



A Perfect Storm?

Forces shaping modern migration & displacement

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Abstract: *In view of the unusually high number of refugees and IDPs globally and the high number of migrants on the move, many of which are using smugglers to enter countries irregularly, we have arguably entered a new era in mixed migration, refugee movements and displacement.*

Whether we believe that the phenomenon constitutes a 'crisis' or not, the issue of migration and refugees has become a central political concern in many countries. If left unaddressed or if poorly addressed the political and social consequences will be significant. For policymakers seeking to respond, therefore, it is critical to acknowledge both the new challenge and new context that this phenomenon represents and to ask if the volume and the manner of movement that we are currently witnessing is a temporary phenomenon or is it instead the 'new normal'?

This discussion paper will identify different aspects of globalization and governance through the lenses of economy, culture, demography, communications, crime and security. It proposes that these aspects are the main ones that have inevitably led to the current mobility and displacement taking place. In the short to medium term these drivers of mobility and displacement will remain strong or become increasingly prevalent. More significantly, however, the confluence of these various forces or waves means the combined impact known as superposition in physics¹, cannot be ignored.

Furthermore, this paper argues that the ability or inability of migration and refugee policy, at national, regional and global levels, to adapt to recent developments is critical to whether future mobility and displacement becomes a source of conflict, crisis and social unrest or whether it will be managed. At stake, amongst other concerns, is the integrity and workability of the refugee convention and accompanying protection standards. If the distinction between economic migrants and refugees is not more strictly applied with appropriately policies designed for each, there is a risk that popular politics will move against refugees irrespective of their genuine needs and rights of protection.

It is a question of perspective whether the current context is one of opportunity or one of threat and crisis, but arguably the combination of all the factors discussed results in a phenomenon far greater than the sum of the parts and, as such, has the making of a 'perfect storm' with critical policy implications for relevant countries and regions.²

¹ The principle of linear superposition - when two or more waves come together, the result is the sum of the individual waves

² A «perfect storm» is an expression that describes an event where a rare combination of circumstances will aggravate a situation drastically. The term is also used to describe an actual phenomenon that happens to occur in such a confluence, resulting in an event of unusual magnitude.

Introduction

Despite being repeatedly referred to as a “crisis” or “disaster” of “unprecedented scale,” the volume of irregular migration witnessed in Europe in 2014, 2015 and 2016, is emblematic of the new reality of global mobility. The new normal can be primarily identified by the scale of contemporary mobility (unprecedented levels of forced and voluntary displacement), its prime characteristics (massed, irregular and smuggler-led) and the profile of those on the move (complex and mixed, defying the usual classifications of refugee and economic migrant). This is the reality of contemporary migration and displacement facing different regions of the world.

While for European policymakers, the focus has been the situation at their own borders, this pre-occupation has masked the extent to which this is a truly global phenomenon. Europe’s ‘crisis’ has started to mirror the prolonged migration challenge faced in the Americas, where irregular migration from the countries of Latin America, the Northern Triangle³ and Mexico has been a continual and increasing pressure on the southern border of the United States. Those on the move are attracted by better employment opportunities, driven by violence, and enabled by mis-information from opportunistic smuggling groups. Paralysed by a policy crisis, the US Department of Homeland Security and immigration services have struggled to deal with either the consistently high numbers of migrants, or the sharp spikes in migration by unaccompanied minors. In 2015, thousands of marginalized Rohingya were left stranded at sea for weeks on end, buffered between the intransigent policies of the South-East Asian nations of Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. The tiny nation of Djibouti, along with Puntland, have collected hundreds of dead bodies from their beaches as the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden crossings prove to continue to be dangerous for labour migrants and refugees from the Horn of Africa making their way to the Gulf.

The narrative of crisis and unprecedented emergency is no longer adequate to describe what should instead be understood as a globalised phenomenon that has fundamentally changed people’s perceptions of statehood, citizenship and entitlement to cross borders. Unless we recognise how and why the context has changed and the combined strength of different factors causing and enabling mobility, we will struggle to respond adequately and the phenomenon will prove resistant to, or perhaps be further exacerbated by, traditional policy prescription and management.

Increasingly, policy-makers and analysts talk of tackling the root causes but the conventional dual explanation of poverty and war is no longer sufficient to explain why people take dangerous journeys through many countries to reach their preferred destination. Besides, the policy conclusions they reach often identify the same needs and deficiencies that international aid and development have been trying to address for decades - most of the 1.8 billion Euros allocated to tackle root causes at the 2015 Valletta summit will be swallowed by development projects that are likely to have little or no impact on the range of factors discussed in this paper. To date, not only there is no empirical evidence suggesting a link between development aid and reduced migration, but the nascent evidence is to the contrary: higher income levels leads to increasing migration.⁴

The political and social risks of failing to respond to the challenge of large-scale displacement and increased irregular mobility are significant. Also apparent are the potential opportunities of an effective response. The nature of the debate around migration and refugees in Europe is changing – driven as it is by the perceived urgency of dealing with new arrivals and the potential sociopolitical and security impact of uncontrolled borders.⁵ But, in terms of public debate, immigration remains for many a polemical discussion subject to taboos and anathema to popular electoral politics. The space for honest and effective exchange is restricted. In academia, as well as in the multilateral system, much of the intellectual and human rights proponents are dominantly pro-migrant and pro-refugee and clash ideologically with the more extreme anti-migrant / refugee hardliners. In between lie the majority population who may feel pulled by arguments on both sides or may fear asserting their position in such a polemical debate. It appears that taking an anti-migrant position attracts certain disapprobium in a way that pro-migrant positions do not. In addition, governments seeking to remain liberal and open, connect with a liberal media (with some egregious exceptions⁶) to maintain a narrative on the subject that appears to be increasingly at variance with what some elements of their electorates want.

³ Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala

⁴ Development and migration complements rather than substitutes. Social and economic development is generally associated with higher levels of mobility and migration due to its effects on people’s ability and aspirations to migrate. Hence, the relationship between development and net emigration is neither linear nor inversely proportional. Ref: Hein de Haas, 2006. “Turning the tide? Why development instead of migration’ policies are bound to fail.” International Migration Institute (IMI) Working Paper, Paper 2. Also Ref: Michael Clemens . 2014. «Does Development Reduce Migration?» CGD Working Paper 359. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.

⁵ According to FRONTEX, the number of detections of illegal border-crossings between border crossing points (BCPs) in the fourth quarter of 2015 reached 978 300, its highest level since data exchange under the Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN) began in 2007. These figures are higher than those issued by the media and UNHCR / IOM. IOM reported that the new arrival figures of irregular migrants in Europe in 2015 were over 1 million and five time higher than the numbers in 2014. During January 2016 new arrivals in Greece were almost 2,000 people per day.

⁶ In many European countries there are popular ‘tabloid’ newspapers or media outlets that have played a strong role in sensationalizing and arguably exaggerating the scale and nature of the refugee and migrant crisis. Some have been overtly discriminatory and xenophobic in their publications.

However here there are contradictions with governments maintaining apparently liberal public rhetoric while at the same time erecting barriers and implementing measures to restrict migration and refugee movement, sometimes illegally. In doing so, they find themselves increasingly disenchanting and disenfranchising from the norms, standards and thus support provided by the multilateral institutions. More conservative political parties and politicians are making gains all across Europe and globally from this divide between perception and policy, and international obligations and de facto policy.

This paper identifies a range of contextual forces and factors that when combined have every chance of creating a major migration and displacement nexus. They have been placed under the three headings of:

- 1. A world of disparity:** Structural realities of global poverty, demography and development in the contemporary world are challenging existing frameworks and commonly understood norms of trade and development, and are creating a pressure to migrate in the Global South that cannot be underestimated.
- 2. Global vectors:** Decades of irregular labour mobility have enabled a new dynamic of aspirations and chain migration that should be understood now as systemic rather than localized. An infrastructure of Diaspora networks, remittance payments and improved communication technology enable and reinforce this cycle. In addition a set of global vectors are exacerbating the irregular migration trends, both amplifying the scale of the flow and increasing the vulnerability of migrants in the process.
- 3. Riding the storm:** One of the greatest challenges in responding to the new landscape for migration is a set of deeply entrenched existing policy paradigms and the constraints of the multilateral system to address such a sprawling and rapidly evolving phenomenon.

With such important issues to be addressed the current restrictions around, or fear of, open debate is creating an environment that is not conducive to finding solutions. If there is a perfect storm brewing or already in our midst, then these restrictions will only make the stormy seas harder to navigate.

The following factors are described to illustrate the range of contemporary forces that appear to directly influence migration decisions (forced and voluntary). In a world of mixed migration and complex flows people may be attracted to or feel compelled to move for a variety of reasons, often interconnected. The aim of these sections is to illustrate how many of the factors have reached a critical level where their combined influence on migration and refugee movement is likely to be greater than the sum of their separate parts. The primary issues are described separately below but are in fact inter-related often with strong feedback effects on each other.

1.

