Indirect Effects of the National and International Migration in seven provinces of Afghanistan

Abstract

According to the Population Situational Analysis of Afghanistan (PSA) of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 2012, and Kuschminder and Dora (2009), large internal and international population displacements have been experienced in Afghanistan. These displacements are strongly associated with political violence and are initially characterized by population groups fleeing areas of conflict. Internal migration has primarily tended towards displacements (forced or voluntary) originating in areas of conflict towards safe areas. Hence the volume and direction of migratory flows, internal or international, are highly correlated with armed conflicts in the areas of origin, which represent a challenge to understanding the migratory profile. The growing returns of Afghans from neighbouring countries since the beginning of the last decade have increased pressure on physical and social infrastructure. This creates a need to analyse the migration phenomena from a multi-scalar approach, which allows an assessment of the volumes, net balance and direction of movements, as well as the condition of migrants and the composition of the households that support them. The aim of this thematic report is to assess the pattern of internal and international migration in Afghanistan, based on the information gathered from the Socio-Demographic and Economic Survey (SDES), conducted in the provinces of Badghis, Baghlan, Balkh, Herat, Nimroz, Samangan and Takhar. The analysis of the micro-data allows to examine the direct and indirect effects of international return migration and interprovincial in-migration in the seven provinces. The indirect effects of migration are not usually estimated and more commonly are completely ignored in the analyses of migration. Techniques of estimation of the indirect effects of migration were adapted in order to take advantage of the information available in the SDES questionnaires. Among the results, 8.6 percent of the population in the seven provinces were immigrants and roughly 8.5 percent were their children born after their arrival, constituting 17.1 percent of the total population in these provinces. Interprovincial in-migrants constituted 7.6 percent and their children born in the seven provinces 5 percent of the province’s population, corresponding to 12.6 percent of the total population. Of the total population of the provinces under study around 2016, 29.7 percent comprised the direct and indirect effects of interprovincial or international migration. Undoubtedly this figure would be much lower had it not been for the exodus in previous decades. This is corroborated by the fact that 63 percent of the immigrants of the seven provinces were born in the province of residence, implying a return to their place of birth.

Key words: Indirect effects of migration; International immigration; International return migration; Inter-provincial in-migration; Afghanistan
1. Introduction

Historically, migration in Afghanistan has been strongly associated with ethnic and socio-political conditions. Pashtun territory, for instance, straddles the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan and was bifurcated by the so-called “Durand Line”, established by the British during the colonial period with the aim of separating British India from Afghanistan. The creation of this boundary has facilitated large scale cross-border movement within the region, virtually defining the migration dynamics between the two countries. No less important, the religious identity of the Hazara ethnic group, which resides in both Iran and Afghanistan, was a major determinant of migration in the region prior to the Soviet invasion. Pakistan and Iran are the main countries of origin and destination for Afghan migrants. The unfavourable economic situation of Afghanistan relative to these neighbours, coupled with the Afghan drought of the 1970s and the Iranian oil boom in 1973 were the main push factors behind emigration movement prior to 1978, driven by the hope of better job opportunities and life conditions (Kuschminder and Dora, 2009).

A huge increase in emigration started with the Soviet invasion in 1979, motivated by the lack of economic opportunities, conflict and by the destruction of the country’s infrastructure. Emigration peaked in 1990 during the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the maintenance in power of President Najibullah. These factors, coupled with extreme drought, resulted in an outflow of 6.2 million Afghans. The number of emigrants declined in 1992, but then increased again in 1996 with the rise of the Taliban regime. In 2002, with the fall of the Taliban government and the military intervention of the United States and its allies, return to Afghanistan accelerated rapidly.

Neighbouring countries such as Iran and Pakistan, which had traditionally welcomed Afghan refugees, after 2001 started to impose restrictions on the duration that these migrants could remain in their respective territories. This was the period when the number of returnees reached its peak. Afghanistan experienced a high inflow of international return migrants after the fall of Taliban, primarily from Pakistan and Iran, although the flow has been decreasing in recent years. However, circular movements between Afghanistan and Pakistan, facilitated by established transnational networks continued. It is a challenge to measure this phenomenon from social surveys which
usually include only information on the previous residence of migrants (Kuschminder and Dora, 2009).

The international movement of Afghan people is not limited to neighbouring countries. Data from the World Bank for 2007 (Kuschminder and Dora, 2009) estimated that the Afghan diaspora comprised over 2 million people in all, including the “near” and “wide” diasporas. Germany has the highest number in the latter group, followed by the United States. The Afghan diaspora has been fundamental to Afghanistan’s reconstruction, both in its political aspects (peace settlements and treaties since 2002) and the remittances sent to Afghan families to help meet their basic needs.

