. U.S. and French rolling Censuses) and several others use population registers instead of Censuses (e.g. Sweden). Censuses tend to be a good source on the number of migrants living in a country at a given point in time (also called the “stock” of migrants), and while some countries have used them in an attempt to measure emigration, are more limited in terms of measuring migrant flows (the number entering or leaving in a given time period) given their relative infrequency (about every 10-15 years in our target countries). In addition to the problem of timeliness, Censuses are limited by the number of questions which can be asked, thus detailed information on migration processes is restricted. Censuses are also quite expensive to carry out, which further limits their usefulness as a data collection tool.

Sample surveys are similar to a Census, but are instead administered to a limited number of persons who represent the population as a whole. Because only a sample of the population is asked questions, sample surveys are much less costly than a population Census, and can be conducted more frequently. They also allow for more flexibility on the number and types of questions which can be asked. Surveys can be either cross-sectional (conducted at one point in time, like a Census) or longitudinal (follow a person or household members over time, e.g. panel data). Though longitudinal surveys have more potential for tracking migration processes over time, they are more difficult to implement than a cross-sectional survey. In lieu of this, researchers often use cross-sectional surveys to measure historical data by asking retrospective life-history questions.

The quality of sample survey data is directly related to the quality of its sampling design. If the sample is large enough and drawn from a representative group of the population, inferences applicable to the entire population can be made. Sample size is important since a larger sample size usually reduces the standard error associated with the sample mean (from which estimates are derived), though the actual size needed depends on the amount of variance in the population (for example, if all persons were identical, then a sample of “1” would be sufficient).

Survey design depends on the specific needs of researchers. The need for quality sampling design is perhaps even more important for measuring migration, since it is a relatively rare event compared to other characteristics of the population. There are a number of sophisticated sampling techniques which can be used to capture rare populations, including probability and non-probability methods. In broad terms, prob-

¹ For many African countries terrestrial borders are permeable, particularly when they separate a community who was living together before colonialism.

ability samples mean that each sampling unit has an equal chance of being selected. One example of a probability based design to locate rare populations is to use a dual-sampling (disproportionate) technique, locating sampling units with a high proportion of migrants (either by using pre-existing data, like a Census, or via sampling areas to discover them), then oversampling in these units. This method works because migrants tend to concentrate in specific geographic areas. Non-probability sampling methods include adaptative or snowball techniques, where respondents are asked if they know any other people with characteristics similar to themselves, which are very useful for finding rare elements of the population, but can suffer from lack of generalizability due to their non-random nature. However, when non-probability methods are combined with probability methods (e.g. initial sample is selected randomly, and then asked for references), good estimates can be obtained.

Surveys can draw their samples from different types of sampling units, the most common being the household, though samples can also be drawn from individuals (e.g. at border crossings, e.g. passenger surveys) or establishments. Household surveys are the focus of this paper, with a household typically being defined as a group of persons who share the same living accommodations. Though there is often variation in how a household resident is defined, the concept of “usual residence” is usually applied, defined by the UN as the place where a person “normally spends the daily period of rest” (UN 1998).²

There are a number of advantages to using household sample surveys to measure migration, particularly in countries which lack alternative data sources. In particular, household surveys have more flexibility in which questions can be asked, thus one can measure specific topics related to migration. Though there are limits to the number of questions which can be asked (depending on many factors, usually cost), questions can be tailored to specific research needs or policy concerns, which is extremely important. There are also other advantages when compared to a decennial Census, in that using a representative sample of the population reduces cost and increases frequency of data collection. However, household surveys are faced with their own limitations, including cost of conducting them, need for large sample sizes to measure flows, difficulty finding migrants in regular sampling frames (coverage and non-response), question sensitivity (particularly money-related, e.g. remittances), respondent recall and respondent burden, and other data quality concerns exacerbated by use of proxy respondents.

Cost of conducting a survey is typically influenced by three factors: number of people included in the survey (and degree of non-response), number of questions on the survey instrument, and region of the world in which the survey is conducted. While household surveys are much less expensive than decennial censuses, they can still be quite expensive for low-income countries, not only for data collection, but also for data processing and dissemination. In theory, lower cost leads to more frequent data collection, but without regular sources of funding, continuous household survey programmes are unsupportable in most West and Central African countries. Household surveys need large sample sizes to accurately measure the number of migrants (both stocks and flows), thus are more effective at measuring the characteristics of migrants and well as the impact migration has on people and places. Emigration is particularly difficult to measure, since responses for household members living abroad are dependent on proxy respondents, as well as the possibility that entire households have migrated abroad (thus are excluded from the sampling frame). Further, if an accurate sampling frame is non-existent or incomplete to begin with (e.g. from a previous Census), estimates can be compromised.

Household surveys can be either general purpose (also often called multi-topic) or specialized, and each has their respective strengths and weaknesses for measuring migration. For a general purpose survey the main focus of the survey is not the study of international migration, but rather specific topics like the labour force and employment, fertility and health, or income and expenditure. Multi-topic general purpose surveys include a number of different topics, of which migration can be one, though there are limits to the number and types of migration questions which can be added. These surveys can also be hampered by a limited sample of migrants if samples are derived from regular probability methods and migration is a relatively “rare” event in the country. In the West and Central African context, general purpose surveys are usually

² Per UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration. The 1998 UN recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses define usual residence as, “The place of usual residence is the geographical place where the enumerated person usually resides. This may be the same as, or different from, the place where he or she was present at the time of the census or his or her legal residence.”

funded by external organizations. Advantages include reduced costs associated with using a pre-existing survey, as well as national representativeness, relative frequency of data collection (particularly in low-income countries with weak household survey systems), and inclusion of detailed information on other variables which can be used with the analysis of migration.

While general purpose surveys can also be quite specialized (e.g. DHS), the primary focus of specialized migration surveys is to collect information on migration and migration processes. Typically, more migration questions can be asked on a specialized survey than when included as part of a multi-topic survey. Specialized migration surveys have the advantage of being tailored to measure migration-related phenomena, thus questions can be as detailed as necessary. Disadvantages include less national representativeness (e.g. smaller sample sizes due to the large number of questions asked), and that they are usually ad hoc (one-time survey) and not conducted at regular intervals (unless a longitudinal survey). Due to the specific nature and expense of these surveys, it is rare to find them conducted at the national level in West and Central Africa, as they have usually been confined to sub-national studies, though there are a few important exceptions.

Perhaps more promising for the specific cases of West and Central Africa is inclusion of migration questions on national multi-topic household surveys, whose primary intent is to collect other information on the population, such as health or the labour force. Questions can be added individually, or as part of a separate migration module. Pre-existing multi-topic surveys tend to be conducted at a national level, thus increase the representativeness of the data, while additional costs are reduced since questions are simply added to a pre-existing survey. The major disadvantage of using a pre-existing multi-topic survey is the limit to the number of questions which can be added, since the survey is already covering a number of other topics. In practice, concerns about response-burden are often mitigated by increased level of funding, thereby limiting this problem.

