Chapter 15
Capturing Irregular Migrations Through a Macro-sociological Lens: The Harga Process in Twelve Steps from North Africa to Europe

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15.1 Introduction

Migration is induced by a broad variety of reasons including the search for better economic or educational opportunities, the desire for family reunification, climate change or natural disasters and so on…In response to the growth of irregular migratory movements many countries are looking towards border control as a solution: closing all gates (land, sea and air) of entry to deter migration.

Actually, the phenomenon of illegal immigration has acquired extreme importance in the Mediterranean Sea Basin, propelled by media interest and the increase in the number of bodies recovered from the sea. The phenomenon represents a basic issue for countries around the Mediterranean Sea: France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Malta, Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.

In this chapter, we develop a model to measure the process of maritime illegal migration in twelve steps for Maghreb countries to European shores.[1] These steps provide a global view of this form of migration on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea, which is lacking up to now. The current literatures have constructed models highlighting only European actions and evidences. Southern countries are supposed to be passive actors. Our model covers each step of this migration process, with evidences from both Northern and Southern data: from the departure, through the

[1] The same model can be replicated for other sea routes, which is quite particular compared to air or land migration routes to Europe.

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journey, at the arrival, during the stay as well as return from the host countries to the country of origin and even re-immigration.

15.2 Theorical Backgrounds

Many definitions of irregular migration have been suggested by analysts. Our definition is derived from three international conventions. First, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 143 (1975), in its article 2, sets out the different forms of irregularity: from the country of departure, during their journey, on arrival or during their period of residence and employment mainly for workers (ILO, 1975). Second, the UN Convention on Migrant Workers and Members of their Family (1990) states that irregular migrants must have the same basic human rights as nationals (UN, 1990). Third, the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) considers smuggling as a criminal action. Smuggling of migrants is defined in article 3 of the Protocol supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as "*the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident (. . .) Article 6 of the Protocol requires the criminalization of such conduct and that of enabling a person who is not a national or a permanent resident to remain in the State. . .*". (UN, 2004).

In contrast to the wealth of literature on irregular migration by qualitative tools (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2018), we can note a paucity in terms of measuring this phenomenon. A handful of analysts have made an attempt to measure the phenomenon, albeit with difficulties due to lack of data.

Delaunay and Tapinos (1998) provide a first attempt to measure irregular migration, in the USA and in a sample of European countries. These authors suggest two methods to capture irregular migration, directly or indirectly through *three main steps* in the eight selected countries of destination in Europe exclusively (Delaunay & Tapinos, 1998). Irregular migrations are measured by identifying various information sources, at the entry, during the stay and their exit through expulsion. These three phases (Entry, Stay and Exit) are now fixed as basic insights. However, in this attempt, actions taken by the country of origin, either before the entry, on the journey or after the exit from the host country, are missing. Europe is seen as a fortress, with check in at entry points and at exit borders.

The essay of UNODC, one of its first reports on smuggling of migrants into, through and from North Africa, is rather descriptive. The attempt to measurement is just approximative and is well resumed by the authors "*An overall estimate of smuggling of migrants into, through and from North Africa has not yet been made*" (UNODC, 2010, p. 5). Partial estimations or guestimates are reproduced by the description of migrants and smugglers arrested at sea borders. The introduction

of sea borders provides another interesting picture of flows for harga form North Africa to Europe.

Tools to measure undocumented migrations (Massey, 2004) have been developed also in America, particularly from Mexico to the United States of America. The author reviewed data used by demographers and statisticians to measure immigration and suggest a new model based on ethnosurvey to study patterns and process of undocumented migration. The ethnosurvey is based on triangulation approach, using survey and life stories, compiling data not only on migrants, households but also on their communities and the origin nations. This method was first invented in 1987 and tested in the USA and other countries in South America.

Many countries have also developed surveys to capture irregular migration in North Africa. A regional survey on sub-Saharan in irregular situation, run with only a questionnaire, has been carried in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia in 2007 by an Italian NGO, funded by EU. (CISP/SARP, 2007).

