Climate Change, Migration and the Cosmopolitan Dilemma[i]

David Held

Abstract: At its simplest, migration refers to the movement of people and their temporary or permanent geographical relocation. People have always been on the move and they have moved over great distances. In this article I set out a brief historical understanding of migration, and then focus on Europe and, finally, current dilemmas of European migration policy. In an era of climate change, war and uneven development, the pressures of migration have grown and could soon create an ever greater avalanche of movement. States act in a paradoxical way. On the one hand, they recognise the nature of the migration crisis and the necessity to broaden the definition of those who need urgent assistance. On the other hand, most host countries act on increasingly narrow definitions of those who warrant assistance and perhaps resettlement. This dilemma is examined and tentative steps are set down to show how it might be resolved.

In this article I sketch something of the history of people on the move. I set out an historical understanding of migration, and then focus on Europe and, finally, current dilemmas of European migration policy. These dilemmas are acute: liberal and democratic states entrench the rights and duties of their citizens, while policing their borders to ensure these privileges are rarely available to others. In this lies their dual role as champions of the universal and the particular, creating a tension, if not contradiction, at the heart of their structure and policies – which constantly pushes and pulls them in different directions.

Core Trends

One form of globalisation is more ubiquitous than any other – human migration (see Held and McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton, 1999). At its simplest, migration refers to the movement of people and their temporary or permanent geographical relocation. People have always been on the move and they have moved over great distances. There are many impulses behind these movements: victorious armies and empires have swept across and implanted themselves into new territories; the defeated and dispossessed have fled to defensible land and safer havens; the enslaved have been torn from their homes and relocated in the lands of the enslaver; convicts and prisoners have been forcefully relocated; the unemployed and the underemployed have searched

for work; the persecuted have sought asylum; and the curious and adventurous have always been travelling, drifting and exploring.

William McNeill argued that two distinctions, one geographical, one social, characterise most forms of migration in human history: central and peripheral migration, and elite and mass migrations (1976, 1978). Most often, elite migrations have taken the form of military-led conquests on the periphery of states and empires, followed by the settlement of border regions and marches by an aristocracy and their subalterns. This kind of settlement could be accompanied by elite migrations of missionaries, merchants and bureaucrats as well as by the mass migration of settling nomads and peasant agrarians moving on to new, less populated lands. Migrations to the periphery must be distinguished from flows to the centre: local elites migrate to the centres of political power and economic activity in cities and royal courts, while the rural poor and skilled head to the city in search of work. McNeill's model is well suited to the greater part of human history in which centre and periphery, urban and rural, provide a more accurate representation of political space than one demarcated by fixed political borders. Indeed, it can be argued that it was outward migrations that helped define and extend the outer limits of political control of a state or empire rather than the crossing of immutable political boundaries.

The large-scale movement of people and peoples has an enormously long history (Fagan, 1990; Emmer, 1993; Bacci, 2012). Since the emergence of the first rudimentary states over six thousand years ago, human migrations have crossed fragile boundaries as well as extended and reshaped them. Mobile nomads have crossed continents and carved out new empires. Some older polities have acquired an internal dynamism that allowed them to push outwards from the centre. Religion and economics have propelled missionaries and merchants across continents. Here I outline some of the main lines of migration history as they have been shaped by Europe and, in turn, shape Europe.

Most migrations were, more accurately, regional rather than global in extent (though Islam's African, European and South East Asian outposts do indicate processes of global migration). From

the late sixteenth century, however, a case can be made that levels of migration significantly increased as a result of Europe's changing economic and military dynamics. The early years of European expansion were not marked by an easy or effortless dominance but by the precariousness of Europe's technological and military edge and the miniscule level of actual migration that followed the conquest of the New World (Fernández-Armesto, 1995). The transoceanic extent of the European invasions may have geographically exceeded most earlier processes of conquest and migration, but its intensity and durability initially remained low. However, three patterns of global migration and movement emanating from, or controlled by, European powers heralded an era of migration that came to exceed its historical predecessors both in extent and in intensity (see figure 1). These migrations were the acceleration and completion of the European conquest and population of the Americas and Oceana; the transatlantic slave trade that fuelled the economic development of the colonies; and the mass movement of Asian labour that eventually replaced the labour flows extinguished by the termination of slaving (Curtin, 1969; Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983).

For most of the long nineteenth century (1760-1914) economic forces were the primary movers of migratory flows (see Held and McGrew et al., 1999, pp.287-297). The early push of religious persecution and the pull of distant and exotic wealth in the seventeenth century gave way to the blunter realities of differential economic development and opportunities in the Americas for many Europeans. Even when the slave trade was halted in the nineteenth century the scope and scale of European and Asian migrations continued to escalate into the early twentieth century. These great waves of migration were brought to an almost complete halt by the First World War. When the smoke cleared in 1918 the situation was transformed: the demand for European, Asian and African labour in the colonies was in decline; a nationalist and exclusionary politics was on the rise in many states, and the restricted immigration policies which flowed from this slowed further the pace of the older global migrations. Economic dislocation in Europe after the First World War,

combined with the global economic downturn of the 1930s, ensured that levels of global migration remained very low through the interwar period.