As previously mentioned, sample design depends on the research needs of the survey, and this is even truer of questionnaire design. Different types of questions will be asked depending on whether the survey is being conducted in a country of origin or destination, or whether the target population is current migrants, returns migrants, or non-migrants. The use of proxies to answer questions for absent household members also drastically changes the way questions can be asked and type of information which can be collected (e.g. subjective questions should be avoided). As with any survey instrument, respondent burden is of concern, thus there is a limit to the number of questions which can be asked, though this is usually even more limited if included as part of a multi-topic survey. Question sensitivity, particularly for topics like visa status or remittances, is also of concern for reducing item-non-response and the accuracy of data collected.

Definitions and Measurement

Migration, both internal and international, is often studied by looking at its size, the characteristics of migrants, and the impact migration has on both migrants themselves and the areas from which they come and to where they go. Questionnaire design is normally tailored towards what is being studied and which migrant group is of greatest interest. There are three primary groups of interest in the study of migration: current migrants (both immigrants and emigrants), return migrants (those who previously lived abroad but have returned), and those who have never migrated (to gauge their intent to move or as a comparison group). It is difficult to measure emigrants who are not currently present in a household, and responses are dependent on the migrant still having some connection to a household in their country or origin, how household membership is defined in the survey, and proxy respondents. Questions can be geared towards measuring many different policy issues. Of particular interest to West and Central Africa are questions of brain drain (the emigration of highly educated) and policies to encourage return migration (and facilitate reintegration), the effect migration has on the distribution of poverty and labour in the country, the spread of diseases, rural-to-urban migration, migration and investment (for both return migrants and use of remittances), as well as refugees (and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)) and environmental displacement.

To answer these policy issues a multitude of questions can be asked. However, to improve the quality and comparability of data, definitions for migrants need to first be established. Migrants are normally

defined as persons who have changed their (usual) place of residence. Whether the change of residence crossed international or local borders, and the duration of stay, are the next criteria for creating a migration typology. According to the United Nations' 1998 "Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration" an international migrant is defined as "any person who changes his or her country of usual residence." Long-term migrants are defined as those who move to a country other than their country of usual residence for a period of at least 1 year, while short-term migrants are people who move to a country for a period of at least 3 months but less than a year. Note the UN definition excludes many temporary migrant workers (e.g. seasonal migrants), who often move to a country for a period of less than 3 months. Also note the term "usual residence," which is often considered to be the place the person has lived for the previous 12 months. Movers who do not cross international borders are considered to be internal migrants, though short-distance/local moves are normally excluded from this group (rather considered to be residential mobility). Also of interest to West Africa is the distinction between intraregional (within West African countries) and extra-regional (outside of West Africa) international migrants, due to historic migration patterns in the region. International migrants can be further delineated into regular (legal) and irregular migrants, those who have moved into a country without authorization or have overstayed visas. Most intraregional migration movement in West Africa would be considered irregular by definition. This is further complicated by the high number of refugees among West and Central African countries.

Of great concern to measurement of migration in Africa is the distinction between international migrants and refugees, as well as internal labour migrants and IDPs. Refugees have differing legal rights by country, and are often not included in official migration statistics due to their supposed "non-permanent" nature. However, if one simply looks at change in geography and duration of stay as the criteria for measuring a migrant, refugees meeting these criteria would be included as such. Questions on reason for move or legal status in country are the only ways for household surveys to distinguish the different categories, though household surveys normally do not sample group quarters (e.g. refugee camps), thus limit their coverage of this segment of the population.

The size of international migration is measured using two concepts: stocks and flows. International migrant stock is the total number of international migrants living in a country at a particular point in time, either measured by foreign-born (country of birth) or foreigners (nationality). Migration flows occur between two geographic areas, consisting of both an origin and a destination. In-flows are the number moving into a given geographic area (e.g. country of destination) over a given period of time (usually 12 months), while out-flows are the number moving away from that same area (e.g. country of origin) and time-period. Flows can be measured in terms of international or internal geographic areas.

As one can see, defining a reference period is important for defining and measuring the size of migration, as is identifying the origin and destination of a move. Some surveys consider any duration of stay of 6 months or longer as sufficient for identifying a migrant, while the UN recommendations call for 12 months for long-term migrants and 3 months for short-term migrants. Others use no reference period to define a migrant, as any change in residence will suffice. For return migrants, who could have migrated at any period of their life, a reference period is often used to restrict measurement to relatively recent return migration, usually over the past ten years or even earlier (e.g. one year, especially for seasonal migrants). Using shorter time periods reduces the number of migrants captured in a sample, but increases the quality of data collected (improved recollection by respondents).

A number of questions can be used to measure the stock and flow (size) of migrants. Normally, country of nationality and/or place of birth are used to determine stock, while previous place of residence (normally at a defined time interval) is used to measure flow. Duration of residence (in current residence or country) and year of entry are often asked as well. For some countries, naturalization histories are also important (citizenship acquisition or intent to naturalize).

In addition to size of migration, characteristics of migrants (and non-migrants), both demographic and employment-related, are of interest to researchers and policy makers, and household surveys are particularly well suited to measure this. Basic demographic characteristics like age, sex, education, marital status, fertility, linguistic group, religion, and nationality/tribe are all potentially important pieces of information to col-

lect. Labour force characteristics like employment status, occupation, and income are also critical pieces of information for analysis. Further, household characteristics (e.g. size, composition, income) and community characteristics (e.g. housing conditions, unemployment rates) can also be collected. The characteristics of non-migrants are important as a comparison group to migrants, but this group can also be asked about their intentions to move, or family members living abroad.

To measure the impact of migration, it is beneficial to have characteristics of people both before (pre-migration situation) and after (current characteristics) their move. Many surveys collect this information using migration history life-calendars, where migration, labour, educational, and family formation “events” can be collected at the same time. Migrants can also be asked for their reason for move, which is particularly important for distinguishing between labour migrants, students, family-based migrants, and refugees. Reasons can be either collected objectively (what is their legal status in country/visa type) or subjectively (why did you move), asking reason for leaving place of origin and/or reason for coming to place of destination. Finally, questions about migrant social integration, social networks, or experiences with discrimination can be useful as well.

Proxy respondents (current non-migrants) can be asked questions similar to those listed above to collect information on household members living abroad, though there are limits to how much detail can be asked. Usually, information on household members living abroad is limited to basic information on age, sex, current residence, country and time of first departure, and some information about work history.³ Questions about subjective experiences or detailed information about processes (e.g. how jobs were found) should be avoided. However, non-migrants can provide information about remittances received from persons living abroad, which is another important policy issue related to migration.

In its most simplistic sense, remittances are all household income obtained from or sent abroad (between resident and non-resident households), regardless of relationship between sender and receiver. “Household income” not only includes money, but also remittances made in-kind. Monetary remittances include cash sent or given to other people, as well as payment made through money transfers, cheques, etc. through either formal or informal channels. “In-Kind” remittances should include a number of things, such as goods, donations, and payments made on behalf of others. Household survey data can not only help measure the size and trends of remittance flows through measurement of remittances made in-cash and in-kind, but also by determining means of remittance transmittal, e.g. what percentage of remittances are sent or received via non-bank or informal channels. In addition, household surveys can inform us about the characteristics of migrant remittance senders, as well as characteristics of remittance recipients. These in turn can help measure the impact remittances have on individuals residing in migrant sending and receiving countries. To measure remittances, the most basic question is whether or not a person (household) sent or received money (or goods) to or from a person living abroad, normally over a 12 month period, as well as the amount. Additional questions are often asked about the frequency of sending, how remittances were sent, information about transactions, and what money was used for.

