

## **A cross-national comparison of internal and international migration aspirations.**

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#### **Introduction**

Internal migration is much more common than international migration. It has been suggested that this is partly due to blocked international mobility; many people who prefer international migration cannot afford the costs and instead migrate internally. Several studies have shown that internal and international migrants have different socio-economic profiles. Some studies suggest that internal migrants have a better socio-economic position in origin countries than international migrants (de Haas, 2008; Stark and Taylor, 1991). A higher level of education may generate sufficient economic opportunities in the home-country, so there is no need for international migration. Other studies however contend that internal migration is second-best, chosen by those who cannot afford the more costly – but potentially also more lucrative – international migration (Czaika, 2012; Adepoju, 1998; Skeldon, 2006) or do not have the necessary network (Massey et al., 1993). In that sense internal migration can be seen as a form of ‘involuntary *international* immobility’, to give a twist on Carling’s (2002) term.

This paper aims to contribute to the debate on the differences and similarities between internal and international migrants. Whereas most previous studies have looked at migration *flows*, this paper looks at migration *aspirations*. By looking at aspirations rather than behaviour the analyses focus on preferences rather than capabilities, thus side-stepping the influence of practical barriers to migration and the resulting involuntary immobility.

Data come from the EUMAGINE<sup>1</sup> survey conducted in Morocco, Turkey, Senegal and the Ukraine. These are all countries with a strong tradition of both internal and international migration. In each country four research areas with different migration profiles were chosen. The paper examines the levels of internal and international migration aspirations in each of the sixteen research areas and tests to what extent the two types of migration aspirations are influenced by socio-economic position, perceived quality of life, migration culture and migration networks.

#### *Hypotheses*

Following neoclassical economics, the expectation of a high probability of finding a job should increase migration aspirations with the expected probability of finding a job in the country of residence increasing internal migration aspirations (H1a) and a job abroad increasing international migration aspirations (H1b). Assuming that wages tend to be higher and facilities tend to be better in urban areas, we may expect that internal migration aspirations are lower there (H2a). According to the migration transition perspective, an urban environment will expose people to a wider range of life styles. This can be expected to lead to more life aspirations, which can translate into higher international migration aspirations (H2b). One of the mechanisms connecting urban migration to international migration aspirations is the presence of more information in the form of internet access and a network of (former) migrants. We expect that both internet access (H3) and a network of (former) international migrants (H4) will lead to higher international migration aspirations but will not affect internal migration aspirations.

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The relation between human capital and migration aspirations is contested. As the above overview showed, higher education may increase the opportunities at home, leading to more internal migration aspirations (H5a). Migration transition theory would predict education to also have a positive effect on international migration aspirations (H5b), however as the human capital collected in education may not be transferable, education can also have a dampening effect on international migration aspirations (H5c).

People are expected to mirror the aspirations, ie social norms, of their environment. Therefore people are more likely to aspire internal or international migration if they feel this is the norm (H6).

Massey et al have critiqued the predictions of neo-classical economics that migration would stop when equalisation of wages is achieved, they argue instead that migration ends “with the attainment of bearable conditions of life in areas of origin, after which people find migration not worth the effort” (1998: 9). This leads to the prediction that people who feel that the quality of life in the country of residence is good are less likely to want to migrate internationally (H7) given the higher costs associated with international migration.