While the relative geographical extensity and intensity of the post-1914 and post-1945 migrations were closely balanced, there can be no doubt that the post-Second World War era saw a steady expansion in migratory flows, albeit marked by phases, relative to the interwar period. There is now almost no state or part of the world that is not exporting or importing labour (see figure 2). With the collapse of European and Soviet communism a swathe of new areas, previously sealed off, became caught up in migratory flows. These flows were not exclusively towards the OECD states, though a significant component of them was. There were also major new patterns of migration within South-East Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, among other areas. All these areas became locked into both regional and global patterns of migration.

The historical pattern of post-War migration for most European countries has been fourfold. First, there was an initial low starting point after the Second World War, temporarily raised by the shifting movement of the many displaced peoples generated by the war itself. Second, there was increasing growth in migration rates in the 1950s, accelerating in the 1960s, and peaking somewhere in the early 1970s. The impact of the oil shocks on economic performance, the falling demand for labour and the consequently bitter politics of immigration are clearly evident in the statistics of the time. Third, after the mid-1970s migration continued, if at slightly lower levels, driven more by family reunions than the push and pull of global economic factors. Fourth, in the 1980s, varying between countries, the rate of migration began to accelerate again. This intensified in the early 1990s as the economic booms in Western Europe, the post-1989 turbulence in east and central Europe and the former Yugoslavia pushed levels of immigration back up again. While war and conflict continued to generate refugee and asylum flows, the overwhelming majority of contemporary migrations remained economically driven, leaving political borders untouched.

Europe: Borders, Surveillance and Conflict

The capacity of modern European states to seal their borders has never been perfect (Castles and Miller, 1993; Pohlmann et al., 2013). Prior to the last three centuries, states were demarcated by the amorphous and permeable grey areas of frontiers and peripheries in which sovereignty gradually dissolved rather than being abruptly truncated. States have always tried to control the movement of peoples through these regions and have been concerned with patterns of peripheral settlement and population movement. In this context, European states have a long and often deeply dishonourable record of forced expulsions, of the Jews and Huguenots, for example.

Contemporary forms of border control were pioneered by the USA in the late nineteenth century. The concentration of immigrants in oceangoing ships in a few key harbours, on the east and west coasts of the USA, meant that a greater concentration of state resources could be brought to bear on migratory flows than is possible over long land borders. While the development of reception centres, passport control and immigration criteria were developed in this era, they initially served a very open immigration policy.

International air traffic has kept migration flows fairly concentrated, but illegal and legal migration are still occurring, often across land, which is expensive and geographically difficult to control. The USA in particular finds it very difficult to patrol its long Mexican border. Although new fences have been effective, many have died in the deserts, victims of harsh conditions, unscrupulous smugglers, private raiding parties, among other causes. The problem of land borders is also present in Europe, for example, the German and French long land borders: but unlike the situation with the US-Mexico border, these now fall, of course, within the European Union and are in effect open borders.

All EU countries tightened up their immigration legislation and enhanced policing powers in the 1970s and 1980s. These measures included strict sanctions on airline carriers; tighter visa requirements; denying access and the due process of law to many forcibly displaced peoples including asylum seekers; and the penalisation of undocumented aliens. Yet, none has been able to

reverse the tide of rising migratory flows from illegal cross-border entry, although they have (until recently in Europe, that is) contained its growth.

Given these circumstances, states have turned to a variety of forms of internal surveillance and control of the composition of their populations. In most European countries there are legal, constitutional and political obstacles to giving the police major powers to stop and check identities on suspicion. Where those powers have been allocated they have often resulted in the abuse of civil liberties or regular and systematic discrimination against visible minorities. Accordingly, liberal democracies have often tried to control illegal migration by controlling access to the labour market. This includes an increasing tendency to penalise employers using illegal labour. However, even in the USA where this has been a fairly draconian policy, it seems to make only a marginal difference – reflecting the limits of state institutions and the resources and technologies available to them, and the failure of those agencies to win the cooperation of many socio-economic actors.

In short, the capacities of liberal democratic states to manage migratory flows have increased with the establishment of immigration agencies, the documentation of citizenship and the funnelling of migrants through check points, harbours and airports. But the ability of migrants to evade the grasp of the state has also risen as overall numbers of travellers have increased, and as the increase in tourism and student exchanges has opened more loopholes in immigration agency practice. This is one of the many sources of the evermore contentious politics of immigration.

The intensification of the migration crisis in the European Union: between 9/11 and climate change

The European Union today is at a conjuncture of significant migratory pressures. Some of these are familiar and represent recognisable past patterns, for example, the 9/11 wars (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, among others). But others are new. If migration can be seen as the most ubiquitous form of globalisation, climate change can be understood as one of the gravest consequences of global transformations. The anthropocene has been given enormous impetus by economic globalisation which, in turn, has created new drivers of migration. The UNFCCC (in effect

from 1994) and the IPCC (formed in 1988) have been concerned about the creation of 'climate refugees' from the outset. While refugees are typically associated with, and often legally determined by, conflict and human rights abuses, in this context the phrase seeks to capture the way climate change now increasingly intersects with conventional security concerns.