This section describes basic information which can be collected to measure migration, and encompasses many topics pertinent to its study. As will be seen in the next section, this is by no means an exhaustive list of topics or question-types which can be asked on household surveys related to migration. Questions need to be tailored to individual research needs and specific cases of countries under study, while attempting to adhere to international standards if possible. Harmonization of questions is important, as this enhances the quality (reliability and validity) and comparability of data between countries, which is particularly important when studying a specific region like West or Central Africa.

³ In particular, when migrants are in an irregular situation and/or don't maintain strong links with their family in country of origin, the information provided by family proxies can be incorrect.

West and Central African Migration Systems and Measurement with Household Surveys

West and Central Africa have very complex and fluid migration systems, distinguished by high intra-regional migration, as well as emigration to Europe and North America. West Africa in particular has a long history of nomadism, with people moving across borders created during its colonial era in search of pasture and water. There has also been a long tradition of seasonal labour migration from the arid Sahel regions (Mali, Mauritania, Niger) to plantations and mines in coastal states like Ghana, the Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Nigeria, most of which is undocumented in nature. The region is also sensitive to repeated environmental, economic, and political crises, which result in a high number of refugees, IDPs, and irregular migration. There have also been contradictory migration policies in the region. While historically the region has had relatively uncontrolled free movement between countries in the region, supported by the decrees of ECOWAS (Economic Commission of West African States), which has encouraged the free movement of people and goods through the creation of regional passports and eliminating short-term visas for its citizens, a number of countries have tightened migration control in recent years, responding to economic and political crises by expelling foreigners (e.g. Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria).

These diverse patterns are particularly true in the target countries of this study. West Africa has been historically seen as one economic unit, including the free flow of people and goods, with mobility being a part of life (Ndione, 2005; Ba & Ndione, 2006). Thus, as economic fortunes change, so do migration patterns in the region. During the oil boom of the 1970s, Nigeria became a popular country of destination, though this quickly changed when the oil industry suffered in the 1980s. The Côte d'Ivoire has traditionally been a country of destination in the region (in 1998 over one-quarter of the population were foreigners), but a relatively recent civil war, combined with a deepening economic crisis, has led to numerous refugees and foreigners expelled from the country. The Democratic Republic of Congo has also been embroiled in a long civil conflict, with political instability resulting in millions of refugees and IDPs.⁴

In the Sahel, desertification and cyclical draughts and famines create waves of environmentally displaced persons across international borders, particularly towards coastal areas. Migration has been a long standing tradition in Ghana. While a source of emigration throughout the 1970s and 1980s, this changed with Ghana's economic progress during the mid 1990s, as it is now a country of destination for the region, particularly from other target countries like Niger and Mali. Senegal has experienced all the migration systems detailed above, attracting migrants, having a large number of emigrants and refugees between itself and Mauritania due to political conflict, while also serving as a transit country for migrants moving towards the Maghreb on their way towards Europe (Shaw 2007).

Relatively open borders, young populations, traditions of seasonal labour migration, and rapidly changing political, economic, and environmental conditions, all result in quickly changing regional migration patterns. Given the undeveloped nature of border control or administrative records in the region, and the long delays between population Censuses, household surveys are likely the best method to collect data on migration, in both a timely and accurate manner. Though there are many different linguistic and tribal groups in the region, most countries in this study are Francophone, though both Ghana and Nigeria are Anglophone, which improves the outlook for creating harmonized questionnaires and improve regional data comparability.

Ideally, migration data should be collected at the national level, which makes the appeal of using pre-existing multi-topic household surveys strong. Due to lack of financial resources in our target countries to carry out household survey programmes on their own, adding migration questions to national household surveys sponsored by outside agencies is a sensible approach. Surveys like the Living Standards Measurement Surveys (LSMS, World Bank) and the Demographic Health Surveys (DHS, USAID) already ask several migration questions and could be further utilized in this manner, though there are also child labour, labour

⁴The World Refugee Survey (2004) estimated the number of IDPs in the DRC at 2.7 million, with about 400,000 refugees from the DRC in neighboring countries, and 330,000 refugees residing in the DRC.

force, income and expenditure, and Multiple Indicators Clusters Surveys (MICS) in the region, which are also possibilities.

National level specialized migration surveys are much rarer, but there is one notable example in the region, the 1993 surveys conducted by the Network of Surveys on Migration and Urbanization in West Africa (NESMUWA).⁵ These nationally representative surveys were carried out simultaneously in eight West African countries (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal), using the same methodology and retrospective migration history questionnaires. However, most specialized migration surveys in West Africa tend to be regional (sub-national) in nature, with several examples found in Senegal, Ghana, and Mali.⁶

Data Inventory of Target Country Household Surveys

A complete assessment of household surveys measuring migration in the target countries proved difficult, due to the paucity of publicly available methodological information and survey instruments. Most, if not all, surveys were carried out using pencil and paper methods, with many still unavailable in electronic format. Also, issues of survey ownership prevented some to be able to provide copies of survey instruments. Given these limitations, this section must be prefaced with the fact that the data inventory is incomplete with only limited (and perhaps inaccurate) information available for some surveys. Particular attention is spent on surveys which could be verified, with greater emphasis on national than regional (sub-national) surveys. Lack of financial resources has clearly hampered the region's ability to carry-out regular household surveys, with many planned to be repeated but never done. Data processing and dissemination also appear to be a concern for the region as well. Finally, aside from survey instruments, I make little attempt to assess the quality of data collected from these surveys, including the quality of sampling design, data collection, or data processing, where many other serious data problems can arise, as this was outside the scope of this paper.

Population Censuses

Copies of each target countries' most recent Census were found for all countries except Mali, which was conducted in 1998. The most recent census was carried out in Nigeria (2006), while the DRC has gone over twenty years since its last Census (1984). Censuses have not been conducted at regular ten-year intervals, with most countries going about 11-15 years between Census enumerations, which makes the timeliness of data an even bigger concern among our target countries.

All countries included questions on place of birth and/or nationality, though coded response categories were often severely limited for non-nationals. For example, in Ghana, if the person is not Ghanaian, they are coded as "Ghanaian by naturalization, ECOWAS national, other African, or non-African" with no country-specific detail collected. Further, if the respondent is not Ghanaian, the proceeding place of birth question is not asked. Similar response choices were available for births outside of Ghana. These coding decisions greatly reduce the analytical capacity of these data for identifying country-specific stocks of migrants. Mauritania, Côte d'Ivoire, and the DRC had open ended nationality and place of birth questions, and though it is not known to what degree data was actually coded during processing, at least the potential to identify country-specific stocks exists. Senegal and Niger had similar open ended responses, though ethnicity was collected rather than nationality. Nigeria fell somewhere between Ghana and the other countries, with limited pre-coded responses for nationality and open ended responses for place of birth.