A world of disparity

Global prosperity and income inequality

Movement is fueled by various types of inequalities and disparities. These inequalities and disparities are often economic, but not exclusively so. Global prosperity is on the rise and has never been as high as it is today. This prosperity is being driven by wide ranging globalizing forces including transformational communication, access to technology, infrastructure and financial markets while augmented by significant gains made in global health and other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The extreme poverty rate has dropped significantly in most developing regions: more than 1 billion people have been lifted out of extreme poverty since 1990. The proportion of workers living in extreme poverty has also fallen sharply and there are 'powerful reasons' to believe that globalization will continue to make the world richer.⁷

However, while the debate on the distributional effects of globalization is polarized there is little dispute concerning the reality of the rise in income inequality. While average real incomes of the poorest segments of the population have increased across all regions and income groups, evidence suggests that income inequality has risen across most countries and regions over the past two decades. A recent Oxfam report, "An Economy for the 1%", found that 1 per cent of people have more wealth than the rest of the world put together, and the wealth of a mere 62 individuals is equal to that of the bottom half of the global population.⁸

Even in middle to high-income countries, inequalities have reached record highs. According to a 2015 OECD report income inequality is such that the richest 10 per cent of the population in the OECD now earn 9.6 times the income of the poorest 10 per cent, up from 7:1 in the 1980s and 9:1 in the 2000s.⁹ According to the same report, overall wealth is even more unevenly distributed than income, but if Pickety's conclusions hold true, access to wealth and its concentration is likely to reinforce inequality gaps, particularly as global markets contract.¹⁰

Income and wealth disparities within nations (often rural / urban), regions and continents are causing people to move in line with neo-classical economics and segmented labour market theories of migration. As long as citizenship explains 50 per cent or more of variability in global incomes, from the individual perspective, the most efficient way in which inequality and poverty can be reduced is through migration. Migration is therefore likely to become one of the key 'solutions' to inequality of the 21st century,¹¹ more so as long as there are significant gaps in labour markets that can be filled, formally or informally, by migrants and even refugees – where they are enabled to access labour markets.

Many of those seeking increased income are, of course, already on the move: in 2015 the World Bank calculated that the number of international migrants (including refugees) surpassed 250 million, an all-time high, as people searched for new economic opportunities and refuge- a 41 per cent increase compared to 2000. South to North migrants target the top twenty OECD countries as preferred countries of destination for work and/or settlement, though whether they are able to realise those preferences is another issue. Fast growing economies within developing regions have become a strong magnet for people from other parts of the developing world with South-South migration larger in volume than South-North migration - in 2013 an estimated 34 per cent of migrant flows moved from developing countries to advanced economies.¹² Within regions, or even within individual countries, migration and movement become the safety valve of chronic and increasing inequality. The United Nations has predicted that an additional 2.5 billion people will move to urban areas by 2050, with 94 per cent of those moving coming from developing countries (and mainly moving to other developing countries or within their own countries).¹³

However, addressing income inequality and wealth alone is unlikely to have a tangible impact on the issue of disparity, as poverty is increasingly being understood as a multi-dimensional issue, including a wide range of factors including health, education and living standards.¹⁴ The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite

7 Mandelbaum, M. 2014. "The Road to Global Prosperity". New York: Simon & Schuster.

8 Oxfam, 2016. "An Economy for the 1%", London 18 January 2016. Available at: <https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/bp210-economy-one-percent-tax-havens-180116-en_o.pdf> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

9 OECD, 2015. "In It Together: Why Less Inequality Benefits All" OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: <<http://www.oecd.org/social/in-it-together-why-less-inequality-benefits-all-9789264235120-en.htm>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

10 Milanovic, B. 2013. "Global Income Inequality in Numbers: in History and Now". *Global Policy*, 4: 198–208. World Bank Global Policy Volume 4. Issue 2. Available at: <<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1758-5899.12032/abstract>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

11 *Ibid*

12 World Bank, 2015. "International Migration at All-Time High". Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/12/18/international-migrants-and-remittances-continue-to-grow-as-people-search-for-better-opportunities-new-report-finds> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

13 United Nations. 2014. *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2013 Revision, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision, Highlights (ST/ESA/SER.A/352)*. Available at: <<http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/highlights/wup2014-highlights.pdf>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

14 The multidimensional poverty Index – MPI, as developed in 2010 by the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative and the United Nations Development Programme.

statistic of life expectancy, education, and income per capita indicators, which are used to rank countries into four tiers of human development. Inequality-adjusted human development index (IHDI), takes into account national inequality and re-calibrates global ranking to account for actual life experiences by nation.

Framing poverty in this wider context (i.e. including inequality values) reveals significant inequality evident between nations and regions and offers better insight into why people move. Current income has a positive and significant effect on people's happiness, just as decline in relative income reduces happiness. Rising income inequality also reduces happiness but people migrate not only to achieve higher income levels, but the ability to achieve a positive future that builds social capital and offer freedoms, security, health and educational outcome they cannot find at home.

Taken together, the phenomena outlined above suggest that perceptions of poverty and subjective well-being based on absolute and relative changes influence migration decisions. Within a globalised world people's reference group (who they compare themselves with in terms of social evaluation) and sense of time (how long it may take to change their situation) are increasingly influencing aspirations.

Chronic violence and unequal access to security

While war has long been understood as a driver of migration, this norm has been insufficiently considered in light of the changing nature of conflict and the consequences for the way people perceive and experience violence, particularly when it is a protracted and chronic phenomena with a generational impact. According to the MDG report for 2015, conflicts remain the biggest threat to human development, which the World Development Report 2011 ascribed to a 20 percent loss in development performance.

Despite the apparent predominance and proliferation of wars and conflict, the number of people dying in wars has been in decline for several decades.¹⁵ Instead, the driver of contemporary violence tends instead to be internal civil conflict, insurgencies, extremism and criminal violence, all of which cause major disruption over a protracted period and are less easily resolved by the instruments of the international multilateral system. A recent study from the Overseas Development Institute suggests that most displacement crises are protracted, and 'A rapidly resolved crisis of any significant proportions is a rare exception'. Even where the specific conflicts are resolved, six decades of evidence suggests that countries that experience civil conflict experience a very high recidivism rate, trapping countries or even sub-regions into cycles of prolonged, cyclical fragility and conflict.¹⁶

Therefore, while there is little doubt that the conflicts in Syria and Libya have focused the intensity of the migration wave on Europe within this current period, it would be wrong to think that the resolution of either or both of these crises (whilst highly desirable and remote) is likely to translate into a sustained reduction in migration flows. Firstly because it has been shown that the tools of the international community are both poorly suited to resolving civil conflicts, but also due to the tendency for civil conflicts to reoccur. Secondly because the extent of the damage in both of these countries means that rebuilding a functioning state that can offer life chances to their populations comparable to the pre-war period will take decades. Finally, as is already clear in the current environment, violent, criminal and terrorist actors flourish in periods of state weakness and instability, and eradicating these as a driver of violence and mobility even after the main conflict is resolved is likely to be a long term endeavor.

The countries and cities with the highest rates of homicide and violence are no longer being found in active war zones, but in areas beset by virulent organized crime groups and gang violence¹⁷ whose methods of competition, intimidation and territorial control expose local communities to daily acts of heinous violence and a climate of fear. In a similar way, the rise of violent extremism and terrorist tactics have resulted in some parts of the world being subject to almost daily attacks on civilian targets.

Globally, forced displacement has been growing rapidly over the last decade, increasing on average by 1.6 million people a year from 2000–2014.¹⁸ Every day, 42,000 people on average are forcibly displaced (as IDPs and refugees) and compelled to seek protection due to conflicts, almost four times the 2010 number of 11,000. By the end of 2014, conflicts had forced almost 60 million people to abandon their homes - an alarming level, the highest recorded since the Second World War and equivalent to the entire population of the United Kingdom or Italy, or the combined population of Australia, Sri Lanka and Mozambique. In 2014, children accounted for half of the global refugee population.¹⁹

¹⁵ Human Security Report, 2013. Simon Fraser University, Canada. Available at: <http://www.hsrgroup.org/docs/Publications/HSR2013/HSRP_Report_2013_140226_Web.pdf> (last accessed on 22/03/16)

¹⁶ WDR 2011, op.cit.

¹⁷ UNODC (2013) *Global Report on Homicide*, Vienna: United Nations and, for example, *The Economist*, "Revisiting the World's most violent cities", 30 March 2016. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2016/03/daily-chart-18> (last accessed on 24/04/16).

¹⁸ Crawford, N., Cosgrave, J., Haysom, S., & Walicki, N., 2015. "Protracted displacement: uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile". HPG Commissioned report. Available at: <<http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9851.pdf>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

¹⁹ MDG 2015, op.cit.

This violence driven movement comes about rather than because of an acute 'crisis' that can be resolved, but because of significant variations in the levels of human security that are available in different parts of the world. As a consequence, populations living in situations of chronic violence are finding new resilience mechanisms centered around transnational lifestyles, involving multiple relocations on a periodic basis between their home state and one or more other localities depending on the economic opportunities and security situations in those locations at any given time.²⁰ In this respect, the traditional distinction made between 'refugees' on one hand and 'labour migrants' on the other no longer appears to be as clear-cut as has often been assumed by UNHCR and other members of the international refugee protection regime.²¹

Demographic changes and demographic inequalities between regions

Often understated, the global demographic imbalance is another powerful factor affecting migration. The current demographic trends, pressures and future projections suggest mobility is and will continue to be an inevitable consequence of demographics. Together, economic and demographic disparities will directly impact mobility of labour and skills into this century.

Demographic changes in the 21st century will be characterized by reduced birth rates and increasing life spans. While working age populations are growing fast in emerging and low-income economies, North America, Europe and East Asia are rapidly aging with the accompanying decline in their workforce. The working age populations of North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, India and China in particular have been soaring and will continue to rise fast between now and 2050.²² At that date the global population is expected to be 9.7 billion (up from 7.4 billion in 2016²³) but it is the distribution of that figure that is striking.

While Germany, Japan and Russia are expected to see a population drop of 10 per cent or more by 2050, India will see a rise of 25 per cent. Africans represent just 15 per cent of the global population now but by 2050 they will represent 25 per cent of the global total with many of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa witnessing population increases of between 150 per cent to over 200 per cent in the next three decades.