The majority of Afghan returnees came from Pakistan and Iran, and although some have returned to their places of birth, most have gone to big cities in search of better job opportunities. This has had an impact on the places of destination, with lack of infrastructure to accommodate such a great volume of migrants resulting in increased urban poverty. This has been a major challenge to the Afghan government, not only in the development of public policies to improve infrastructure, but also the identification of and the response to the basic needs of this huge migrant population.

From another perspective, the returned international migrants in the last decade have increased pressure, not only on labour markets but also on housing and household arrangements. This emphasizes the need to analyse migration phenomena from a multi-scale approach, which permits an assessment of the volume, net balance and direction of movements, as well as the condition of migrants and the composition of their households. Household level analysis provides a basis for integrating structural dimensions and behavioural perspectives in the study of population movements (Wood, 1982; Davis, 1989; Massey, 1993; Hoeder, 2002; De Haas, 2010).

The trends observed with regard to internal migration have primarily been related to population displacement (forced or voluntary) from areas of conflict towards safe areas. UNHCR data shows that in 2011, 448,000 persons were internally displaced for the same reasons (UNFPA, 2012). Data from a 2001 register indicated that 186,000 persons were displaced due to armed conflict1. Hence, the volume and direction of migratory flows, both internal and international, are associated with armed conflict and political instability in Afghanistan.

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1 See: [http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/afghanistan](http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/afghanistan)
areas of origin. This presents a challenge to understanding the migration profile of Afghanistan as population movement can vary greatly in form and volume, whether temporary (displacement followed by return), or permanent migration seeking safer areas of residence.

Considering their nature, volume, economic and social impacts, there is little doubt that population movements in Afghanistan are key to understanding the dynamics of the country. In order to assess the implications of this phenomenon with view to development policies, it is essential to study the magnitude of migration at different levels of analysis. A proper understanding of these dynamics and their implications is fundamental to population and development policies in Afghanistan for the coming years.

2. Data and methodology

This paper analyses the pattern of internal and international migration in the provinces of Badghis, Baghlan, Balkh, Herat, Nimroz, Samangan and Takhar (Afghanistan). In the absence of a demographic census, the data are based on the information gathered from the Socio-Demographic and Economic Surveys (SDES), that covered these seven provinces, between 2015 and 2017.

The migration information obtained from the SDES is based on responses to the following migration questions included in the survey questionnaire: place of usual residence; duration of stay in current residence; place of previous residence; place of previous residence at a given date in the past (Nawroz, 1390); and place of birth. The information obtained can be disaggregated by country, province and city or district, being that the focus of this work is the analysis of interprovincial migration and international migratory movements.

An important factor limiting the analytical depth of this study is the absence of a previous census or survey as a base to measure trends. This also prevents the application of indirect methods in order to estimate net migration indicators (United Nations, 1970). The use of indirect techniques has proved to be a powerful analytical tool when coupled with direct measures, given that it allows comparisons between the various estimates (Rigotti, 1999; Carvalho, Rigotti, 1999). Under these conditions, the study will limit itself to the use of data drawn from the SDES, between 2015 and 2017.
It is important to note that due to limitations imposed by the questionnaire, the identification of international and inter-provincial migrants under certain conditions will be missed. For example, if an inter-provincial in-migrant made a second inter-district displacement in the same province, or if the immigrant made an inter-provincial movement within the time period of analysis, after completing an interprovincial or international migration, he or she is counted in the SDES as an intra-provincial in-migrant in the first case, or an interprovincial in-migrant in the second.

Due to the short time span between the reference date of the SDES and the date used to measure fixed-period migration – Nawroz 1390 – and due to the reference-date differences among provinces, this measure yields information with limited explanatory power. Nevertheless, direct estimates of migration can be obtained using the information on “previous place of residence” and “duration of stay in current residence” which links the spatial and temporal dimensions of migration (United Nations, 1970; Rigotti, 1999).

The volumes of returned international migrants and of interprovincial in-migrants to the seven provinces are high. This has had a heavy impact on the population as a whole, and the composition of households. Methods that permit the assessment of these consequences of migration will be employed.

2.1. Direct and indirect effects of returned immigration

Return migration has been extremely important since the beginning of the last decade and has reached highly significant figures, in both absolute and relative terms, compared to the receiving population. The full impact of return migration in a given period goes beyond the actual number of returned migrants (direct effect) and indirect effects must also be considered when incorporating the real impact of return immigration on the size and composition of the receiving population. Moreover, the SDES refers only to previous residence migration, without identifying international returnees who, once back in Afghanistan, made an inter-district movement.

To address this situation, technical procedures have been adapted and/ or developed, which make it possible to estimate: 1) the indirect immigration effects of those whose previous residence was international; 2) the direct and indirect international migration effects of individuals who, after returning to Afghanistan, made a second move
and changed their district of residence (for whom the SDES does not register the first information).

2.1.1. First Model: Indirect effects of international return migration, considering households with individuals whose previous residence was international

Ribeiro (1997) proposed a methodology to analyse the demographic effects of returning migratory flows. This methodology was marginally improved by Garcia and Miranda-Ribeiro (2005). The basic rationale underlying the two versions was applied to international return migration in Afghanistan in this paper.