A survey tools has been developed by EUROSTAT as part of the New Neighbourhood European Policy, known as MED-HIMS (Household International Migration Surveys in the Mediterranean countries). Such survey has been implemented in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia.[2]

The ethnosurvey model or MED-HIMS survey are costly and cannot be implemented as a permanent tool to collect and observe irregular migration. The UN just release an updated handbook to include migration module in censuses (UNDESA, 2020).

Another paper on irregular migration discards general estimations produced by various authors, and selects data on *"apprehensions, regularisations and migration statistics to assess the magnitude and recent evolution of irregular migration from West Africa to North Africa to Europe*" (De Haas, 2007, p. 37). In this paper, data produced by North African states on apprehension is deliberately undermined as "*they are not verifiable*". Such assertion is questionable. The authors deduce an estimation of irregular migrants during regularisation process. They compare released data on migrant's status and migration statistics. In this model, three sources, only in Europe, are supposed to be reliable.

A further model of measuring irregular migrations, designed some years later, is based on population statistics in three groups of indicators in two dimensions, inflows and outflows (Kraler & Reichel, 2011, p. 101). The three population components are: migration flows (immigration on entry and return on exit); demographic vital events (birth and death); and migration flows related to status change (from regular to irregular or vice-versa). This attempt to measure irregular migration contrasts with existing European statistics and provides a new dimension of irregular migrants, particularly from new countries admitted to the EU. That's why history matters. The changing status of a country, where their citizens were considered to be in irregular situation became regular *de facto* after their admission in EU...An attempt to measure maritime migration, quite in line with our object, deserves to

[2] Cf. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-neighbourhood-policy/enp-south/med-hims

be mentioned, as this form of migration is mainly a South-North movement. The authors argue that this maritime migration is quite well documented by Northern countries all over the world "*irregular maritime migration is able to be quantified in specific locations, namely the Caribbean Sea to the US, the Mediterranean Sea to Europe and the Indian Ocean to Australia*" (McAuliffe & Mence, 2014, p. 20). It is also noted that data on detections may not capture successful attempts. This paper quotes mainly data provided by International and Regional Agencies.

There is no doubt that the process of irregular migration is a complex one. These contributions are important progress made to measure the phenomenon in all its forms and facets. That said, maritime migration is quite challenging and a powerful insight for all actors involved in the process, McAuliff & Mence have tried to seize and updated a world picture (Macauliff & Koser, 2017). This global picture is again viewed strictly through Northern lenses. Southern countries remain blind spots and passive actors yielding only emigration flows threatening the security of Northern countries. These studies, whilst progressing in measuring the process of irregular migration, overlook important factors driving people at home countries to move through illegal channels to Northern countries.

Drivers of irregular migration are not the same as those of regular migrations. There is a third active actor involved in the process: smugglers. In this paper, we deliberately limit our analysis to migrants. The business of smugglers needs other tools for the quantification of many outcomes: the benefits of the business, their networks including transnational actors providing travel documents, logistics and lodgings.

First, it is important to know what we are measuring: stock or flows of migration? Inflows or outflows? Both measurements are important and must be done at the appropriate step. Measuring stock relates to the number of irregular migrants, as defined by the United Nations recommendations (UNDESA, 1998), either short- or long-term *migrants,* those staying *over 90 days* without a legal residence permit. Measuring flows is quite different. Irregular migration refers to the rule of law from the country of departure to the country of arrival.

Our attempt to measure is based on capitalising existing literatures. We have developed a global vision of the process of irregular migrations in twelve steps, with a focus on *harga* from North Africa to Europe crossing the Mediterranean Sea, grouped in three phases.

The notion of "harga" generally comes from the Maghreb countries, particularly Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, with only its pronunciation differing in the three countries. It means irregular immigration.

The word "haraga" denotes that the irregular immigrant does not respect the phases of legitimate or lawful immigration, i.e., the procedures and laws. They hide their identification papers, not show them, and sometimes do not carry them on their trips to Italy, or Spain, hoping to acquire a new identity.

The term "haraga" has become widespread in Algeria. It is no longer a term used by the youth only, particularly males, but has come to be used by females and even children. It is no longer a term denoting irregular immigration in the media, e.g., newspapers, but has become a term used in Algerian and Moroccan songs to express the phenomenon.

