

Questions in existing household surveys related to informal sector, informal employment and social protection: **Middle East and North Africa**

Table 1 — Questions on social protection, employment in the informal sector and informal economy

Concepts and Indicators/ Regions and countries	Informal sector	Informal employment	Social protection	Working conditions
Middle East North Africa				
Afghanistan			NRVS 2007-08 Programmes cash for work, food aid	
Algeria	LFS 2001-08 Registration, accounts, Size	LFS 2001-08 Affiliated to social security	LFS 2001-08 Affiliated to social security	
Morocco	ENNV 2006-07 Module on non-farm own-account enterprise, legal status, size, payment of social contributions		ENNV 2006-07 14 questions: Any health coverage? Which one? Affiliated or beneficiary? Amount paid	
West Bank and Gaza		Work conditions 2004 No written contract Benefit annual paid leave, sick leave, maternity leave	Work conditions 2004 Benefit annual paid leave, sick leave, maternity leave	Work conditions 2004 Health and security at work

Some comparative results and examples of questions from selected **Middle East and North African countries**

As illustrated by table 2 hereafter, the Middle East and North Africa is a region where long time-series on social protection are available for from both social security sources and from household surveys. Since 2000 in Morocco, 2003 in Turkey and Algeria, the question of registration to social security (Turkey) or affiliation to social security (Algeria) or medical coverage (Morocco) has been introduced in the permanent labour force surveys and the statistics are regularly published in the annual reports. At the same time, the social security institutions in these countries provide relatively reliable data, which can be compared with the survey data. It is the region for which such a comparison can be made on a sound basis. The comparison is made easier where the national institutes of statistics or social security compile the data for the various social security funds (private sector, civil servants, army, etc.): in Algeria for example, the National Office of Statistics publishes the statistics of the Ministry of Labour and Social security, which compiles the data of social insurances for the wage-workers (CNAS), the non-wage workers (CASNOS) and the workers of Construction and Hydraulics (CACOBATH), distinguishing the number of insured persons, the number of affiliated persons, the number of current contributors, the number of affiliated employers, the number of declared workers and the number of benefits provided.

It can be seen that social security statistics from administrative sources (in italics in the table), despite their quality, overestimate the population coverage because of double counting and

failure of updating, while it is not obvious that labour force surveys underestimate the coverage, provided that respondents are supposed to be aware of their actual situation regarding social protection. As a matter of fact, this affirmation deserves discussion: a worker may think that he is affiliated while he is not, as the employer has not paid his contribution. But the contrary is more doubtful: why a worker could think that he is not affiliated while he is actually? On the other hand, a certain proportion of workers may have been affiliated to social security and recorded, with their employers having been failing to pay their contribution after some time or during a given period: in such cases, the right to social security is not lost and remain potential. This is why the actual figures of social protection coverage – or of its reverse informal employment – are somewhere between the two estimates.

The case of **Turkey** is interesting: the time series from 1990 to 2006 is based on administrative data from social security schemes and shows that the proportion of the active population not covered has been regularly decreasing from 56.1% in 1990 to 31.3% in 2003. The introduction of a question to capture the persons not registered to any social security institution in the labour force surveys at the beginning of the years 2000 has lowered by some 4 millions the number of active persons being actually covered. Informal employment defined by the lack of social protection was measured at 53.8% of total employment in 2004, regularly declining down to 44.9% in 2008 (the 2009 figure is for June and not for the whole year).

The same observation can be made for **Algeria**: in 2006, when the question on social security was asked in the labour force survey, the number of active persons covered revealed to be overestimated in social security statistics by nearly 3,5 millions: informal employment was then estimated at 53.6% of total employment.

In **Morocco**, according to social security schemes data, the coverage gap decreased from 80% in 1990 to 75.8% in 2000 and it seems rather stagnant since then (with a level at 74.3% in 2007). In this regard, the results of the labour force surveys show that this deficit of coverage reaches higher levels but also that it is on a more positive trend towards an extension of social security coverage: the indicator has dropped from 87.6% in 2000 to 83% in 2008, with an acceleration in 2006.

In **Jordan**, where the only source of information is the social security administrative data, the trend is also downward oriented, with a regular decrease from 68% in 2000 to 53% in 2007.

In all the countries studied, the trend is downward oriented and it seems that the countries are engaged into a ongoing process of extension of social security coverage: its pace is rather slow, but appears to be characterised by acceleration since 2005-2006. The only exception is Algeria where the private sector is still lagging behind a predominant public sector: however in 2006, among the 52.6% not affiliated to any social protection system, a little bit less than 1/3 (31%) were employed in the public sector (and 69% in the private sector), which means that public enterprises do not hesitate to resort to low quality jobs, a phenomenon which could explain why informal employment is still on the rise in this country. If 73.2% of employers and own-account workers are not covered by any social security scheme, and 86.4% of non permanent employees, still 34.3% of the permanent employees are not covered, a proportion which is huge and explains, to a certain extent, that the transition from informal to formal is still ahead. Even for non-agricultural employment, the trend is uncertain.

