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From migration crisis to refugee crisis in Europe: Securitization priorities vs what?

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An “Age of Migration”?

“In the early 21st century, the forces generating international migration are more powerful than ever, and human mobility has become a key facet of global integration. Yet public concern about migration also remains powerful.” (Castles 2014: 190).

- In recent years, governments against the existing research findings, increasingly portray migration as a security threat.
- A number of events construct a picture that Muslims constitute a danger to democratic societies:
 - The New York terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001
 - Madrid bombings of 2004
 - London bombings of 2005
 - Paris killings of November 13th 2015

An “Age of Migration”?

- The dominant approach of securitization of migration is based on a perspective that emphasizes the security of rich northern states and their populations, while ignoring the reality that migration and refugee flows are often the result of the fundamental lack of human security in poorer countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.
- Previous historical periods of colonization but also current socioeconomic and political conditions in many less developed countries create a situation of absence of human security for their populations.
- Migration policies may well exacerbate human insecurity due to the limited ways of legal migration (e.g. smuggling, trafficking, surge of irregular migration).

An “Age of Migration”?

- The ‘drivers’ of international migration can be considered as those factors that increase the likelihood that people will decide to leave their homes in search of a better life (Castles 2013: 124):
 - neo-liberal globalization and social transformation;
 - social and economic inequalities;
 - state security and human security;
 - technology;
 - labour demand;
 - demographic changes;
 - politics;
 - law and governance;
 - the social dynamics of migration; and
 - the role of the people who make their living by facilitating migration (‘the migration industry’).

An “Age of Migration”?

- The impression that we live in the “Age of Migration” (Castles *et al.* 2015) has been challenged on three levels (King 2015):
- Firstly, taking into consideration the current stock of 232 million migrants worldwide (UN estimates), accounting for a little over 3% of world population, international migration is not really a large-scale phenomenon. The people who move are much less than the people who don’t move!
- Secondly, the vast majority of the world’s population is not free to migrate. They would like, but they are not allowed to. In the end, many people move due to conflicts and/or insecurity and seek for safer places to (re)settle (e.g. Syria, Afghanistan)

An “Age of Migration”?

- Thirdly, one might say that we live in an “age of mobility” rather of international migration. Population movements (such as internal migration, short to medium duration movements, circular movements and so on) are much more characteristic of the current period rather than international migration.
- The main criticism(s) addressed to the dominant discourse over the significance of international migration is (Cohen & Sirkeci 2011; King 2015) whether:
 - (a) the mobility aspect of human population movements; and
 - (b) the internal migration aspect (740 million people were internal migrants by 2009 in the most populated countries of the world, i.e. China, India, Indonesia, Brazil and Nigeria) are taken into consideration when dealing with the issue of migration.

“Cultures of Migration” and paradigm shift

- Migration may well be substituted by that of “mobility”, which illustrates in a better way the complexity of human movement, but also offers a flexibility in discussing movement across various scales, temporal contexts and through different practices and experiences.
- In such a way, people are divided to “movers” and “non-movers”, while also we refer to “Cultures of Migration”, which refer to *“the abilities, limits and needs of the movers as well as the cultural traditions and social practices that frame those abilities and limitations through time”* (Cohen & Sirkeci 2011: 13).
- Moreover, human movements are transnational processes that cannot be contained within the various national contexts (‘sending’ or ‘receiving’ countries) or else they become instruments of state legitimacy (Glick Shiller 2010).

An “European” migrant/refugee crisis

- A recent European migrant crisis or European refugee crisis of 2015 arose through the rising number of refugees and migrants coming to the European Union, across the Mediterranean Sea or through Southeast Europe and applying for asylum (European Migration Crisis 2015)
- The phrases "European migrant crisis" and "European refugee crisis" became widely used in April 2015, when five boats carrying almost two thousand migrants to Europe sank in the Mediterranean Sea, with a combined death toll estimated at more than 1,200 people (media accounts).
- The media searched to find what is the most appropriate term that should be used in order to illustrate the “crisis”. The BBC (Ruz 2015) and The Washington Post (Taylor, 2015) opted for the term “migrant crisis”, while the Al Jazeera (Malone 2015) chose the term “refugee crisis”.