Fig. 15.1 Mapping the process of irregular migration process by sea in twelve steps

The process of irregular migration can be modelized in 12 steps and three phases. The first phase has three steps. Migration, regular or not, begins at the *entry box* with the intention to leave, then the decision-making begins with the first prospections and finally the departure starts with the choice of the route and the mode of departure. The final phase has three options: installation, return to the country of origin or new departure. Between these two phases, there is the "black box" that each analyst observes on its multi-facets' aspects. The measurement of migration flows (entry/exit) is carried out according to the regularities of border crossing. The detection of irregularities is done in the home country, during the journey, on arrival to and during the stay or overstay in the host country (Fig. 15.1).

This construction provides a macroscopic view of the process of irregular maritime migration. This means that a single small rotation of the view gives a shift of all narratives, myths and options and can transform irregular into regular migration.

The economic situation in 2019–2020, coupled with the effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, has given rise to temporary border closures. The strict control of border movements has significantly changed the perception of regular and/or irregular migration. This change brings to light another paradox: an upsurge of irregular migration by sea from Maghreb countries to Europe (Boubakri et al., 2021). While the COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented travel restrictions, criminal networks active in smuggling and trafficking in human beings have continued to thrive (EUROPOL, 2022).

The three following sections give a deep insight of our model: the entry box, the black box and the final exit phase with their detailed steps. At each step, we provide evidences produced and data released by all actors.

15.2.1 Entry Box with Three Steps, Mainly Observed in the Country of Departure

These first steps are not relevant to the stock of migrants. Persons involved in are not yet migrants but potential migrants or *migrants to be*. As we focus on North Africa,

this concept comprises also "*transit migrant*", coming from a third country (Sub-Sahara but also from Asia).

Step one relates to the desire or the aspirations expressed by people to migrate. The intention of migration provides the intensity of expected flows, quite different to prediction. Many surveys have been carried on this topic. Gallup runs a world survey on potential migration: more than 750 million persons would move if they could, an average of 15% worldwide. Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries account for 24%.[3]

A recent survey shows a decline in *global talent's* intention to move, from 63% in 2014 to 50% in 2020. The rates of potential migration are above world's average for Maghreb countries: 92% for Tunisia, 84% for Morocco and 83% for Algeria (BCG, 2021). Other regional surveys (Afro & Arab Barometers) also provide data on the intention to move. The Arab Barometer survey[4] (wave 5) released a global migration intention rate of 30% in 2018–2019. The first three North African countries registered a rate above the average: 39% for Morocco, 34,5% for Algeria, 30,3% for Tunisia and only Egypt is under the average, with 22,9%. The Afro-Barometer also computed data on the desire to move to other countries with an average of 21% for North African countries.[5] We note a difference of 9 points between the means of these two surveys for North Africans.

The SAHWA survey (2015), targeting youths, goes deeper to capture the intention to move, even irregularly, if there is an opportunity to do so. Youth (15–29 years' old) willing to migrate irregularly are from Lebanon, 15.6%, from Egypt 4.5%, from Tunisia 16.9%, Algeria 27.2%, and Morocco 35.5% (Dibeh et al., 2018).

Step two goes further behind the intention, the dream or the aspiration to migrate by detecting whether there is a plan or an action taken to move. People who desire to move may be just dreaming and others are lacking the means to do so. The preparedness to move is also an important step, because the target country and the route are identified. So, there is an awareness of the cost and the risks of irregularity. This step is sometimes underscored - only desire and capabilities are supposed to be the core momentum (Carling & Collins, 2017; Carling & Schewel, 2018). Three degrees of preparedness can be identified, in the same model as for return migration (Cassarino, 2008). The first degree is closer to capabilities (concept of Sen) and migration *habitus* (concept of Bourdieu). Migration is a family tradition or a tribal ritual initiation to adulthood. The second degree pertains to the deep aspiration of people to change their social status and climb the class ladder faster (concept of Sayad). The third degree refers to individuals who are forced to move due to an

[3] Gallup website: https://news.gallup.com/poll/245255/750-million-worldwide-migrate.aspx

[4] https://www.arabbarometer.org/surveys/arab-barometer-wave-v/

[5] Cf. afro barometer website: https://afrobarometer.org/publications/updata-ing-narrative-about-african-migration

unexpected event. Even, in this case, the readiness to move is conditioned by the level of resilience. There is a psychological preparation to move. By measuring the preparedness to move, any change in the environment, as well as in social conditions, is taken into account.