In addition to the direct effects, all migratory flows have indirect effects on the size and demographic composition of the receiving population. In this particular case the receiving population is modified through three different effects of the international return immigration. The first is composed by those who after emigrating returned during the period of analysis, the direct effect of return migration. The second refers to the number of children of return migrants born in Afghanistan, whose age is equal to or lower than the time of residence of the returnees (in this paper named “indirect effect 2”). The third is ancillary to the direct effect, and consists of those persons who are not born in the country of birth of the returnee (Afghanistan), but whose migration is associated with the returnee. This phenomenon is also considered an indirect effect of migration (in this paper termed “indirect effect 1”).

The indirect effects of return immigration are estimated by linking the data of returned immigrants with information on family relationships within the household. Two typologies based on the head of the household are used when studying the direct and indirect effects of return migration. The first is the case where the head of the household is an Afghan who returned to the country. The second case is where the head of the household is not a returning migrant, but one or more members of the household are returned migrants.

The first case, where the head of the household is an Afghan returnee:

- **Direct effect**: all Afghan returnees regardless of their relation to the household head.
- **Indirect effect 1**: non-Afghans belonging to the household nucleus. Foreign members of the household, not belonging to the household nucleus, with time of residence equal or lower than the heads, are also considered as indirect effect 1.
• **Indirect effect 2**: children or grandchildren of the head of the household, born in Afghanistan,\(^2\) with age equal to or lower than the time of residence of the household head after returning.

The Second case, where the head is not a returnee to Afghanistan, but the household has members who are returned immigrants

• **Direct effect**: all Afghan returnees regardless of their relation to the household head.

• **Indirect effect 1**: foreign-born persons with a time of residence that is equal to or lower than the returnee’s.\(^3\) The criteria is the same independent of the kinship relation, whether belonging to the household nucleus or not.

• **Indirect effect 2**: children and grandchildren born in Afghanistan whose age is equal to or lower than the time of residence of the returnee, if the parent (head of household) is foreign-born with a time of residence equal of lower than the returnee’s (that is, when the household head is an indirect effect 1).

This model allows obtaining estimates of the direct and indirect effects of international return migration, both in households where the head is an Afghan international returnee and in households where the head is not an Afghan international returnee but with at least one Afghan international returnee among their members.

2.1.2 Second Model: Direct and indirect effects of international return migration, in households with foreign-born persons younger than 20 years of age and with no previous residence return immigrant

There are situations where households have members who are international returnees but have changed residence from one district to another, and whom the SDES cannot track. The model was adapted in order to estimate such cases.

Some basic restrictions and assumptions were made when adapting the model. First, only households with non-Afghans below 20 years of age belonging to the household family nucleus are considered. These households have other members that are immigrants but did not appear in the SDES because after entering in Afghanistan they moved between districts. In those households with at least one non-Afghan member aged 20 years or lower, and with no previous residence returnees, whose head is his or her

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\(^2\) The kinship relation in the SDES question is limited to that with the head of the household.

\(^3\) If there is more than one returnee in the household, the one with more time of residence is considered.
parent and Afghan, the head is considered an international returnee. The same applies to
the spouse of the head if she is Afghan and to the Afghan sons and daughters who are
older than the non-Afghan sibling. This set of individuals, parents and older Afghan
brothers and sisters, constitutes the direct effect of return migration.

Sons, daughters and spouses in the households, who are foreign-born, constitute
indirect effect 1 of international return migration. Afghan sons, daughters and
grandchildren of the head, who are younger than the head’s foreign-born child, constitute
indirect effect 2 of international return migration. In the estimation of indirect effect 1,
individuals outside the family nucleus (who are not the head, spouse, son, daughter or
grandchild) were not considered.

2.2. Direct and indirect effects of inter-provincial in-migration

In order to evaluate the impact of interprovincial in-migration on the volume and the
age distribution of the province’s population, it is necessary to estimate the indirect effects
of the interprovincial in-migration and to add them to the direct effects. In this case there
is only indirect effect 2 (children born in the region of destination) because indirect effect
1 only exists when the migratory flow analysed is a subset of a major flow in the direction
of a region.

As the information about kinship in the SDES questionnaire is limited to the
relationship with the head of the household, the estimation of indirect effect 2 is limited to
those related to the household head. All children and grandchildren of the interprovincial
household head in-migrants born in the province with an age equal or lower than the time
of residence in the province of the head of the household will be considered components
of indirect effect 2.