Of more immediate concern to national governments and policy makers seeking to control migration should be the statistics concerning youth and unemployment. According to the United Nations, employment opportunities are being outpaced by the growing labour force, a phenomenon which is hardly surprising when countries have populations with such a high proportion of youth.²⁴ Countries in sub-Saharan Africa have the youngest proportion of population in the world with over 70 per cent of the region's population aged below 30.²⁵ Uganda has 50 per cent under 15. In 2013, 73 million 15 to 24 year olds were unemployed representing 38 per cent of the global unemployed. A UN Population Fund report in 2014 claimed that by 2050 over 2 billion people will be between 10 and 24 years of age.

One challenge to be addressed in regards to youthful populations is that they have demonstrated a higher propensity towards both conflict and political violence, which in turn generates more forced migration.²⁶ In general, the majority of migrants also tend to be young adults, carrying with them their "youth cultures that coalesce around distinctive identities and untampered ideologies, and find expression through experimentation and risk taking. Such conditions, some theorists argue, facilitate the political mobilization and recruitment of young adults – particularly young men – by non-state and state-supported organisations capable of political or criminal violence."²⁷ In short, the demographic most likely to migrate enable environments which contributes to and exacerbate the conditions of insecurity cited above.

Globally, about three quarters of working-age men participate in the labour force, compared to half of working-age women. Since 1990 approximately two thirds of countries in the developing regions have achieved gender parity in primary education. Today, women make up 41 per cent of paid workers outside of agriculture, an increase from 35 per cent in 1990.²⁸ As gender equality and empowerment of women is increasingly promoted and implemented, the number of female migrants looking for new opportunities should be expected to rise.

20 Jeff Crisp (2016) "An End to Exile? Refugee Agency and the Search for Durable Solutions", *IDS Bulletin*, Brighton: Institute for Development Studies

21 Katy Long, 'Extending protection? Labour migration and durable solutions for refugees', *New Issues in Refugee Research*, no. 176, October 2009, UNHCR, Geneva.

22 After 2020 there will be a decline for China. Predictions based on UN DESA projections. *World Population Prospects The 2012 Revision*. (New York, United Nations 2012). More information on: <http://esa.un.org/wpp/>

23 Using UN DESA projections through Worldometers website: <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>

24 MDG 2015, United Nations. Report available at: [http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20\(July%2012\).pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20(July%2012).pdf) (last accessed on 22/03/16).

25 Bumphrey S., 2012. "Special Report: The World's Youngest Populations" *Euromonitor International*. Available at: <http://blog.euromonitor.com/2012/02/special-report-the-worlds-youngest-populations-.html> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

26 The work of Henrik Urdal explores the relationship between youth and violence in multiple forms quite comprehensively. Worth reviewing are: Henrik Urdal (2011) *A Clash of Generations? Youth bulges and political violence*, paper prepared for the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on Youth, Adolescents and Development, New York: United Nations and Henrik Urdal (2004) *The Devil in the Demographics: the effect of youth bulges on domestic armed conflict, 1950-2000*, Washington DC: The World Bank, Social Development Papers, Paper No. 14, July 2004.

27 Richard P. Cincotta (2008-9) "Half a Chance: Youth bulges and transitions to liberal democracy", *Wilson Centre Environmental Change and Security Programme (ECSP) Report No. 13*: https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/ECSPReport13_Cincotta.pdf

28 MDG 2015, op.cit.

Some argue that advanced economies are continuing with business as usual and not sufficiently accounting for these global changes in their fiscal and social policies. They are not well prepared for rapidly aging societies. But, if well managed, mobility could be used to 'bridge' the gaps in current and future labour markets as well as contribute to global development through remittances and side-stepping potential economic stagnation.²⁹ However, the demise in working age population in selected regions will probably also mean there will be vigorous competition for low and semi-skilled migrants in the coming decades.

In addition to the potentially large numbers of economic migrants moving for the employment imperative, millions of aspirational youth in developing countries will add annually to the existing ranks of the world's mobile population. As other factors listed in this paper gain further traction (such as technological connectivity, diaspora size increases, education improvements etc.) yet more youth can be expected to want to try to move.

Rising educational standards and diminishing educational returns

Closely linked to the rapid rise of the proportion of youth in developing countries' populations, is the issue of education. Unless the jobs market can keep pace with newly educated youth one of the responses will be migration: migration to towns and cities, or to more vibrant hubs within their region and then further afield, internationally.

According to a 2015 statement from the Millennium Development Goals results, the primary school net enrolment rate in the developing regions has reached an estimated 91 per cent in 2015, up from 83 per cent in 2000. The number of out-of-school children of primary school age worldwide has fallen by almost half, to an estimated 57 million in 2015, from 100 million in 2000. Between 1990 and 2012, the number of children enrolled in primary school in sub-Saharan Africa more than doubled, from 62 to 149 million. Educational inequality is still very evident - in developing regions children in the poorest households are four times as likely to be out of school as those in the richest households, but the literacy rate among youth aged 15 to 24 has increased globally from 83 per cent to 91 per cent between 1990 and 2015.³⁰

While these achievements in primary education may be positive and desirable in the long term, in the short and medium term they add significant pressure in restricted job markets nationally in all developing regions. The growth of higher education establishments (mainly private), technical training centres and increased access and take up of secondary education is outstripping livelihood opportunities and therefore reducing educational returns (in terms of a family investment). The impulse to move to where returns are higher and opportunities better will contribute to more migration. This has been the basis for the much discussed 'brain drain' of scarce expertise from developing regions to advanced economies.

Despite the mistaken commonly held view that migrants and refugees are often the poorest and most uneducated people, the evidence is clear that a relatively high proportion of those on the move today are secondary or tertiary educated. Whether they be from Eritrea, Albania, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somaliland, China, Turkey or Mexico, profiles reveal many have education beyond primary. In the recent and controversial influx of Syrians to Germany some observers have commented that given the high education and skills of many of the refugees Germany stands to benefit economically from their 'welcoming' refugee policy.

Labour migration policy of individual nations in advanced regions generally favour the better educated and the skilled (and semi-skilled). But higher education outcomes combined with the rapid rise of youth cohort will mean demand for work will continue to outstrip supply. From the individual and national government's perspective migration may be the only pressure valve in the search for solutions. Those who cannot migrate regularly through labour programmes will, as they do already, migrate irregularly using people smugglers.

Of additional concern are the levels of violence and criminality that have occurred as result of the restricted opportunities to seek employment in some parts of the world. A recent World Bank study in Latin America found that 20 per cent of the region's youth population was neither in school nor employed, and that there was a strong correlation amongst those youth to gang membership and extreme societal violence, resulting in countries having some of the highest homicide rates in the world.³¹ This in turn has become a self-reinforcing negative spiral that has been the cause of increasing levels of migration and forced displacement from the Northern Triangle countries of Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala towards the United States in the hundreds of thousands per year. An estimated 10 per cent of the population is said to have left from these three countries, fleeing violence at home.³²

²⁹ Migration Policy Institute. 2013. Rainer Munz. *Demography and Migration: An outlook for the 21st Century*. MPI Policy Brief number 4.

³⁰ MDG 2015, op.cit.

³¹ de Hoyos R., Rodgers H., and Székely M., 2015. *Out of School and Out of Work: Risk and Opportunity for Latin America's Ninis*, Washington D.C.: World Bank. Available at: <<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/22349/K8318.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

³² Renwick D., 2016. "Central America's Violent Northern Triangle", Washington D.C.: Council on Foreign Relations. Available at: <<http://www.cfr.org/transnational-crime/central-americas-violent-northern-triangle/p37286>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

Globalised and changing aspirations

Closely related to all of the above issues of inequality are changing aspirations. Aspirations play a critical role in social behaviour, in people's sense of well-being and behavioural economics. Compelling forces of push and pull factors are clearly shaping aspirations, but in a globalised world where technical penetration exposes people in increasing numbers to 'international' standards of living, freedoms and opportunities (through satellite television, social media and networking, cell phone technology etc.), aspirations are changing. People find it easier to adjust their aspirations upward rather than downward, and generally upward aspiration appears to move following an ever increasing 'ratcheting' effect – incrementally rising only.³³

In the last generation alone, since the early 1990s, the world has seen extraordinary progress. Young men and women today in general live in a transformed and transforming world compared to their parents or grandparents. According to the MDG report from 2015, daily life in poor countries has been changing profoundly for the better: one billion people have escaped extreme poverty, average incomes have doubled, infant death rates have fallen sharply, fewer urban residents are living in slums in almost all regions, millions more girls have enrolled in school, chronic hunger has been cut almost in half, deaths from malaria and other diseases have reduced dramatically, and arguably democracy has spread further than ever before as conflicts have declined in number even if they tend to be more protracted with significant implications for displaced persons.³⁴ And yet, unlike their parents or grandparents, young men and women today are more inclined to migrate. Aspirations have changed.

These improvements in information and communication technology, are instrumental therefore in providing exposure to (urban or foreign) lifestyles, and thereby to highlighting discrepancies between a life lived and the possibility for advancement elsewhere. Improvements in communication technology have also facilitated contact between the growing Diaspora population and those at home. Fueled by success stories of earlier migrants and the establishment of new role models or new peers means for many would-be migrants they see their future as outside their own country. Information transmitted back by the Diaspora may create what some have called an aspiration gap, where aspirations are created, thereby increasing the compulsion and desire to migrate. Migration, for many, closes this aspiration gap.

Not only has awareness about new opportunities combined with stronger feelings of relative (not absolute) deprivation had a negative effect on a potential migrant's level of subjective well-being and/or aspirations about his or her future, it has created conditions that facilitate movement, probably as never before, meaning that aspirations can become the new reality for many.