The Gallup Survey provides such data: the preparation rate worldwide is 7.6% for those who hope to move during the next 12 months, but only 3% have really taken some initiatives to do so. The Afro-Barometer, as stated above, reveals that, out of 21% of North African citizens having the intention to move, 24% were rather passive, 36% were planning to move by the next 12 months and 38.4% were currently making preparations to move (like applying for a visa...). On the whole, the Afro-Barometer confirms that 2.7% of North Africans are actively planning to move, the most important for European or North American countries. There is a high probably of visa refusal for the Maghreban particularly. The two surveys (Gallup and Afro Barometer) conclude with a quite similar rate: around 3% of people have engaged in active preparation.

Step three concerns the decision to move. There are many theories on the determinants of the decision to migrate. No need to recall these theories. The best decision's tool to measure the probability of migration from North Africa to Europe is the visa application particularly for European Countries.[6] Failing to have a visa to travel to Europe can change the decision to migrate and the route chosen may be reconsidered. The latest trends from EU Statistics show around 25% of visa applications were refused (2019), with Algeria the top Maghreb country (40%).

The decision to migrate by sea, during the COVID-19 pandemic, with closed borders and visa application centres, seems to be the only option left for potential migrants. As with prohibition, during this period, organized criminal groups react quickly, adapt and thrive. Demand for smuggling services for harga was very high; and a low risk of detection and punishment for the criminals behind this crime. Jet Ski was used to cross the Detroit of Gibraltar...

This tool (visa) is used also in political negotiations or trade-offs between states for mobility. EU negotiations with third country to give more or less visa sometimes depends on readmission agreements. The action taken by the French government to reduce visa is quite eloquent.[7] The number of visa deliveries to Algeria and Morocco was to be halved from 2020 levels, and by a third for Tunisia, after diplomatic efforts with the three North African countries failed. This drastic decision is taken by the fact that these countries are refusing to take back their nationals in irregular stay in France.

[6] It is quite evident that Europe is the most important destination for North African, surely less for Egyptians who move to KSA and other Arab Gulf countries. Within Europe, France remains the main destination country for the three ex-colonised maghreban countries.

[7] https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/france-to-grant-fewer-visas-to-countries-like-algeria-morocco-tunisia-for-refusing-to-take-back-illegal-migrants/

15.2.2 The Black Box: Six Steps from Country of Origin Through the Mediterranean Sea to Europe

These steps are very important as they concern both the "migrant to be" and people staying over three months with an irregular status. This sequence provides first, information from the country of departure's efforts to combat irregular migration on different routes (land, air and sea). The other steps are based on data collected by international institutions and by the host country.

Our focus will be on the sea route, though a combination of routes is also possible. Some people are arrested on the Southern Mediterranean shores before boarding. Others are rescued, drowned or reported as "*missing migrants*". The *successful travel* does not mean *successful entry* in the country of arrival. Some people are arrested at entry. Others are arrested on land, after their arrival by sea. These people arrested may claim for asylum and are classified as asylum seekers and finally many others are invited to leave the host country after a fixed period. Only, those who sojourn more than three months without leaving the country are considered as irregular migrants, are recorded in annual flows in institutional statistics. The stock, as we will see later on, remains unknown and is revealed partially under a regularisation process.

Step four sets up the scene for migration routes and focus mainly on sea routes. Statistics are produced by the *countries of departure* on the maritime migration irregular process on *Haraga* and smugglers. These data reflect North African countries level of management of sea border control. Morocco detected 27,000 irregular migrants and dismantled more than 60 smuggling networks in 2019.[8] In Algeria, official statistics report that 8184 Algerian *haraga* and 3085 foreigners were arrested, and 190 smuggling networks dismantled.[9] A recent report, published on Tunisia, reveals that "*Between January 2020 and mid-December 2021, Tunisian security and defence forces intercepted 35,040 irregular migrants in the country's littoral areas and off its shores, two-thirds of whom were Tunisian nationals. Over the same period, authorities in Italy recorded the disembarkation of 28,124 Tunisians, as well as roughly 6000 migrants from other countries who left from the country*" (Herbert, 2022). On the whole, for Tunisia alone, more than 60,000 people were engaged in *harga* during 2020 and many others were missing. It should be noted, also that Maghreb security coastal forces provide data on *haraga* bodies that are washed ashore.