Since the end of the Cold War, migration has taken on a new momentum as patterns of conflict have shifted and intensified with the start of the 9/11 wars. The combination of Western military interventions, 'anti-terrorism policies', and increased civil conflict have led to a dramatic rise of migration as a whole, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in particular – would-be refugees that simply have not yet crossed an international border. Refugees and IDPs are two sides of the same coin, some separated by border fences and some by seas. The European Union has been attempting to follow containment policies – basically seeking to prevent people from migrating. Containment policies exacerbate widespread civil insecurity stemming from failed interventions, civil conflicts, regional collapse, and the widespread threat to human life chances in many areas, particularly the Middle East and North Africa.

These new patterns have been given an additional impetus by the changing nature of environmental degradation. Environmental crises are not, of course, new. For most of human history, the main way in which environmental shocks occurred was via unintentional transportation of flora, fauna, and microbes (Crosby, 1983). The European colonisation of the New World, which shifted diverse forms of natural life across the Atlantic, within a generation all but wiped out a substantial majority of the indigenous population of the Caribbean, Mexico and other parts of Latin America. Until the mid-20th century most forms of environmental degradation, at least the degradation that could be perceived, were local or regional or, occasionally, transregional. However, since the end of Second World War, the globalisation of environmental degradation has been massively accelerated by a number of factors: 70 years of extraordinary resource-intensive growth in developed world; the industrialisation of Russia, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet states; the

breakneck industrialisation of China and many parts of Asia; and the massive rise in global population.

The result is an unprecedented array of global environmental problems, including climate change, the destruction of global rainforests, the loss of biodiversity, and oceanic and riverine pollution. Of these, climate change poses the most severe existential threat. Despite 20 years of multilateral negotiations under the UN, a global deal on climate change mitigation or adaptation remains elusive, with differences between developed countries, which have caused the problem, and developing countries, which will drive future emissions, forming the core barrier to progress (see figure 3). Multilateral governance is gridlocked over climate and, in this context, it is not unreasonable to expect climate change to become an ever more powerful cause of migration (Hale, Held and Young, 2013). Climate change is wreaking havoc on the world's diverse species, biosystems, and socio-economic fabric. Violent storms are becoming more frequent, water access is becoming a battleground, rising sea levels may well, as predicted, displace millions, the mass movement of desperate people will become more common, and death from serious diseases in the world's poorest countries will rise rapidly (largely because bacteria will spread more quickly, causing greater contamination of food and water). The overwhelming body of scientific opinion maintains that climate change constitutes a serious threat not only in a long term, but in the here and now.

The term environmental refugee was coined in 1985, and was reinforced in the first 1990 IPCC report which stated that 'the gravest effects of climate change may be those on human migration as millions will be displaced' (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 1990, p. 20; see also El-Hinnawi 1985). From 2009 to 2014 approximately 27 million people have been displaced annually as a result of natural disasters, such as flooding, mud-slides, droughts and violent storms (see figure 4). Without an effective policy on climate change, the projections for increasing disaster-affected displacement are dire. According to UNEP by 2060 there could be 50 million 'environmental refugees' in Africa alone (Brown 2008). Apocalyptically, Christian Aid in 2007 indicated that close to

1 billion people could be permanently displaced by 2050 with climate change being a key driver in forced migration (ibid).

The European Union and the Mediterranean migrant crisis: a case study

Migration from North Africa to Europe is certainly not new. For years the Mediterranean has been a thoroughfare for migrants trying to reach the shores of Europe. Whilst migrants have started their journeys from many African and Middle Eastern countries, they are typically bound by a common goal to find greater economic and social opportunities, escape persecution and flee conflict. However, there are notable differences in migration patterns over the last few years.

First, there has been a generalised increase of would-be-migrants attempting to reach Europe. Second, there has been a dramatic rise in the departures that travel via the Central Mediterranean route. In fact, the EU Border Agency, Frontex, estimates that between 2013 and 2014 there was a 277% increase (see figure 5). Third, and bearing in mind UNEP's projections for environmental refugees in Africa, the push from Africa is only likely to intensify in the future.

Across the Mediterranean migration is increasing, but nowhere more dramatically than from Libya. From figures 6 and 7, one can see the apparent correlation between migration flows through the Central Mediterranean and the regional instability in North Africa. 2011 was a period of optimism and migration from Libya declined; but it has been exponentially rising since. The majority of the migrants are not Libyan per se. Rather, the greatest number of migrants to date have originated from Syria, Eritrea and Somalia, but there are significant numbers also from Nigeria, Gambia and Mali just to name a few. The instability and chaos that grips Libya has created a vacuum for armed groups, smugglers, gangsters and human traffickers to operate at will; hence, Libya has become the dominant point of departure for many.

The current Mediterranean migration crisis is in many respects a symptom of Western policy failures in two key respects. First, the failed intervention in Libya created the instability that led to the Central Mediterranean route becoming so popular as a passage to Europe. Second, the European countries scaled back recovery efforts just at a time when they were needed the most. From late

2013 to November/December 2014 the Italian government ran a relatively effective operation called

Mare Nostrum, during which time more than 100,000 migrants were rescued at sea.