Finally, the differences between countries of the region partly reflect the respective shares of agriculture in their labour force (40.9% in Morocco, 23.7% in Turkey, 20.1% in Syria, 13.7% in Algeria and 3.4% in Jordan): it is clear that the agricultural sector is the most difficult to cover and will remain the last obstacle to generalisation of social security.

Algeria, Morocco and Turkey can be cited as the good illustrations in the region in the sense that, in the regular labour force survey, a simple question on medical or social security coverage is asked to all persons employed and the statistics are regularly published in the annual reports, making of this information a useful indicator for policy makers, as a measure of the progress in social protection.

A special mention must be made for the Palestinian Territories (**West Bank and Gaza strip**) where a survey on work conditions was carried out in 2004. Several sets of questions were designed to address social protection benefits, and the working conditions regarding health and safety. Social benefits were captured through the following question: are the following benefits available at your job?

1. Annual paid vacation,
2. Paid sick leave,
3. Paid emergency vacation,
4. Paid Maternity vacation,
5. Paid sad vacation,
6. Breastfeeding hours,
7. Weekly vacation one day (24 continuous hours for rest during the week),
8. Rest period during work time (half an hour after passing less than 5 work hours),
9. Paid wages in time (being late, after 5 days from payment period),
10. Paid wages regularly,
11. Vocational, cultural course for workers (courses /internal or external seminars),
12. Job security (Stability at work),
13. Available of in kind incentives,
14. Available of morale incentives, thanks for special works,
15. Contribution of workers in making decision.

Table 2: Trends in social protection coverage (in thousands and %) in the Middle East-North Africa

	1990	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Turkey											
Employment (1)	18,539	21,581	21,525	21,351	21,147	21,791	22,046	22,330	23,581	22,111	21,947
Covered by social security (LFS) (2)					10,214	10,241	11,001	10,791	11,251	12,185	11,922
Covered by social security (SS) (3)	8,131	11,859	11,591	14,437	14,520	14,546	15,104	16,582			
% not covered = (1-3)/(1)	56,1%	45,0%	46,2%	32,4%	31,3%	33,2%	31,5%	25,7%			
Informal employment (% not covered) = (1-2)/(1)					51,7%	53,8%	52,3%	48,5%	46,9%	44,9%	45,7%

	1990	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Syria											
Informal employment (% not covered)									61%		
Jordan											
Employment		1,130	1,198	1,211	1,278	1,314	1,324	1,436	1,552	1,534	
<i>Covered by social security (SS)</i>		366	382	416	467	519	592	662	724	788	
Informal employment (% not covered)		68%	68%	66%	63%	60%	55%	54%	53%	51.4%	
Algeria											
Employment (1)			6,229		6,684	7,798	8,044	8,779	8,594	9,146	
Covered by social security (LFS) (2)					3,568		4,092	4,159	4,322		
<i>Covered by social security (SS) (3)</i>			4,877	4,784	5,917	6,320	7,527	7,870			
% not covered = (1-3)/(1)			21.7%		11.5%	19.0%	6.4%	10.4%			
Informal employment (% not covered) = (1-2)/(1)					46.6%		49.1%	52.6%	49.7%		
Morocco											
Employment (1)	7,783	9,323	9,265	9,415	9,838	9,934	9,947	10,212	10,297	10,381	
Covered by social security (LFS) (2)		1,160	1,257	1,264	1,285	1,269	1,292	1,690	1,727	1,765	
<i>Covered by social security (SS) (3)</i>	1,556	2,254	2,284	2,340	2,401	2,508	2,564	2,606	2,650		
% not covered = (1-3)/(1)	80,0%	75,8%	75,3%	75,1%	75,6%	74,8%	74,2%	74,5%	74,3%		
Informal employment (% not covered) = (1-2)/(1)		87.6%	86.4%	86.6%	86.9%	87.2%	87.0%	83.5%	83.2%	83.0%	

Note: Figures in italics are from administrative sources (social security), other figures are from labour force surveys (LFS).

Sources: For Turkey: TÜİK, Turkish Statistical Institute, (2008), Statistical Indicators 1923-2007, table 7.1, population covered by social security schemes, p.116; and Household Labour Force Survey (LFS), June 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009.

<http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/yillik/stat_indicators.pdf> and http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?tb_id=25&ust_id=8

For Jordan: Social Security Corporation, Annual reports <http://www.ssc.gov.jo> and <http://www.almanar.jo>

For Algeria: social security statistics (CNSS, CASNOS and CACOBATPH) and Labour Force Survey 2006. <www.ons.dz/-Protection-Sociale-.html>

For Morocco: Labour Force Surveys, Activité, emploi et chômage 2007, résultats détaillés, table 2.17 p.257, et années 2000 à 2008. <http://www.hcp.ma/publication.aspx> and DEPF www.finances.gov.ma. Social security statistics include CNSS (private sector), CMR (civil servants) and CNRA (public sector).