Duration of residence questions were only asked by Mauritania, Nigeria, Niger, and the DRC. Mauritania used pre-coded responses (since birth, less than one year, one to four years, five to nine years, ten years or more), while the DRC and Niger asked the actual number of years since arrival. Nigeria used a coding scheme similar to Mauritania, but with more range of response categories (since birth, less than six months,

⁵ REMUAWO in French. These surveys were coordinated by the Centre d'étude et de recherche sur la population pour le Développement (CERPOD)

⁶ Here the term "regional" means regions within a country, or sub-national. Other portions of this paper use the term "region" to describe the countries which make up West or Central Africa. This is clarified to avoid confusion.

six months to less than one year, one year to less than two years...ten years to less than fifteen years, fifteen years or more).

Previous residence questions were collected by all countries except the DRC, though reference period and geography varied widely. Ghana asked residence five years ago, though the question only asked for the district (local move). It is not clear whether moves from other countries could be coded, since coding instructions were not included with the questionnaire. Senegal also used a 5-year migration question, for both residents present and absent, collecting commune for internal moves and country for international moves. The Côte d'Ivoire used a one-year migration question, collecting geographic information for both internal and international moves. Mauritania, Niger, and Nigeria asked for most recent move, with time of move derived from duration of residence questions. It appears moves from abroad to Mauritania were not coded, as responses were limited to the *Wilaya dn Moughataa* geographic level, while both Nigeria and Niger collected geographic detail about internal and international moves.

Place of usual residence was asked by several countries (Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal), but only Senegal asked a series of questions about emigrants living abroad. For those who had left Senegal during the previous five years and still remained abroad, questions were asked on their sex, age, relationship to the household head, country of destination, and reason for moving (work, study, marriage, health, family reasons, other). This is the only example of emigration being measured on a Census among our target countries.

As one can see, though some migration-related questions existed on each Census, there was great variation in the questions asked and time-references used. Increased coordination between West African statistical agencies and harmonization of Census questions would do much to improve data comparability in the region. Pre-coded response categories often limited the analysis which could be performed, though there are questions about to what extent open-ended questions were actually coded. Only one example of emigration questions was found, and long delays between Censuses further reduce their effectiveness as a data source on migration.

General Purpose Household Surveys

As previously described, most national household surveys in our target countries are general purpose or multi-topic surveys, for which migration is not the main focus, though there are a few notable exceptions, including a proposed national specialized migration study in Ghana. The following is not an exhaustive review of all surveys conducted in the region over the past fifteen years, due to limitations discussed previously.

The most prevalent sample survey, and a source of limited migration information, in the eight target countries is the DHS, funded by USAID (and others) and conducted by Macro International. Begun in 1984, the DHS are nationally representative household surveys providing data for a wide range of monitoring and impact evaluation indicators in the areas of population, health, and nutrition. The sample of the standard DHS is based on a stratified two-stage cluster design, and has a sample size of between 2,000 (Côte d'Ivoire) and 13,000 (Mali) households in our target countries, while smaller interim DHS surveys are also conducted in some countries. The DHS is normally conducted every five years, and all eight target countries have had at least one since 2001. Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Niger, and Senegal have conducted them at regular 5-year intervals. Questions used on DHS surveys are more-or-less standardized for all countries, enhancing the comparability of data. However, the purpose of the DHS is to measure indicators on topics like health, education, fertility, HIV/AIDS, mortality, conditions of living, and other gender issues, not migration, thus migration items are very limited.

Women and men are asked separate questionnaires, and there are some differences in migration questions asked. Differences also exist between which questions are included on target country surveys. In general, women are asked three questions: "for most of the time until you were 12 years old, did you live in a city, in a town, or in a village," "how long have you been living continuously in (name of current place of residence)," and if ever moved, "just before you lived here did you live in a city, a town, or in a village."

These only allow for the identification of movers, not geography or the ability to classify migrants by any distance of move (except urbanity of previous residence), though in the case of Mauritania and Niger, foreign country is a response option. Men are typically asked the same three questions, but in some countries are also asked up to three additional questions which give some measure of circular migration: “in the last 12 months, have you ever travelled away from this community, slept away,” “in the last 12 months, on how many separate occasions have you travelled away from this community and slept away,” and “in the last 12 months, have you been away from this community for more than 1 month at a time.”⁷ Ethnicity and sometimes nationality (e.g. Mali, Senegal, and the Côte d’Ivoire, though only the Côte d’Ivoire collects specific country information) questions are also asked. In addition to these migration questions, and a multitude of health-related questions, information on age, sex, education, and employment status is also collected, which can be used in tandem with migration variables for analytical purposes. Given the focus of the survey, about three-quarters of the sample are female, between the ages of 15 and 49. This sample bias further limits the ability of the DHS to be used for migration studies given potential differences in migration patterns between men and women in the region.

Though the DHS is extremely limited for measuring migration, it is the only nationally representative survey regularly conducted in all eight target countries. Even though it would be theoretically possible to add additional migration questions to the survey instrument, given the large number of questions already asked, this potential is severely limited. Other competing public health surveys, like the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (UNICEF) and World Health Survey (WHO) have similar potential, but currently have no migration questions included on their surveys.

Another multi-topic survey with more proven potential to measure migration is the LSMS sponsored by the World Bank. First piloted in the Côte d’Ivoire and Peru in 1985, it has since been conducted in over 40 other countries. The LSMS programme hopes to improve quality of household survey data, improve capacity of statistical institutes to carry out household surveys and analyze data, and provide policy makers with data on social and economic outcomes. Though this has only been conducted in a few of our target countries, Côte d’Ivoire (1985-1988), Nigeria (2003 and 2006), and Ghana (1987, 1988, 1991, 1998, and 2005), recent implementations in Ghana have included a detailed migration module, as well as a remittance-specific module in 2005. The Côte d’Ivoire’s 1988 *Enquête Permanente Après des Ménages* did include a migration section for household members 5 years and older (Section 6), but these questions are missing from the publicly available questionnaire. Nigeria has also asked several migration questions on its LSMS.

Methodological information was only found for Ghana’s 1998 LSMS 4, but this should be comparable to what was done in 2005, though I assume the sampling frame was updated from their 2000 Census. In 1998 LSMS sample size was about 6,000 households, using a nationally representative two-stage stratified sampling technique to select units. The questionnaire from the 2005 Ghana LSMS 5 included dedicated sections on both migration and remittances sent and received. The basic demographic section asks for region/country of birth, nationality, and whether the household member was absent. As is the case for rest of the survey, and typical of other Ghanaian surveys, geographic response categories are limited to detail within regions of Ghana. For people born outside of Ghana, responses are limited to “other ECOWAS,” “Africa other than ECOWAS,” and “outside Africa.” For nationality, more detail is available, with response categories for Burkinabe, Malian, Nigerian, Ivorian, Togolese, Liberian, and detailed information for non-Africans. The LSMS includes numerous other variables, including age, sex, marital status, and detailed sections on education and employment.

