"Everyone wants to leave"

Transit migration from Khartoum — The role of information and social media campaigns

Jan-Paul Brekke and Audun Beyer

Contents

Foreword

This report explores the role of information and information campaigns in migrants' decisions in transit. We did the fieldwork in Khartoum, Sudan, in 2018. In March 2019, there was a turbulent regime change in Sudan. It is still unclear whether conditions for migrants in Khartoum will improve or become more challenging.

To be able to do fieldwork in Sudan, we were dependent on help from local partners. We received substantial help from the Norwegian Embassy in Khartoum, from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In particular, we are grateful for the help of Cato Næverdal, who served as our contact point throughout the study and helped organize the fieldwork. Likewise, we thank Veera Tua Jansa and Asfand Waqar for facilitating the interviews, helping recruit the informants, and sharing their knowledge of the transit migrant communities in Khartoum. The staff at the IOM, who operated the Migrant Resource and Response Center, were very helpful throughout our stay.

Furthermore, this study would not have been possible without the 52 migrants who shared their experiences, reflections, and aspirations with us. The migrants explained to us in detail the challenges they face in Khartoum and the dilemmas they experience in deciding on whether to stay in Sudan or move north through the desert. We extend a deeply felt gratitude to our interviewees for sharing their thoughts.

Oslo, June 2019

The authors

Sammendrag

Forfatter   Jan-Paul Brekke og Audun Beyer

Tittel   "Everyone wants to leave"
Transit migration from Khartoum —
The role of information and social media campaigns

Sammendrag   Hvilken rolle spiller informasjon for migranters beslutninger i transitt? I denne studien svarer vi på dette spørsmålet på bakgrunn av intervjuer med flyktninger og migranter i Khartoum, Sudan. I intervjuene med hovedsakelig eritreere og etiopiere utforsket vi spesielt hvordan informasjonskampanjer på sosiale medier kan påvirke valgene til disse migrantene.

Dette er kampanjer som er finansiert av myndigheter i europeiske land og av internasjonale organisasjoner for å informere og advare migranter som vurderer å ta seg irregulært til Europa. Budskapet i kampanjene er at migrantene bør se mulighetene som finnes i hjemlandet, at reiseruten er farlig og at ikke alle får lov til å bli værende i Europa.

Tidligere studier viser at denne typen kampanjer gjør det mulig å presentere informasjon til målgrupper som er vanskelige å nå på andre måter. Vi presenterte tre kampanjer for informantene i Khartoum: den norske Facebook-kampanjen «Stricter asylum regulations in Norway», kampanjen «Telling the real story» fra FNs høykommissær for flyktninger, og kampanjen «Aware Migrants», som er finansiert av International Organization for Migration og italienske myndigheter.

Migrantene vi traff var allerede underveis og få hadde sett akkurat disse kampanjene. Intervjuene ga en anledning til å vise dem kampanjene og få deres reaksjoner. Vi brukte tid på å vise dem de tilhørende sosiale medie-postene, nettsider og videoer for å få høre deres oppfatninger om blant annet avsendere, mottakere, design, format, plattform og budskap. Kan slike informasjonskilder påvirke transitt-migranters beslutninger om videre-migrasjon?

For å forstå den rollen informasjon spiller må man kjenne til handlingssituasjonen som migrantene står i. Det er ikke et enkelt valg som migrantene og flyktningene i Khartoum opplevde. Forholdene i transitt var tøffe og mange opplevde at de ikke kunne vende hjem. Samtidig var de klar over at reise videre gjennom ørkenen og over Middelhavet var svært farlig.

Tidligere forskning har vist at offentlige informasjonskampanjer rettet mot migranter kan gjøre det mulig å nå frem til målgrupper som er vanskelige å nå på andre måter. Det har vært mindre forskning på hvordan kampanjene blir oppfattet.

Vi fant også at migrantene hadde god tilgang på informasjon og at samtlige informanter hadde smarttelefoner. De brukte sosiale media aktivt og var generelt interessert i informasjon om for eksempel reiseruter og Europa. Det tekniske ligger med andre ord til rette hvis myndigheter ønsker å kommunisere med disse gruppene.

Videre fant vi at migrantene var positive til innholdet i disse kampanjene, men at de opplevde at de allerede kjente til det som ble fortalt. De så ikke noe behov for å få denne informasjonen. De kjente for eksempel godt til farene ved å reise videre; farene ved å krysse ørkenen; overgrepene som kunne skje underveis og til den farefulle siste etappen over Middelhavet. Dette svekket potensialet for at kampanjer skal kunne endre holdninger og atferd, spesielt når de er rettet mot mennesker som allerede har forlatt hjemlandet.

Når informantene i denne studien var tvilende til effekten av slike kampanjer kan det også ha sammenheng med at disse migrantene allerede var underveis. De var i transitt, og mange valg var allerede tatt, enten av dem selv eller av deres foreldre.

Samtidig var det en rekke andre forhold som påvirket transittmigrantenes situasjon i Khartoum, og dermed deres valg om å bli eller dra videre. I rapporten beskriver vi pressfaktorene som økte deres motivasjon for reise videre. Disse pressfaktorene omfattet blant annet sikkerhetssituasjonen, trakassering, deres økonomiske situasjon, boligutfordringer og adgang til arbeidsmarkedet. I tillegg satt mange med en opplevelse av at det ikke var noen fremtid for dem i Sudan. Og de eritreerne og etiopierne vi møtte så ikke retur til hjemlandet som aktuelt på det tidspunktet. Resultatet var, som en av migrantene sa, at Khartoum var et sted «alle ville forlate».

En annen grunn til at kampanjene kan ha begrenset effekt er troverdigheten til avsenderne av disse kampanjene; mottakerlandenes myndigheter og internasjonale organisasjoner. Informantene hadde større tiltro til andre informasjonskilder som familie, venner og folk som allerede hadde reist videre.

Til tross for kunnskapen om farene ved å reise videre, så ikke transittmigrantene Khartoum som noe blivende sted. Mange levde under tøffe forhold. Flere hadde lett etter lovlige veier inn i Europa, men hadde gitt opp. I stedet jobbet de for skaffe penger til reisen og ventet utålmodig på at rutene skulle bli litt tryggere så de kunne reise nordover.

Dette var det de fortalte oss. At de ville dra. Samtidig så vi at mange hadde blitt værende i denne transitt-situasjonen lenge. Noen hadde vært der i måneder, andre i år, og noen i flere tiår.

Emneord   Migrasjon, flyktninger, kommunikasjon, sosiale medier, politikk

English summary

Authors   Jan-Paul Brekke and Audun Beyer

Title   "Everyone wants to leave"
Transit migration from Khartoum — The role of information and social
media campaigns

Summary   In this study, we ask what role information plays in migrants' decision
making in transit. In particular, we are interested in the potential impact of
social media campaigns.

As part of the study, we interviewed 52 refugees and migrants in Khartoum,
Sudan. When asked about the role of information, they immediately pointed
to the range of other factors that affect their decisions besides information.
Our goal then became to place the role of information and campaigns in
the context of other determinants, such as the migrants' aspirations, lack of
alternatives, and push factors in transit.

A key finding in the study is that all informants had access to smartphones
and were active users of social media. The migrants' access to this tech-
nology provides a solid base for communication that potentially also
includes government and NGO actors. Although only a few of the migrants
we met had seen the particular campaigns we presented to them, their
comments gave valuable input on the role information plays in their precari-
ous situation in transit, the potential of information campaigns, and the
context in which such information is perceived.

We presented the migrants with three social media campaigns initiated by
governments and NGOs. These were the Norwegian Facebook campaign
"Stricter asylum regulations in Norway," the Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Refugees campaign "Telling the real story," and the
International Organization for Migration/Italian campaign "Aware migrants."

We showed them the campaigns asked them how they perceived them and
whether information provided through such campaigns could contribute to
changing their and others' attitudes about onward migration.

We found that although the migrants were sympathetic to the framing of the
content, they felt that they already had the information they needed. They
knew about the conditions in the camps; many had stayed there on their
way to Khartoum and were well aware of the risks associated with irregular
migration through Libya and Egypt. There were ample reports from
migrants who had gone before them. The migrants were already in transit
and did not feel they needed the information. This lack of perceived need
reduced the potential for government-sponsored campaigns to change the
migrants' attitudes and behaviors. In this report, we discuss the methodo-

logical difficulties of evaluating government campaigns directed at migrants.

The interviews revealed that the migrants experienced several strong push factors in transit, creating the general perception of Khartoum as a place that "everyone wants to leave." These push factors included safety issues, poor economic conditions, housing challenges, lack of access to the labor market, and a general bleak outlook. The study also found that smugglers are often integral parts of migrant communities.

Information on travel routes, smugglers, and prospects in Europe was easily available to transit migrants in Khartoum. Although they had access to several sources of information, including traditional media, an active use of social media made it easy to stay in continuous contact with family and friends in their home country and along migration routes, people residing in transit, and those already living in potential destination countries.

Index terms   Migration, refugees, communication, social media, policy

1 Social media campaigns and secondary migration

The title of this report refers to the very first interview we conducted with migrants in transit in Khartoum. Our goal was to study the effects of social media campaigns, including their impact on secondary migration. The informant in this first interview was an Eritrean woman in her mid-20s. We asked her to describe the situation of transit migrants in Khartoum. She answered, "No one wants to stay," and she later confirmed this by saying, "Everyone wants to leave."

As we continued our fieldwork in Sudan, we obtained a somewhat more nuanced understanding of migrants' aspirations. Although they wanted to leave, they also saw a range of reasons for not going just yet. They appeared well informed about the dangers of moving on.

In this report, we describe and discuss the findings from our interviews with 52 informants in Khartoum, highlighting the factors that influence their choices in transit—specifically, their decision to remain in transit, go back to their country of origin, or move on. For most migrants staying in the Sudanese capital, moving on meant traveling north to Libya or Egypt before crossing the Mediterrenean.