3. Findings

Of all residents of the seven provinces, 24.8 percent are in-migrants and
immigrants (using the criterion of previous residence migration). Nimroz (52 percent) and
Herat (33.4 percent) have a high proportion of in-migrants and immigrants, against only
14.4 percent in Badghis and 12.5 percent in Samangan (Table 1).
Table 1 – Population by previous residence migratory status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usual Residence</th>
<th>Badghis</th>
<th>Baghlan</th>
<th>Balkh</th>
<th>Herat</th>
<th>Nimroz</th>
<th>Samangan</th>
<th>Takhar</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absoluted numbers</td>
<td>872.763</td>
<td>229.212</td>
<td>435.620</td>
<td>807.872</td>
<td>124.808</td>
<td>218.948</td>
<td>72.263</td>
<td>1.947.220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not reside for more than six months in another district or country</td>
<td>428.012</td>
<td>1.032.153</td>
<td>1.236.775</td>
<td>1.607.730</td>
<td>115.152</td>
<td>441.231</td>
<td>1.058.975</td>
<td>5.890.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>500.275</td>
<td>1.261.365</td>
<td>1.672.395</td>
<td>2.415.603</td>
<td>239.961</td>
<td>469.732</td>
<td>1.277.923</td>
<td>7.837.253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relative Distribution (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Residence</th>
<th>Badghis</th>
<th>Baghlan</th>
<th>Balkh</th>
<th>Herat</th>
<th>Nimroz</th>
<th>Samangan</th>
<th>Takhar</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other city/district, same province</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other province</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other country</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 show that in the seven provinces 34.8 percent of migrants had previously resided in another country. This proportion varies from 21.5 percent (Balkh) to 56.6 percent (Nimroz), showing the importance of international immigration flows in the seven provinces, probably consisting mostly of returnees to Afghanistan. At first glance, it is surprising that the volume and relative weight of intra-provincial migrants is the same (34.8 percent) as that of international immigration. Usually it would be expected to observe a higher proportion of intraprovincial migrants. These figures range from 6.8 percent in Nimroz to 42.2 percent in Takhar. These levels of internal mobility can also be attributed to the small number of districts in the seven provinces (Table 2).

Table 2 – Previous residence of migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Residence</th>
<th>Badghis</th>
<th>Baghlan</th>
<th>Balkh</th>
<th>Herat</th>
<th>Nimroz</th>
<th>Samangan</th>
<th>Takhar</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absolute numbers</td>
<td>872.763</td>
<td>229.212</td>
<td>435.620</td>
<td>807.872</td>
<td>124.808</td>
<td>218.948</td>
<td>72.263</td>
<td>1.947.220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not reside for more than six months in another district or country</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>500.275</td>
<td>1.261.365</td>
<td>1.672.395</td>
<td>2.415.603</td>
<td>239.961</td>
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<td>7.837.253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relative Distribution (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Residence</th>
<th>Badghis</th>
<th>Baghlan</th>
<th>Balkh</th>
<th>Herat</th>
<th>Nimroz</th>
<th>Samangan</th>
<th>Takhar</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other city/district, same province</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other province</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other country</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 presents for the 7 provinces, the place of birth of all interprovincial in-migrants and immigrants. Among the immigrants, 63 percent were return migrants to their provinces of birth while among the interprovincial in-migrants only 13.8 percent were born
in the destination province. It is worth noticing that among the immigrants 27 percent were born out of Afghanistan. As will be seen later, this high proportion of foreigners is almost entirely linked to Afghans returnees. They constitute in this report what is named the indirect effect 1 of return migration.

The proportions of returnees in these provinces are high, particularly in Badghis, Samangan and Takhar, where returnees make up 65 percent of all interprovincial immigrants and immigrants. Balkh, Herat and Nimroz, on the other hand, attracted mainly people born in other provinces and countries. Only 11.1 percent in Nimroz, 22.8 percent in Balkh and 38.6 percent in Herat, of its in-migrants and immigrants, were native born.

Table 3 – Interprovincial in-migrants and immigrants in the seven provinces (Total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Residence</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same province</td>
<td>Other province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other province (abs)</td>
<td>81.649</td>
<td>501.317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other province (%)</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other country (abs)</td>
<td>426.590</td>
<td>68.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other country (%)</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (abs)</td>
<td>508.239</td>
<td>569.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SDES-2015-2017, UNFPA-Afghanistan and CSO of Afghanistan (Micro data)

Table 4 presents the origins of previous residence immigrants and in-migrants. The numbers in the principal diagonal refer to the intra-provincial migration between the districts of the same province. Neighbouring countries Pakistan and mainly Iran are extremely important origins for previous residence migration. They are the last place of residence of 34.6 percent of the combined previous residence international and interprovincial migrants to the seven provinces, and account for 97.1 percent of all immigrants.

The volume of intra-provincial migrants (677,509) is very close when compared with the volume of interprovincial in-migrants (594,226) and of the immigrants (677,485). Also, 32.1 percent of the 133,297 migrants who moved between the seven provinces migrated to Herat province and 28.3 percent headed to Balkh province. The interprovincial migrants (592,227) had as a main destiny Herat (35.4 percent) and Balkh (30.6 percent),
while those who had as last residence a foreign country moved with more intensity to Herat (41.4 percent), Baghlan (15.3 percent) and Balkh (13.9 percent).