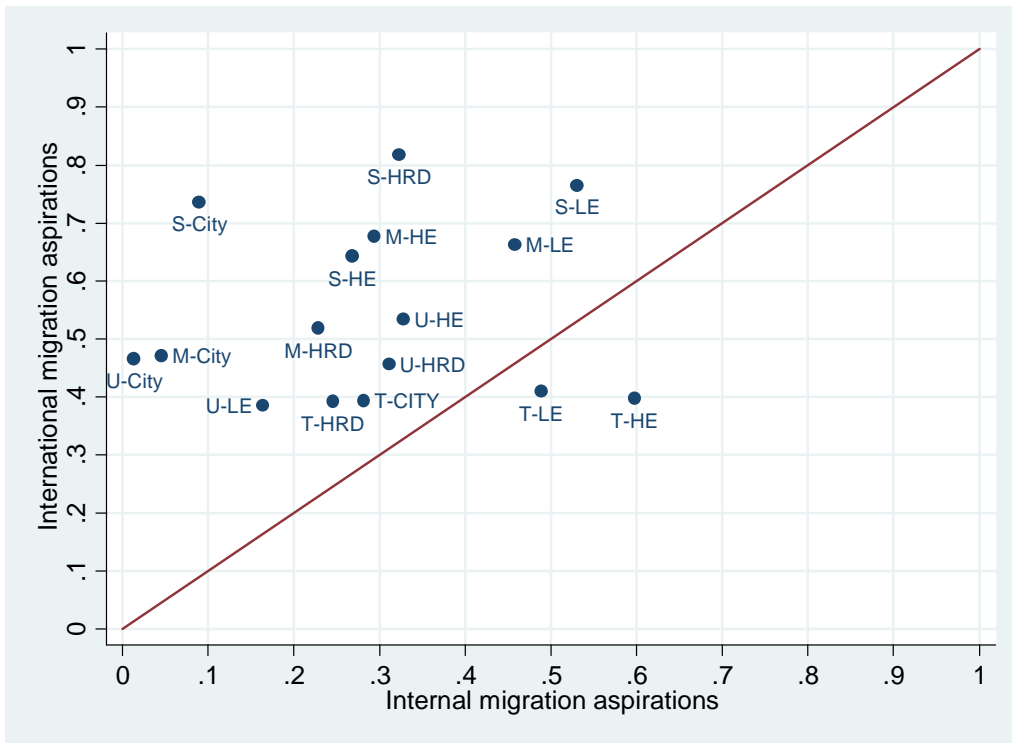
## **Data**

The analysis draws survey data from the *EUMAGINE-imagining Europe from the outside* project. The larger goal of the project was to examine the migration aspirations of people in Turkey, Morocco, Senegal and the Ukraine and investigate how these aspirations relate to perceptions of human rights and democracy in the country of residence and Europe. The project consists of a survey, in-depth interviews and ethnographic fieldwork. This paper focuses on the survey data. In each of the four EUMAGINE countries, four research areas were selected by the local research teams. In each country one area with a history of high emigration (HE), one area of comparable socio-economic status with a history of low emigration (LE), one area in a city (city) and one area with a human rights and democracy (HRD) were selected. Except for the cities, most areas contain both rural and urban parts.

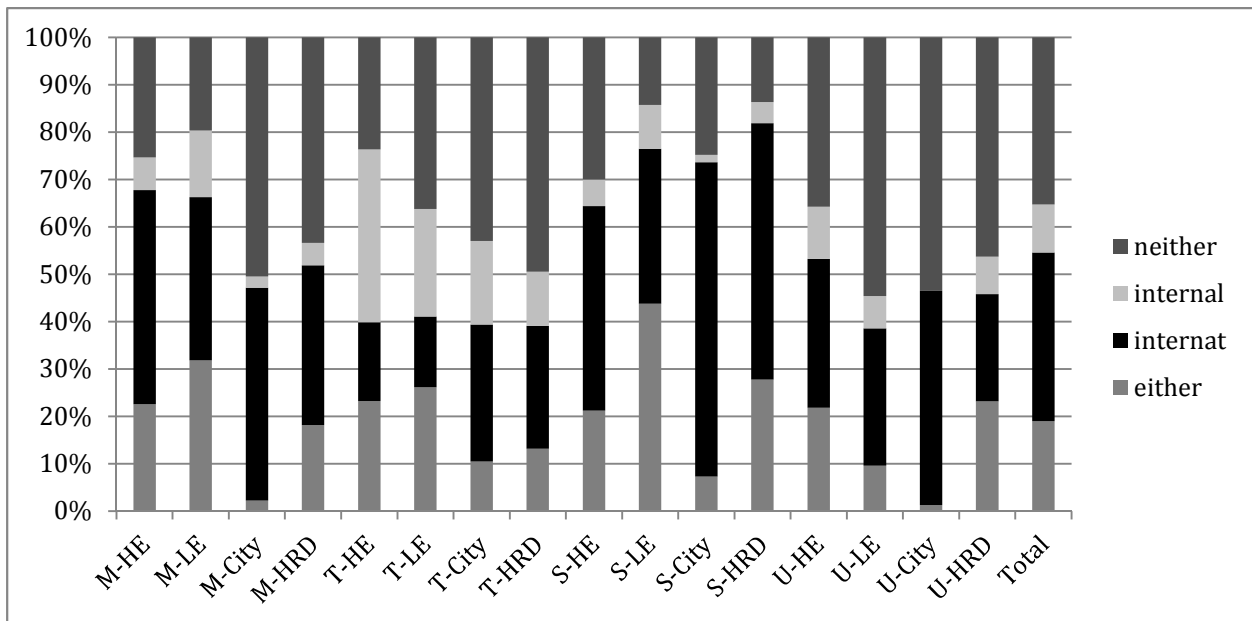
The EUMAGINE target group consists of 18-39 year olds because this is the age-group most likely to have migration aspirations. In 2011 a face-to-face survey with a representative sample of 500 members of the population aged 18-39 in each research area (making a total of  $16 \times 500 = 8,000$  surveys). Households were selected in a stratified cluster sample with random walks. The first part of the survey collected information on all household members, followed up by a personal survey with a randomly selected household member aged 18-39 (see Ersanilli et al., 2011; and Ersanilli, 2012 for details on data collection).

## **Results**

Figure 1 is a scatter plot of the proportion of internal and international migration aspirations in each of the sixteen research areas. International migration aspirations range from little under forty to over eighty per cent of the population, whereas internal migration aspirations are present among close to zero to sixty per cent. Given that international migration is much less frequent than internal migration, this may signal a high level of involuntary immobility. The diagonal line represents equal levels of international and internal migration aspirations. Only in the Turkish High Emigration (Emirdağ) and Low Emigration (Dinar) areas do internal migration aspirations exceed international migration aspirations. This may reflect the better economic situation in Turkey compared to the other countries; there are enough internal opportunities for people. In each country except Turkey, internal migration aspirations are much lower in the city. This is in line with the expectation that cities provide the most opportunities and internal migration has little to offer to those already in the city.



**Figure 1 Internal and international migration aspirations by research area (weighted).**



**Figure 2 Migration aspirations types by research area (weighted).**

Figure 2 presents the relative shares of four migration aspiration types: people who only aspire internal migration, people who only aspire international migration, people who aspire both types of migration and people who do not aspire to migrate. All four profiles are present in each research area, but the relative size differs strongly. In most areas the ‘neither’ and ‘international only’ are the most common profiles.

Results from multivariate analyses – conducted separately for each of the research areas - support the idea that migration culture has a strong impact on aspirations and also mostly affirms the role of networks. The other variables show a more mixed pattern.

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