This route is known as the middle Mediterranean route, distinguishing it from the eastern route (Turkey–Greece) and the western route (Morocco–Spain). Khartoum is a key transit hub for migrants coming from the Horn of Africa, and it serves as a gathering place for people on their way from, among other countries, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia.

The study in Sudan was initated by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security. The Ministry was interested in determining the effects of social media campaigns aimed to inform and influence migrants who are considering going to Europe. Similar to several other European countries, Norway launched a campaign following the 2015 refugee and migration crisis. The Norwegian version was Facebook-based and called "Stricter asylum regulations in

Norway".[1] The question was whether this type of campaign had an effect on migrants' understanding of their situation and on their decision to stay, go back, or move on. We included two broader social media campaigns in the study to cover a wider range of such initiatives: the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) "Telling the real story" and the International Organization for Migration (IOM)/Italy's "Aware migrants".[2] We describe the campaigns below.

A key finding in this study is that all informants were active users of social media. The migrants' access to this technology provides a solid base for communication that potentially also includes government and NGO actors. Although only a few of the migrants we met had seen the particular campaigns we presented to them, their comments on the campaigns' design, format, and messaging gave valuable input on the role information plays in their precarious situation in transit.[3] The interviews also opened for a discussion on the potential of information campaigns and on the crucial role of the context in which such information is perceived.

Research questions

The overarching research question asked in this study is as follows: What are the (potential) effects of social media information campaigns aimed at irregular migrants in transit? To answer this question, and using the situation in Khartoum as point of departure, we need to describe and understand the following list of secondary questions:

• How do transit migrants in Khartoum perceive their options regarding onward migration?

• Do they have access to the Internet, do they have smartphones, and in what ways do they use them?

• How do these migrants perceive social media campaigns aimed at influencing their migratory decisions? How do they interpret the campaigns' message,

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1   Beyer et al. (2017); Brekke & Thorbjørnsrud (2018). The campaign was still active in 2017 and 2018. Current campaign page: https://nettsteder.regjeringen.no/asylumregulations/351-2/
2   UNHCR: http://tellingtherealstory.org/ and IOM/Italy: https://awaremigrants.org/
3   As will be explained in Chapter 2, the selection of informants (migrants in transit) may have influenced the reach of the three campaigns. The Norwegian campaign alone is said to have reached 11 million migrants, including in the Tigrinja-speaking region (Eritrea and parts of Ethiopia) (https://forskning.no/innvandring-medievitenskap-samfunnskunnskap/skremmekampanjen-nadde-mange-mulige-asylsokere/325821)

format, and design? Can social media campaigns influence migratory decisions? If so, in what way?

- How does information (types, sources, legitimacy, and platforms) affect migratory decisions?

- How do transit migrants factor in the risk for physical and mental harm (to themselves and to their families) when considering onward migration?

During the fieldwork in Khartoum, we quickly became aware that to understand the role of information and the potential of campaigns in influencing migratory decisions, we had to include other factors that affected their situation in transit. In this report we therefore analyze both the situation for migrants in transit considering moving on and the potential influence of information campaigns.

Information campaigns in context

The three information campaigns studied in this report were designed by governments and NGOs to inform and influence migrants considering going to Europe. These efforts must be seen as part of wider efforts by European governments to manage migration before migrants reach European shores (Geiger & Pécoud, 2010; Brekke & Thorbjørnsrud, 2018).

Africa has been a target area for a range of EU-wide initiatives. The 2015 Valetta Summit accellerated the cooperation between EU and African countries in the area of migration management. The summit resulted in both the Rabat Process, which covers routes in Western Africa, and the Khartoum Process covering Eastern Africa.[4] European governments have since established the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa,[5] an operative structure whose goal is to secure stability, improve migration management, and address the root causes of irregular migration in three African regions; Lake Chad and Sahel, North Africa and the Horn of Africa. Following the high influx of asylum seekers to Europe in 2015 and 2016, these processes and the trust fund have contributed to decreasing the number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean. The campaigns informing potential migrants of the positive sides to staying where they are, of the dangers of migration journeys, and of the challenges for migrants once they reach Europe must be seen as part of these efforts to externalize European migration control.

A key component in both political and academic discussions on migration management is the role that information plays in migrants' decisions to migrate and, if so, where to

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4   https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2015/11/11-12/
5   https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/africa/eu-emergency-trust-fund-africa_en

go (Koser & Pinkerton, 2002). In the academic field, the role of information has been studied primarily from the migrants' perspective (Havinga & Böcker, 1999). Attention has been focused on the relative importance of different sources of information, such as public institutions, family, friends, smugglers, and other migrants, and on the perceived legitimacy of these sources (Haug, 2008). It has been noted that various types of information play different roles for different groups of migrants, such as forced versus voluntary migration, and for different nationalities (Brekke & Five Aarset, 2009; Crawley, 2010; Crawley et al., 2016).

In the literature, less attention has been given to the active communication efforts by governments directed at migrants. In the political realm, discussions have centred on how government communication toward potential asylum seekers can influence arrival patterns (Brekke, 2004). In European receiving states, these efforts have been directed at reputation management—that is, not appearing more attractive to asylum seekers than neighboring countries (Thiele-mann, 2003, giving rise to the concept of negative branding (Gam-meltoft-Hansen, 2017).

Social media provide ground-breaking new possibilities for governments aiming to reach out to people. Yet, communication strategies adapted to the affordances of social media (such as paid targeting and detailed user information) raise vital concerns related to the basic principles of government communication, such as transparency, correctness, and dialogue (Kettle, 2008; Bucher & Helmond, 2016). The use of social media in government communication has, in general, been characterized by experimentation and ad hoc projects. There is a lack of clear guidelines, often leaving individual governments' officers in a terrain of challenging ethical dilemmas and improvisation (Mergel, 2013).

Studies document that information campaigns have been seen as an important part of governments' efforts to obstruct migrants before they reach European borders (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007; Pécoud, 2010; Carling & Hernán-dez-Carretero, 2011; Oeppen, 2016). Yet, while migrants' extant use of social media technology to facilitate migration has been documented (Dekker & Eng-bersen, 2014; Zijlstra & van Liempt, 2017), the counter move by govern-ments—reaching out to migrants using the same communication platforms—has not been studied in depth. While some studies research the output of informa-tion campaigns directed at migrants (Schans & Optekamp, 2016), how such campaigns are perceived and what their potential influence is on behavior has barely been explored (Schans & Optekamp, 2016).

How are we to understand the migratory situation of transit migrants? In the literature, migrants' decisions have been studied from a range of perspectives, including qualitative studies using micro-level models that stress common denominators (Brekke & Five Aarset, 2009; Robinson & Segrott, 2002). A separate strand of research has studied secondary or onward migration (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, 2008; Schapendonk 2012; Kuschminder & Koser 2016).

In the current study, the migrants were considering crossing the desert, putting themselves in an extremely vulnerable position. This made us include risk management perspectives and vulnerability as additional aspects to the existing micro models of migratory behavior.

Social media campaigns targeting migrants

For decades, Western governments have used information campaigns to inform and influence migrants (Carling & Hernández-Carretero, 2011). A main goal of such campaigns has been to provide information concerning migrants' possibility of obtaining asylum or the right to stay once they reach their target country (Schans & Optekamp, 2016).

Furthermore, these campaigns aim to inform migrants of the dangers along many of the routes leading to Europe. Some also highlight the advantages of remaining in the country or region of origin. Recently, these information campaigns have added information on the role of human trafficking and smugglers. Governments and NGOs try to inform migrants of the risks they run by using smugglers.[6]

A more cynical perspective of information campaigns targeting irregular migrants heading toward Europe is to see them as instruments to slow or deter unwanted migrants from coming to the continent. Often, campaign evaluations state that these initiatives are considered successful when governments observe that the number of migrants is decreasing, regardless of whether or not it is possible to ascribe the decrease as an effect of the campaigns themselves (Beyer et al.; Brekke, & Thorbjørnsrud, 2017; Browne 2017).

Information campaigns targeting migrants either in their countries of origin or in countries of transit have taken many forms over recent decades. Information efforts span from talking face-to-face with people via local community efforts,

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6   Government campaigns may have secondary functions, such as showing the national electorate that they are doing something to manage migration (Brekke, 2004; Brekke & Thorbjørnsrud, 2018).

such as theater plays or by handing out leaflets, to sponsoring broadcast materials and billboards in the sending countries (Brekke & Thorbjørnsrud, 2018). With the rise of social media, a new channel has emerged as a vehicle for such campaigns. Social media, or social network sites, have particular characteristics or *affordances*, including what type of information that can be forwarded (written, audio, graphics, and video). Social media allows senders to target specific groups and then provide statistics on reach and activities (such as "likes," forwarding, and more). Potentially, information from governments can spread through personal networks on these platforms, reaching a high number of would-be migrants.

Arguably, these last features are unique to social media, especially in terms of how easily and cheaply professional senders can use such evaluation tools. It is no wonder that governments turn to social media when they want to reach target groups in other countries. Their goal is to disseminate information, to update and change beliefs and attitudes, and, ultimately, to influence behaviors. In a previous study (see Beyer et al., 2017; Brekke & Thorbjørnsrud, 2018), we mapped and analyzed European campaigns that used social media to reach migrants.

We selected these campaigns because they all point to the middle Mediterranean route, which runs through Khartoum.

The three campaigns included in this study were similar in that they all had a solid presence in social media (Facebook, Instagram) while also linking up to designated webpages. The Norwegian campaign ("Stricter asylum regulations in Norway") had Facebook as its main outlet (while being linked to government webpages). The two other campaigns (IOM/Italy's "Aware migrants" and UNHCR's "Telling the real story") were primarily web-based but strategically used social media platforms for input, outreach, and communication.

The campaigns differed in a range of ways, including whether they relied on user-generated content and the degree to which they presented the information in a human-interest framing.

Both the UNHCR and the IOM campaign relied on stories reported by actual migrants. The Norwegian campaign, in contrast, started as a general Facebook page opening for comments and user participation but later had to block all comments.[7] Thus, the government used the Facebook page as a digital billboard combining self-produced information and links to relevant news sources.