However, the operation was costly at €9 million a month, and Italy cancelled it at the end of

2014 claiming that it was unsustainable without more EU financial backing. In place of Mare

Nostrum the EU launched the much-scaled back operation Triton. Under Mare Nostrum the Italian

Navy carried out search and rescue operations across 27,000 miles of the Mediterranean. Under

Triton, the mandate only covered border surveillance within 30 miles of the Italian coast. The EU

budget for Triton was only a third of what was spent on Mare Nostrum. To those who paid attention

at the time, this was a huge, bright, waving red flag. Human rights groups and migration experts

warned, with virtual consensus, that this would lead to a much larger migration crisis with many

more deaths in the Mediterranean.

In the face of renewed crisis (and many deaths) the EU initiated discussions about how to

address the Mediterranean migrant dilemma. On the 29th of April 2015 the EU Council released its

summary of their 28 country talks. The agenda moving forward can be summarised in three points:

confront and prevent smugglers and human traffickers from operating; triple the financial resources

for EU border operations including the increase of ships and other necessary capacity; and enhance

refugee protection. For the latter, this includes implementing a 'Common European Asylum System

to ensure the same standards in all Member States, an increase of emergency aid to front-line

Member States, and the deployment of support teams to help process asylum claims' (European

Council 2015).

This could have gone a long way towards mitigating the escalating tragedy in the

Mediterranean. However, it would certainly be a mistake to consider the matter closed and problem

solved, even if the EU were able to bring casualties to zero. Upon close inspection of the EU's

immediate response, it is clear that it was still driven primarily by an exclusionary regional interest to

manage and control migration into Europe. These are policies that, whilst having a humanitarian

veneer, radically exacerbate the burdens of migrants and displaced persons from and in countries

like Libya, Syria, Eritrea, and Somalia. Stefan Kessler captured the underlying motive behind the EU's new approach: 'Keep protection-seekers far, far away from Europe so that their deaths don't make the headlines in European media' (in Siegfried 2015). Moreover, a conspicuous absence from this response, and on-going consideration, is the increasing concern with climate-induced displacement and migratory flows. Instead, migration continues to be conceived through a security-specific lens, deliberately missing larger parts of the picture.

It is clear, however, that EU policy has failed both in its narrow objectives and in wider terms as migration flows put pressure on multiple entry points into Europe, from Macedonia to Italy, Greece to France. Some of these pressures have now become so great that these entry points are almost ungovernable. As hundreds of thousands of people pour into Europe from the South and Eastern routes, what was once known as the 'Mediterranean Crisis' quickly became a larger European refugee crisis which threatens to overwhelm existing EU policy structures. It remains to be seen how the interplay between state migration policy and actual migratory movements play out, with some countries, notably Germany and Sweden, currently liberalising their border policies, while others, the UK and Hungary for instance, are resisting such moves.

To be sure, these problems are difficult to resolve. The issue of refugees and displaced peoples is one of the great tests of the international humanitarian ideals of the 21st century, and of the cosmopolitan aspirations of a Europe shaped by ambition to project its soft power and good governance across the world. However, when cosmopolitanism meets state interests under economic pressure, the former is often cast aside. Europe, racked by the Euro crisis, has become a partial, and all too often sorrowful, champion of humanitarian values. There is a paradox wherein many European states are cosmopolitan when it comes to championing ideals, but remain sectarian when it comes to their implementation.

There were huge steps that Europe took in the post-war period to move from a region of bitter conflict and strife to a pacific union in which (still) the idea of war among European countries is almost inconceivable – a supraregional polity shaped by human rights, common frameworks and

the rule of law. But like in so much of European history, there are rights for citizens and exclusions for others. This divide, previously noted, is constantly policed and a bridge between these poles has been hard to build.

Concluding thoughts

In a much quoted passage, Hannah Arendt referred to statelessness as the "newest mass phenomenon in contemporary history," and stateless persons as "the most symptomatic group in contemporary politics" (1977). It could also be said that internally displaced persons or refugees highlight the difficulties of cosmopolitanism with its aspiration for global law and transnational accountability.

In an era of climate change, war and uneven development, the pressures of migration grow and could easily create an ever greater avalanche of movement. States act in a paradoxical way. On the one hand they recognise, along with all humanitarian organisations, the nature of the migration crisis and the necessity to broaden the definition of those who need urgent assistance, not just refugees but all those migrants forced to leave for reasons of violence or poverty. On the other hand, nearly every host country acts on increasingly narrow definitions of those who warrant assistance and perhaps resettlement.

The growing crisis of migration, as Pierre Hassner once wrote, "like the problem of genocide, or of the environment, or of nuclear proliferation, can be handled only by going beyond the monopoly of states toward a more universal perspective, such as that of human rights, or a more global one, such as that of a collective interest of the planet" (1998, p.281). As Hassner recognised, the question is whether "an effective synthesis of the global and the local, the universal and the particular" remains within the sphere of the possible (*ibid*.).

Stepping stones to a universal constitutional order, linking the global and the local, are, I have argued elsewhere, already in place, set down by some of the most important achievements of international law and institution building in the 20th century (see Held 2010). These developments generate a conception of rightful authority tied to human rights and democratic values. In this

perspective, political power is legitimate if, and only if, it upholds these standards. Moreover, the link between territory, sovereignty, and rightful authority is, in principle, broken since rightful authority can be exercised in many spheres and many levels – local, subnational, national and supranational. Accordingly, citizenship can be envisaged, as it already is in the EU, as equal membership in the diverse, overlapping political communities which uphold common civic political values and standards. Citizenship, accordingly, is not built on exclusive membership in a single community, but on a set of principles and legal arrangements which link people together in diverse communities which significantly affect them.