Step five informs on missing migrant on the journey: how many migrants have disappeared or drowned? This gap has remained undocumented for long. The

[8] The press reports that "*The Moroccan police have dismantled 150 criminal networks that were active. These networks allegedly belonged to irregular migration organisations, an illegal movement that attempts to organise the movement of migrants outside the rules of the countries of origin or host countries*" https://atalayar.com/en/content/morocco-dismantles-150-networks-involved-irregular-migration, access on 24th December 2021.

[9] Data released by the Algerian "Gendarmerie" in 2019.

Table 15.1 Evolution of refusal at entry border from 2011–2019

Country	Years									Average
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
DZA	50	50	50	75	85	110	160	105	160	94
EGY	190	215	15	15	15	35	15	15	15	59
LBY	15	5	0	0	10	30	20	5	20	12
MAR	335	565	490	560	595	1010	1885	1955	1510	989
TUN	85	750	130	130	175	135	135	40	130	190
Total	675	1585	685	780	880	1320	2215	2120	1835	1344

Source: Eurostat (2022)

Mediterranean Sea is described as the deadliest zone in the world. Attempted crossings since 2014 rise up to 23,859 missing – i.e. an average of nearly 3000 per year (2014–2021). The main missing cause is people "*drowned at sea*" with 92%.[10] Apart from IOM collected facts, other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) help rescue "migrants to be" in the Mediterranean Sea. No data are disclosed on these people rescued and the outcomes.

Step six records entries in Europe by travellers coming from North Africa. Data are collected by Eurostat on different routes (by sea, air or land). *Refusal at entry* is well documented. Eurostat published data on migration by different routes. An assessment of the main migration routes is possible using the *refusal at entry* as a proxy. Refusal at entry, from 2013 to 2020, with an average of 83% at the land border, 14% at the air border and *only 3% at the sea border.*

Eurostat data records an average of 74% for Morocco from 2011 to 2019, and 26% for other North African countries. Refusal at sea border for passengers embarking on regular move but with no or falsified documents and visas (Table 15.1).

Step seven brings us again to the arrival in Europe, focusing now only on the irregular flows by sea routes, as compiled by the FRONTEX for Maghreb countries. According to data released by this EU agency in 2020, out of 42,000 *haraga* arrested by sea at European Borders, nearly 40% came from Morocco, and 30% from Tunisia and Algeria (Fig. 15.2).

The trends of apprehension of harga during 2021 coming from North African countries[11] by sea, through all routes, to Europe show a high intensity of flows by month even during the COVID19 pandemic. Figure 15.3 shows the trends the flows from 2018 to 2021.

Step eight relates to asylum seekers from North Africa in Europe. According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data (Table 15.2), the refusal rate of asylum in 2021 is 54% on average for the Maghreb countries, with a highest rate for Tunisia.

Algerian asylum demand in the EU is increased by twofold from 2014 to 2016 and then progressively slopes downwards. Moroccan demand multiplied by five

[10] Cf. IOM website, https://missingmigrants.iom.int/fr/donnees

[11] ISO Codes for North African countries are used: Algeria (DZA), Egypt (EGY), Libya (LBY), Morocco (MAR) and Tunisia (TUN).