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7   Comments were blocked due to numerous posts with hateful content (see Beyer et al., 2017).

While the first two campaigns shared a distinct focus on human interest-framed stories, the Norwegian campaign reported more thematically framed news items.

The three campaigns shared a clear main message: migrants should look for options other than coming to Europe as irregular migrants. They all urge migrants to appreciate the positive sides to remaining in their region of origin, to take into account the dangers of the journey, and to keep in mind that many migrants will not be allowed to stay in Europe. The main message was one of deterrence.

Migrants in Khartoum, Sudan

The major migration route from the Horn of Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia) goes through Sudan and the capital Khartoum (see Figure 1). With a population of 40 million, Sudan houses an estimated three million internally displaced migrants and 400,000 registered refugees (including from South Sudan) (IOM, 2017). The number of irregular migrants is unknown. The inner city of Khartoum has a population of 600,000, but more than 5,000,000 people live in the larger metropolitan area. The city serves as a hub for international migrants passing through on their way north through Libya to Europe or east toward the Gulf countries.

Figure 1. Map of migrant routes through East and West Africa toward the Mediterranean
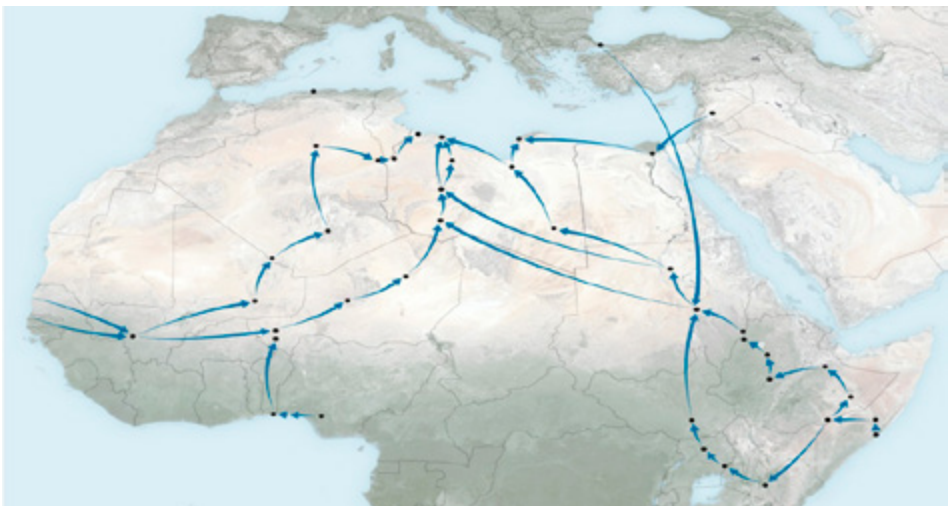
According to our informants, some irregular migrants pass through Khartoum in a day, often staying overnight on the fringes of the city. Others stay for a week, a month, a year, or longer. Some refugees and migrants end up living in the city for a lifetime. We met migrants in all of these categories. Centrally placed in the region, Khartoum is simultaneously a regional destination for migrants in search of a job and for foreign nationals who come to get an education.

Existing survey—data on migrants in Sudan

According to a 2017 IOM study,[8] there is little research on the situation for international migrants in Sudan.[9] Looking at studies conducted before 2017, the IOM team found only a handful of interviews with migrants in transit.[10] As a follow-up to the 2017 report, the IOM conducted a broader-based survey involving 1,200 respondents in Sudan, also covering migrants residing in Khartoum (IOM, 2018a).[11]

Both IOM (2017, 2018a) studies describe the situation of selected groups of migrants in Sudan and Khartoum. They focus on the migrants' immediate situation, their aspirations, their perceptions of destinations, and their means of communication.[12]

The IOM research teams found that migrants from different countries had different reasons for leaving their home country and coming to Sudan. While the Eritreans mentioned a lack of freedom of expression and compulsory military service among their top reasons for leaving, Ethiopians named a lack of jobs and insufficient income as their primary reasons. Both nationalities, however, mentioned security *and* economic reasons for leaving their home country (IOM, 2017, 2018a).

The IOM reports distinguish between the root causes for leaving and specific triggers. Again, Ethiopian migrants mentioned a mix of security and livelihood factors. Interestingly, nine out of 10 Eritreans and seven out of 10 Ethiopians did not have Sudan as their primary target country when they crossed the border

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8   "Migrants in Sudan: Pilot study on migrants' motivations, intentions and decision-making in Khartoum" (IOM, 2017).
9   See Ati (2017) for a recent contribution on human smuggling and trafficking in Eastern Sudan.
10   The IOM study involved survey data covering some 300 respondents (IOM, 2017), including 17 in-depth interviews.
11   "Sudan–Ethiopian and Somali migrants in transit: A snapshot report" (DTM), was conducted by the IOM and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. The full version is titled "Enabling a better understanding of migration flows (and its root causes) from Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Somalia toward Europe" (IOM. DTM, May 2018).
12   It is important to note that both IOM surveys faced methodological challenges and urge caution in interpreting the results and assumptions of generalizability. None of the 2018 IOM surveys included Eritrean refugees.

(IOM, 2017). In other words, Sudan is primarily a transit country for the migrants from these two countries; however, as we shall see, many end up spending months and even years in the country, which was meant to be a short stop on their way.

According to the IOM surveys, the majority of migrants made the decision to migrate by themselves but only after having conferred with friends and family, both in their home country and in Europe (IOM, 2018b). Many had relatives and friends who had already migrated. Contact person-to-person and in community gatherings (such as in churches/mosques) was seen as important sources of information. The migrants saw telephone and social media as equally important platforms of communication (IOM, 2017).

The surveys document the challenges that the migrants in Khartoum faced, such as a lack of formal status, police harassment, tough living conditions, and a general bleak outlook.

According to the 2018 IOM survey, it was easy for migrants to find smugglers on their way to Sudan. Before leaving home, Somalis and Ethiopians gathered information about the costs of migrating, routes, and asylum procedures. Many Ethiopians heading for Europe had no specific country in mind when leaving their home country (21%). Those who did mention specific destination countries named Germany, the UK, Switzerland, and Sweden as their main targets (IOM, 2018). The surveys did not have similar data for Eritreans.

Readers' guide

In the next chapter (2) we describe the data and methods of the study. Doing research on migrants who are in potentially vulnerable situations requires specific considerations and ethical sensitivity.

In Chapter 3, we present a conceptual framework anchored in media science along with a model comprising the factors influencing migratory decisions in transit. In Chapter 4 we analyze the decision-making situation of the Eritrean and Ethiopian migrants who are residing in Khartoum. We use the model of secondary migration to structure the presentation. This provides the context for discussing how the informants perceived the three social media campaigns in Chapter 5. Basing on these earlier chapters, we end the study by presenting the main conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 6.

2 Data and methodology

The interviews with the migrants in transit were conducted during a one-week period of fieldwork in Khartoum in May 2018. During that week, we met with 52 migrants in different constellations. We also interviewed experts working in Khartoum, including five NGO representatives (from UNHCR and IOM) and one Norwegian civil servant.

It was not easy to get permission to do research in Sudan. Our visa application included a brief description of the study. As the normal processing time expired, Sudanese authorities told us that they did not approve of our plans to interview migrants in Khartoum about social media. The Norwegian Embassy helped explain the intention and value of the research, and after six weeks, the Sudanese authorities permitted us access to the country.

Gaining access to the migrants was the next challenge. Again, Embassy staff were helpful in pointing us to NGOs and networks in the country that were in direct contact with individual migrants and migrant communities. The main cooperating partner and facilitator was IOM's Migrant Resources and Response Center (MRRC) in Khartoum. They allowed us to use the offices and resources of the Center. The management and staff served as "gate openers," suggesting groups and communities of migrants to us, inviting informants, and sometimes serving as interpreters. We also interviewed IOM management and staff, who provided important background knowledge about the characteristics of the groups selected and the needs of migrants in the city. The Norwegian government was among the contributors to the MRRC at the time of the fieldwork. The Center provided support, counseling, and health services to migrants, often without formal status. All interviews with the migrants were conducted in the MRRC office building.

UNHCR's Khartoum office served as a second gate opener and helped recruit informants. Their top management served as expert informants who enriched our knowledge not only on the situation of migrants in Sudan and Khartoum but also on the wider topic of information campaigns and the use of social media among migrants in the region.

The informants

The selection of migrants in a qualitative study, such as ours, is important. Whose voices are being heard? We used two methods of recruiting informants. The first was through the organizations described above, and the second was the "snowballing" technique—that is, at the end of the interviews, we asked the migrants to pass on the message to people they knew were in a similar situation.

The initial recruitment criteria passed on to the IOM and UNCHR, as well as to the Norwegian Embassy, were migrants from Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia, residing in Khartoum, who considered or could be expected to consider moving on toward Europe.

In the fall of 2017, IOM Sudan conducted a face-to-face survey about the conditions for migrants residing in the country, using migrants as interviewers. We asked IOM to recruit as many of these interviewers as possible for our study. The idea was that not only could these informants share their own migration experience, but they would also have a wider understanding of the situation and experiences of their informants in the survey. This strategy worked well. In many of the interviews, the informants spoke confidently about the migrants they themselves had interviewed in the previous six months. This strategy broadened the empirical horizon of the study and made the generalization of the results easier.

In addition to the three nationalities we aimed to reach—Eritreans, Ethiopians, and Somalis—we also interviewed a group of Nigerian migrants. Out of the 52 migrants we talked to, 17 were Eritreans, 15 were Ethiopians, 6 were Somalis, and 14 were Nigerians. The Eritreans and Ethiopians had all considered moving on, and most were considering onward migration at the time of the interviews. The Somalis were students in universities in Khartoum and served as secondary sources in our study. They did not consider moving on but were planning to return to Somalia once they completed their studies. However, they were highly familiar with the route from Somalia passing through Khartoum and had assisted a number of migrants on their way north. The Nigerians we met were stuck in Sudan after not reaching their destination in the Gulf. They served as important sources of information regarding the situation of transit migrants in Khartoum, for example, by confirming reports from other groups on the vulnerability of migrants in the city, the lack of security, the lack of access to the labor market, and other issues. Given the composition and background of the informants, we focus the analysis in this report on the Eritrean and Ethiopian groups. Finally, we also interviewed six expert informants working at the Nor-

wegian Embassy and the IOM MRRC facility as well as senior staff at UNHCR. These interviews added background information to what the migrants told us.