Section 5 is dedicated to migration, and asked of all household members 7 years and older. Questions ask if the respondent was born in their current village/town, if they had ever lived away for more than one year, when they last moved, if they intended to stay in their village/town for more than one year, and where they previously lived (though for areas outside of Ghana this is again limited to “other ECOWAS,” “Africa other than ECOWAS,” and “outside Africa”). Next, occupation and industry at previous residence, and who

⁷ These examples were taken from 2003 Nigerian DHS, but similar to questionnaires found in other target countries, except that Mauritania and Niger offered more geographic choice in response categories. Differences do exist between questionnaires in target countries. For example, Ghana does not ask the first additional migration question to males, while Mali, Niger, and Senegal do not include any of these additional questions for males, while Mauritania does not include the three migration questions asked of women on their male questionnaire.

the respondent worked for, are asked. Finally, main reason for moving is asked, including a number of employment, family, political, and environmental reasons for moving.

Section 11 is dedicated to income transfers and includes questions on both remittances sent and received. For remittances sent, the question of whether any household members live away from home is asked, and whether this household has sent any money or goods to them during the past 12 months, or to any other non-household members. For each person to whom remittances have been sent, information on the relationship to the household head, sex, frequency of sending, if money is to be paid back in the future, the total amount sent during the past 12 months, the three main uses, the total value of food and other goods sent during the past 12 months, and where the recipient lives (though as with other questions, detail is limited to Ghana) is collected. For remittances received, the question of whether or not the household has received any money or goods from absent household members or any other individuals is asked. For each person from whom money or goods have been received, questions on relationship to household head, sex, regularity of receiving, if the money needed to be repaid, total amount of cash sent during the past 12 months, how remittances were received (bank account, money transfer agency, sender him/herself, carried by someone else, and other), the three main uses of cash received, total value of food and other goods received during the past 12 months, and where the individual lives (with the same limitations outside of Ghana) are asked.

Though Nigeria's 2003 Living Standards Survey asked fewer migration questions than Ghana's, some important information can still be gained. In Section 5, if the person was born here, if they had always lived in this village or town, and whether they had ever moved away from this village/town for more than 12 months and then returned, are asked. Next, how long ago they moved to this place, in which state or country the respondent was living in before moving to this village/town, and what place they were living in (Abuja, Lagos, other state capital, other urban, other rural, other) are asked. This is followed by several questions on employment in their previous residence, including occupation, industry, for whom they were working, and main reason for moving from previous residence (own employment, spouse's employment, marriage, other family reasons, school, drought/war, other).

Ghana's 2005 LSMS is the best example illustrating the potential of adding migration questions to a general purpose or multi-topic household survey, and perhaps this could be expanded to other countries in the future. The major limitation to the current survey is the lack of geographic detail for moves outside of Ghana, which severely limits its ability to analysis flows of migration and remittances between countries (within and outside the region). Another drawback is the cost of Ghana's LSMS, which is one of the most expensive of all LSMS's conducted, which could make it less feasible to be replicated in other countries.

There are several other examples of national general purpose household surveys in our target countries which include a limited amount of information on migration. For example, Ghana's Child Labour Survey (SIMPOC/IPEC 2001-2003), conducted by Ghana's Statistical Service, is focused on measuring child labour, but does include a few questions on household migration. Questions on if the household has ever changed residence, district of last place of residence, how long the household has been living in the present place of residence, and the main reason for changing to present place of residence (job, school, other) are all included on this survey. In the household information section, there are additional questions on nationality (again limited to Ghanaian by birth, Ghanaian by naturalization, Other ESCOWAS, and Others) and ethnic group for nationals.

Mauritania's *Enquête Permanente sur Les Conditions de Vie des Ménages* (2004) had a large number of migration-related questions. This survey includes questions on place of birth (though no detail is captured for foreign births), nationality (Mauritanian, Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian, Libyan, Liberian, Senegalese, Malian, Guinean, other Arab, other African, other), how long absent from household over past 12 months, and if they lived in another household during absence. Section 5 is dedicated to the topic of migration. All household members 10 years and over are asked if they have always lived in this village/town, if they have ever left the village/town for more than one year and returned, how many years were spent away from village/town the first time, how long they have been in the village/town since their last return, where was their previous residence (*Nouakchott*, *Nouadhibou*, other urban, rural, nomad, abroad), name of *moughataa*, how long the journey took to return to village/town, what transportation was used, distance, principal activity in previous residence, sector of activity, if worked for money, for whom they worked, main reason for leaving,

if moved because of job loss, and how long lived in previous residence (years, months). Finally, section 9 includes several questions about remittances sent and received. For both persons to whom remittances were sent and from whom remittances (money or goods) were received over the past 12 months, the following questions were asked: name, if a household member, relationship to household head, sex, where they live (same locality, *Nouakchott*, *Nouadhibou*, other urban, rural, nomadic), frequency of payments (by month, by trimester, annually, other, not regular), if they needed to be repaid, total value of cash over the past 12 months, total value of food, and the total value of other goods. Though geographic detail is limited, some question wording clunky, and it has been conducted somewhat irregularly (1987, 1989, 1995, 2000, and 2004), this is another good example of how migration questions can be used on a regular multi-topic survey.

Other examples of general purpose household surveys including a varying number of migration questions are Mali's *Enquête Permanente Emploi Auprès des Ménages* (EPAM, 2003), the Côte d'Ivoire's *Enquête Niveau de Vie des Ménages* (1998), and Senegal's *Enquête sur les Priorités* (ESP 1991-2) and *deuxième Enquête Sénégalaise auprès des Ménages* (ESAM II, 2002).⁸ Mali's survey includes questions on nationality (Mali, CDEAO, other African, and rest of the world), place of birth (in this locality, elsewhere), if always lived in locality, numbers years lived here, where lived before coming here (Bamako, regional capital, other urban commune, other cercle, other locality, from abroad), and reason for migration, but response categories severely reduce the survey's effectiveness for analysing international migration patterns. The Côte d'Ivoire's household survey also had detailed migration questions, asking if the household head is present or absent, how long they have been absent, as well as ethnicity or nationality (Akan, Krou, Mande du Nord, Mande du Sud, Voltic, Burkinabe, Malian, Ghanaian, other African, naturalized Ivorians). The migration section asked for place of birth (name, department, rural/urban), how long lived here, where lived before (same location, same department, other department, outside of here), and reason for move (work, health, school, look for work, help family, housing problem, visit, marriage, family reason). There is also a question on remittances sent (how much sent to parents or others over the past 12 months) in the household expenditures section. More limited, Senegal's priority survey only asked four migration-related questions, including the ethnicity or nationality of the household head (no detail for non-Senegalese), how long the household has lived continuously in this locality, the place where the household lived before moving here (no detail if abroad), and whether it was urban or rural. Priority surveys tend to be more for rapid assessment purposes, thus have a limited number of questions which can be included, but have more flexibility in types of questions asked and can be conducted relatively quickly.