An “European” migrant/refugee crisis

- Because “*words matter in the migration debate*”, it is important not to use the words economic migrant and refugee interchangeably, i.e. as identifying the same persons, but as complementary notions that need to be better defined.
- One side of the argument [supported by international organizations] is that the term “migrant” is used as a generic term that encompasses many other categories such as: irregular/ illegal migrants, movement of people, etc.
- The use of the term ‘refugee’ has to do with very specific conditions under which the people are fleeing from their countries of origin (1951 Geneva Convention). It is because they are persecuted due to their ethnicity, colour, belief, etc. and their lives are threatened as a result of ethnic strife, war or any other conflict.

An “European” migrant/refugee crisis

- For some commentators (Malone 2015) the use of the term ‘migrant’ is reductive, implying that it helps creating an environment in which *“hate speech and thinly veiled racism can fester”*, while the majority of the people drowning in the Mediterranean are refugees.
- The use of the word ‘migrant’ gives weight to those who want only to see economic migrants and also imply that most of those risking their lives to land on Europe’s shores are doing it for money (!)
- According to this view, there is no ‘migrant’ crisis in the Mediterranean. There is a very large number of refugees fleeing unimaginable misery and danger and a smaller number of people trying to escape the sort of poverty that drives some to desperation.



Photos 1,2,3. Migrants/ refugees on overloaded boats, when boats overturn and when they go out in Greek island (e.g. Lesbos, Chios or Samos).

Migrant/refugee crisis

- On the one hand, the discussion over the migrant/ refugee crisis seems to be *Eurocentric* in the sense that it underlines what is going on in the borders of Europe and more specifically in its Mediterranean and Southeast borders.
 - It surely misses that there are similar conditions in Southeast Asia, where people try to cross the sea border with other more developed countries in Asia
- According to officials *“the EU is facing an 'unprecedented crisis' with 'unprecedented' flows of refugees and migrants for which the 'current system was not designed’* (Matthias Ruete, Director General of the Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission) (EMN 2015).

Migrant/refugee crisis

- There are three major migrant/refugee routes to Europe throughout 2015:
- **Central Mediterranean Route (Italy and Malta):** Over 120,000 migrants/refugees arrived in Europe via this route between January and September. Most have traveled on smugglers' boats departing from Libya, Tunisia, or Egypt.
- **Eastern Mediterranean Route (Greece/Aegean Sea):** The Eastern Mediterranean has become the primary maritime route in 2015. Over 350,000 people have crossed from Turkey to Greece (the vast majority to Greek islands like Lesbos and Kos) in the first nine months of 2015.
- **Western Balkans (Hungary):** Over 155,000 people crossed from Serbia into Hungary between January and August. They are either Western Balkan nationals (from Kosovo and Albania) or migrants/refugees traveling onward from Greece to the EU.

Map 1. Movements of migrants/ refugees towards Central and Northern Europe IOM (12/11/2015)



Europe/Mediterranean Migration Response
Movement Trends and Numbers

ARRIVALS	
Italy	141,766
Estimate arrivals as of 11 November Source: IOM	
Greece	691,835
Estimate arrivals for land and sea as of 11 November Source: IOM	
Macedonia	224,911
People registered between June to 9 November Source: Government	
Serbia	404,022
Estimate arrivals as of 11 November Source: IOM	
Croatia	354,446
Estimate arrivals as of 10 November Source: Government	
Slovenia	179,299
Initial estimate as of 11 November Source: Government	
Hungary	390,990
Estimate arrivals as of 9 November Source: Government	
Spain	3,845
Estimate arrivals as of 20 October Source: IOM	

MOBILITY TRACKING & MAPPING

POINTS OF INTEREST include Border Crossing Points (Entry/Exit), Organized Transit Points/Reception Centres, and Spontaneous Transit Points.