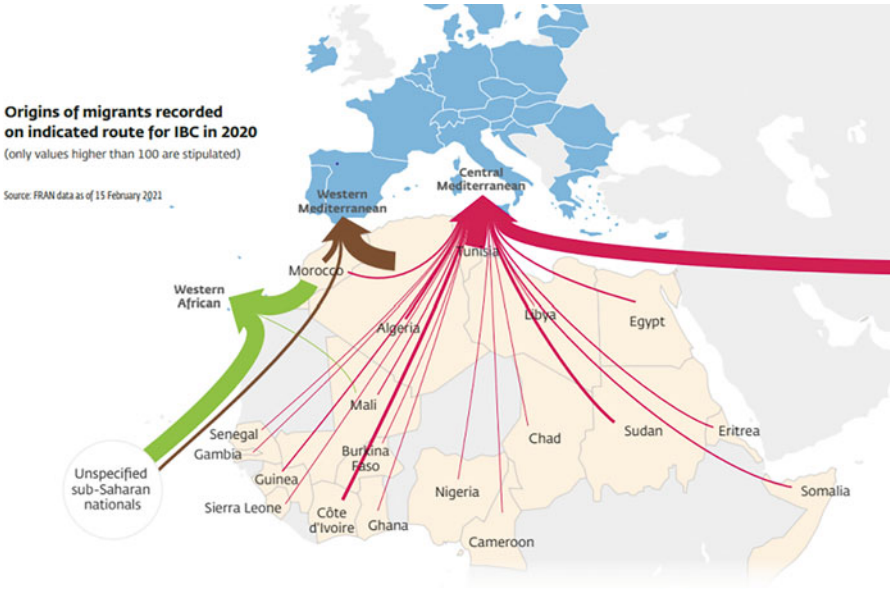

Fig. 15.2 Mapping mixed migration flows to South Europe. (Source. Risk Analysis Report 2021, FRONTEX (Cf. https://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Risk_Analysis/Risk_Analysis_2021.pdf))
This map gives an insight of mixed migration flows in 2021 from Africa and Asia, though North African countries and the Mediterranean Sea to South of Europe, mainly to Italy and Spain. It is clear that Maghreb Countries are used as gateways to Southern Europe

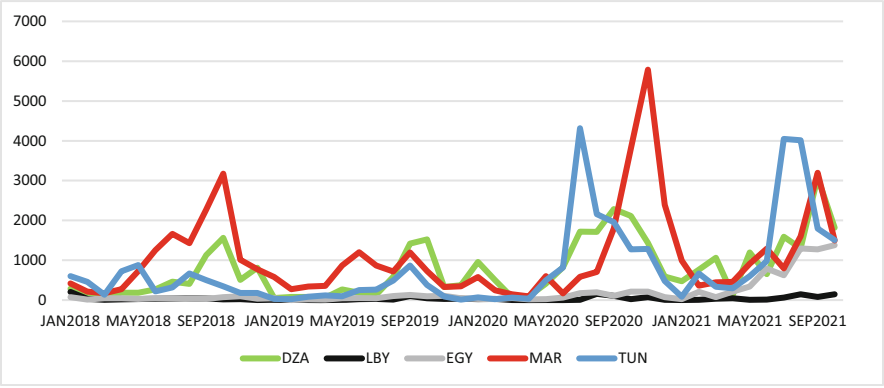

Fig. 15.3 Apprehension of haraga by sea (2018–2021). (Source: Data extracted from FRONTEX, 2022)
Out of 53,330 persons arrested at sea border, 29,4% came from TUN, followed by MAR with 28,2% and DZA and 16,3 from EGY and only 1% form LBY. A peak is observed for TUN during the summer with more than 4000 interceptions

Table 15.2 Decision for Asylum Seekers

	Country		
Decisions	DZA	MAR	TUN
Recognized decision	418	339	98
Complementary protection	81	114	96
Rejection decision	2943	2674	1168
Otherwise closed	2376	1540	614
Total decision	5818	4667	1976

Source: Data extracted from UNHCR

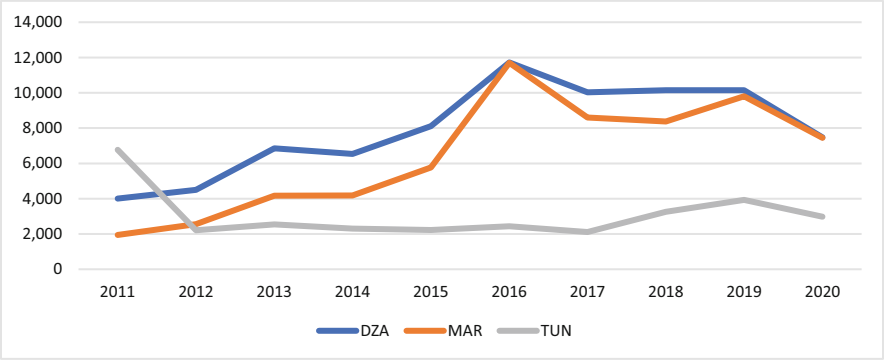

Fig. 15.4 Asylum trends (2014–2021)

during the same period. Tunisians falls lightly after the exceptional upsurge in 2011 but finally rises up, as well as Moroccan in 2021 (Fig. 15.4).