Stepping stones, yes. But it remains another big step to extend these principles and arrangements to the stateless. Short term extensions in the EU could include: centrally funded reception centres; coordinated legal routes through which migrants can travel to seek refuge; robust asylum quotas for all member states; tackling human trafficking; and providing direct aid to refugee camps in the Middle East which are currently home to millions of displaced people. Other difficulties need to be addressed as well. One of these lies in the current conception of policy choices: either citizenship or send migrants home. Kant laid down over 200 years ago the duty to offer universal hospitality to each and all as a condition of a law bound, open global order (1970). Perhaps today the idea of universal hospitality can be rearticulated to connote not just search and rescue and/or providing temporary aid but a number of intermediate steps that might, at least in small part, fill the gap between statelessness and citizenship. Short term working visas and limited working passes are among options to ease the crises of the stateless while offering universal hospitality in an era of overlapping communities of fate. Even if this were granted (and we are a long way from this happening), the problem would only be stemmed – not resolved. Only when people live securely in a world where sustainable development is promoted in all regions, where severe inequalities between countries are tempered and reduced, and where a universal constitutional order guarantees the rights of all peoples, could this begin to be envisaged. Cosmopolitan ideals, but still, far from realities.

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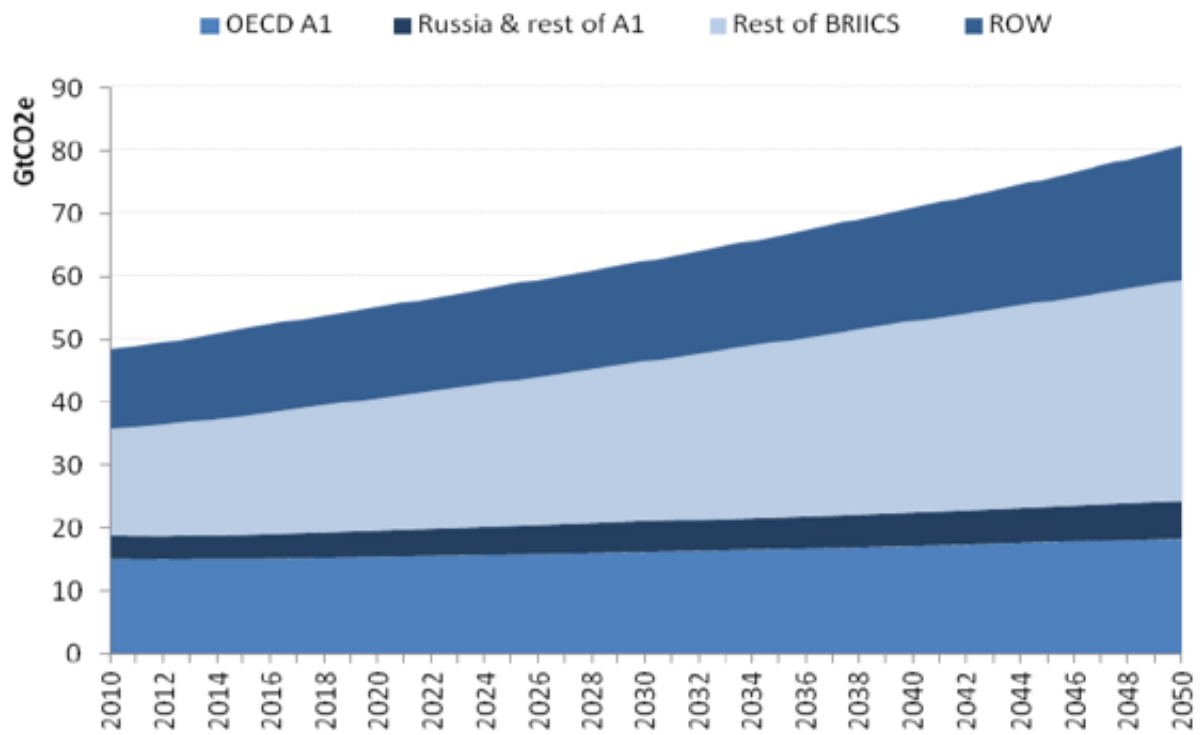Figure 1. Major Global Migrations, 1600 – 1915.
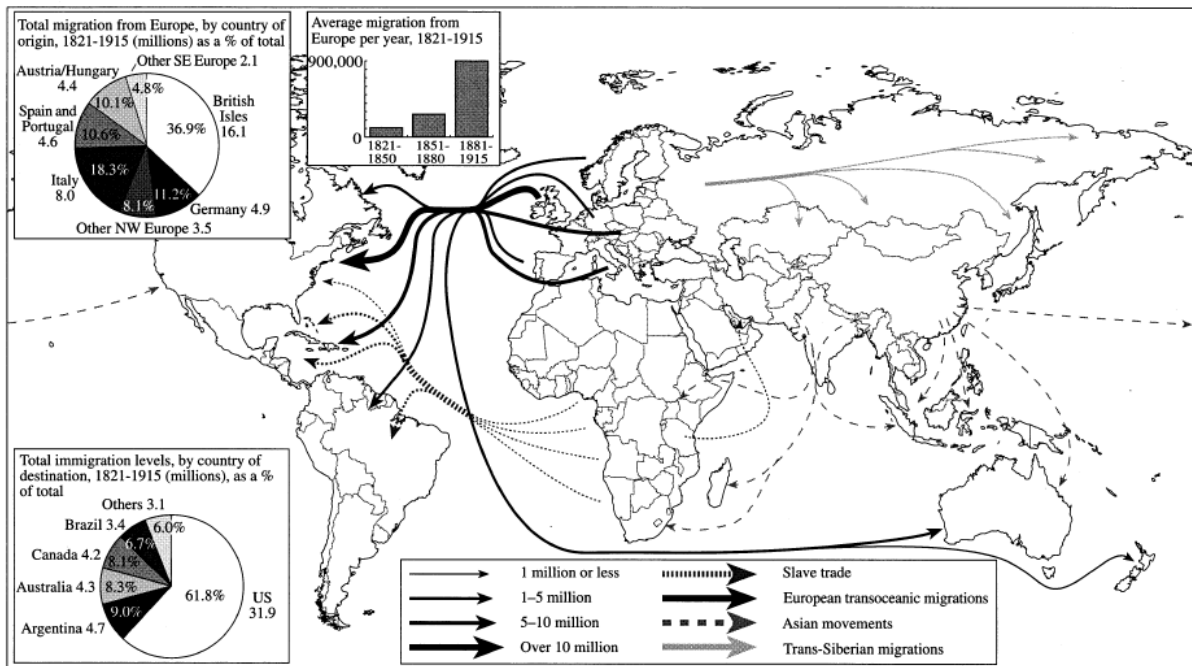
Source: Held and McGrew et al., 1999, adapted from Kenwood and Loughneed, 1989