Mapping and tracking activities in progress. As mapping and tracking will be in progress, they will be updated.

This map is for information purposes only. It does not constitute an official statement or endorsement by IOM.

www.iom.int

As of 12 November 2015
sources: IOM • feedback: prd@iom.int

Map 2. Illustration of migrants/ refugees movements towards Central and Northern Europe UNHCR (17/11/2015)



Source: UNHCR data

Migrant/refugee crisis: focus in Greece

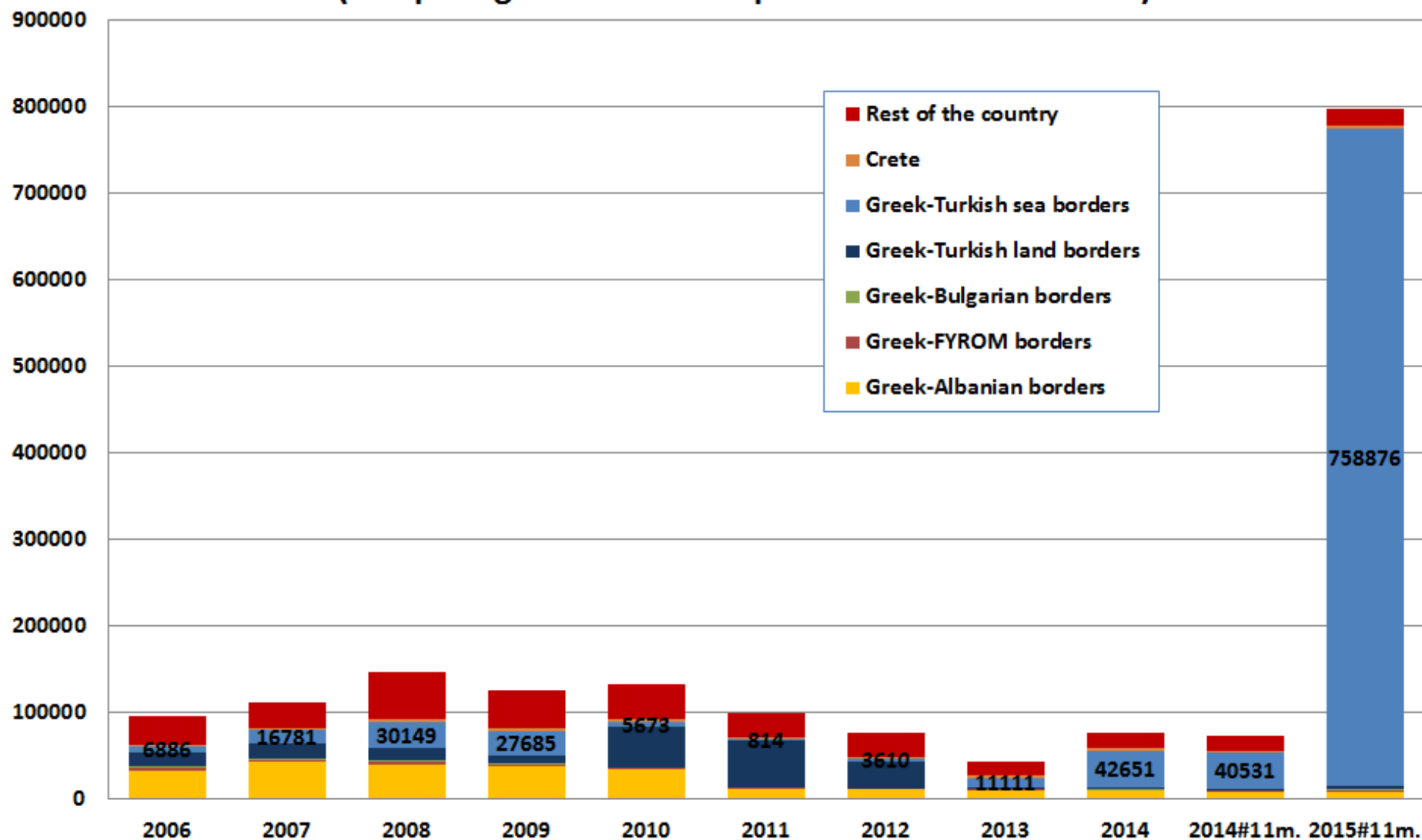
- While in 1990s migrants originated from Balkans and CEE countries, by 2014 the majority of migrant flows are from the Middle East (45%), Asia (24%) and Balkans and CEE countries (24%) and Africa (8%).
- On the basis of the apprehensions data of irregular migrants in Greece, the composition of the migrant flows by border gate has significantly changed in the period 2010-2015.
- The arrests at the Albanian border have gradually diminished up to 2011. Then the Turkish land border became the main border gate to the country (2010-2012), and later lost its significance due to the building of a security fence along the Evros river. By 2013, the irregular crossings via the land border virtually stopped and the apprehensions at the sea border rose again (until 2015).