Step nine deals with flows of irregular migrants in Europe. Up to now, we don't have a global stock of irregular migrants in Europe. Data on flows are collected and released by Eurostat (Fig. 15.5).

Out of a flow of 618,000 migrants in irregular situation (2017), 13% came from North Africa. A 10-year trend shows that Morocco stands alone, with more than 40% of all North African migrants. A recent study on the stock of irregular migrants in Spain has approximately the same structure: less than 10% of migrants are from Africa, half of migrants came from Morocco (Fanjul & Gálvez-Iniesta, 2020).

Statistics on flows do not give the real size of irregular migrants in Europe. During the COVID19 pandemics, some EU countries have considered an exceptional regularisation process for migrants.

15.2.3 Exit Box: Settlement, Return Migration and New Departure

The exit box deals with establishment of migrant in the host country under a regularisation process. The change of status means an exit of irregularity. Second

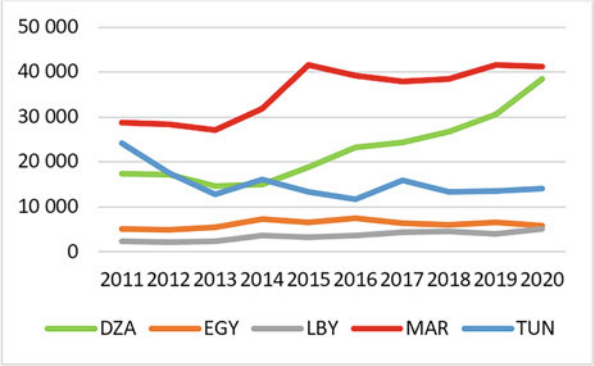

Fig. 15.5 Irregular Migration Flows from NA to EU (2011–2020). (Source: Extracted from Eurostat (2022))
These data shed light on the irregular trends during the last decade, including not only the post Arabs' uprising, the Hirak in Algeria but also the COVID19 pandemic. The annual flow of irregular migration for DZA is on a constant rise since 2013 and will probably join the Moroccan trending

auto-exit or forced exit are return migration and reintegration in the country of origin. The final step concerns those migrants who leave again the country of origin for overseas. It is not surprising that returnees try again to migrate (with or without visa) to the same target country or other destinations.

Step ten deals with the regularisation of the stock of irregular migrations. Exceptional data are provided by Italy and Spain, in response to migrant demands but also to the economic needs for seasonal labour during the COVID-19 pandemic. Regularisation refers to the process of offering migrants who are in a country illegally the opportunity to legalise or normalise their immigration status, whether it is on a temporary or permanent basis. Regularisation does not mean granting citizenship (naturalisation). There are many types of regularisation. There is also a wide range of criteria required of migrants, distinguishing these programmes from general amnesties applied to all irregular migrants. Regularization process exist in all countries.

Overall, 220,000 people applied for regularisation in 2020, just under a third of the estimated stock of 690,000 undocumented migrants in Italy.[12] This policy does not yield the expected results.

In the case of Spain, there have been two types of measures concerning the treatment of migrants during the COVID-19 outbreak, concerning work and residence permits and the use of immigration detention centres. Approximately 430,000 immigrants currently reside irregularly in Spain, or 12% of the total migrant population.

The whole of the African continent contributes 9.2% (around 43,000 people) of irregular immigrants residing in Spain. Of these, more than half come from a single country,

[12] https://reliefweb.int/report/italy/italy-flawed-migrant-regularization-program

> *Morocco, which also accounts for one in four non-EU foreigners residing in Spain. Nigerians and Senegalese constitute the only prominent Sub-Saharan nationalities, with inconsequential irregular immigration figures when compared to other origins*. (Fanjul & Gálvez-Iniesta, 2020, p. 9)

Step eleven introduces return migration. There is a wealth of literature on returnees from Europe. In North Africa, we have run a survey, some fifteen years ago, on Maghreban returnees from Europe (MIREM, 2008). This survey designs a three-stages questionnaire, capturing the different phases: entry, stay and exit. In this survey, returnees were not all in irregular situation. Voluntary return of irregular migrants must not be confused with harga. Return of haraga is quite different. Some of them, intercepted on arrival by sea, are not migrant. During the COVID pandemic, these haraga were ordered to leave.