For more migrants and refugees intending to practice secondary/onward movement, the means to move are more readily available and viable than ever. This is important as it enables people to overcome their immobility (involuntary immobility) and close their aspiration gaps or avoid falling into (unfulfilled) aspiration traps, as some commentators have described them.

Aspirations can stimulate behaviour leading to an improvement of capabilities, and, at the same time, aspirations are the consequence of inherited and/or socially acquired capabilities. This means to some degree migrants and potential migrants are self-selecting. There is also evidence that aspirations may be a cause and consequence of migration³⁵ highlighting the feedback mechanism as well as the ratchet effect as part of the migration phenomenon. Some studies suggest that migration itself leads to higher aspirations amongst migrants themselves. Aspiration-enhancing characteristics include being of young age, well educated, and economically and socially well situated.³⁶ Migration experience feeds back into individual future aspirations. With human smuggling at an apex - in terms of high volume and income, and migration policy in disarray in some regions, people are sensing that they can meet their aspirations and are on the move.

³³ Wilkinson N. & Klaes M., 2012. *An introduction to behavioral economics*. Palgrave Macmillan.

³⁴ Radelet S., Jan/Feb 2016. "Prosperity Rising: The Success of Global Development – and How to Keep it Going" *Foreign Affairs*. Available at: <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2015-12-14/prosperity-rising>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

³⁵ Czaika, M., & Vothknecht, M., 2014. "Migration and aspirations—are migrants trapped on a hedonic treadmill?". *IZA Journal of Migration*, 3(1), 1-21. Available at: <<http://izajom.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/2193-9039-3-1>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

2.

Global Vectors

Culture of migration

A concept of significance, but harder to quantify, is the prevalence of 'cultures of migration' that have established themselves in recent decades to varying degrees in different parts of the world, and increasingly impact migration flows - both in terms of direction and volume.

Where migration is a long-standing practice and high in volume, an entrenched propensity to migrate is established as migration becomes part of a community's or society's culture. For some regions (e.g. West Africa, North Africa) and countries (e.g. Mexico, Philippines, Turkey), robust 'cultures of migration' have already been established, from before the impacts of globalization started to be felt. It may be presumed that the impact of 'new' aspirations (those related to goods and benefits other than employment alone) will only add to these existing older flows.

Typical characteristics are when people see migration as a normal part of life's course, a marker of manhood and virility for some men, or the transition into adulthood (for men and women becoming family providers), a coming of age, and a widely accepted and common vehicle for economic survival and mobility. When international, the aspiration or expectation to migrate is typically transferred across generations and between people through social networks. In some cases migrating becomes the norm rather than the exception, with staying home associated with failure.

Illustrating one aspect of this 'culture' of migration, some studies have shown that family members of those that have already migrated are more likely to set their sights on migration and thereby perpetuating the behaviour and adding to the number. Here the dynamics are closely linked to the role of the Diaspora (below).

Researchers and field investigators have charted the impact of cultural beliefs and values as well as social patterns and dynamics associated with labour migration in countries in different regions including Mexico, Philippines³⁷, Turkey as well as Sub-Saharan Africa with particularly strong examples from West Africa.³⁸

This paper argues that there is no reason for the term to exclusively apply to labour migrants. Increasingly the same dynamics are informing irregular migration and mobility by asylum-seekers and by onward-moving refugees. This suggests that despite the fact that the main drivers are armed conflict and persecution, refugees can be motivated to move on from camps and safe transit countries from dynamics that also resemble 'culture of migration', or at the very least a pattern of cyclical migration that is akin to nomadism but on a transnational scale, where communities and family units have developed resilience mechanisms to which mobility is inherent. For example, Somali refugees are also particularly well connected across international borders, with a sophisticated ability to establish livelihoods and lifestyles based on the circulation of goods, capital, information and people between the many sites where their compatriots and clanfolk are to be found: Mogadishu, Nairobi and the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya, as well as Uganda, South Africa, the UK and USA.³⁹

In some cases, the development and entrenchment of a culture of migration (such as in the case of Filipinos) has been aided by migration's institutionalization – where the government facilitates migration, regulates the operations of the recruitment agencies, and looks out for the rights of its migrant workers. Importantly, the remittances workers send home have become a pillar of the country's economy. This can be more recently seen in Ethiopia too where the government (despite periodic bans on working in certain countries) provides passports for its citizens with great ease and offers assistance and guidance to labour migrants before departure, particularly to the Gulf States and Middle East.

There are three aspects of interest here:

First, presumably, entrenched cultures of migration are far more resilient to change, restriction or re-direction. In this respect they present a different problem to policymakers compared to people on the move as a direct response to a crisis (such as Syria, or Afghanistan). Some countries such as Somalia exhibit mobility driven by conflict combined with an established 'culture of migration'.

³⁷ Asis, M. M., 2006. "The Philippines' culture of migration". *Migration Information Source*. Available at: <<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/philippines-culture-migration>> (last accessed on 22/03/16)

³⁸ Cohen, J. H., & Sirkeci, I., 2011. *Cultures of migration: The global nature of contemporary mobility*. University of Texas Press.

³⁹ Crisp 2016, *op.cit.*

Second, the extent that these cultures of migration are expanding and deepening in certain societies and what kind of volumes can be expected from new countries exhibiting mobility that is born out of cultures of migration should be of some interest if the contemporary dynamics of movement are to be understood.

Thirdly, the term has been applied to various countries where a culture of labour migration, has taken root (such as Mexico, Philippines, Turkey, Senegal, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan etc.). However, labour migration is formally organised and often temporary. The migrants travel by air and are registered. What is now evident with countries where the culture of migration is becoming established or extended is that irregular movement using human smugglers is a prevailing model of mobility. This is particularly evident in parts of Asia, West Africa and especially the Horn of Africa with Eritreans, Ethiopians, Somalilanders and Somalis (whether asylum seekers or economic migrants) mostly travelling by land and under the precarious charge of smugglers.

When combined with the rise of the youth cohort, the influence of the diaspora and education outpacing employment opportunities there seems little prospect for cultures of migration to reduce. On the contrary, the scene is set for them to deepen and become ever-more pervasive and therefore increasingly problematic for policy makers in the North and South.

The multiplying power of diaspora and network migration

Diasporas have a direct influence on current and future migration. For some countries with a strong and established culture of migration along with new ones and refugee sending countries, the Diaspora communities are large and growing. The importance of networks here link this phenomenon to the Social Capital Theory of migration. In terms of policy, controlling migration in the light of the dynamics of this theory is difficult as migrant networks (and diaspora) are created outside the country and occur irrespective of policies pursued.

Whether the Diaspora communities are made up of labour migrants, irregular migrants or refugees, once a critical number have settled in a particular destination, a process of chain or network migration sets in. This is a self-reinforcing phenomenon, in which prospective migrants are facilitated through social and financial networks by earlier migrants. They inform, encourage and fund migration, often providing initial sanctuary and protection (shelter, income and legal advice, jobs etc.) for new arrivals. They are often in communication with migrants on the move, pay ransoms, connect them with smugglers and send them new information regarding access to preferred destinations in a changing political context. These phenomena are separate from the added issue of family reunification which even more directly connects potential migrants and refugees with previously established family members in destination countries.

In particular, the existence of a Diaspora group creates a desire within source communities to emigrate to specific destinations. A vivid current example of this can be seen in Calais, France where thousands of irregular migrants and asylum seekers particularly from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan refuse to accept France as their final destination and insist on attempting to enter the United Kingdom (irregularly) where they aim to join up with people from their own communities. Similar trends can be seen with Somalis in Sweden or the USA, Turkish and now Syrians in Germany. Before it implemented a strict 'no boats' policy a similar connection was seen between Afghan and Iranian irregular migrants / asylum seekers and Australia.

Most research has also found that the Diaspora effect on chain migration is significant, and likely to be a strong driver of potential future pressures, as individuals or communities with Diaspora links therefore have much higher likelihood of migrating.⁴⁰ Recent findings of research conducted in West Africa illustrate a trend where a quantitative survey conducted in source communities found that when asked to express the top three preferred means of gathering information about migration, respondents stated from family members (74 per cent), friends (59 per cent) and returned migrants (49 per cent). The internet came fourth, with just under 14 per cent of respondents offering it in the top three.⁴¹

Understanding that this is a self-reinforcing phenomenon and that the Diaspora communities are becoming larger raises important questions for policy makers and indicates that the impulses for successive flows of migrants to destinations countries with large existing foreign communities will be strong. By contrast, policy changes around immigration and refugees may have very limited impact on mobility decisions. A study conducted by the Overseas Development Institute with a limited number of case studies suggested that anti-migration messages and declarations of more severe policies do little to influence a migrant's perceptions of the journey they are about to make and therefore overall migration flows to Europe.⁴²

⁴⁰ Beine, M., Docquier, F., & Ozden, C., 2010. "Diaspora effects in international migration: key questions and methodological issues" (No. 10-14). Center for Research in Economic Analysis, University of Luxembourg. Available at: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1876297 (last accessed on 22/03/16).