Migrant/refugee crisis: focus in Greece

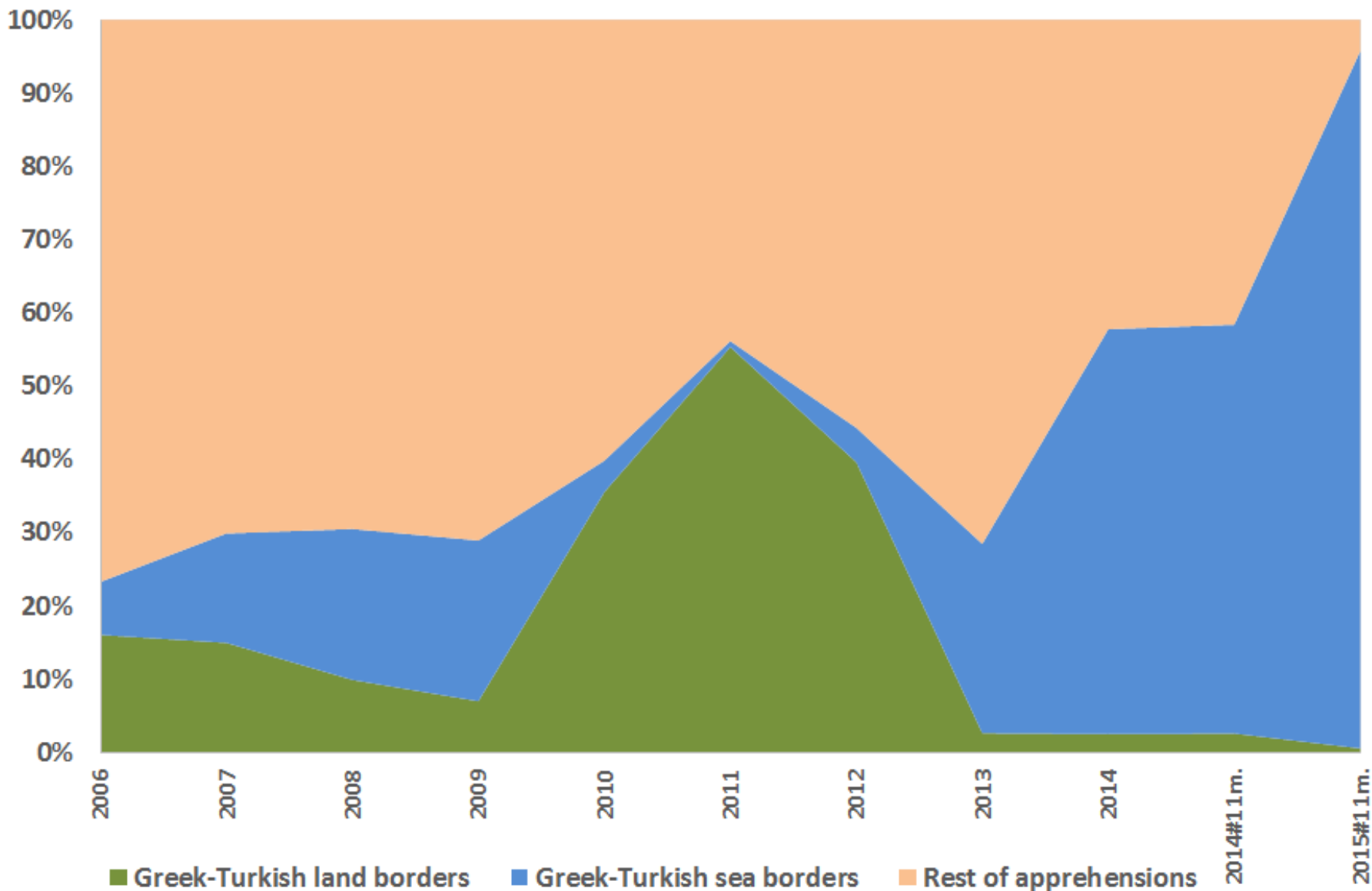


Photo 4. The security border fence by the Evros river

**Graph 1. Apprehensions of irregular migrants by border area, 2006-2015
(comparing the 11-month period in 2014 and 2015)**



Graph 2. Variance of apprehended irregular migrants by the Turkish (land and sea) borders, 2006-2015



Source: Data from the Ministry of Citizen Protection

Map 3. Overview of migrants/ refugee flows within Greece and towards its northern border UNHCR (23/11/2015)

23/11/2015

UNHCR Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response - Greece - 23 November 2015



Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response - Greece

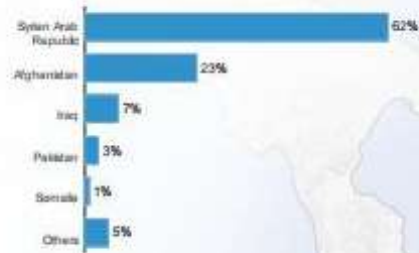
23 November 2015

<http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean>

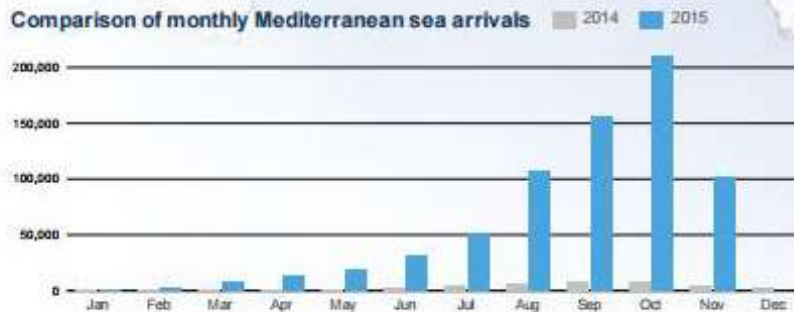
Increasing numbers of refugees and migrants take their chances aboard unseaworthy boats and dinghies in a desperate bid to reach Europe. The vast majority of those attempting this dangerous crossing are in need of international protection, fleeing war, violence and persecution in their country of origin. Every year these movements continue to exact a devastating toll on human life.