Deportation is an act of a state in the exercise of its sovereignty in removing a foreigner from its territory to another place after the refusal of admission or termination of permission to remain. The trends of deportation from Europe of Maghreban are as follows (Fig. 15.6).

Official data release by FRONTEX reports that 298,190 irregular migrants were given a "return decision" by EU member states in 2019. Out of this, 138,860 people were effectively returned (either forcibly or voluntarily) i.e. 46% due to the world health crisis and closed borders.

Step twelve is related to re-emigration after spending a time lapse without any change in their status. The change of countries may also include change of identity and nationality. Returnees, as well as people deported to the country of origin, may also try again to migrate by other routes or other destinations. Re-emigration is not fairly documented. Data are nowadays collected by all countries with biometric travel document and the use of artificial intelligence in the management of migration (OECD, 2022). The likelihood of these policies is not far from the technique of marked-recapture used for animals in migration and re-immigration. Border control system can detect false or true travel document with false visa. An example of re-emigration pattern is provided by a study in Sweden (Monti, 2019): 10% of North African returned to their home country whilst 6,9% were on route to unknown

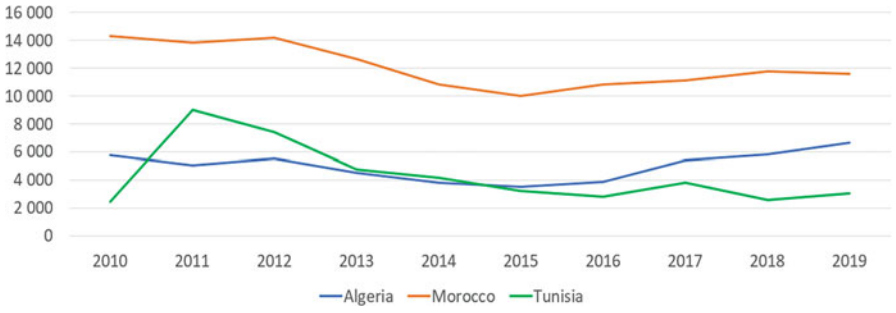

Fig. 15.6 Trends of Maghreban deportation from EU27 (2010–2019). (Source: Eurostat Data, 2020)

destination. It is quite relevant to weight re-emigration of former irregular migrants and the more so, for haraga. Some life stories report that haraga, even intercepted, do not give up easily and try again to reach the Northern Mediterranean shores. New field studies are running on re-integration of haraga in their home country. Failures of re-integration may also be a driver to re-emigration.

15.3 Conclusion

In this paper we have attempted a synthesis of the different stages of the process of irregular migration. Further in-depth studies will be necessary to consolidate the model, to estimate the volume of irregularities observed to achieve this global vision.

A first simulation of the model gives a share of around 3% of potential migrants who have taken the initiative to leave. We have also seen that the plan may not be successful: the decision can be revised. A third of potential migrants will be intercepted and thus experienced the end of the dream. Some will meet their death; some will be saved *in extremis* by NGOs in the Mediterranean Sea. The Mediterranean Sea has become an open-air cemetery. Others will be apprehended on entering the Northern shores. There are also many more unknowns. They can also be arrested, after a successful entry by sea, during transit at land borders. Finally, migrants may be regularised (perhaps naturalised in the long run) and some migrants will be deported or return voluntarily and get out of the exit box. The return process in the country of origin needs also to be evaluated- Returnees, if not well integrated, will try again to migrate regularly or irregularly.

A focus on each step of the irregular migration process offers several avenues for not only a mutual understanding of the drivers acting behind the scene either in Northern or Southern Mediterranean countries. Hence, strategical and global actions can be devised to cope with this phenomenon and to develop secure and sure migration paths.

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