⁴¹ Reitano, T., 2016. "Human Smuggling from West Africa to Europe", chapter in OECD/AfDB (2016) *Illicit Financial Flows: Criminal Economies in West Africa*, Paris: OECD

⁴² Hagen-Zanker J. & Mallett R., 2016. "Journeys to Europe: the role of policy in migrant decision-making" ODI Research reports and studies. Available at: <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/10297.pdf> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

Instrumentalisation of remittances in migration

Another reason that Diaspora-led (or successful migrant-led) chain migration is such a potent phenomenon is financial. As migrants successfully establish themselves in new destinations, they begin to send home remittances that can contribute positively to the overall economic development and growth of their home communities (though the benefits can be over-stated). But their finances when combined with changing aspirations and an established or establishing culture of migration also fuels successive waves of movement. This primarily impacts non-refugee communities but can also be seen as an important factor for refugees seeking to practice onward movement: while in camps or urban centres waiting for sufficient funds to engage smugglers to take them further.

In this context, earlier waves of migrants and refugees may be seen as “path-finders” as they set the precedent and search out what they perceive as the optimum location for themselves and their relatives.

Successful migrants have more available funds for sponsoring other members of their own family, clan or community to make a migrant journey. As mentioned they are also more likely to be in a position to help new migrants find employment and avoid detection once they arrive, thereby increasing the chance that the migration journey will be successful.⁴³

Again, as Diaspora and refugee communities become stronger and more economically stable in destination countries the volume of successive migrant flows of irregular migrants and onward moving refugees is likely to increase. As other ‘push’ factors discussed in this paper continue to exert strong motivation upon would be migrants, the role of Diasporas, and in particular funding through remittances, provides additional agency to enabling factors.

Increase of organised crime / smuggling and trafficking

While the human smuggling industry is not new, within the framework of new global mobility and in the absence of safe and legal options for migration, it has become a critical dynamic in the movement of migrants and refugees. A highly responsive market force, human smugglers have proved themselves to be resilient and innovative, both amplifying the scale of the flow and shaping its manifestations, whilst demonstrating an ability to form collaborative networks that span astonishingly large distances. Whereas traditionally this has been a low priority crime – a collateral activity that swelled the profits on an ad hoc basis on the back of other forms of illicit trade, human smuggling is quickly becoming one of the most lucrative forms of transnational crime, with grave consequences for the safety and security of migrants themselves as well as for states in which they recruit, transit and deposit migrants.

States are now examining how to respond to the growth in human smugglers more than ever. Not least as they are increasingly demonized as the reason for rising irregular migration. The policy rhetoric around responses to human smuggling is increasingly mirroring that of the Drug Wars of the 1980s, with promises of “crackdowns” on smuggling, “breaking the business model”, the deployment of warships, militaries and the full range of law enforcement instruments. This response is insufficiently nuanced. In the contemporary setting, the smuggling industry is a multi-faceted and diverse enterprise that encompasses everything from opportunist individuals, to local criminal gangs, to labour migration agencies, and in some cases a limited number of highly structured criminal organizations. One policy prescription is unlikely to cater to all manifestations of the smuggling industry, and the ‘hard security’ and border control focused responses have caused smuggling service providers to become more organized and more violent.⁴⁴

Furthermore, given the paucity of safe and legal options available for those migrating even from conflict zones, smugglers are often perceived as saviours by those they transport, and thus command considerable loyalty and legitimacy within the populations that they serve. In some cases, smuggling networks have been closely linked to militia groups, criminal gangs or terrorist groups who are engaged in exercises of competitive state-making and conflict, which in turn complicates the ability of the state to engage and reinforce the rule of law. Given the complexity of the environment, straightforward justice and security led strategies using traditional law enforcement instruments have struggled to gain traction and demonstrate tangible results.

⁴³ De Haas, H., 2008. *Irregular migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union: An overview of recent trends* (Vol. 32). Geneva: International Organization for Migration. Available at: < <http://www.takeaction.unhcr.org/49e479cao.pdf> > (last accessed on 22/03/16).

⁴⁴ David Kyle and Marc Scarcelli, “Migrant smuggling and the violence question: evolving illicit migration markets for Cuban and Haitian refugees”, *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 52:297-311

One of the principal challenges in mounting an effective response to smuggling is the level of corruption and collusion from state officials that is required to grease the wheels of this illicit industry. Whereas in some cases the illegal crossing of borders is an act of violent force or of sheer numerical scale, most frequently it is a flow smoothed by the payment of countless bribes: to consular officials to supply visas or passports to counterfeit and sell, or to border guards, policemen or the military to look the other way as migrants are ushered through immigration, through back doors in ports and airports, or through a hole in the fence a few hundred metres away from their watch.⁴⁵

Smugglers respond quickly to exploit loopholes and inconsistencies in states responses, and use policy changes to build up additional demand for their services. The growth in the number of unaccompanied minors into the United States stemmed directly from smugglers using the relative vulnerability of the US asylum system as a recruitment strategy.⁴⁶ A similar phenomenon has occurred in Europe, where the Afghan smuggling networks are using Sweden's generous policy towards migrants, which includes family reunification, as a sales strategy including discounts and group incentives, resulting in a strong spike in Afghan youth arriving in the country.⁴⁷

The securitized response by states to the challenges of rising levels of migration only enriches the smuggling industry, which is becoming more profitable by the day. EUROPOL estimated that in 2015 alone, the smugglers bringing migrants to Europe may have netted as much as €6 billion.⁴⁸ Globally, it is thought to be a criminal industry worth \$35 billion a year.⁴⁹ And as the controls increase, the cost to the migrant increases, as does the level of organisation required of the smuggling industry. Profits are translated into investments that perpetuate their business model: bigger bribes, better cars, more money spent on transportation, recruitment and protection. As shifting EU policy causes the levels of enforcement and penalties to increase, the lower level players are slowly falling away, and the more organised criminal groups are left to control the field, to the detriment of local security and the rule of law.

Furthermore, as attitudes harden towards migrant themselves, the balance of power between migrant and smuggler shifts, making the migrant more vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and extortion – all common practices along the major migrant trails. Despite this, the industry remains predominantly demand driven, and migrants seem prepared to tolerate all manner of abuse in their quest for mobility.

Surveys in source countries have shown prospective migrants to be well-informed about the risks of migration, yet prepared to accept them as a necessary evil for a far greater return.⁵⁰ In doing so, the lines between smuggling and human trafficking have become blurred, and instances of forced labour, sex trafficking and indentured servitude have become manifold. Not only does this further enrich the smuggling industry and increase the vulnerability of the migrants in transit, but it also challenges still further the capacity of states to meet their obligations under international law for refugee protection and human rights adherence.

The role of information and communication technology

The role of information and communication technology may be a considerably underestimated factor in the rise of aspirational and smuggler-orientated irregular movement. As of 2015, 95 per cent of the world's population is covered by a mobile-cellular signal. (MDG report from 2015). The almost ubiquitous use of cell phone communication and internet sites by migrants firstly to identify a smuggler, but also to guide them along their journey has created an unexpected dynamic to the movement, and heightened the degree to which migration flows are responsive to state policy and changing border controls.

On the one hand it has actually served to make migrants better informed and more secure – prompting the creation by the smuggling industry of a range of insurance guarantees such as check point codes or safe words – but at the same time has enhanced capacity for extortion. In the Sahel, Sinai, Thailand and on the Mexican border, for example, smuggling groups have used cellphones as a means to extort migrants and their family members. Extortion gangs and smugglers use phones to glean information about potential victims and their families, and then to actively encourage their captives to use phones to press their relatives to pay up.⁵¹

45 Reitano, T. and P. Tinti (2015) *Survive and Advance: the economics of smuggling migrants and refugees to Europe*, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies: <https://www.issafrica.org/publications/papers/survive-and-advance-the-economics-of-smuggling-refugees-and-migrants-into-europe> (last accessed on 24/04/16)

46 Isacson, A., & Meyer, M., 2015. "Border Security, Migration, and Humanitarian Concerns in South Texas". WOLA. Available at: <<http://www.wola.org/sites/default/files/ONTHEFRONTLINES.pdf>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

47 Momenian, M., 2014. "A Study of Unaccompanied Afghan Asylum-Seeking Children in Sweden" Malmö University. Available at: <<https://dspace.mah.se/bitstream/handle/2043/17974/Master%20thesis.%20Marziyeh.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>> (last accessed on 22/03/16) and Wilkens, A., 2016. "An Afghan Exodus (2): Unaccompanied minors in Sweden". Afghanistan Analysts Network. Available at: <<https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/an-afghan-exodus-2-unaccompanied-minors-in-sweden/>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

48 Escritt, T., "People-smuggling gangs net 6 billion euros in migrant traffic to Europe: Europol". Reuters, 22 February 2016 issue. Available at: <<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-europol-idUSKCN0VV1MD>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

49 More information on Havocscope website, at: <http://www.havocscope.com/tag/human-smuggling/>

50 RMMS, 2014. "Blinded by Hope: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Ethiopian migrants". Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat. Available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/fileadmin/content/rmms_publications/Blinded_by_Hope.pdf>

51 Stewart, S. (10 March 2016) "To Stop a Virtual Kidnapping, Keep Your Head", Stratfor, available online <<https://www.stratfor.com/weekly/stop-virtual-kidnapping-keep-your-head>> (last accessed 22 March 2016)

Technology is further enabling both migrants and smugglers to make payments through informal and formal money transfer systems, whether they be bribes, fees, ransom payments etc., ensuring that the majority of financial transactions in the smuggling industry are occurring outside the formal banking system, and thereby confounding law enforcement capacity to monitor or track payments.

While there have been some efforts by both states and civil society to provide platforms to inform, advise and offer services to migrants and refugees for the purposes of providing humanitarian assistance, information and protection, there is an inherent challenge with an 'external' platform. The reason that the systems generated by migrants have thrived is that they serve as a trusted platform with which to dialogue internally. By contrast, those provided by states, or even by NGOs lack that baseline of trust, and can be perceived as attempting to dissuade rather than enable migration. If states cannot communicate effectively with mobile populations or those vulnerable to migrating irregularly, the ability to formulate and disseminate policies is severely constrained.