Top-10 nationalities of Mediterranean sea arrivals

Top-10 nationalities represent 100% of the sea arrivals



Comparison of monthly Mediterranean sea arrivals



703,374 arrivals by sea in 2015

93% of arrivals come from the world's top 10 refugee-producing countries

Last updated: 20 Nov 2015



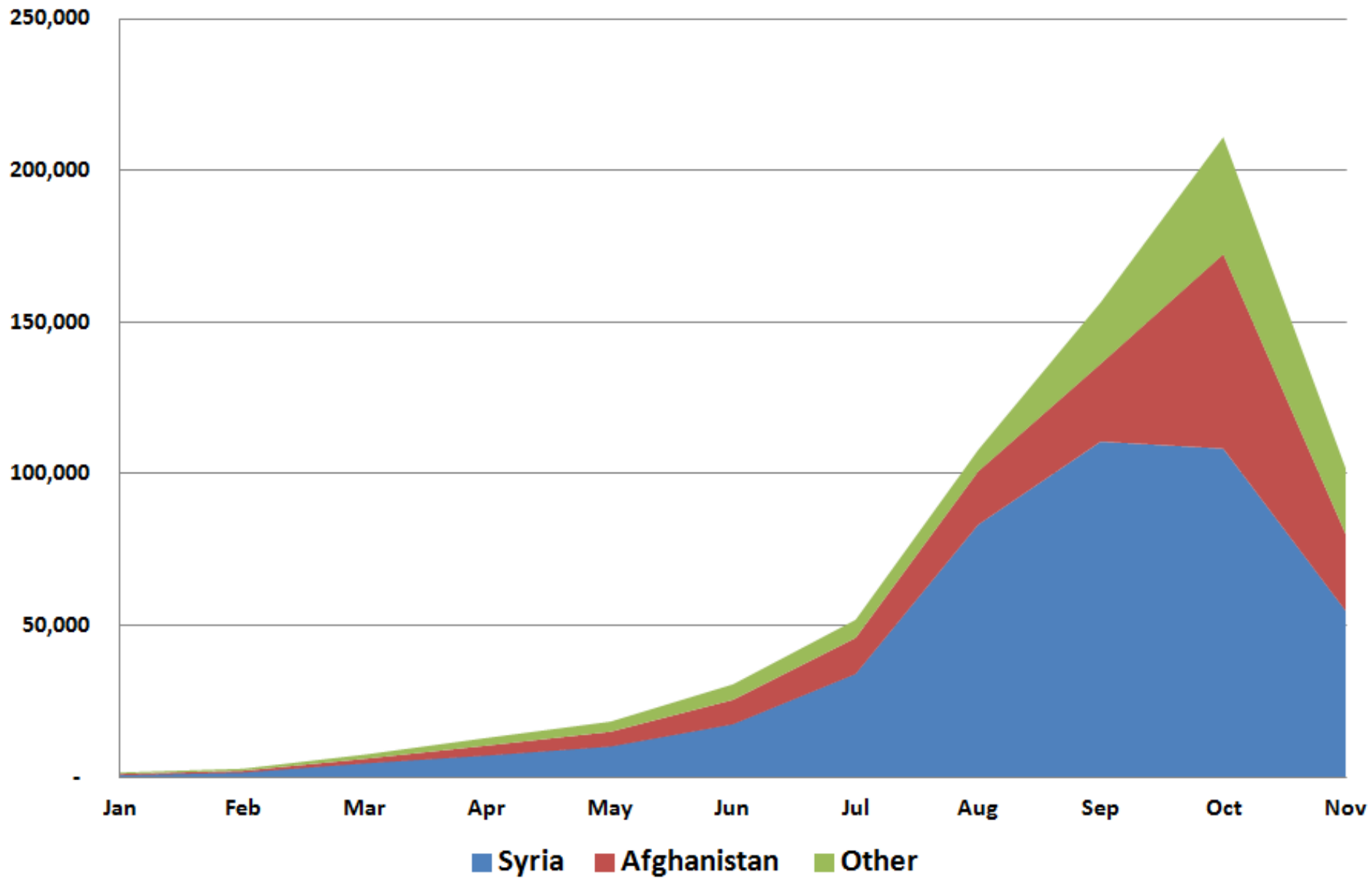
Demographics



*Series (AND KDQS5VDC: SRES/1244 (1999))