Figure 2. Major Global Migrations, 1945 – 1995.
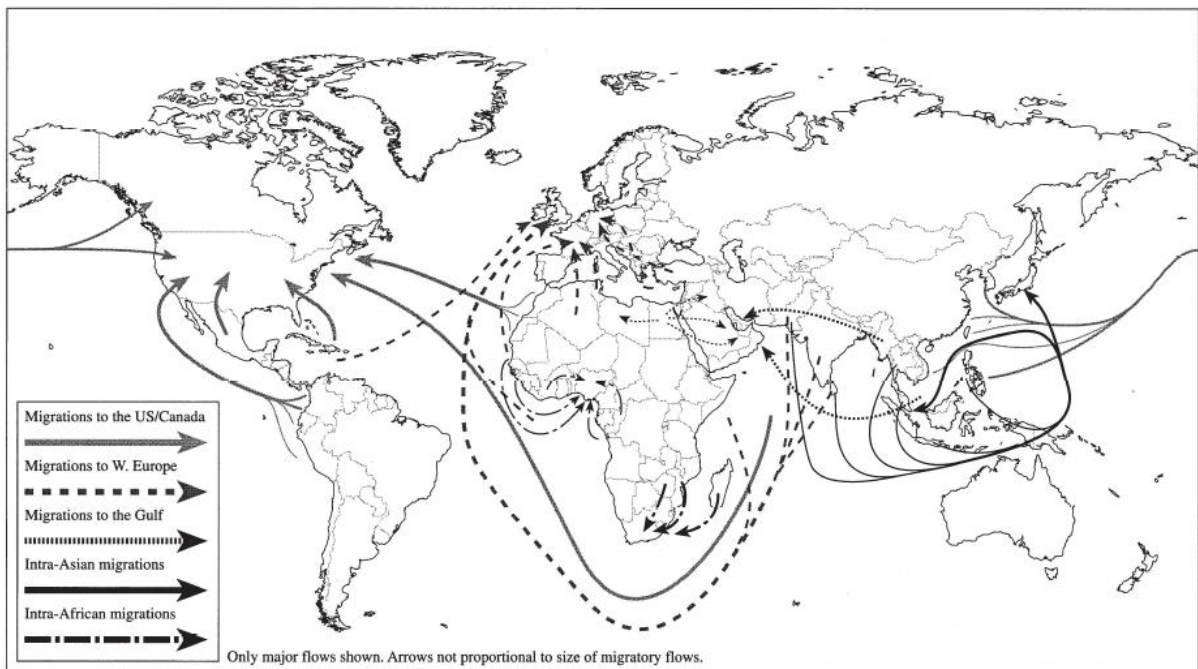
Source: Held and McGew et al, 1999