Impact of climate change

In 2015, certain estimates indicated that global emissions of carbon dioxide have increased by over 50 per cent since 1990. Overexploitation of marine fisheries is rising, threatening ecosystems and livelihoods. Water scarcity affects more than 40 per cent of the global population and is projected to rise.⁵² The First Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued in 1990 noted that the greatest single impact of climate change might be on human migration and displacement. This claim was further substantiated by the findings of the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (2007) and subsequent studies.

Evidence indicates that certain regions are being hit harder than others by climate change. Profound long-term changes will affect the most vulnerable and poorest communities harder than others, particularly where the ability to mitigate impact is often weaker. There are strong claims that gradual and sudden environmental changes are already resulting in significant human migration and displacement. Some claim this trend is 'expected to continue, with anywhere between 50 and 200 million people moving as a result by the middle of the century, either within their countries or across borders, on a permanent or temporary basis. There is a possibility of even higher numbers if the IPCC's worst-case scenarios materialize.'⁵³ The effects of climate change also have the potential to trigger or exacerbate tension, conflict and violence thus leading to displacement.⁵⁴ According to the International Displacement Monitoring Centre, over the past five years, an average of nearly 27 million people have been displaced annually by natural hazard-related disasters.⁵⁵

While giving values to the level of impact on displacement is problematic, potentially, climate change could be one of the strongest factors causing displacement and mobility for the future (both as rural exodus as well as international movement), particularly when compounded by other push and pull factors identified in this paper.⁵⁶

⁵² MDG 2015, *op.cit.*

⁵³ UNHCR, 2009. "Climate change, migration, and displacement: impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation options". Available at: <<http://www.unhcr.org/4a1e51e0.html>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

⁵⁴ Warnecke, A., Tänzler, D., & Vollmer, R., 2010. "Climate change, migration and conflict: receiving communities under pressure?". The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF). Available at: <https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx_bicctools/gmf_climate-change-migration-conflict_07_2010.pdf> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

⁵⁵ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) & Norwegian Refugee Council, 2014. "Global Estimates 2014: people displaced by disasters". Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2014/201409-global-estimates2.pdf>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

⁵⁶ UNHCR, 2015. "High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges, 2015 Understanding and addressing root causes of displacement". Available at: <<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/55e4506b6.html>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

3.

Riding the storm

Policy chaos

By design, there is no uniformity or coherence between nations and regions concerning migration policy. Different nations and regions of the world have different policies regarding regular and irregular migration and refugees / asylum seekers, and the ability to control its borders, rights to citizenship and access to resources remains the fundamental responsibility of the nation state. While many nations are signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention, which in principle dictates universal standards and expectations - even if these commitments may often be honoured in their breach - the difference between policy and practice is often considerable.

Principles and values that may normally aim to be generous and open to those on the move, whether voluntary or forced, come under great strain when the numbers rise. In this age of mobility with the rapidly swelling migrant stock, the fast rise of irregular migrants and refugees, the pressure of new irregular arrivals can throw policy into disarray as politicians and law makers scramble to respond to changing, unforeseen situations. International norms and obligations, including those relating to fundamental human rights, are being called into question or flagrantly disregarded as urgent (and in some cases politically expedient) solutions have to be found to what is still perceived as a "crisis". This is increasingly bringing the UN custodians of such agreements into contest with member states, creating a situation whereby states are even further inclined to act unilaterally (due to internal political pressures) to respond to a situation that by its very nature requires multilateral solutions. Furthermore, this is a paradigm that is being applied to states who have long been considered bastions of internationalism and champions of human rights.⁵⁷

Examples of policy confusion or apparent contradiction, can be taken from the US where mass deportations of unauthorized migrants (mainly Central Americans and Mexicans numbering 440,000 in 2013) are a daily occurrence, while a legalization scheme for millions of other undocumented immigrants is under discussion. Also, in 2014 over 70,000 unaccompanied minors from Central America were apprehended crossing into the US forcing political controversy and rapid policy-adaptation. In 2014 Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia reacted differently and with contradictory policy when large boats with thousands of smuggled Rohingya from Myanmar (refugees) and Bangladeshi (economic migrants) were found in the Andaman Sea and the subsequent trafficking scandal broke when mass graves of murdered migrants and refugees were found in the Thai jungles. Meanwhile Australia, despite legal challenges and condemnation from human rights groups, has conducted some questionable legal gymnastics and used national security as reasons to trump their international commitments to refugees in the case of irregular maritime migrants. In the Horn and East Africa, free movement protocols agreed in the East African Community (EAC) and the Intergovernmental Government Authority for Development (IGAD) are not implemented and irregular movement is common. The level of collusion and corruption by certain state officials also favours the smugglers and refugee and immigration rules are often applied arbitrarily with the result that the rights of migrants and refugees are frequently abused.⁵⁸

But the most remarkable recent example of policy confusion and discordance is being witnessed in Europe and dominated politics during 2014, 2015 and into 2016. Freedom of movement agreements and refugee policy have been stretched to breaking point as countries within the Union have disagreed on how to respond to the thousands of migrants and refugees that suddenly began arriving daily at Europe's borders, and have been held over a barrel by fears of disenfranchising electorates.

Disharmony may have grave repercussions for European cooperation and legal/border arrangements between nations. Some wonder if the European 'project' itself is now under threat with nations taking such different approaches to the flows of Syrian refugees and the hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers and migrants/ from various nations flowing with them. Particularly as a high percentage of those arriving are subsequently being rejected for asylum and required under the European Return Directive to be deported which is costly, slow and difficult to implement. Finland, for example, is currently seeking to return two thirds of asylum seekers who arrived in 2015. Sweden is also planning to deport 80,000 failed asylum seekers from flows in 2015, but admit that due to the necessary procedures this may take ten years to complete.

⁵⁷ Hajaj C. and Reitano, T., 2016 (forthcoming) *Caught in the Crossfire: UN Security and Policy Perspectives on the Refugee Crisis*, Frederich Ebert Stiftung

⁵⁸ Notwithstanding the fact that Ethiopia and Kenya between them host over 1.2 million refugees and have done for many years - mostly Somali.

The fundamental premise of the EU's approach to migration and mobility ensured that irregular access to Europe is currently the only option, as the European policy towards migration and mobility requires that asylum applications are made within the borders of Europe, and there are no means by which to seek asylum externally. The Dublin Regulation, which states that the application will be processed in the European state where the person is first detected creates a further pressure on European solidarity and a joint approach, as there are significant discrepancies between the entitlements and benefits afforded to successful asylum seekers across Europe. Together, these two policies already ensure that both to enter Europe and to transit safely across it, migrants will seek the assistance of smugglers. Regions or countries where policy is incoherent, indecisive or corruptible offer further opportunities to determined migrants and refugees and particularly smugglers who profit hugely from modern irregular mobility. These opportunities in turn could exacerbate the problem with the policy disharmony acting as a pull factor for many would be migrants and incentivize smugglers to ratchet up their operations.

The cost of border management and the industry of control

Addressing the management of migration through prevention has high costs, not only in terms of the hardware and personnel costs of restrictive and controlling infrastructure, but also in terms of national or regional identity. How efficient they are is also questionable. What lengths are nations or groups of nations prepared to go to secure frontiers from irregular access to enable migration to be managed? In the case of Europe, the recent migrant and refugee 'crisis' has brought into sharp focus the debate about European values and the concept of open societies and free movement, to say nothing of debates over protection and assistance for those in need. Following the logic of prevention there are precedents and new initiatives to consider externalizing preventative and deterrent measures beyond the actual borders of Europe – as Spain did with north and West African states in the 1990s. In early 2016, the EU brokered a deal with Turkey with a similar intention. But to what extent is it legal, desirable or even cost effective to implement and/or externalize border control?

Conversely, what are the costs to national sovereignty, social cohesion and the national identity if borders are not managed and mobility is unregulated or partially regulated? Already in different parts of the world and especially in Europe the concerns around migration have pushed the issue to the top of the political agenda with a visible shift of popular politics to the right. This is also evident in North America, and Australia. Less liberal and hardline right-wing parties profit from the current situation of uncertain or disharmonized migration and refugee policies which allow continued unregulated flows. Internally, nations and regions appear to struggle to reconcile their inclinations to offer sanctuary and settlement to migrants and refugees (and uphold agreed normative and convention agreements) with their fears of what large-scale immigration may bring. As a report of the European Parliament's Special Rapporteur for Migration regretfully concluded, the focus of EU funding on border control and detention measures came to the detriment of the EU's protection obligations.⁵⁹

Anti-migrant/refugee sentiment is already seen to varying degrees in parts of Africa, the Middle East, Europe, North America and Australia. To what extent this grows and leads to political fragmentation and polarization causing reduced social cohesion and higher social unrest remains to be seen but cannot be ignored.

A longer-term approach to genuinely addressing migrant issues with a relevant policy may also have deep implications for international trade and aid arrangements: if the root causes of large scale migration are identified as global inequality, poor governance, conflict and unsustainable refugee arrangements, and if the issue of migration is deemed serious enough by receiving countries, then the coming years may see significant re-calibration of the North's engagement with the South: a potential re-organisation of the world economic order no less. In fact, this may no longer even be an option, but a necessity. As this paper has tried to highlight, there is a new normal for global mobility which arguably can no longer be reversed. What remains to be seen is whether and how the policymakers choose to respond, and the possible consequences that result. Further exploration of this notion goes beyond the scope of this paper.