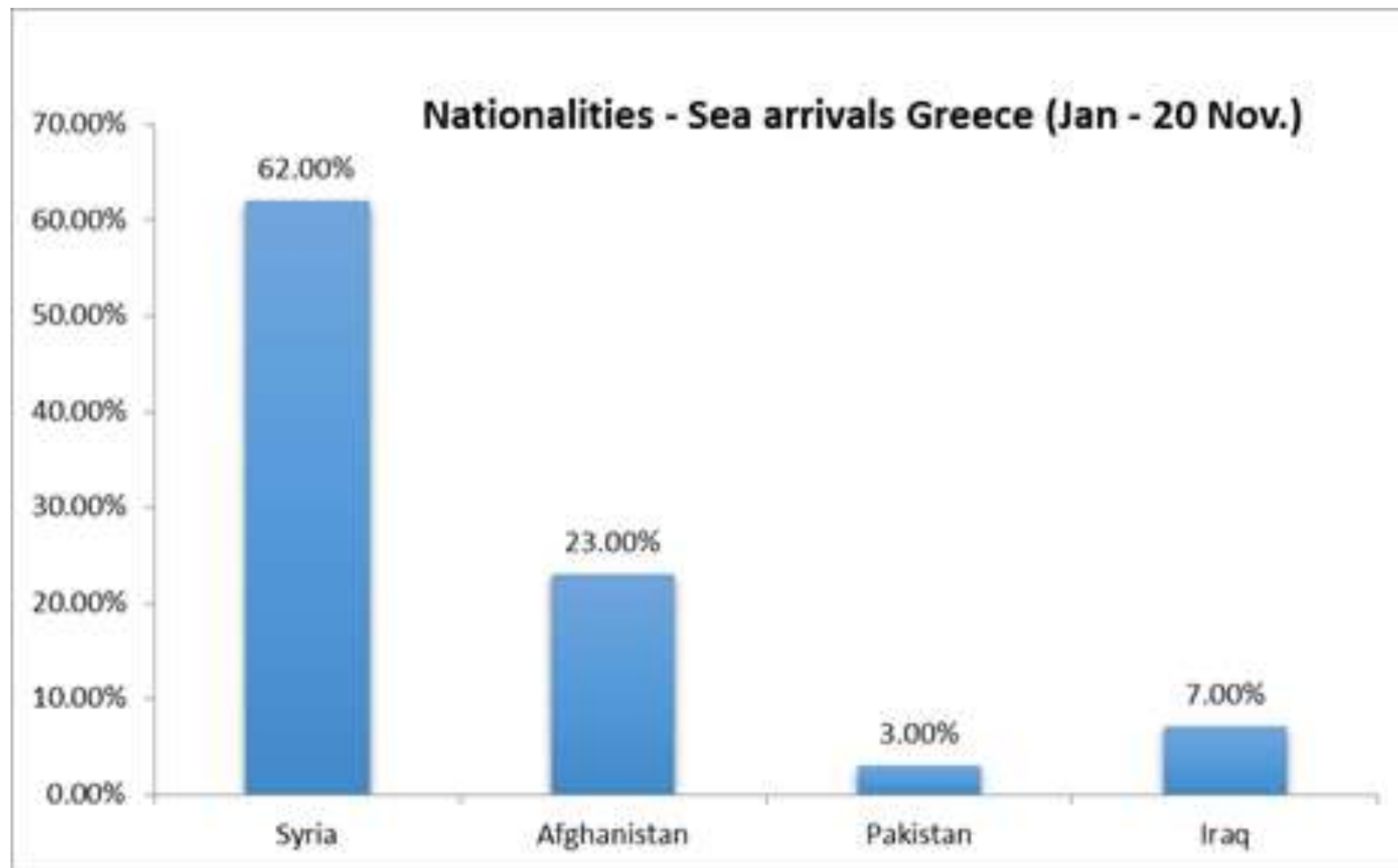
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

**Figure 1. Evolution of major nationalities to Greece in the period
January-November 2015**



Source: UNHCR data, 23 November 2015

Figure 2. The size of migrant population by nationality in Greece



Source: UNHCR data, November 2015

Greece

as at 4 Nov 2015



Legend

- Bus Route
- Main Locations
 - Field Unit
 - Reception Site
 - Registration Centre
 - Assistance Site