### Table 4 – Origin-destination matrix of previous residence immigrants and in-migrants: Badghis, Baghlan, Balkh, Herat, Nimroz, Samangan and Takhar (2015–2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Dest.</th>
<th>Badghis</th>
<th>Baghlan</th>
<th>Balkh</th>
<th>Herat</th>
<th>Nimroz</th>
<th>Samangan</th>
<th>Takhar</th>
<th>Total except intra-provincial migrant</th>
<th>OVERALL TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badghis</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.424</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>35.748</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>37.159</td>
<td>57.583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baghlan</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>64.743</td>
<td>10.525</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>3.902</td>
<td>4.194</td>
<td>16.273</td>
<td>84.448</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>3.771</td>
<td>159.969</td>
<td>2.408</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>8.224</td>
<td>1.238</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>20.148</td>
<td>176.242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimroz</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>3.216</td>
<td>8.433</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>4.031</td>
<td>12.464</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samangan</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5.485</td>
<td>22.653</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>14.015</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>29.655</td>
<td>43.670</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takhar</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3.718</td>
<td>2.088</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>92.403</td>
<td>6.326</td>
<td>98.729</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other provinces</td>
<td>6.691</td>
<td>47.283</td>
<td>144.147</td>
<td>167.726</td>
<td>39.546</td>
<td>41.991</td>
<td>458.930</td>
<td>458.930</td>
<td>958.830</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>40.513</td>
<td>125.847</td>
<td>341.887</td>
<td>528.094</td>
<td>54.151</td>
<td>38.421</td>
<td>140.823</td>
<td>592.227</td>
<td>1.269.736</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>1.539</td>
<td>58.216</td>
<td>32.892</td>
<td>8.261</td>
<td>1.552</td>
<td>8.512</td>
<td>22.214</td>
<td>133.186</td>
<td>133.186</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>29.799</td>
<td>41.907</td>
<td>55.911</td>
<td>269.864</td>
<td>69.067</td>
<td>9.345</td>
<td>53.613</td>
<td>527.506</td>
<td>527.506</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other countries</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>3.242</td>
<td>4.930</td>
<td>1.653</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.219</td>
<td>2.299</td>
<td>14.793</td>
<td>14.793</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign countries</td>
<td>31.750</td>
<td>103.365</td>
<td>93.733</td>
<td>279.778</td>
<td>70.657</td>
<td>20.076</td>
<td>78.126</td>
<td>677.485</td>
<td>677.485</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72.263</td>
<td>229.212</td>
<td>435.620</td>
<td>807.872</td>
<td>124.808</td>
<td>58.497</td>
<td>218.948</td>
<td>1.269.712</td>
<td>1.947.220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SDES-2015-2017, UNFPA-Afghanistan and CSO of Afghanistan (Micro data)

### 3.1. Direct and indirect effects of Afghan international return migration in the seven provinces

Around 2016, among the migrants living in the seven provinces who had previous residence in another province or country (1,269,713), 53.3 percent had come from another country (677,486), 73.8 percent of immigrants were Afghans and constitute the direct effect of return migration to the country, and 26.2 percent were foreign-born. Furthermore, the foreign-born immigrants in the seven provinces (182,705) were probably, in a significant proportion, linked to the return of Afghans to the country (indirect effect 1 of return migration). In addition, the Afghan immigrants had, on the reference survey date, children born after their return to the country (indirect effect 2 of return migration). The persons constituting indirect effects 1 and 2 had become part of the seven provinces population due to the Afghan international returnees.

There is also the direct and indirect contribution of the international return immigration through those Afghans who, after their arrival in Afghanistan, moved to another district. Unfortunately, they were not captured by the SDES questionnaire. Consequently, the numbers provided in this report referring to the return migration of
Afghanistan constitute an underestimation of the real values. In this section, a thorough analysis will be made to estimate the direct and indirect effects of international return migration to the seven provinces under study and its impact on the size and age composition of the province’s population.

To estimate the direct and indirect effects of international return migration, the households were split according to the following criteria: (a) Households where the head is an Afghan returnee immigrant (First Model, first case); (b) Households where the head of the household is a last residence no-returned immigrant, but there are in the household one or more members who are Afghan returned immigrants (First Model, second case); (c) Households without the presence of previous residence Afghan returnees, but with the presence of at least one foreign-born aged 20 years or less, and whose household head parent is Afghan born (Second Model). The estimated direct and indirect effects of the return migration to Afghanistan in the seven provinces are shown in Table 5 (for each province).