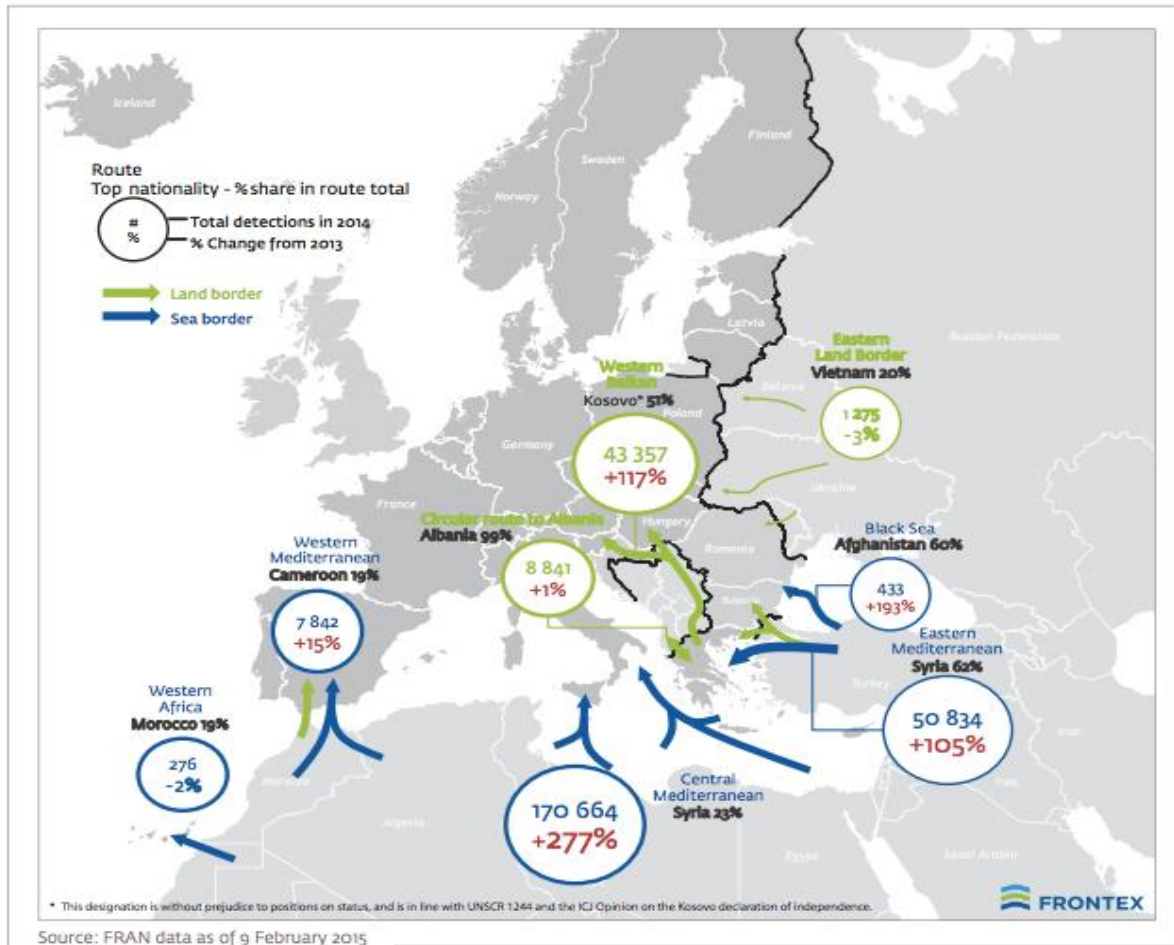Figure 3. GHG emissions by region: Baseline, scenario 2010-2050

Note: GtCO2e = Giga tonnes of CO2 equivalent ROW = Rest of the World
Source: OECD Environmental Outlook Baseline, 2012

Figure 4. Impact of extreme weather

IN 2012, EXTREME WEATHER DROVE
MORE THAN 32 MILLION PEOPLE
FROM THEIR HOMES

USA
776,000
displaced

CHAD
500,000
displaced

NIGER
530,000
displaced

CUBA
343,000
displaced

NIGERIA
6.1 Million
displaced

PERU
138,000
displaced

PAKISTAN
1.9 Million
displaced

BANGLADESH
600,000
displaced

CHINA
5.5 Million
displaced

NORTH KOREA
9.1 Million
displaced

JAPAN
250,000
displaced

S.SUDAN
340,000
displaced

MADAGASCAR
190,000
displaced

INDIA
9.1 Million
displaced

PHILIPPINES
3.6 Million
displaced

98% OF CLIMATE REFUGEES WERE FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