Restricted space for legal migration and asylum seeking

As mentioned, the space for legal migration and those seeking asylum is highly restricted. The evident need for migrant labour in certain parts of the world combined with the desire for many to migrate to more prosperous parts of the world is overwhelming many governments. Migration policy is struggling to keep up with migration. Equally, possible solutions for refugees (returning home, local integration in the host country and third country resettlement) are manifestly insufficient to the need. As a result, irregular, onward movement for refugees and migrants using smugglers is the best bet for most. Amongst would-be migrants it is common knowledge that if

⁵⁹ Strik, T., 2013. "Migration and asylum: mounting tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean". Council of Europe: Parliamentary Assembly. Available at: <<http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?docid=51384f992>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

they are not accepted for asylum they have a high chance of remaining in their country of destination one way or another. Both in Europe and the USA there are already many millions of irregular migrants living with false documents or 'below the radar' without documentation.⁶⁰

The reality of the migration policies of the EU, the US and a number of the other preferred destination countries is that they are out of step with migration as it actually takes place. Countries not allowing people to make asylum claims from outside their country (except in special cases) means people consider themselves to be compelled into irregularity. In the process of trying to get to their preferred destination using clandestine methods they undertake much publicised journeys fraught with lethal hazards and frequent rights abuses.

These conditions represent a bonanza for human smugglers and other criminal organizations profiting from the contemporary aspirations to migrate. It is the same story in the Bay of Bengal, the trans-Saharan routes, the Mediterranean, the trans-Asia land route, routes through northern Mexico, to South Africa, and every other journey facilitated by smugglers. Europol estimates that 90 per cent of the 1.1 million migrants and refugees that entered Europe irregularly in 2015 were assisted by smugglers.⁶¹ A subsequent study commissioned by the European Commission put the estimate at 100 per cent.⁶²

However, at current and future expected levels of mobility, even if destinations opened up quotas and considerably increased access to their countries, the demand would likely always be higher than supply. This would mean smuggling and irregular entry, with all the social and political implications, would persist.

Definitional challenges bring 1951 into question

As observed above, armed conflicts are becoming more protracted, especially in those cases where terrorist groups prevent ceasefires or stable political solutions, and a number of regions have become caught in longstanding cycles of conflict and violence. As a consequence, displacement is rarely a temporary or short term phenomena, and some refugee camps have become more like mini-cities but vastly restricted in the life chances that they offer to their inhabitants.⁶³ The implications for the existing 60 million displaced and those joining their number in the years to come are that their return to their homes and origins will be slow and their interest in avoiding a life in limbo - normally in hardship with few prospect and limited rights - may be to choose mobility. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians recently did just that in 2014 and 2015 (and continue) when they left the relative refuge of the Middle East (in towns, communities and refugee camps) for Europe.

In fact, most refugees globally do not reside in refugee camps but in urban centres (59 per cent).⁶⁴ Because of the protracted nature of the conflicts they are fleeing and the fact that they are often hosted in developing countries with fragilities of their own (86 per cent currently hosted in developing regions), many pursue onward movement using refugee camps as a staging post for further migration. This is the case for camps in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sudan, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somaliland to name just a few. It is not uncommon for smugglers (and traffickers) to operate out of refugee camps offering to guide and transport people as well as organise visa and documentation (normally forged or obtained illicitly) – the same services offered by smugglers in urban centres.

The extent of current irregular onward movement of refugees and the potential growth of this flow has opened debate about the Refugee Convention, agreed over sixty years ago in a different sociopolitical context. To some extent the guardians and defenders of the Convention (particularly UNHCR) fear such a debate or re-appraisal because the prevailing attitudes to migration and forced displacement (and their causes) may result in further restrictions of asylum space instead of the opposite.⁶⁵

In addition, the practice of asylum seekers and refugees asserting their preferred countries of destination raises questions concerning their status once they decide to move onward from their initial country of refuge (usually the country neighbouring their country of origin). With very low probability of refugees being offered third countries of resettlement (currently around 1 per cent of the refugee population globally) flows of those practicing onward movement look set to increase, presenting policymakers with thorny questions that touch on the essence of international refugee law. Equally, with so many so-called 'economic migrants' from non-refugee producing countries of origin claiming asylum, the definitions and terminology around mixed migration are being stretched

⁶⁰ The OECD estimate that there may be from 5 to 8 million undocumented migrants in Europe while the US government estimate over 11 million migrants in the USA are irregular [For more information on global trends and data on migration see: "International Migration Outlook 2012", OECD, 2012, available at: <http://www.npdata.be/BuG/165-NV-A-migratie/oECD-Migration-Outlook-2012.pdf>. For specific data on global trends on undocumented migration see: "International Migration Outlook 2007", OECD, 2007, available at: http://www.oecdilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/international-migration-outlook-2007_migr_outlook-2007-en]

⁶¹ Europol Press release, 2016. "Europol launches the European migrant smuggling centre". Available at: https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/EMSC_launch (last accessed on 22/03/16)

⁶² European Commission, DG Migration and Home Affairs, 2015. "A Study on Smuggling of Migrants: characteristics, responses and cooperation with third countries". Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/study_on_smuggling_of_migrants_final_report_master_091115_final_pdf.pdf (last accessed on 22/03/16).

⁶³ Asylum Access & the Refugee Work Right Coalition, 2014. "Global Refugee Work Rights Report", Asylum Access. Available at: http://asylumaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/FINAL_Global-Refugee-Work-Rights-Report-2014_Interactive.pdf (last accessed on 22/03/16).

⁶⁴ Crawford, N., Cosgrave, J., Haysom, S., & Walicki, N., 2015. "Protracted displacement: uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile". HPG Commissioned report. Available at: <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9851.pdf> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

⁶⁵ Hajaj and Reitano, op.cit.

and those in a position to offer protection and assistance are wearier and suspicious of those who apply. This is a reality not lost on refugees themselves – in March 2016 Syrian refugees expressed their anger in northern Greece (at the Macedonian border) towards those from other nations who had falsely obtained the Syrian passport and were claiming asylum as Syrians. Along with the rise of human smuggling, the trade of stolen, falsely obtained and fraudulent identity papers and travel documents has increased exponentially in Europe during 2014/15.⁶⁶

Damage to the asylum system from irregular migrants

A critical fall out of the 'perfect storm' thesis could be the integrity and status of the global refugee regime. As long as irregular economic migrants and refugees/asylum seekers appear to be moving together, entering destination countries and claiming asylum together they will be inextricably linked in terms of public perception and policy. The currency value of the normative and convention protection rights for asylum seekers and refugees will inevitably be degraded - possibly irreversibly. For some the very principle of international protection for those fleeing war and persecution is already at stake.

If the distinction between economic migrants and refugees is not more strictly applied with appropriate policies designed for each, there is a risk that popular politics will move against refugees irrespective of their genuine needs and rights of protection. As it is there is a problem with volume, perceived or otherwise, and an absence of distinction in many receiving countries. In the midst of a rising global need for people seeking refuge, most advanced economies have a far lower appetite to offer settlement than specialized and mandated agencies like UNHCR would like them to.

The reluctance of most European countries (with notable exceptions led by Germany) to absorb even low quotas of refugees is sobering: six months after most European countries agreed to share 160,000 refugees from Greece, Italy and Hungary (in September 2015) the number that has been resettled remains in the hundreds. Countries are either dragging their feet or simply not fulfilling their commitments. It is hard to see how larger numbers of new refugees will be acceptable to the European electorate if the relatively small numbers have caused such strong reactions.

The fact that Europe finds it so difficult to implement return for failed asylum seekers and irregular economic migrants only exacerbates the situation; people are less willing to take the chance of allowing migrants and asylum seekers to enter their territory considering the cost and effort to return those whose claims are not later found to be legitimate. As a result, European governments have imposed discriminatory border closures and unlawful caps on asylum applications. The evidence suggests that many failed asylum seekers merely abscond and go underground. In 2014 the EU claimed that only 39% of failed asylum seekers were actually returned. The bind Europe find itself in concerning the implementation of the EU Return Directive means respect and support for the refugee regime is likely to decline, and proposals for an African "laissez passer" to overcome the challenges of identifying nationalities was an indicator of the direction of policy discussions which seem to permit violations of basic human rights and existing norms and standards. Furthermore returns that are not properly managed and sustainable can lead not only to further abuse and exploitation of the migrant, but also to more cycles of insecure and irregular migration, with human rights implications for the people moving.

Securitisation of migration

Rising irregular migration and refugee movement comes at a time when the global threat of violent extremism and terrorism has never been higher. Nascent evidence from certain conflict zones suggests that human trafficking and the detention and extortion of migrants has historically been a source of financing for militia groups in Libya, the Sahel and in the Sinai Peninsula. The growing flow of migrants represents a significant source of profits, and so there is little reason to suggest that past trends would not have evolved into future trajectories. Allowing the smuggling industry to proliferate and enrich conflict parties or terrorist groups is exacerbating insecurity and increasing the push factors related to conflict in a number of states, in Africa, Asia and the Americas.

That some hot spots of irregular migration and displacement are also regions and locations linked to extremism is leading to high levels of concern around the potential linkages between migrants, refugees and extremism, and the possibility that uncontrolled migrant flows may conceal active terrorists. While the extent to which this is actually a credible threat differs both according to locale and over time, nonetheless, this has tended to exacerbate the rhetoric that portrays migrants and refugees themselves are a threat to domestic security, which increases the challenges of successful integration of migrant populations, including those legitimately accepted as refugees. Analysts suggest the rise of Islamic extremism is to remain with us for at least a generation with accompanying impact on policy and intervention, making this a long-term challenge for policymakers.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Tinti, P. & Reitano, T., 2016 (forthcoming) *Migrant, Refugee, Smuggler, Saviour*, London: Hurst Publishers

⁶⁷ This sentiment has been expressed in a variety of sources – for a good overview that highlights in particular how Occidental policy responses only further inflame the extremist rhetoric and action, see Reeson G. C., 2011. "Stalemate: why we can't win the war on terror, and what we should do instead", Lanham: Government Institutes.