Finally, there are several other general purpose surveys for which detailed information was difficult to find, yet contain additional migration information. These include the 1-2-3 Surveys of Senegal and the DRC (2004) (3-phase surveys of households, the informal sector, and household consumption), the World Fertility Survey (conducted during the 1980s in all target countries except Mali, DRC, and Niger, women only), and Nigeria's Child Labour Survey (22,000 households, 2001) and National Integrated Survey of Households (NISH), of which the General Household Survey (20-28,000 households, 1982, 1990, 1992, 1993, and 1996) is part. The NISH also served as Nigeria's labour force survey, and once included a module called the Survey of Internal Migration (SIM).

This section shows the relatively limited prevalence of national-level general purpose household surveys which include questions on migration in our target countries, yet underscores the potential use of these surveys for collecting data. However, given the primary intent of these surveys is not the study of migration, there are limits to what extent they can be utilized (both in terms of the number of questions asked and the appropriateness of doing so). This is further hampered by the irregular nature of most of these surveys, which are not conducted on a regular basis (even if this was their original intent). Another critique of using multi-topic surveys to measure migration is their samples are not designed to specifically find migrants, thus if it is a rare event (though this is probably not the case in West Africa), not enough cases will be captured for effective analysis. A way around these problems is to conduct specialized migration surveys, which allow for more flexibility with sample design as well as the number and types of questions which can be asked. While most of these sorts of surveys are done at a regional (sub-national) level, there are a few national examples in West Africa.

⁸ This survey included migration variables like place of birth, place of current residence, nationality, age at departure, country of destination, reasons for migration, and remittances to Senegal.

Specialized Migration Surveys

The most significant nationally representative migration survey in West Africa was conducted in 1993 by NESMUWA in six of our eight target countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal, Niger, Nigeria, and Mauritania, in addition to Burkina Faso and Guinea). Though individual countries' statistical offices seem to have carried out the work, the project was coordinated by the Center for Studies and Research on Population for Development (CERPOD). Each country used the same survey instruments, and data collection was carried out simultaneously using the same methodology, making comparisons possible. Several questionnaires were used, including a household questionnaire, an individual questionnaire addressed to eligible migrants, non-migrants, and return migrants, and a community questionnaire. A retrospective questionnaire was used to record migration history, and a separate questionnaire measured out-migration from the household over the past 5 years. Methodological information is limited, particularly on sample design, though the surveys included about 100,000 households (resulting in about 140,000 migration histories). Though now quite dated, it remains the best source for migration data in the West African region. Several regional (sub-national) studies using the same methodology have been repeated in urban areas since the original study was done (e.g. Dakar 1997-8 and Mauritania 1995).

Though methodological information on the overall project is difficult to find, the Nigerian portion is better documented. These surveys were carried out by the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER) using a multistage, stratified nationally representative sample which included 22 of Nigeria's 30 states and capital cities. States were purposively selected so desired sample size could be reached for each of the areas. First major cities were selected, then known sending states (rural), and finally border states (with Benin, Cameroon, and Niger). Urban centers were stratified into five groups and simple random sampling techniques were used to select cities. Next, residential areas of each selected urban area were stratified into areas populated by non-migrants and migrants. Finally, census enumeration areas and then households were selected randomly. For rural areas, purposive sampling of major sending and receiving states was done, excluding urban areas in the state, and four rural government areas selected. For border areas, two local government areas were selected, and a total of 40 enumeration areas included in the survey. This resulted in 32,000 households, and about 86,000 individuals. It is unclear how similar these methods were to the other seven countries involved in the project, though it was probably similar, with no special effort made to identify international migrants (other than sampling from border states).

Through the efforts of IOM's focal point in Senegal, I was able to obtain copies of the NESMUWA household, migrant, and return migrant survey instruments used in Senegal, though not the retrospective migration biographies (for those 15 years and over) used to collect residential changes of longer than 6 months between 1988 and 1992. The household questionnaire asks individual characteristics for each household member, including sex, relationship to household head, age, religion, and marital status. For those 6 years and older, nationality (though response codes are unclear), ethnicity, literacy, education, occupation and industry, place of birth (again response codes are unclear), previous place of residence, and duration of residence are asked. Respondents are then coded as either non-eligible, eligible migrant, eligible return migrant, or eligible non-migrant. Next, dwelling characteristics are collected, followed by emigration questions for those who had left during the past five years (for longer than 6 months), including name, relationship to household head, sex, age at departure, duration of absence, and current residence.

The migrant questionnaire consists of 84 questions, including age at arrival, previous place of residence, who made the decision to move, if the move was financially assisted, reason for move ("adventure," marriage, other family reasons, health, study/apprentice, retirement, look for work, lost job, other (specify)), information known about location prior to move, if had help upon arrival, problems upon arrival, if accompanied by others, if still in (and amount of) contact with family, if and why visit family, and return plans. These are followed by questions related to activities at their previous residence, such as work experience and income earned, if worked in agriculture, if they owned land, etc., followed by the same questions about activities during their first year of arrival. The return migrant questionnaire consists of 68 questions, and tends to mirror the questionnaire for migrants, with some changes in wording and response categories (e.g. instead of "adventure" for reasons for move, "end of adventure/fatigue" is used). Again, age at return, previous residence, decision making, financial assistance, if absence caused problems for family, difficulties upon

return, if accompanied by others on return, if family members remain abroad, activities at last residence, and activities during first year of arrival are all asked.

Though questions about sampling design and data quality exist, and the survey instrument could use some refinement, the NESMUWA surveys remain the best nationally representative migration surveys in the West Africa region. Large sample sizes, comparability of questionnaires and methodology, and identification of migration types and flows all helped improve data in the region. However, the data is now fifteen years old, and given the volatile nature of migration patterns in the region, is in desperate need of updating.

There have been no other nationally representative migration surveys conducted in the region, though there have been many at a regional (sub-national) level. One possible exception is a 2008 pilot migration study recently (January 2008) conducted in Ghana by the Center for Migration Studies, funded by UNDP, to sample of 300 households in 4 pilot areas.

The survey's objective is to provide up-to-date information on general migration patterns (internal and international) in Ghana and to assist policy makers in formulating migration policies and programmes for the country, and is planned to be expanded into a national survey. Though I was not able to see copy of the questionnaire, the pilot test was successful and there are plans (even if funding is not yet in place) to expand the survey to a national sample of 3,000 households. If this national survey does indeed take place, and if conducted regularly and expanded to include other countries in the region, it could become a significant source of migration data in the future.

At the regional (sub-national) level there have been many specialized migration surveys, especially in high migrant regions of West African countries. One of the more ambitious regional studies was called the "Push and Pull Factors of International Migration," carried out between 1994 and 2000 by NIDI and Eurostat. This project included both sending and receiving countries in its analysis, focusing on migration from the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region and from Sub-Saharan Africa to the European Union. Both Senegal and Ghana were used as West African examples, with Ghanaian migrants interviewed in Italy, and Senegalese interviewed in Spain. Within sending countries, four regions were purposively selected, based on a combination of criteria related to development and migration history. Within these regions, multistage stratified disproportionate probability sampling took place, with the aim of generating survey data representative (of both migrants and non-migrants) at the level of these regions. In Senegal 1,700 households, and in Ghana 1,600 households were interviewed, while about 500-670 Senegalese and Ghanaian households were interviewed in Spain and Italy respectively.