All four groups consisted of close to an equal number of men and women. Their ages varied from early 20s to 60 years old. The majority were between the ages of 20 and 35. The migrants received compensation for their travel expenses to and from the interview location at MRRC.

It is important to keep in mind while reading this report that we selected individuals and members of the communities in Khartoum who, at some point in time, expressed interest in onward migration. We expected this interest to color the answers and reflections we obtained from the informants. An important question, therefore, is whether one can generalize, for example, the wish to leave Khartoum and head for Europe to a wider circle of Eritrean and Ethiopian migrants in Khartoum.

Our answer to this is that there are certainly groups of Ethiopian migrants who come to Khartoum for work and do not intend to move on. However, we will state that our findings are relevant for transit migrants from these two countries residing in the Sudanese capital. As mentioned earlier, many of our informants themselves served as interviewers of other transit migrants in Khartoum. We have included their impressions as interviewers in this report. The aim of qualitative research, such as the present study, is not to establish how widespread a phenomenon is. What we can say is that the description of the migrants' challenges in their daily life (security, work, life chances) are most probably shared by the wider circle of migrants from the two countries residing in Khartoum.

The interviews

We conducted three types of interviews with the migrants: single interviews, group interviews, and what we called "serial interviews".

In the single interviews, we talked to one person using a standard open qualitative interview technique. This included using a flexible interview guide while ensuring that we touched on all key topics of the study.

The group interviews were done with two or more persons. Here we posed questions to the group, and those who wanted to could answer. The advantage with this format, in addition to its obvious efficiency, is that the informants can inspire each other and feel more comfortable in expressing themselves. In these interviews, the informants knew one another, and this contributed to making the

interview situation a space allowing for the open sharing of experiences and reflections.

In the serial interviews, there were also more than one interviewee present. In these interviews, however, we insisted on individually asking the same question to all those present. Even if this slowed down the pace of the interviews, we found this to be a useful format. The reason was that the answers given by others forced the informants to reflect on, correct, and build upon the answers.

An interpreter was available to all informants. Three informants chose to do their interviews with an interpreter present.

The interviews with the staff and experts did not follow a pre-set guide. However, the same basic thematic structure was used as in the migrant interviews: discussing the situation of migrants in Khartoum, onward migration, and the role of information.

The interviews with the migrants had two parts. The first section consisted of questions on the migrants' migration history, the situation in Khartoum, and their aspirations and plans to move on. The second section was dedicated to questions regarding their access to and use of information and their perceptions of the information campaigns. During this part of the interviews, we used a projector to show examples from the three campaigns, including videos.

There is always a chance that the answers given in this type of study, to some extent, are strategic—that is, that the informants' wish to better their own position by "coloring" the information they provide. In this case some informants saw the interviews as an opportunity to describe the harsh conditions they were living under in Khartoum, thereby possibly helping their community more than themselves as individual migrants. They may also have seen their participation as a form of payback to the institutions that had recruited them (IOM/MRRC and UNHCR).

Ethical considerations

Some of the campaign materials contained strong messaging, so during each interview, we had to consider whether to show the campaigns. Most migrants had secondhand experience with the dangers along the route through the desert, and many had lost someone close or someone in the community in the recent past. We had to consider the fragility of the individual informant during the first part of the interview before moving on or stopping. In some cases, we could

only show parts of the materials, often excluding a video from the Norwegian campaign that many perceived as highly emotional as it used detailed images and background music. We still showed the campaigns to most informants, and only in three cases did we refrain from presenting the web campaigns altogether.

In social science research, it is a basic ethical principle to protect those participating in the research from negative effects. How did the current study affect the informants? Will it benefit the transit migrants in Khartoum?

One goal of the research was to determine the effects of social media campaigns designed to discourage migrants against onward migration. Our research could potentially improve the campaigns and contribute to hindering migration. Would this be in the interest of the migrants or in the interest of the governments of the receiving countries in Europe? At the same time, the campaigns can provide information about the dangers of the journey north through Libya. If this report helps improve the campaigns, will this be a positive outcome?

On the other hand, this research also highlights the conditions of and options for these refugees and migrants. Decision makers in receiving countries will have access to this report. By contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the migrants' situation, the report may benefit migrants in transit in the end.

3 Conceptualizing secondary migration and the influence of campaigns

In this chapter, we introduce models and concepts that we use in the following chapters to analyze the migrants' situation in Khartoum and the potential of social media campaigns. First we present a model of secondary migration. This allows us to see information as one of many factors that influence migratory decisions. We then present a conceptual framework for analyzing the potential of social media information campaigns, such as the three selected for the current study.

A model of secondary migration

There is a core distinction in the literature on migrants' actions between micro and macro explanations. Macro models typically emphasize structural factors that influence migrant behavior, such as economic or labor market differences between the country of origin and the destination country. Researchers often refer to these as push-pull models (De Haas, 2010; Van Hear et. al. 2018).

Micro models stress the agency of migrants and the actors' aspirations and capabilities (Carling & Schewel, 2018) as well as the role of information (Koser & Pinkerton, 2002). Over recent decades, research has focused on the unit of decision making, be it by the individual (micro level) or by a wider circle of household or family members or larger communities (meso level). Some models seek to combine these levels and approaches, including both push and pull factors, the actors' perceptions of these elements, the migrants' immediate situation, and information.

One such model of migratory action combines micro, meso, and macro elements (Brekke & Five Aarset, 2009, Brekke & Brochmann 2015). Focusing on the migrants' immediate situation in transit, the model (see Figure 2) includes the original migratory action, secondary movements, and conditions in the country of destination. The original push factors (economic, security-related, social, or other) in the country of origin may still play into the decision in transit, for

example by hindering the alternative of returning. The future pull factors and the perceptions of the destination area (Europe) or specific country may also play into the situation in transit.

The model (Figure 2) identifies key elements of the migrants' situation in transit and thereby the premises for governments who seek to influence migrants' decisions.

Figure 2. Model of transit migration decisions
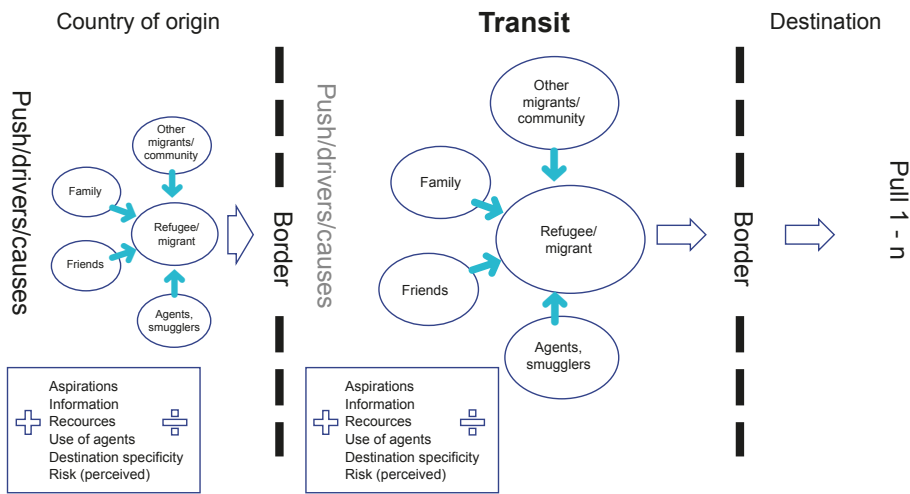
In the model, we find the actor—the migrant—surrounded by other actors and networks. Networks include family, friends, other migrants, community members, facilitators/agents/smugglers, and others. These networks may be physically present in the same transit location, they may still be in the country of origin, or they may be in some other third country, including the potential destination countries. They may also be virtually present in transit through social media and influence decisions through this medium. These networks will serve different functions related to further migratory behavior. They may serve as sources of information, provide resources, and/or encourage or discourage onward migration. Information campaigns may influence the key decision maker directly or indirectly through the surrounding network.

In transit, the immediate surroundings and opportunities may or may not push toward secondary movement. Structural factors, such as the economy, labor market access, safety, and access to residence permits in transit, may be more or less relevant to individual cases.

In Figure 2, a list of such variables is included. Here, we find aspirations pointing to the presence or absence of an overall goal of achieving life goals through migration (Czaika & de Haas, 2013).

In the model, information refers to access to information and the sources of information as well as the role that information plays in shaping an individual's migratory decisions. The amount and quality of information will vary from one migrant to another and across the different stages of migration. A key aspect here is the legitimacy of the sources of information. Who does the individual migrant trust, under what circumstances, and for delivering what kind of information? What role can governments and NGOs play as providers of information to migrants in transit?

Resources are the availability of means that will help the individual migrant attain his/her migratory goals. This may be to return to the country of origin, to remain in transit, or to move on toward a third country destination. These resources may include money, educational resources, networks/contacts, access to housing, means of transportation, and more. Resources may be acquired along the route, such as by working while in transit to finance the next stage of the journey.

The use of agents, facilitators, or smugglers will vary between migrants and across stages. We use the three concepts interchangeably, as previous studies have found that such assistance to migrants and refugees places itself along a continuum, ranging from highly commercial and potentially exploitative businesses at one end to amateur, not-for-profit helpers on the other end (Brekke & Five Aarset, 2009). The literature has shown that facilitators can play different roles as sources of information about routes and destinations. Some studies have described cases in which smugglers have been the main deciders (Koser & Pinkerton, 2002; Crawley, 2010), whereas others have pointed to this description as overestimating the role of facilitators.