Taking into account all the observed and estimated Afghan international returnees living in the seven provinces, they numbered 500,346 persons, or 6.4 percent of the seven provinces population around 2016. Indirect effect 2 (the children born after their return and alive around 2016) numbered 662,722 or 8.5 percent of the seven provinces’s population, and indirect effect 1 (non-Afghans who accompanied Afghan returnees) 135,453 individuals, or 1.7 percent of the total population of the provinces. In all, 16.6 percent of the resident population of the seven provinces around 2016 comprised persons who were either Afghan international returnees or non-Afghans who moved to the country as a consequence of the return of Afghans, or children born in the country after the international return of their Afghan parents (see Table 5). While this proportion represents only 9.6 percent of the total population of Samangan, the sum of direct, indirect effect 1 and indirect effect 2 reaches 17.1 percent of Badghis, 21.8 in Herat and 40.6 percent of Nimroz.
Table 5 – Direct and indirect effects of Afghan international return migration in the seven provinces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>Direct Effect (a)</th>
<th>Indirect Effect 1 (b)</th>
<th>(a)+(b)</th>
<th>(c)/Total Pop.</th>
<th>Indirect Effect 2 (e)</th>
<th>[(c)+(e)]/Total Pop.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badghis</td>
<td>31.413</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>31.577</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>54.030</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baghlan</td>
<td>74.336</td>
<td>21.131</td>
<td>95.467</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>108.535</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td>71.491</td>
<td>20.977</td>
<td>92.468</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>79.612</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herat</td>
<td>208.621</td>
<td>48.226</td>
<td>256.847</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>268.790</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimroz</td>
<td>29.188</td>
<td>33.971</td>
<td>63.160</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>34.247</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samangan</td>
<td>16.693</td>
<td>2.786</td>
<td>19.479</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>25.610</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takhar</td>
<td>68.603</td>
<td>8.198</td>
<td>76.801</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>91.899</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>500.346</td>
<td>135.453</td>
<td>635.799</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>662.722</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SDES-2015-2017, UNFPA-Afghanistan and CSO of Afghanistan (Micro data)

Two observations should be made: 1) of the total number of Afghan returnees, 500,346 persons, only 1.1 percent (5,567) were estimated. The remaining 98.9 percent declared themselves as Afghan previous residence international returnees in the SDES questionnaires. This extremely high proportion show that after entering the country, at least among those living in the seven provinces around 2016 and during the period in consideration, only a small proportion of immigrants made an internal move to another district. 2) If the Afghan previous residence international returnees (500,346) are added to their indirect effect 1 (135,453) they total 635,799 persons. This number corresponds to 93.8 percent of all of those who declared another country as their previous residence origin (677,486) in the SDES. This proportion leads to the conclusion that practically the entirely of immigration in the seven provinces under study is due directly or indirectly to return migration to the country. This conclusion should not be a surprise given the political context. On the other hand, it shows the importance of taking into consideration indirect effect 1 of return migration. 3) The large numbers of those constituting the indirect effect 2, i.e., those born after the arrival of their parents in the destination provinces, are due, in addition to high fertility, to the fact that the data refer to lifetime migrants. The longer the time of residence, the bigger the weight of the indirect effect 2.

Given the small numbers of return immigrants and of their indirect effects 1 and 2 estimated through the Second Model, and due to the fact that they are also included
among the interprovincial in-migrants to the provinces under study, further analysis of
return migrants in this report will exclude them.

3.2 Direct and indirect effects of interprovincial migration in the seven provinces

Similar to returning immigration, it is important to account for the indirect effects of
interprovincial migratory flows to the seven provinces in order to assess the joint impacts
that in-migration and its indirect effects had on the size and age distribution of the
population in these provinces, around 2016. In the case of these migratory flows there is
no indirect effect 1, which only occurs when dealing with a subset of migrants, as was the
case with Afghan returned immigrants, which constitutes a subset of all immigrants who
had the seven provinces under study as their destination. When studying interprovincial
migration, all in-migrants are considered collectively. In this case, the only indirect effect
of migration is the children of in-migrants born in one of the seven destination provinces.
Considering all households in the seven provinces, 157,085 were headed by an
interprovincial in-migrant. These households provide the base upon which the size of
indirect effect 2 is estimated. Within the 157,085 households considered, 592,226
interprovincial in-migrants were enumerated.

Table 6 – Direct and indirect effects of interprovincial migration in the seven
provinces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>Direct Effect (a)</th>
<th>Indirect Effect 2 (b)</th>
<th>(a)/Total Pop. (c)</th>
<th>[(a)+(b)])/Total Pop. (d)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badghis</td>
<td>20.089</td>
<td>23.239</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baghlan</td>
<td>61.104</td>
<td>64.787</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td>181.918</td>
<td>113.132</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herat</td>
<td>210.572</td>
<td>98.630</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimroz</td>
<td>45.718</td>
<td>24.604</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samangan</td>
<td>24.406</td>
<td>21.402</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takhar</td>
<td>48.419</td>
<td>46.154</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>592.226</td>
<td>391.948</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SDES- 2015-2017, UNFPA-Afghanistan and CSO of Afghanistan (Micro data)