The survey instruments used in Senegal and Ghana were quite long and exhaustive, consisting of both micro and macro portions. The micro-questionnaires included household, non-migrant individual, return migrant individual, and current migrant individual questionnaires (and Senegal included an additional one for spouses), while the macro-questionnaires collected national, regional, and community information. The household questionnaire consisted of four modules: the household roster, living quarters of the household, economic conditions of the household, and remittances received. The household roster collected basic demographic information, as well as education, country of birth, current residence, if ever migrated, and a number of questions related to migration. Remittances received were limited to money and goods received over the past 12 months, including questions on frequency, amount, and use of money.

The non-migrant individual questionnaire had six modules, including social and demographic characteristics, work, migration history, household composition 5 years ago, economic situation 5 years ago, and migration intentions (though this includes several attitudinal questions as well). The detailed migration history portion of the survey collects information on all places the person has lived since birth, including data on arrival and departure and reason for leaving (job transfer, national service, other economic reasons, family related, school, fear of war/civil conflict/prosecution, retirement, end of contract, homesickness, other political reason, other), and if the person ever went abroad to work for period of less than one year. The return migrant questionnaire included ten modules, including social and demographic characteristics, work, migration history, household composition just before the last migration from country of origin, economic situation just before the last migration from country of origin, motives for last move abroad, information before migra-

tion about the last country of destination, migration networks and assistance, experiences in the last country of destination, and intentions. The current migrant individual questionnaire contains the same ten modules found on the return migrant questionnaire, though it is answered by a proxy respondent for household migrants currently living abroad. The amount of detail collected in this portion is well-beyond what can be expected from a proxy respondent, thereby limiting the effectiveness of this portion of the survey.

Though limited to specific regions of Senegal and Ghana, there is a wealth of information collected on these surveys, for both migrants, non-migrants, and return migrants, though the quality of data for current migrants is suspect due to use of proxy respondents and no attempt made to reduce the complexity of questions.

There is currently another ambitious project organized by INED similar to the “Push and Pull” migration project, soon to be conducted in Ghana and Senegal, as well as destination countries (Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, UK). This project is called “Migration between African and Europe” (MAFE) and aims to produce a new data set on Afro-European migration. Data is supposed to be representative, longitudinal, and multi-level, and offer new insights on the changing patterns and determinants of migration and circulation between Africa and Europe, as well as on the socio-economic changes associated with international migration. Though precise sampling frames have yet to be defined, in Africa, representative samples of about 1,500 individuals (non-migrants and return migrants) will be randomly drawn in selected regions of each country. In Europe, there will be about 300 Ghanaians and 450 Senegalese in the European MAFE sample.

Similar to the NIDI migration project, questionnaires are quite long and extensive, and collect detailed information.⁹ A household questionnaire collects information on household members, including migration information (with contact information collected if the respondent lives in France, Italy, or Spain), year of departure, initial country of destination, place of birth, and nationality. For those living abroad, a number of questions are asked (though again dependent on proxy respondents), such as reason for move, aid from household, if had official papers, if there has been (and how much) contact with this person over the last 12 months, and if they have visited. This section is followed by a brief section on migrant remittances (both money and goods) received over the past 12 months. There are also extensive life history questionnaires (retrospective longitudinal data), including timing of marriages, births of children, employment, and migration.

In addition to these large-scale regional (sub-national) surveys, numerous smaller regional migration surveys have been conducted within West African countries, particularly in Ghana, Mali, and Senegal. While the Côte d’Ivoire used to be a popular country for conducting surveys, few surveys are currently conducted there due to its unstable political situation. Instead, several surveys have been conducted in Burkina Faso to measure recent migration patterns out of the Côte d’Ivoire. I was not able to find examples of sub-national specialized migration surveys in Niger or the DRC.

As already noted, Ghana has been the site of several migration studies, including a small scale survey of return migrants, conducted by Ghana’s Institute for Social, Statistical, and Economic Research, and funded by DFID (2001). This survey of 152 international return migrants used snowball sampling techniques, initially sampling from employment sectors and locations where return migrants were known to exist, and was part of larger research project on transnational migration, which included a survey on elite returnees to Ghana and the Côte d’Ivoire. Unfortunately, I was not able to see a copy of these questionnaires. Another recent sub-national household survey project in Ghana was the 2002 Population and Environment Survey (P&E) of the Central Region in Ghana, representative of six coastal districts of Ghana’s Central Region.¹⁰ This survey had a total sample size of 2,500 people aged 15 and over, and included community, household, men, and women questionnaires. Migration questions are very similar to those found on the DHS, though household roster information included whether the household member had moved in the past 12 months and region of birth. More importantly, a life history calendar was used to collect information, including moves

⁹ I only had access to the Senegalese, not the Ghanaian, version of this survey.

¹⁰ This survey was conducted by the Population Studies and Training Center, Brown University, the Institute for Land Management and Development, University of Science and Technology, Ghana, and others. The intent of the survey was to study migration, fertility, child health knowledge and behaviors, and environmental attitudes.

(region and type of residence), which allows for the analysis of migration with the timing of other life-course events (education, occupation, marital status, child birth and death). However, this survey is more geared towards measuring internal migration than international migration, and would not be classified as a specialized migration survey.

Senegal has also been the site of several regional migration surveys, including follow-ups to the NES-MUWA surveys in Dakar (1997-98), as well as the Survey on Determinants of International Migration in Senegal (DEmIS 1997-8), which was conducted in Dakar and Touba to a sample of 1,700 households (6,000 individuals). There have also been numerous academic studies in the West African region, such as the *Enquête sur les Déterminants de L'Emigration Internationale dans la Ville de Kaolack (Sénégal)* (2,500 households, Ndione 1997). Mali has also been the site of several regional academic studies, including a longitudinal panel study of migrants between 1982 and 1989 (Findlay et al.), which was continued in Niono, Mali (Central Mali) from 2002-2007, and includes information on remittances and environmental factors. Finally, there was the *Enquête Migration et Transferts Region de Kayes* (Gubert 1997), in which 305 households were interviewed in the Kayes region of Mali. This survey included a village questionnaire (asked of the village chief), a household questionnaire (sex, age, education, residence situation, length of departure, and several migration history questions), and a work questionnaire which collected information on migrants (who made decision to move, if financed, costs, activities).

As seen in the “Push and Pull” and MAFE surveys, it is desirable to be able to measure migrants in both countries of origin and destination. Destination countries have conducted a number of specialized surveys to measure international migration, such as a survey in Morocco of Sub-Saharan African migrants and a socio-economic survey in France on Malian, Mauritanian and Senegalese immigrants, but I will only touch on a few specific examples related to our target countries.