Furthermore, migrants in transit vary with regard to whether or not they have a specific destination country in mind. The destination specificity may be low, as in migrants pointing to an ambition to move on and leave the transit country; medium, as in migrants talking about a region, such as Europe or Northern Europe, to move to; or high, as in migrants aiming for a specific country. This variation may or may not coincide with strong or weak ambitions to move on.

Risk has several meanings in the action model, including the risk of physical and mental harm of moving on as well as the risk of not reaching the intended

destination—meaning the probability of not succeeding. The perception and awareness of such risks may play key roles in the decision to return, stay, or move on. These individual perceptions may or may not correspond with the actual risks of moving on or with the actual probability of reaching the destination.

Time is another variable that may influence migrants' decisions. The duration of one's stay in transit may increase the chances of moving on, such as by enabling the accumulation of funds to finance the next stage of the journey, or may decrease the chances by anchoring/integrating the migrant in the transit society. As years pass for some, the situation in the home country may have changed, making a return more or less attractive.

Evaluating information campaigns— key concepts

Campaign evaluation typically distinguishes between inputs, outputs, and outcomes (Macnamara, 2014). One key topic here is how one can assess the outcomes of campaigns or the effects of media exposure in general. In the next few sections, we will provide a framework for applying this knowledge to the case of the transit migrants in Khartoum.

Inputs are the messages and the presentation of the information and the choice of channels or platforms and strategies to reach the intended audience. Outputs are observable results, such as the number of messages sent, the number of people who received them, and secondary media coverage.[13] The outcomes of the campaign are concerned with the number of people who changed their attitudes or behavior because they were exposed to the campaign.[14]

The premises for effective campaigns

Government campaigns have explicit goals. In the campaigns presented in this report, the goal was to affect migrant behavior. Theoretically, one can distinguish different levels of goals, where the most basic is to transmit information. Having enough information is a prerequisite for shaping beliefs, attitudes, and/or behaviors. In our case, governments (supported by NGOs) aim to provide information that may change migrants' beliefs about asylum regulations in a given country. To be effective in changing beliefs, though, the migrants must

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13 What the recipients understand and remember is labeled *outtakes*.
14 The McNamara model has been refined by Lindenmann (1993), who distinguishes between different outputs and outcomes, including impressions, awareness, comprehension, retention, opinion change, attitude change, and behavior change.

have a need for orientation. Did the migrants we met in Khartoum feel they needed the information that the governments provided in the campaigns?

We need two more concepts for the subsequent analysis: relevance and uncertainty. How relevant was the information, and how certain were they of what they already knew (e.g., about traveling routes and conditions in Europe)? According to media theory, the campaigns would be most effective if the migrants perceived the information as highly relevant and if they were unsure whether what they already knew on these issues was correct.

For example, information about migration is highly relevant to migrants in transit. If they at the same time they are unaware of the risks involved and the chances of succeeding in getting to stay in Europe, this would increase the chances that campaigns could influence their attitudes.

There are, however, further prerequisites for a campaign to have effects. These include the timing of the campaigns. Do the migrants perceive the campaigns as relevant at the time when they get the information? Furthermore, do they experience the information as being meant for them or for someone else? Campaigns need to be context-specific, and the senders need to know the situation of its intended audience.

Theory applied to transit migrants in Khartoum

The analytical concepts of input, output, outtake, and outcome are all relevant to campaigns directed at migrants in transit. In our fieldwork, we asked questions related to the framing, relevance, and the recipients' level of certainty/uncertainty in regard to the accuracy of the information in the three selected campaigns. We also asked basic questions about access to the Internet, their use of computers and smartphones, their use of social media, and, crucially, how they perceived their need for information.

With regard to outputs and outtakes, researchers often measure these quantitatively, such as the number of people who were exposed to and have understood a message. In our qualitative study, the goal was to show the campaigns to the migrants and then ask them about their understanding of the messages, their perception of whom the intended target groups were, and their need for this information.

It was the goal of the three campaigns to influence or change attitudes and/or behavior. We asked the migrants about whether they thought the information campaigns could have such effects. Could they even change the migrants'

beliefs about what were the correct facts on the ground? We asked the migrants whether they believed the information was correct and if it corresponded with their existing beliefs or in some way altered them. What kind of information could possibly change their view on onward migration? We come back to these concepts during the analysis in Chapter 5, when we consider the migrants' need for orientation and the potential of information to influence their cognitive structures (beliefs, information, and knowledge), attitudes (evaluations of this information), and, finally, behavioral intentions.

To understand the role of information and the potential impact of information campaigns, we will now describe the context of the migrants in transit in Khartoum in 2018. We also present a model that is based on a list of factors, including information that may influence migration decisions.

4   Secondary migration from Khartoum

In this chapter, we analyze the decision-making situation of the Eritrean and Ethiopian migrants who are residing in Khartoum.[15] We use a model of secondary migration to structure the presentation. In the next chapter, we then turn to how the informants perceived the three social media campaigns.

The migrants' background

The migrants from Eritrea and Ethiopia whom we met in Khartoum all expressed interest in onward migration. They came from a variety of backgrounds, with most pointing to war and oppression as their main reasons for leaving their home country. These background stories were often mixed with stories of tough living conditions and a limited outlook.

Most of these migrants had made their way to Khartoum by themselves. Some had traveled by foot for days along the routes from Ethiopia to the city. Others had come from Eritrea through the border camps near Kassala before they were smuggled to the Sudanese capital. Many experienced strenuous conditions in these refugee camps before deciding on moving on, seeking temporary work, refuge, and the possibility of onward migration.

Most Eritrean citizens who register in the camps across the Sudanese borders obtain refugee status. However, according to Sudanese statutes,[16] these refugees do not have the right to move freely within Sudan. If they want to move on to Khartoum, they have to do so irregularly—that is, by using facilitators.

Some of our informants were children of refugees and either arrived in Khartoum when they were young or were born in Sudan of migrant parents. They frequently pointed to what they saw as the hopeless destiny of their parents, who were stuck in transit.

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15   Our interviews with the Somali and Nigerian informants are used as secondary sources (see Chapter 2).
16   Sudan signed the UN 1951 Refugee Convention but not the 1967 Protocol.

We asked the migrants to reflect on the option of returning. None of the Eritrean and Ethiopian migrants contemplated going back as long as the political and social situations were as they were in the spring of 2018. They left because of a lack of freedom, the wars between the two countries, internal strife, and general hardship. On top of these broad factors, they mentioned concrete triggers, such as incidents in the military service, lost battles, and sudden illnesses. It remains to be seen whether the positive developments in the relationship between the two countries during the fall of 2018 and the spring of 2019 will lead to more return migration from Khartoum.

The migrants' immediate situation in Khartoum

In the interviews, the informants described a list of challenges they faced as a part of their everyday life in Khartoum. These included safety concerns; difficulties with the police; and lack of access to schooling, the labor market, and housing.

Safety concerns

Harassment by the Sudanese police and authorities was the prime concern mentioned by the migrants we interviewed. They experienced that being a migrant or refugee gave them a secondary status compared with the Sudanese majority. The informants mentioned a range of negative encounters, entailing random ID checks (including unannounced checks in their homes), a variety of seemingly arbitrary fines, physical harassment, and corruption.

> Safety is the number one reason why it is difficult to live here in Khartoum. If you forget your ID card and the police stop you, there is trouble. […] Even if you have the card, they can take you to the police station. Then they can pick you up again tomorrow … and the day after. (Female, Eritrean, 20s)

Formal permissions and ID cards (national ID, refugee ID) were a concretization of the link to the authorities in Khartoum (and Sudan). These caused different sorts of difficulties and became a symbol of the host society's reluctance to accept the migrants and as proof of their status as outsiders. Being caught without the proper ID would most often result in a fine (7,000 Sudanese pounds).[17] Those who could not pay the fines risked being put in jail, according to our informants.

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17   7,000 Sudanese pounds were worth approximately 200 USD dollars in 2018.

The informants portrayed women as particularly vulnerable in interactions with the authorities.

> I interviewed a girl, who, together with a friend, had been caught by the police without an ID. They asked her to have sex with them to let her go. She said no and cried. She was 17 or 18. Her friend did have sex with the police, and they let them go. (Female, Eritrean, 20s)

There were reports of robberies and absence of the rule of law. The migrants said their voices are not heard when they complain to the authorities.

> Life here in Sudan is very difficult, primarily because of the security situation. Some people came into my home and stole my camera equipment. I reported it to the police, but they said *Chabish* (derogative for foreigner) and did nothing. They do not care because we are refugees. We are nothing to them. (Male, Eritrean, 20s)

The expert informants confirmed a lack of transparency regarding the interaction between Eritrean and Ethiopian migrants with an irregular status and Sudanese authorities.

They pointed to instances in which unregistered Eritrean nationals were returned by force to Eritrea.

They also confirmed the role that the refugee camps along the Eritrean border play as only a temporary refuge for most refugees.

> The ones who cross the border often register in the UNCHR camps. They get protected status. However, life in the camps is tough, and the migrants do not leave Eritrea to stay in camps. As a result, 70% of those registered in camps leave within two months. (Expert)

Economic and labor market outsiders

The second set of challenges that made life difficult for the transit migrants in Khartoum was a lack of access to proper jobs and, as a result, economic hardship.

> I do not get the conditions I want here in Sudan. It is difficult for Eritrean refugees, in general, difficult to find work. Employers prefer Sudanese. There is discrimination; refugees work below their standard, and I know many graduates who work as taxi drivers. (Female, Eritrean, 30s)

According to our informants, refugees are not allowed to work, nor are irregular migrants. The refugee ID card carries text at the bottom saying that the status

does not give the holder the right to work. Yet, people look for work and take on whatever chores they can find, such as domestic work or daily work in construction. With little and unstable income, the migrants find it difficult to accumulate enough capital to move on. Many feel stuck in Khartoum:

> I don't want to stay here. It is so difficult here. I want to go abroad; I want to leave, but you need money to go. (Male, Ethiopian, 40s)

The transit migrants' lack of formal status and their position as outsiders in Sudanese society translated into trouble with getting a foothold in the labor market and accumulating funds. As a local expert put it, "Local integration is not an option."