Table 6 shows that 391,948 individuals (sons, daughters, and grandchildren) in the
seven provinces lived in households headed by interprovincial in-migrants and were born
after the arrival of their interprovincial in-migrant parents or grandparents in the province.
This is an underestimation due to the impossibility of taking into consideration indirect effect 2 related to the in-migrants living in households headed by non-in-migrants. Interprovincial in-migrants and their estimated indirect effect 2 made up 12.6 percent of the population of the seven provinces around 2016. If the indirect effect is not taken into consideration, this proportion diminishes to 7.6 percent. This last proportion is misleading as an indicator of the importance of in-migration in the provinces under study and its consequences because at least 391,948 persons (indirect effect), or 5 percent of the total population, would not live in the seven provinces in the absence of the interprovincial in-migration.

3.3 An integrated overview of the weight of immigration and interprovincial in-migration in the seven provinces

Figure 1 provides an integrated view of the age distribution of each of the seven provinces population disaggregated by immigrants and interprovincial in-migrants, and their indirect effects and by those not directly or indirectly linked to these two migration components. From the centre of the pyramid outwards the following components of the population are shown: 1) population not related to the return immigration and to the interprovincial in-migration; 2) interprovincial in-migrants; 3) indirect effect 2 of interprovincial in-migrant; 4) immigrants and their indirect effect 1; 5) indirect effect 2 of returned immigrants.

Items 2 and 3 constitute the population of the provinces under study composed of interprovincial in-migrants and the children of these migrants born after their parents' arrival in the seven provinces. Taken together, this group represents 12.6 percent of the population in the seven provinces around 2016 (interprovincial in-migrants 7.6 percent, and their children born in these provinces 5 percent). As previously discussed, indirect effect 2 of interprovincial in-migrants is underestimated due to data restrictions. Consequently, the contribution of the interprovincial in-migration to the population under study is also underestimated.

Item 4 comprises all international immigrants in the seven provinces around 2016, namely: returned immigrants, non-Afghan immigrants linked with return immigration (indirect effect 1) and foreign-born immigrants not linked with return immigration. The
estimates provided in this report show that this component of immigration corresponds to a small proportion of all the immigrants. Item 5, in turn, corresponds to indirect effect 2 of international Afghan returnees. It is necessary to point out that there is an inherent omission in the estimation of indirect effect 2 related to immigrants. Indirect effect 2 of the immigrants not related to return immigration was not estimated. On the whole, items 4 and 5 (international migration and indirect effect 2) represented 17.1 percent of the population of the seven provinces around 2016 (8.6 percent due to immigrants and at least 8.5 percent due to their children born after arrival in the provinces).

Considering immigration and interprovincial in-migration jointly, as well as their indirect effects, they accounted for 29.7 percent of the population of the seven provinces. Of the total population, 16.2 percent corresponded to immigrants and in-migrants, and 13.5 percent to their children born after arrival in the provinces (indirect effect 2). The non-migrant population, that not directly or indirectly related to immigration and interprovincial in-migration, represented, around 2016, approximately 70.3 percent of the total population.

Given the significant contribution of return migratory flows, it follows that in the absence of the adverse political conditions at the end of the last century the scenario would be quite different. This is based on the fact that political instability triggered a large exodus from the provinces under study. Subsequently, when conditions improved, probably the majority of emigrants returned to the provinces. In the absence of this context it is plausible to affirm that the proportion of non-migrants in the seven province’s population would be significantly higher.
Figure 1 – Relative age distribution by sex of previous residence interprovincial in-migrants, of their indirect effect 2, of previous residence immigrants, of the indirect effect 2 of returned immigrants, and of the remaining population Badghis, Baghlan, Balkh, Herat, Nimroz, Samangan and Takhar (2015–2017)

Source: SDES- 2015-2017, UNFPA-Afghanistan and CSO of Afghanistan (Micro data)

The three age groups represent children (aged 0–14 years), people of working age (15–59 years) and the elderly (60+ years). The age distribution of migrants and their children is usually concentrated in the more productive ages (young adults), which are
also those with higher fertility, and in the very young ages through the direct and indirect effect 2 of migration.

The joint overall sex ratio of the returned immigrants and the persons included in their estimated effects 1 and 2 is higher than the sex ratio of the total population in the seven provinces under study. There is no significant sex ratio differential between the immigrant population and that of the seven provinces between in the 0–14 age group. However, among those aged 15–59 and among those 60 and over, the sex ratios indicate a significantly higher presence of men among immigrants in these two age groups relative to the population of the destination in the seven provinces. The hypotheses to explain those very high sex ratios are: 1) failure to declare in the SDES the presence of women living in the household (under-enumeration of women), increasing proportionately with age; 2) higher female adult mortality. Another report in this series of SDES data analyses, the *Thematic Report on Adult Mortality - Provinces of Bamiyan, Daykundi, Ghor, Kabul, Kapisa, Parwan*, has shown evidence of a higher female mortality after ages 40 or 45. However, this excess female mortality probably does not entirely explain the rapidly growing sex ratio as age increases; 3) a third hypothesis can be put forth. Namely, when these individuals emigrated from Afghanistan there was already a predominance of men, and hence a high sex ratio at a prior stage of the migratory cycle and consequently in the return migration flows.