One example is a World Bank ad hoc (one time) survey recently conducted in Belgium of African-born remittance senders to Nigeria, Senegal, and the Republic of Congo. Given the population of interest was limited to specific remittance flows from Belgium to Africa, a targeted adaptive sampling strategy was used to draw a representative sample. About fifty questions were asked covering a wide variety of topics related to remittances sent over the past 12 months, including place of birth, year of migration to Belgium, employment and income, if was money sent, amount, methods used to send, transaction costs, as well as information about the remittance recipient (including their place of residence). However, little effort was made to measure goods sent (only asks for the total value of goods sent over the past 12 months).

Another example is the U.S. Nigeria Migration Survey (Osili 1997), conducted by a graduate student at North Western University on economic linkages between Nigerian emigrants in Chicago and their home families in Nigeria. A sample of 112 Nigerian emigrants in the Chicago area selected from a random sample of 500 Nigerian names (Igbo ethnic group only, from Southeastern Nigeria) found in telephone directories were interviewed. This was another long survey, collecting information on migration history to the U.S., economic activity before leaving Nigeria, educational history (for household head and spouse), social ties and connections still maintained with people in Nigeria, trips to Nigeria, goods brought back on trips, money sent in the past year, methods used to send, use of money, other economic variables, and return migration plans. Finally, a section of questions on the situation of their family in Nigeria were asked, including contact information. This was followed up with 61 interviews of these remittance receiving households in Nigeria. Though I did not see a copy of the survey instrument used in Nigeria, this approach is somewhat unique in that information is collected about specific remittance flows between households in both country of origin and country of destination.

As one can see, there are and have been several general purpose and specialized migration surveys conducted in our target countries over the past 15 years. However, these still suffer from a number of limitations, including infrequency of conducting, lack of financial resources to sustain, lack of harmonization in questions asked, limited response categories, and lack of specialized migration surveys at a national level.

Summary and Conclusions

The migration situation in West and Central Africa is very complex and fluid, and there is a lack of quality data to measure the phenomenon and help guide effective migration policies in the region. The majority of international migration takes place at the intraregional level and is not recorded at border control areas (mostly limited to air and sea ports of entry), since most moves are via land borders and undocumented. Most migration is circular, with seasonal labour migration an important part of the migration system. There are also a large number of refugees and IDPs in the region, caused by political unrest, conflict, and environmental degradation (draught, famine, etc.). The weakness of current data in the region, particularly administrative, increases the potential of using surveys to fill these gaps.

There is common agreement that existing migration statistics in West and Central Africa tend to be scarce, unreliable, invalid, and susceptible to problems of comparability. As shown in the data inventory portion of this paper, there have been many household surveys conducted over the past 15 years, but overall there is a paucity of survey data in the region, particularly at the national level. Some countries like Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria have conducted far more surveys than others like Niger, DRC, and Mauritania. Current political instability in the Côte d'Ivoire and DRC further reduces the likelihood of conducting quality surveys in these countries.

The timeliness of survey data remains a problem in the region. The DHS is the most frequent and prevalent national survey in our target countries but is severely limited in the migration information it collects. But even the DHS is only conducted every 5 years, further limiting its potential to measure migration on a timely basis. Ghana and Nigeria's LSMS surveys have greater potential to measure migration, but Ghana's is only conducted every seven years, though Nigeria only had a three year gap between its last two surveys. Mauritania's survey on living conditions of households is also conducted about every 5 years and Mali's recent EPAM survey has potential if conducted regularly. Of course, regularity of household surveys is dependent on financial resources available, thus explaining the infrequency of surveys in the region.

The amount and content of migration information found on household surveys in our target countries varies widely, from the extremely detailed "Push and Pull" survey, to just a few questions added to general purpose households. Even among decennial Censuses there was wide variation in the types of questions asked, question wording, and response categories used. Limited geographic data for place of birth, nationality, and previous residence restricts the types of analysis which can be performed, especially with regard to international migrant stocks or flows by country of origin. Also, in their current state, most of these surveys have limited ability to distinguish between types of migrants, such as labour migrants, refugees, and IDPs.

What can be done to improve the content of these questionnaires? At the most basic level, expanding response categories to include more geographic detail on international migration (country of birth, nationality, and previous residence) should be done. This does increase coding burden, but if popular origin countries are pre-coded, would not add too much extra cost. The addition of a few emigration questions would also be helpful for studying the phenomenon, though this is rarely found on surveys in the region. Reason for migration questions could help identify refugees and IDPs, improving ability to distinguish them from other types of movements. Harmonization of questions and definitions used would also improve comparability of data across the region.

It is always tempting to call for the addition of migration questions to pre-existing surveys, as this is a simple way to increase scope of measurement. However, the gains of increased content must be weighed against increased cost of adding questions and response burden. Most general purpose surveys are conducted to measure something other than migration, which is only considered a variable of interest, not the topic of interest. For example, while migration should be seen as a critical component of a labour force survey, not all persons see it this way, thinking a labour force survey is an inappropriate vehicle for asking migration questions. Finally, samples used to conduct general purpose surveys are not geared towards finding international migrants, though if migration is a common enough phenomenon, this problem is minimized. The alternative

to adding questions to general purpose surveys is conducting specialized migration surveys, though these are rare at the national level. The last such project in West Africa was conducted in 1993, though financial restrictions limited future planned work with this project. Again, national representativeness, frequency, cost of conducting, and sustainability are all issues with specialized migration surveys.

It must be added that household surveys are not a panacea to the study of migration and are faced with their own limitations. Though much less expensive than population Censuses, surveys are still quite costly, and to be sustainable sources of funding must be found. Using pre-existing surveys reduces costs, but limits the number and types of questions which can be added. Data quality is dependent on the quality of sample design, which includes having a valid pre-existing sampling frame (normally taken from a Census), which is not always up-to-date in our target countries. Sample surveys are effective at measuring the characteristics and impact of migration, but less so at measuring the size of migration stocks and especially flows. A very large sample size is needed to measure specific country-to-country flows, and even then, depending on how weights are applied, invalid results are common. If sample surveys are used to measure flows, careful data review needs to be performed to make sure results are consistent with reality. Question wording is also an issue, as different wording can yield different results, making the harmonization of questions and definitions used critical for comparison purposes. Even when data is collected, it still needs to be (and funding planned for) processed, reviewed, and disseminated, which is often not the case after surveys are conducted. Finally, political stability is paramount to being able to conduct effective household surveys, and this further limits their effectiveness in the region.

Given the long-standing need for improved migration data in West and Central Africa, household surveys have the most potential for collecting accurate and timely data in the region. However, given the limitations faced by household surveys, it would also be in the best interest of countries to try and better develop other administrative data sources at their disposal, though given the high prevalence of irregular migration in the region, this is limited. Quality survey sample and questionnaire design is needed, as is funding to sustain such work. Ideally, a national migration survey would include all countries in the region (not just our target countries), using similar methodologies and questionnaire design, much as was done in the 1993 NES-MUWA study. Perhaps the recent pilot test in Ghana can help pave the way for such an endeavor. Without migration data from the entire region, the complete picture will remain unclear and the ability to effectively inform migration policy diminished.

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