According to the migrants, they are not allowed to buy a house, even if they could afford one. At the same time, rents are high. Many end up sharing overcrowded apartments.

Relationship between Sudan and the home countries

A third challenge mentioned by the migrants in transit was a suspicion that the governments of their home countries and Sudan were colluding. This took on several different forms, according to our informants. Some stated that they experienced this unofficial coordination even in the UNHCR-led camps along the Eritrean border. A young Eritrean man who had just arrived from the camps when we met him put it this way:

> First, there is no food in the camp. Second, there is no safety. I saw Eritrean Special Forces in the camp. If they saw someone, they would pick them up and take them away. (Male, Eritrean, 20s)

There were also rumors that Ethiopian and Eritrean authorities were allowed to have their pick of migrants in Khartoum as a part of the deal with Sudanese authorities:

> The Eritrean government is present here in Khartoum. Recently, a man disappeared from a café. The next week, he was in Eritrea. (Male, Eritrean, 20s)

This was strongly denied by several of the expert informants. Although they said there may have been instances of such interference and collusion between Eritrea and Sudan, these dated back to the 1990s.

The migrants did stress the ties between the countries in the region and that this may be affecting Sudan's willingness to integrate refugees and migrants crossing the borders into its society.

> Ethiopia and Sudan have a strong relationship. The migrants are in-between. They cannot go back, and they cannot stay here. The only solution is to move on. (Male, Ethiopian, 40s)

Outlook

Given their immediate situation in Khartoum, our informants had a gloomy outlook with regard to their continued stay in the Sudanese capital: "So you can do everything right here as a refugee—get an education, look for work—but still end up with nothing" (Female, Eritrean, 20s). Transit migrants who stayed in the city for a short time shared this view with those who had lived there for two, three, five, 10, or 20 years. Children born into this outsider status were particularly desolate, having seen their parents' temporary life turn into a permanent limbo without any local integration to show for their efforts:

> They see that their parents have lived here for a long time, and there has been no change in their situation. So they think, "Do I want to end up like my parents? Without any chance of a change?" (Female, Ethiopian, 20s)

The feeling of being stuck was also put forward by several informants: "We don't choose to live in Khartoum. This city is no place to live" (Female, Eritrean, 30s).

This was particularly prominent for the younger migrants. One of our informants, whose brother had already left and was safe in Switzerland, said:

> I have dreams. I do not know about the others, but I have dreams, and I have to make something out of my life. I have to make something out of me. This is not the place to do so. The situation here in Sudan is difficult. (Male, Eritrean, 20s)

Yet, the people we spoke to had not (yet) left Sudan, although a few of them had attempted to go. It was difficult to tell which of them that would be able to leave in the end.

Perception of opportunities

How did the migrants in transit view their options with regard to moving on? Many considered going through the desert to Libya and Europe. A few saw Egypt as an alternative, a place one could stay in irregularly until "you get your rights." Others had tried the route to Egypt and returned.

All informants from the Eritrean and Ethiopian communities knew someone who had left.

> Actually, no one wants to stay here in Sudan or in Khartoum. Students leave and go through Libya, and even teachers go. They teach for a month, and then they leave. I know many who have left school and gone through Libya. Others have gone through legal channels assisted by UNHCR or by sponsors. (Female, Eritrean, 30s)

Several of our informants mentioned that the optimal outcome of their stay in Khartoum would be to resettle through the UNHCR or achieve family reunification through regular immigration channels. However, even those that had tried this strategy described it as a long shot. They had little hope that they would ever succeed. One young woman told us how her family had suggested several male migrants who were already residing in Europe. She had declined all of these marry-for-permit offers.

Destination specificity

Some informants pointed to Europe as a general destination when asked where they wanted to end up if they were to move north through the desert. Others named specific destination countries.

> Most of the Eritreans want to go to Europe, in general, whereas a few I interviewed mentioned specific countries; but most just said Italy, and then they would decide where to go from there. (Female, Eritrean, 30s)

Some also noticed that the increased control along the route to Libya and in the Mediterranean following the 2015 peak in irregular arrivals to Europe changed how migrants in Khartoum talked about destinations.

> Which country people aim for depends on which country gives asylum more quickly at the time of travel. Right now, some people talk about Germany, but they mostly do not have single countries in mind. Two years ago, they talked about specific countries, such as Norway and Sweden. (Female, Eritrean, 30s)

Many informants had family members and friends who had already migrated to Europe. These individuals were providing information about routes and the conditions in the country where they were residing. Often, however, the migrants had contacts in more than one country, opening up the chance for multiple possible destinations.

Regarding the reasons for choosing one destination over another, one informant had a clear list of criteria:

> First, in what country are the chances to get accepted the highest?
> Second, in what country are the job opportunities the best? Third, in what country is the refugee support best? (Male, Ethiopian, 40s)

Some of the informants with networks and family in particular countries had more detailed information about the asylum regimes there. For example, one Ethiopian migrant talked about the options in Europe and pointed out: "We are a bit afraid of Norway now because Norway rejected many from our communities. It is something we talk about in the community" (Male, Ethiopian, 40s).

Risks

Were the migrants aware of the risks of moving on and crossing the desert? The short answer to this is *yes*. Their main sources for this particular information are other migrants who have already made the journey. These dangers were the major talking point in the transit migrant communities in Khartoum:

> This is the main topic here among the Ethiopian community. We discuss it in the churches, in meetings. People go through the desert; some die […] and friends who have left, succeeded and now have refugee status in Europe. We get this information through social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp. (Male, Ethiopian, 40s)

The migrants were also aware of specific dangers along the routes. There were stories of girls taking birth control before leaving, expecting sexual assaults, and of men knowing that maltreatment, abduction, kidnapping, and extortion of family members were distinct possibilities. Still, they left.

> Some of my friends died in Libya, in transit. One took his wife. He died. Another took his two children; he carried them. They all died. (Male, Ethiopian, 40s)

There were other stories spread within the communities, told by migrants who had already tried to cross but returned because of hardships and death along the route.

> I witnessed very, very bad things. I saw many people die. I saw a pregnant women bleed as we walked. They used water to rinse it off. She kept bleeding. Then, they did not have enough water. She died in the desert. (Male, Ethiopian, 40s)

Despite such horrible stories, people leave. The same man told us he tried to convince migrants in transit not to leave.

> I tell them of the dangers on the road, but they do not trust me. They choose to listen to those who tell them that the journey is easy. They say, "I don't care; I have to go." They are already locked in. (Male, Ethiopian, 40s)

Others stated explicitly that they did have detailed information about the dangers and that they shared such information, including when someone died during the journey.

> We call it "Mardo Mis" (Onction des maladies),[18] a burial ceremony. Every time someone dies going north through the desert or crossing the Mediterranean, the Ethiopian community here in Khartoum gathers, discusses, and drinks coffee. In this way, the bad news is spread every time it happens. The community has lost 400 persons this way. We sit and talk about the dangers for three days. (Male, Ethiopian, 40s)

There seemed to be a limited preventive effect of such information. For those who decided to leave, the bad news did not change their minds:

> We cannot say they should not go. No, that does not have any effect. Remember the video of the ISIS killing of Ethiopians on the beach in Libya? We all saw that video. On the same day, more Ethiopians left Khartoum for Libya. They used the same route, the same smugglers, on the same day! (Male, Ethiopian, 40s)

At the same time, the informants told of warnings from those who made the journey and were now safe in Europe. They warned people not to go, with the message being, "You think you know what the risks are, but until you've experienced them, you don't."

> My brother now lives in Switzerland. Before he left, I begged him not to go. He saw what ISIS did on the beach but said he would rather die there

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18 https://journals.openedition.org/afriques/921?lang=en

than here in Khartoum. Now, I called him and joked I would go the same route. He cried on the phone, "Don't do it!" (Male, Eritrean, 20s)

One informant saw the risks as too high. Clinging to the hope of one day finding a regular route to reach her destination, she said the risks kept her from going:

I would never go through Libya because it is too dangerous. I do not want to put myself in that situation. [...] we only have one life. If you do not have a choice, you're willing to do anything. [Still], I want to go legally. (Female, Eritrean, 20s)

Asked what could solve the situation, the informants pointed out that there was a little chance of changing anything through information. Could information work?

No, the only thing you could do is to change the conditions in Sudan so that we can stay here. Give me my rights, and then those who want to go to Europe can go through legal channels. If you cannot go, you should have good conditions here. (Female, Eritrean, 20s)

Before the interviews, we were worried that the informants would be reluctant to talk about the use of facilitators/smugglers. We turned out to be mistaken.

Use of facilitators/smugglers

The migrants saw smugglers as a necessity, as a normal part of life in transit and as potential exploiters. On the positive side, the migrants were dependent on their assistance to be able to go north. In addition, facilitators living in Khartoum were considered a part of the Eritrean and Ethiopian communities. The migrants knew them. These facilitators could assist migrants for parts of their trip or the whole way to the Libyan border, where others in their network would take over.

On the negative side, smugglers were seen as potential harassers. There were stories about extortions and maltreatment, corruption (migrants being handed to the authorities), and dangerous networks in Libya. The majority of these stories pointed to smugglers of other nationalities.

However, the informants also mentioned smugglers living in Khartoum who stood outside schools in order to recruit children. They said,

> Do you want to go to Europe? For free? And get a job? They sponsor the start of the trip, and then call the parents from the border with Libya and ask for money. Then, the families have to borrow. (Male, Ethiopian, 40s)

The transit migrants trusted smugglers from their own nationalities the most. They could be acquainted with these smugglers' families, and knowing that they lived in Khartoum gave some assurance that they could be trusted.

> Sometimes, you know them; sometimes, you do not. For example, my friend gives me money, and you agree with the smuggler on the phone, who says that someone will come for her. Sometimes, you deal directly with the smuggler; sometimes, you do not. (Female, Eritrean, 20s)

Who makes the decision?