In order to shed light on this unexpected behaviour it is important to consider the socio-cultural context in which these migratory flows took place. First, the mean age of first marriage is lower for women than men. Furthermore, it is common practice that when women wed they move to reside in the husband’s household. Moreover, Afghan emigration flows generally occur towards regions where the inhabitants share the same ethnicity, as in the case of Pashtun emigrants going to Pakistan and Hazara emigrants to Iran. Considering these factors, it is quite plausible that a proportion of single Afghan female emigrants married natives (non-Afghans). Consequently, when their families returned to Afghanistan these women would probably have remained abroad. Another possible factor that could influence the differences in sex ratios in adulthood has to do with the techniques employed to estimate indirect effect 2 of Afghan immigration. Women born in Afghanistan after the return of their parents (indirect effect 2) who married and, as
it is usual in the country, left their households, were not captured by the technique employed. These two elements combined may help to explain partly the higher sex ratio observed in the immigrant population in adulthood in comparison with the non-migrant population.

Similar to the situation among the international returnees analysed earlier, the joint age distribution of the interprovincial in-migrants and their indirect effect shows the traditional concentration in the young adult and the very young age groups. Interprovincial in-migration is probably not primarily linked to labour market dynamics but rather to the country’s context of political instability. In these circumstances, individuals generally migrate as part of a nuclear or extended family, even as part of a social group in some cases. As a consequence, the age distribution of the migrants is not very different from that of the population in general.

When indirect effect 2 is added to the interprovincial in-migrants, their proportional age distribution is similar to the age distribution of the whole population, particularly when the comparison is made among men and women separately.

From these sex ratio distributions some observations can be made, and some hypotheses proposed. The age composition of the in-migrant population indicates that the flow of in-migrants consists of nuclear or extended families. No abnormal concentration in particular age intervals is observed. Nonetheless, interprovincial in-migrants display a disproportionate weight of males in elderly age groups compared with non-migrants, producing higher sex ratios in the in-migrant population in relation to non-migrants. Perhaps the sex ratios in the provinces of origin of the in-migrants are abnormally high. Further investigation asking more specific questions about migratory flows may prove fruitful in corroborating this hypothesis.

Another hypothesis, corroborated by the data, is that women have a higher mortality level than men, particularly after age 40. This holds for the in-migrant, immigrant and non-migrant population, although the differential varies from one group to another. This subject deserves further attention and research, and may have important implications for public policy, particularly with regard to health services.

It is also important to consider that under-reporting of females may be higher than of males. The data suggest that under-reporting may increase with age. Once again
investigative query would be a significant contribution to understanding the socio-demographic and economic context in Afghanistan.

4. Conclusion

Migration streams in Afghanistan are associated with ethnic diversity, through historical migration flows to neighbouring countries, particularly Iran and Pakistan. Beyond this historical context, migration has been related to the search for better job opportunities due to the better economic situation of those countries relative to that in Afghanistan. More recently, emigration, as well as interprovincial out-migration, were a consequence mainly of armed conflict, closely related to the political instability that the country faced in recent decades. Since the fall of the Taliban regime, a large volume of international immigration has occurred, almost entirely linked to return migration.

The analysis of migratory flows to the seven provinces under study yielded important conclusions, particularly when accounting for indirect effect 2 of in-migration and immigration and indirect effect 1 of return immigration. Indirect effect 2 corresponds to the children of in-migrants or immigrants born in the place of destination. Indirect effect 1 of return immigration corresponds to those not born in Afghanistan who immigrated to the provinces as a result of return migration of Afghans to their country. It primarily consists of children of Afghans born abroad and of non-Afghan spouses who accompanied Afghans in their return migration.

In the seven provinces, 8.6 percent of the population were immigrants and roughly 8.5 percent were their children born after their arrival, constituting 17.1 percent of the total population in these provinces. Interprovincial in-migrants constituted 7.6 percent and their children born in the seven provinces 5 percent of the province’s population, corresponding to 12.6 percent of the total population.

Of the total population of the provinces under study around 2016, 29.7 percent comprised the direct and indirect effects of interprovincial or international migration. Undoubtedly this figure would be much lower had it not been for the exodus in previous decades. This is corroborated by the fact that 63 percent of the immigrants of the seven provinces were born in the province of residence, implying a return to their place of birth.
The Second Model was developed to estimate the direct and indirect effects of those immigrants who, after their return, migrated to a second district. As a result, there is no information in SDES about their international move. The results show that internal migration after arrival in Afghanistan was very small.

5. Bibliography