Source: Global Call for Climate Change, 2013

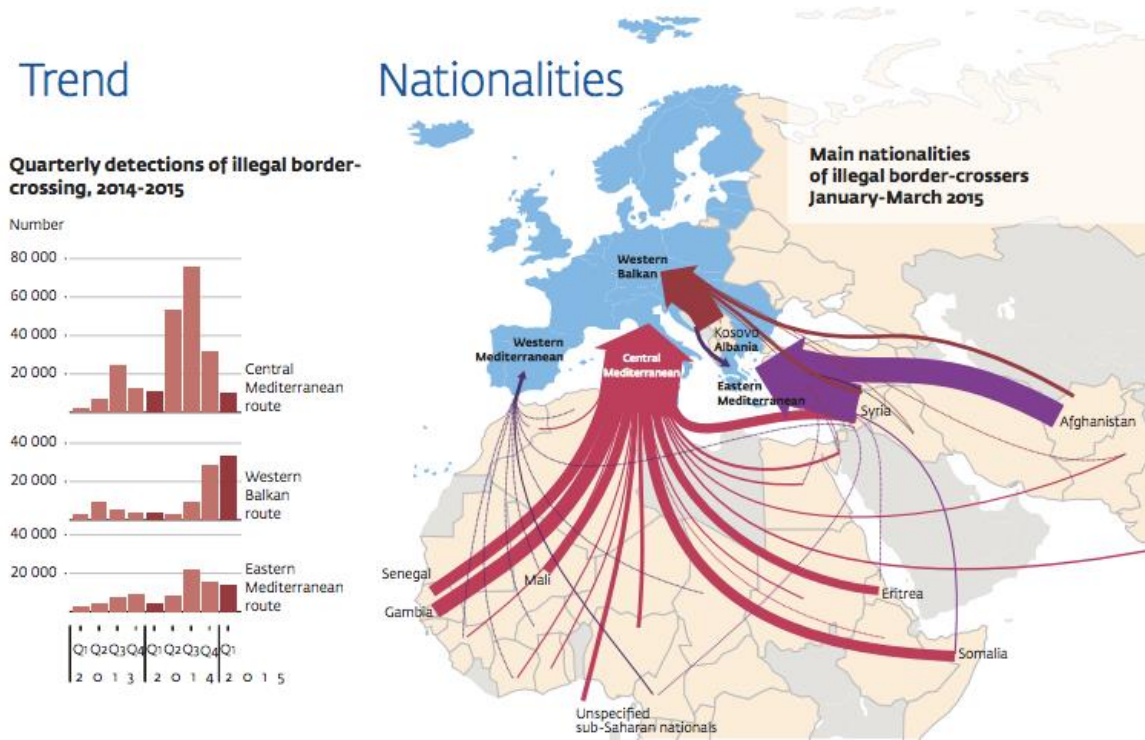Figure 5. Increase in migration flows, 2013-2014

Source: FRAN data in Frontex 2015a

Figure 6. Fluctuations in popularity of routes to Europe
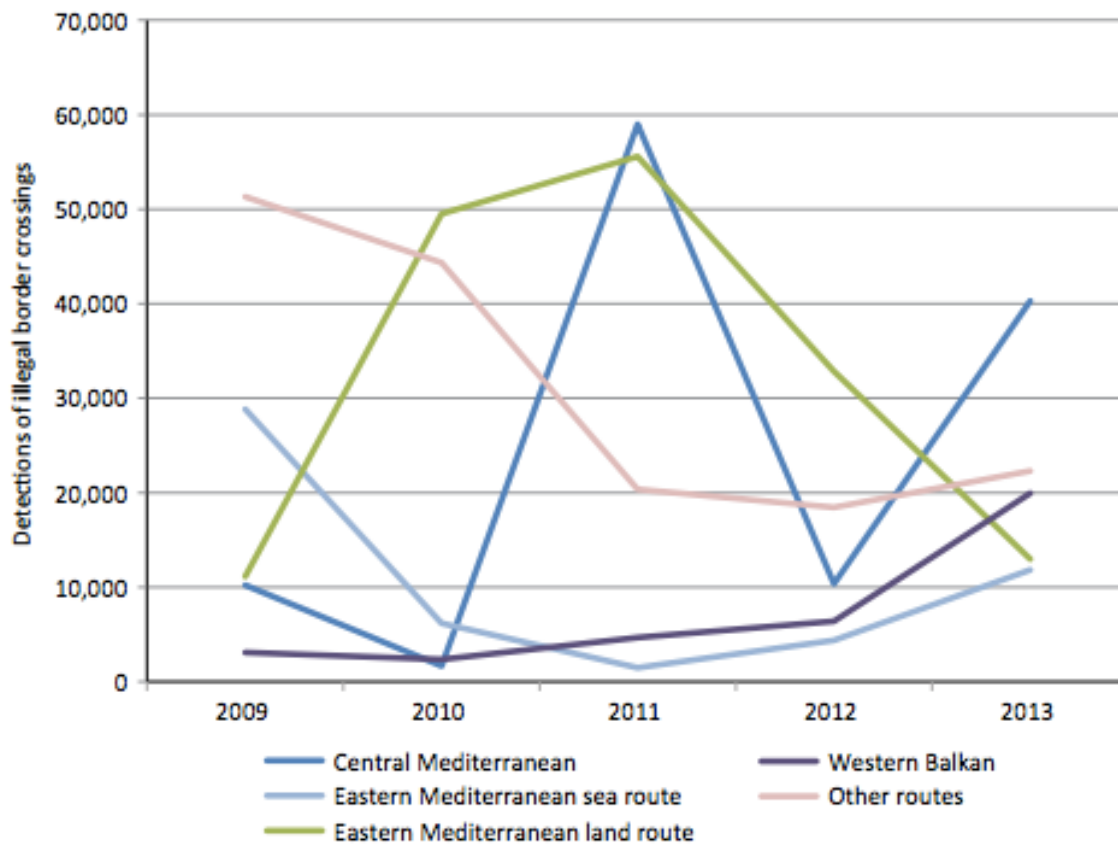
Source: Frontex in IOM 2014

Figure 7. Recent trends in and nationalities of illegal border crossovers

Source: Frontex 2015b