So, who decides whether an individual migrant should remain in Khartoum or move on? The migrants we interviewed saw themselves as being in transit. They consider this decision to be their own to make. However, from the interviews, consideration for others in their families and social networks played a role. Families with children, for example, were in a very different decision-making situation compared with single young persons. Life phase mattered, and so did age. The older migrants talked about the younger migrants and their eagerness to leave. The younger ones reflected on the role of their parents.

> Sometimes, they tell their parents they are leaving, and sometimes, the family will not mind. However, most times, they do not tell their families or even their friends. They just go. (Women, Eritrean, 20s)

Most informants focused on the challenges of gathering enough funds while in Khartoum to be able to pay for the onward journey. Often, family and friends contributed, becoming co-deciders and co-facilitators of the secondary migration. Network members who were in Europe or other destination countries also contributed.

By studying migrants already in transit, we observed that what has been labeled path dependency (Mahoney, 2000) appeared to influence the migrants' decisions; they were already on their way on a path that pushed them onwards.

> They ask us why people go when they know it is dangerous. Well, most people do not have a chance to go back, so they take their chances—they are already invested in the process. There is no use telling a person about the dangers when they have already risked something and the journey has started (Male, Ethiopian, 40s).

Time

Migrants who have spent 10 years or longer in transit in Khartoum appeared to be losing faith in their onward journey. Some Ethiopians noted that the conditions in their home country might be improving, whereas most saw no chance of ever returning. Their home country had changed while they had been abroad. Some said,

> Even if some say they want to return, they cannot. For one thing, their houses were destroyed in the war; women sold tea in the street and had no protection from the police. (Male, Ethiopian, 40s)

Factors affecting secondary migration from Khartoum

Returning to the model presented in Chapter 3, we can now fill in the case of the Eritreans and the Ethiopians residing in transit in Khartoum. The following model (see Figure 3) gives a brief overview of their situation:

Figure 3. Factors in the migration decisions of transit migrants in Khartoum
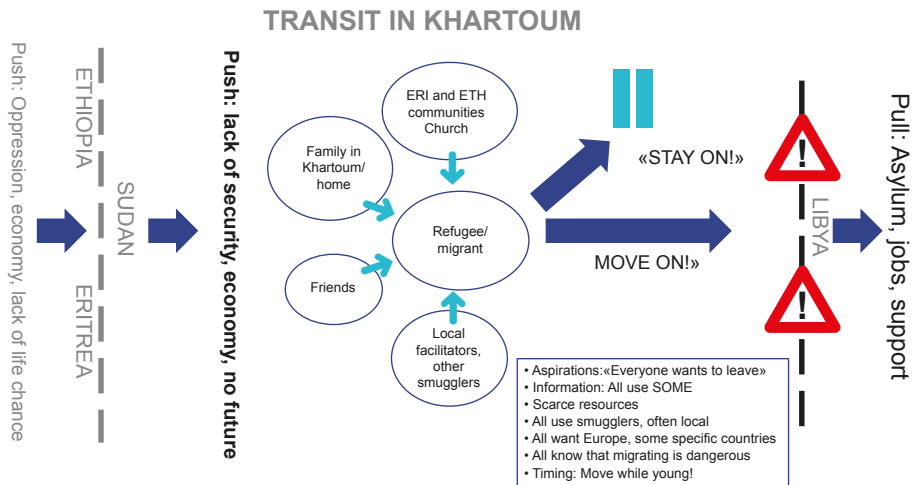
In the revisited model (Figure 3), we see a compressed listing of the factors that the Eritrean and Ethiopian migrants in Khartoum mentioned.

Pushed out of their home countries (because of oppression, little economic/labor market options, and lack of life prospects), they crossed the border to Sudan and

into Khartoum (often after shorter stays in camps). In transit, the migrants experienced new pressures to leave (because of a lack of security and formal status, the tough economy/labor market, a lack of prospects). When deciding, they were influenced by their ethnic communities, family, and friends, and they were advised by facilitators/smugglers. They wanted to leave and were informed by trusted networks of friends and family in their home country, in Sudan, and in destination countries in Europe. They all had access to smartphones and social media platforms, and they used these to communicate. Most of the migrants aimed for Europe or specific countries therein. However, they knew the dangers involved. Age and life phase mattered. Traveling through the desert was not for families with children or the less capable. In Europe, the pull factors included getting asylum and jobs as well as receiving integration support.

5   The potential effects of social media campaigns on migratory decisions

In this chapter, we use the theoretical concepts from Chapter 3 to analyze how the migrants perceived the three campaigns selected for this study.[19] The main goal is to explore the potential influence that social media campaigns may have on migratory decisions.

We structure our discussion according to the concepts of input, including the overall content; outputs and outtakes, including relevance and internalization; and outcomes, which include changes of behaviors, attitudes, beliefs and opinions.[20]

Inputs

The inputs of the campaigns include the production of content and the framing of the message, as well as the choice of communication channels. Decisions relating to content, framing and channels have great implications for the possible effects of a communication effort.

Content and framing

As discussed above, the selected campaigns focused on the positive aspects of remaining in Africa, on the dangers involved in irregular migration, and on the challenges faced by migrants who reached Europe. As mentioned previously, these messages were often framed as human-interest, often individual stories. From the literature, we know that the use of this frame is quite common in journalism and that its effects tend to make respondents remember the particular case presented and, to a larger degree, neglect the more general information presented.

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19 These included input, output, outtake, outcome, relevance, and need for orientation
20 We would like to remind the reader that the design of our study, including the selection of informants, makes it possible to discuss the potential influence of the three campaigns. A few of the informants reported having seen one or more of the campaigns in question, but the data do not allow for discussions of the actual effects of the three campaigns.

Some of the informants in our study were positive in regard to the individualized human-interest approach. They saw it as a good way of informing.

During our interviews, the informants read some of these personal stories from the "Telling the real story" and the "Aware migrants" campaign pages. Their response was that they recognized the overall sentiment of these individual stories and trusted the migrants sharing their experiences. In particular, they trusted stories from the routes and camps that the informants knew well. For instance, the UNHCR campaign had several human interest-framed stories dealing with fleeing Eritrea and life in the camps in Sudan.

However, although the informants perceived these stories as credible, they did not see them as bringing new information. As a result, this information confirmed what they already knew.

The media science literature discusses the effects of familiar versus new information on attitudes. The so-called agenda setting theory states that information on issues with which the individual has little prior experience makes stronger impressions (McCombs, 2014). In our case, the migrants recognized both the information and the framing, but these did not make a lasting impression on them.

The personal stories about the hardships and dangers were relevant to our informants. At the same time there was little uncertainty regarding these issues and therefore little *need for orientation*.

Information channels—the potential of social media

Social media appear to be ideal platforms for information campaigns. First, these media platforms make it possible to spread information instantly. Second, the network structure of these platforms means that information can spread from one person to the next, picking up sender-legitimacy on the way. Third, such platforms allow multiple formats, enabling the integration of text, video, images, and graphics. Finally, the commercial nature of social media makes it possible for senders to target specific audiences and pay to promote messages to these audiences more accurately than traditional media.[21]

For these ideal conditions for information campaigns to be realized, however, several premises need to be in place. To reach migrants, they need to have

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21 Governments and NGOs can pay the commercial platform owners to spread campaign information to specific target groups. The Norwegian campaign used Facebook commercial targeting tools to reach certain target groups (see Beyer et al., 2017).

access to the Internet and ideally also to smartphones. In addition, the migrants need to have access to and know how to use social media platforms. However, even with such technology and knowledge in place, the basic questions remain, such as content and design, relevance, need for orientation, the legitimacy of the sender, and the framing of the messages.

Our interviews with transit migrants in Khartoum showed that all of them had regular access to the Internet. Almost everyone had a smartphone with some sort of data package, meaning that these migrants, in practice, could access any social media whenever they wanted to. The few people who reported that they did not own a smartphone had regular access to Internet services at Internet cafes.

In addition to access to the Internet, almost all of the informants had profiles on several social media platforms. The most common ones were Facebook, WhatsApp, and Viber. In our experience, the encryption of WhatsApp communication made this the preferred service for most of the migrants. During our fieldwork, we even used WhatsApp to arrange meetings with the informants. Among the Eritrean and Ethiopian communities, social media was widespread and used actively. Their use of the platforms included discussing issues related to migration.

However, their use of social media involved primarily networks consisting of family, friends, and the wider ethnic community. This may restrict the possibility of governmental actors to reach their target audience. Another way of putting this is that the structural potential is there in that people both have access to the Internet and can use social media, but it is more of a question of their willingness to engage with content from external sources when they are online. In the next section, we will therefore turn our attention to the question of whether the migrants in transit are motivated to read, consider, retain, and understand the paid messages on their social media feeds.

Outputs and outtakes

As we have noted earlier, the migrants saw the three campaigns as relevant to their situation and, in particular, issues related to onward migration. At the same time, however, all migrants were well aware of much of this information, such as the dangers of moving on. In the interviews, they reported knowing people who have made the journey. They told stories of successful migrants who had reached Europe and of others that either returned to Khartoum or who went

missing on their way there. To us as researchers it remained a puzzle whether the informants really knew about all the dangers along the route. They insisted they did, and they gave us examples that supported their claim. At the same time, they were also surprised. They also saw people they knew making the journey despite knowing what could happen to them.

As one Ethiopian man in his 40s told us, "They know everything. Still, they go." According to this informant, some young Ethiopians in Khartoum did not know enough about the dangers. He said that although informing young people might be the right thing to do, it was still not likely that that information would change their minds about leaving. The reason was that they did not see living in Khartoum as an alternative. The conditions were too harsh and unpredictable.

So, what could decrease the push for onward migration? Asked what was needed to solve the problem, one informant from Ethiopia pointed to the root causes of migration in the region. They have "to fix things in my country." In the absence of bettered conditions in the home countries, they pointed to the need for legal ways to migrate out of Sudan.