Furthermore, the close association and reliance those using smugglers often develop with criminal groups during transit makes them more vulnerable to recruitment by criminal groups in their destination countries. This is of particular concern in cases where neither migrants nor refugees are offered few if any legal livelihood alternatives, and the concentration of low skilled labour in certain towns or cities due to the pull factor of existing Diaspora populations exceeds the absorptive capacity of the legitimate economy. Migrants are pushed into situations of informality and varying degrees of illegality in the grey economy of receiving states. These associations need to be understood, and monitored and protection needs to be enhanced to control the otherwise inevitable erosion of the rule of law.

The poverty paradox

The Valletta Summit “EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa”, which is intended to address ‘instability and root causes of migration’ reflects a continued (and misguided) belief that addressing poverty will stop migration. It seems to fail to acknowledge the growing body of evidence, encapsulated above, that not only do rising income and education levels contribute to higher migration levels, but also that there are inherent disincentives for African countries to partner with the EU on this goal. From a pragmatic perspective, how likely is it that governments with the quickly rising populations (who are often the poorest globally) will be able to offer sufficient training, education and jobs to their current and upcoming youth? Governments are better served to encourage and facilitate their own citizens to move to relieve domestic political, social and labour market pressures, and to benefit from the significant remittance inflows, than to make any effort to prevent them, even if they could credibly do so. Potential migrants feeling the demographic pressures and often failed by their own governments are unlikely to even wait for the North to work out how to manage labour migration, let alone to see returns on long-term development investment. We cannot continue to assume that ‘more of the same’ development policy will be able to reverse the tide.

Paucity of global political responses to migrant/refugee producing situations

Instead of harnessing migration for global development and feeling pride in being able to offer sanctuary and protection to those in need, the dominant narrative around mobility is becoming negative. According to one commentator, at the heart of the migration and displacement dilemma is a contradiction. ‘Europe faces a migrant crisis, but not the one we imagine. The dilemma it faces is this: on the one hand, any moral and workable immigration policy will not, at least for the moment, possess a democratic mandate; on the other, any policy that has popular support is likely to be immoral and unworkable.’⁶⁸

Human rights seem to be the major point sacrificed in responses to migration at all levels. Not only are the migrants themselves more victimised as a result of their vulnerability, but also in the responses themselves. Having achieved varying degrees of effectiveness in preventing irregular migration, Australia and the US find their response policies compromising international human rights standards, as well as their obligations under international conventions. One of the most egregious examples of countries turning their backs on asylum seekers took place when human traffickers left thousands of people from Myanmar and Bangladesh adrift on the open seas without food and water. These publicized events in 2014 and 2015 prompted four UN Special Rapporteurs to express their serious concern about the push-back policy implemented by the Governments of Thailand and Malaysia in the Bay of Bengal, which was found to be in contravention with no less than six international human rights conventions.⁶⁹

In a report to the UN General Assembly, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights found that “migrants in transit are [placed] in a precarious — even perilous — human rights situation,”⁷⁰ In Europe, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights has expressed concern about the increased use of razor-wire fences, border controls and restrictions to free movement in several countries in Europe.⁷¹ The agreement negotiated between the EU and Turkey in March 2016, which included the involuntary return of smuggled migrants into Greece back to Turkey, has been harshly criticized by human rights and humanitarian agencies, and described as being ‘flawed, illegal and immoral’.⁷²

⁶⁸ Malik, K., 2016. “Europe’s immigration bind: how to act morally while heeding the will of its people”, *The Guardian*, 31 January 2016 Issue. Available at: <<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jan/31/europe-bind-act-morally-on-immigrants-heed-its-citizens>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

⁶⁹ OHCHR, 2015. “Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants; the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children”. Available at: <[https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/3oth/public_-_UA_Malaysia_21.05.15_\(2.2015\).pdf](https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/3oth/public_-_UA_Malaysia_21.05.15_(2.2015).pdf)> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

⁷⁰ United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, 2016. “Situation of migrants in transit: report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights”. Available at: <<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/012/91/PDF/G1601291.pdf?OpenElement>> (last accessed on 22/03/16).

⁷¹ Council of Europe, “Europe should lead by example by treating migrants and asylum seekers humanely and fairly,” Statement by the Commissioner for Human Rights, 13 November 2015. See more at: <http://www.coe.int/t/democracy/migration/bodies/commDH_archiveSelectYear_en.asp>

⁷² *The Journal* “Amnesty calls EU deal ‘flawed, illegal and immoral’”, 18 March 2016: <http://www.thejournal.ie/eu-leaders-turkey-2667017-Mar2016/> (last accessed 24/04/16)

Conclusion

The intention of this paper has been to demonstrate that the rhetoric around migrant 'crises' and 'unprecedented phenomena' suggest that the experiences of Europe in the past years are something exceptional - a one-off squall which needs to be managed within emergency measures, whereas in fact they are the manifestation of a perfect storm of systemic factors enhanced by global vectors.

As this paper argues, there are pervasive conditions in the world economic and social order and new developments arising from a more globalised world that contribute to changes in displacement and mobility. Looking at 'root causes' can be daunting because they point to some of the structures that underpin the global order. Through this lens, the seeds may have been planted in previous decades or far longer in the past and now the world reaps the whirlwind of reaction that manifests in different ways - one of which being displacement and mobility.

The origins of poor governance, endemic poverty, protracted conflicts, inequality and climate change will continue to be disputed. In crises, where powers predate upon citizens and egregious human rights abuses are evident, should the international community intervene or not intervene? There are examples of both choices producing yet worse situations with more elusive solutions and high levels of displacement. Specifically concerning Syria for example, there is a case to be made that had the core political problems been ameliorated in 2011, the current refugee problem would be very different. Some would argue that thousands of lives would have been saved. The issue of increased migrant and refugee movement is directly linked to issues of global governance and the limits of global solutions to adequately respond to regional or national (and international) problems, but to assume that the resolution of those problems at this stage will magically make the migration 'crisis' evaporate is likely to be a fallacy.

In some cases, the moral imperative to respond and save lives may encourage unwelcome movement - the rescue ships positioned and active in the Mediterranean to prevent migrant drownings have arguably enhanced conditions for greater numbers to migrate in 2014 and 2015 by changing the way smuggling networks operated. Recently, Eritrea's ambassador to the UN, blamed Western nations for encouraging Eritreans to leave by offering them instant asylum. On the other side, international instruments and conventions are being overtaken and invalidated by government action. A recent Amnesty International Annual Report (2015) condemned at least 30 countries for illegally forcing refugees to return to countries where they would be in danger.

Ultimately, there is a lack of political responses and current migration policies that fail to offer any sustainable response to the situations that are producing migrants and refugees. And as things currently stand, the policy debate within the multilateral framework is providing little in terms of constructive solutions that recognize and respond to an environment that has fundamentally and permanently changed. This might seem like a perfect storm, with catalytic events such as the Syrian and Libyan conflicts triggering mass displacement but in fact, this is our new operating environment. Rather than respond to this as if it is an abnormal natural disaster that will eventually subside, there is a compelling need to create rules, policies, and frameworks that can function effectively in the new context.

Continuing to chart the present course is unlikely to lead to fairer waters or calmer shores. Instead, if the current trajectory holds true, we are unlikely to weather this perfect storm. The more likely outcome is a fundamental degradation of global adherence to human rights norms and standards, the reinforcement of national borders and interests to the detriment of the collective good, and the exacerbation of some of the root causes driving global irregular migration in the first place: further inequality, injustice and marginalization, which will in turn result in heightened insecurity.

It is urgently time to shift to a new paradigm. This is going to be neither swift or simple, as it requires unpicking some longstanding assumptions, changing attitudes and developing policies which may not immediately appear to be in the interests of the electorate. The goal of this paper was to argue the evidence basis for why this shift is necessary, not to lay out in detail what this new paradigm might entail. The authors will be working with other experts and policy makers in an innovative process of dialogue and debate, the results of which will be published in a subsequent publication.

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- *Kathrine Starup, Global Protection Advisor, Danish Refugee Council, Copenhagen.*



The Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS): Formed in 2011 and based in Nairobi, the overall objective of the RMMS is to support agencies, institutions and fora in the Horn of Africa and Yemen sub-region to improve the management of protection and assistance to people in mixed migration flows in the Horn of Africa and across the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea in Yemen. The Steering Committee members for the RMMS include UNHCR, IOM, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), INTERSOS, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, IGAD and the European Union. The RMMS is a regional hub aiming to provide information and data management; analysis and research; support and coordination; and support to policy development and dialogue. It acts as an independent agency, hosted by the DRC, to stimulate forward thinking and policy development in relation to mixed migration. Its overarching focus and emphasis is on human rights, protection and assistance. See our websites www.regionalmms.org and <http://4mi.regionalmms.org> or follow RMMS on Twitter @Mixed_Migration.

The Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime: The Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime is a network of prominent law enforcement, governance and development practitioners who are dedicated to address the growing global challenges of transnational organised crime by developing the building blocks for national and global strategies that will equip policymakers to make more effective interventions. The Global Initiative is a Swiss NGO headquartered in Geneva. To find out more see our website www.globalinitiative.net or follow the Global Initiative on Twitter @GI_TOC.



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