The informants saw the content of the campaigns as accurate. They accepted the information as truthful. Only two informants reflected upon the intentions behind the campaigns, such as the wish to lower the number of irregular arrivals to Europe. These interviewees were intimidated by the messaging and formats . They saw the campaigns as manipulative.

 The large majority did not see the campaigns as part of a strategy, as a way for governments and NGOs to influence their beliefs and future behavior.

While the informants in our study may already have been knowledgeable of the campaign information, this may not have been the case for those that our informants had interviewed in an earlier study. From what we were told, those informants had less education and resources. However, it was the impression of the migrants we interviewed that even their informants experienced that the push factors in Khartoum would override any information telling them to not move on.

Outcomes

The ultimate goal of the three campaigns was to influence the migrants' behavior and their attitudes, beliefs, and opinions. Did these campaigns carry this potential? Could they change the migrants' default attitudes from "leave" to

"stay," or even to "return home"? The campaigns were up against deeply rooted attitudes pointing in a different direction.

An Eritrean woman in her 30s, who had previously worked as a journalist, put it very bluntly: "*I have never heard about anyone who wants to stay here.*" This sentiment was repeated throughout the interviews we conducted. Against this backdrop, it is obvious that it takes a lot to change the attitudes and behavior of people living under such conditions.

Several informants mentioned that migrants leaving Khartoum know about the dangers of the journey north and about the boats. However, they may be less knowledgeable about what to expect once they reach Europe. Of course, many communicated frequently with networks of migrants already in Europe. Still, they may have had unrealistic expectations regarding everything from the chances of getting a residence permit to support levels.

At the same time, they may not feel that they have a need for orientation on these issues while residing in Khartoum. The attitude appeared to be that this information can wait. To make the migrants see the relevance of this information, the interviews indicate that a more comprehensive communication design is needed. In addition to social media, governments may want to combine multiple communication channels, including presence on the ground in Sudan. This would allow for including group-specific, contextual factors into consideration in the campaigns. This would make the content relevant to the target audiences.

Different campaigns—different effects?

Did our interviews in Khartoum reveal any knowledge regarding the effectiveness of the differences between the campaigns? Did their format and messaging influence the migrants in different ways? In short, do different campaigns yield different kinds of effects?

The three campaigns were quite different with regard to how they attempted to engage with their target groups. Videos presented in the IOM campaign "Aware migrants" used a standardized interview format, presenting the fates of individual migrants. The campaign presented the migrants themselves and allowed them to speak in their own words. Similarly, the UNHCR campaign consisted of migrants telling their own stories in their own words, albeit in a less-standardized manner. The Norwegian campaign had two perspectives: the Facebook page that linked to news-like stories and linked video productions. These were

dramatizations that used a documentary style. Migrants were featured, but they did not speak. Instead, the voiceover in the video was clearly the voice of the Norwegian government, saying that migrants who were not eligible for asylum would have to return home.

The overarching finding from the interviews was that nearly all informants saw the campaigns as purely descriptive. They acknowledged the information as a truthful depiction of the situation for many migrants. They expressed this by nodding and replying, "*Yes, this is true*."

However, the two respondents who did objectify the campaigns were quick to identify both the senders and their strategies. This was the case when we showed the videos from the "Stricter asylum regulations in Norway" campaign to an Eritrean woman who worked as a journalist. She came across as quite offended. The video portrays, in dramatic images using emotional music and a voiceover, refugees in large groups moving through a landscape.[22] The voice-over emphasizes that many refugees will have to return back as they will not be granted asylum. Although the stated facts in the video are clearly correct, the use of images, music, and the voiceover gives it a dramatic tone. The Eritrean woman explained her reaction:

> You cannot say it like this; it's OK with the UNHCR campaign and personal stories, but not OK to tell it like the Norwegian campaign; this is like saying don't come here!" (Female, Eritrea, 30s)

This reaction, while not representative of the larger group, points to the fact that campaigns could go too far in applying dramatic sentiment when conveying their message. Campaign organizers will have to weigh the ethical dimension when attempting to engage with individuals in potentially vulnerable situations. If the goal is to inform migrants about policies or the asylum system in a given country, the above quote shows that the strong use of dramatic effects also has the potential to offend migrants.

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22 https://nettsteder.regjeringen.no/asylumregulations/351-2/

6 Conclusions and recommendations

In this final chapter, we draw conclusions regarding factors that influence the decision-making situation for transit migrants in Khartoum, where information is one of a range of determinants. With this as context, we here present conclusions regarding the potential effects of information campaigns on social media. The chapter ends with a list of recommendations.

"Everyone wants to leave"

Our interviews with migrants from Eritrea and Ethiopia in transit in Khartoum often started with some variation in the title quote, "Everyone wants to leave." Given sufficient funds to finance their journey north through the desert to Libya and Europe, most migrants expressed their ambition to leave. At the same time, they were aware of the dangers along the route. Many had been stuck in transit for years.

Substantial push factors in transit

The Eritrean and Ethiopian transit migrants in Khartoum experienced challenges in their daily lives, such as lack of security, lack of formal status, exclusion from local integration, economic difficulties, and lack of life prospects. These push factors in transit provided a strong motivation for them to leave.

The difficult decision—stay or go?

The risks of moving north through the desert were well known. The transit migrants were therefore faced with a difficult decision, in which they had to weigh the pros and cons of staying versus leaving. All our informants had relatives or friends who left for Europe and succeeded. However, they also knew of people who had died trying.

Varied knowledge of the destination countries

Many of our informants had family and friends who had migrated to European countries. These people were better informed about the conditions in such

countries than the other migrants. For them, Europe was their destination, and Italy their country of transit.

Smugglers were part of the community

The transit migrants in Khartoum had a nuanced perception of the value and challenges involved in dealing with smugglers. They all knew smugglers who, in many cases, were living and functioning within the communities. The migrants preferred to use smugglers of their own nationality for the first stage of their trip—that is, to the Libyan border.

The challenge of influencing attitudes and future behavior

Based on the fieldwork, we see substantial challenges for social media campaigns in terms of changing attitudes or future behavior among transit migrants. The reason is that their need for orientation is low, the situation in Khartoum is extremely difficult, and they already possess extensive knowledge on the issue.

The migrants had access to the Internet and smartphones

Nearly all of the informants had smartphones and through them access to both the Internet and social media services. Most used several social media platforms. Services that provide encryption, such as WhatsApp, seemed to be preferred. The access to smartphones and social media provides a base for government information campaigns using these technical platforms.

The relevance of this case study

Our research involved 52 informants from four countries. We did not design the study in order to measure the extent of effects of the information campaigns. Instead, we wanted to hear directly from migrants in a transit situation how they viewed the campaigns messages, relevance and potential effects.

The descriptions of life in transit that the Eritreans and Ethiopians provide in this study may certainly be relevant for understanding the situation for other transit migrants in Sudan, but also in other countries. The migrants came from different backgrounds and ended up in Khartoum for different reasons. Yet, they all reported the same challenges of a marginal existence in Khartoum (in terms of security, work, economy, and lack of life prospects). The refined model of migratory decisions may be relevant to transit migrants in other countries and contexts.

The role of information in secondary migration

Information about migration routes, the experiences of people who successfully migrated, and the dangers along the route was vital in framing the decision to stay or go for our informants. The motivation to migrate appeared to trump the dangers én-route. Public information appeared to have little impact on this choice. Still, we met migrants who were waiting in Khartoum for conditions along the route to improve. Possibly, information from the outside may influence the timing of onward migration.

Recommendations

Our study has described the hardships of being a migrant in transit in Khartoum, Sudan and the potential of influencing migrants' decision regarding onward migration through information campaigns. Below, we present a list of recommendations pertaining to future information campaigns. Improving the living conditions and prospects of transit migrants in transit cities such as Khartoum would have the potential to contribute substantially to influencing these migrants' decision to stay or go. Such recommendations, however, are outside the scope of the current study.

Secure a comprehensive campaign approach

We recommend that governments and organizations currently engaging in social media campaigns targeting migrants use social media as one of their multiple communication tools. The chances of succeeding in getting a message through to the target audience are probably greater with such a multi-channel approach. We also strongly recommend that campaigns include a component of on-the-ground presence in the geographic locations that are the targets of the campaign.

Initiate multilateral cooperation in campaigns

European governments should engage in multilateral cooperation in campaigns and evaluations. A part of this work would be to get a better understanding of how migrants perceive specific destination countries.

Evaluation of campaigns – a continuous effort

European and national information campaigns should include an evaluation of the projects from start to finish. Benchmark indicators, such as those provided

by the EU DG Home's Communication Department, should be a minimum requirement.

Use third parties to secure on-the-ground presence

Governments and organizations should increase their efforts to secure on-the-ground presence via cooperation with international organizations, local communities, and national authorities in third countries.

Campaigns should be adjusted to migrants' experiences

Each campaign needs to take into consideration the specific context of migrants' experience. Broad campaigns targeting several countries, different populations who are migrating for different reasons, are challenging. These need to be diversified enough to meet the needs in regard to the orientations of the different target groups. Previous research has shown a lack of multilateral campaigns with clearly identified target groups.

Establish a European campaign archive

To be able to build a strong body of work on how these campaigns work, European governments and organizations should establish a resource archive of previous studies.

Secure accumulation of knowledge

There is also a need for more transparency in cases where governments commission studies but do not publish the results. Commercial research companies hired by government actors should be required to publish all data on information campaigns targeting migrants. This would open the results to the scrutiny of the wider research community and make it possible to accumulate valuable knowledge.

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"Everyone wants to leave"

Transit migration from Khartoum —
The role of information and social media campaigns

This report is based on interviews with migrants who are stuck in transit in Khartoum on their way to Europe. Challenged by the rough living conditions in the Sudanese capital, they weigh the attractions of reaching their preferred destination against the costs and dangers on the route through the desert and across the Mediterranean. What role does information play in these considerations? Can information campaigns on social media influence their decisions?