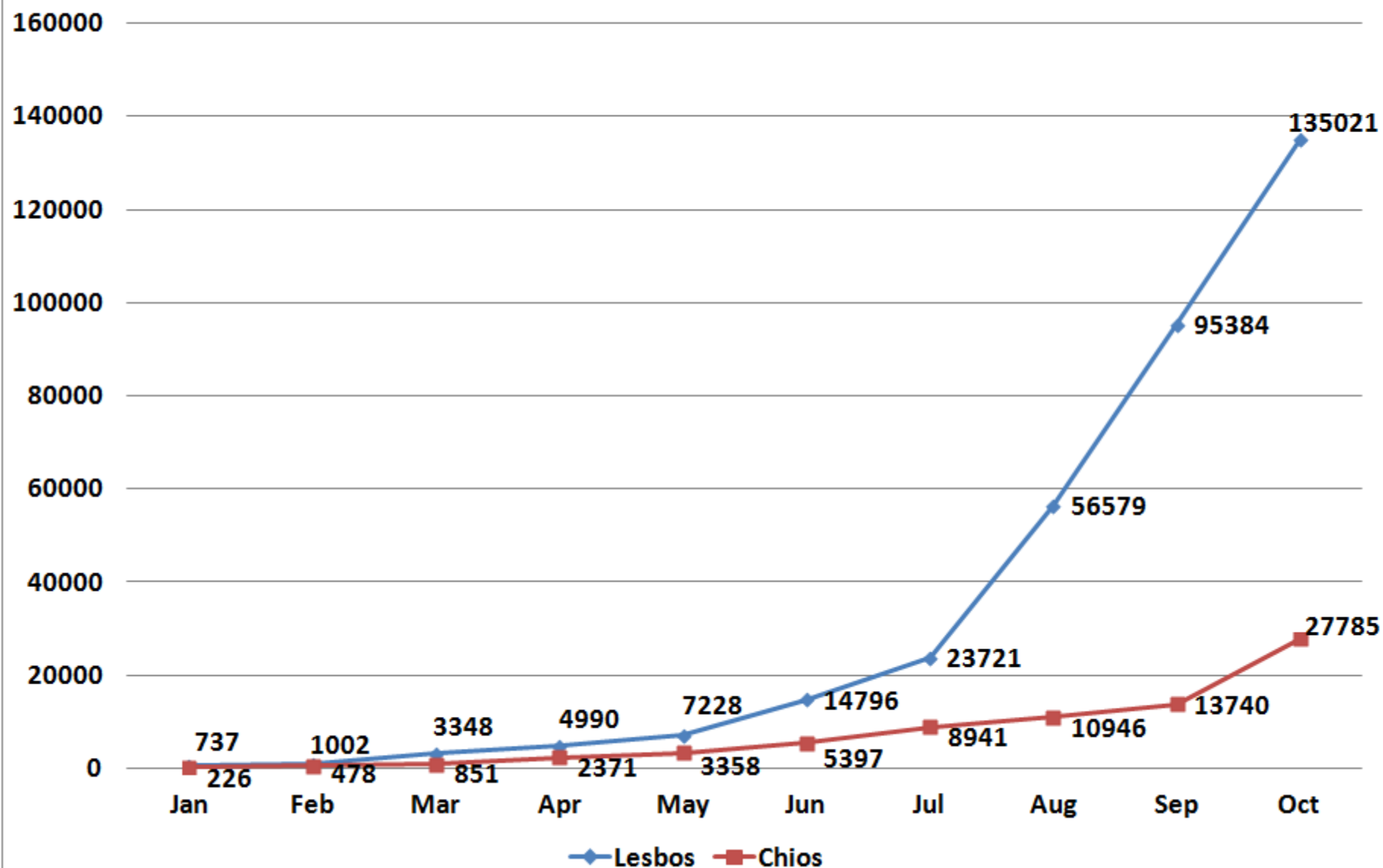


The boundaries and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

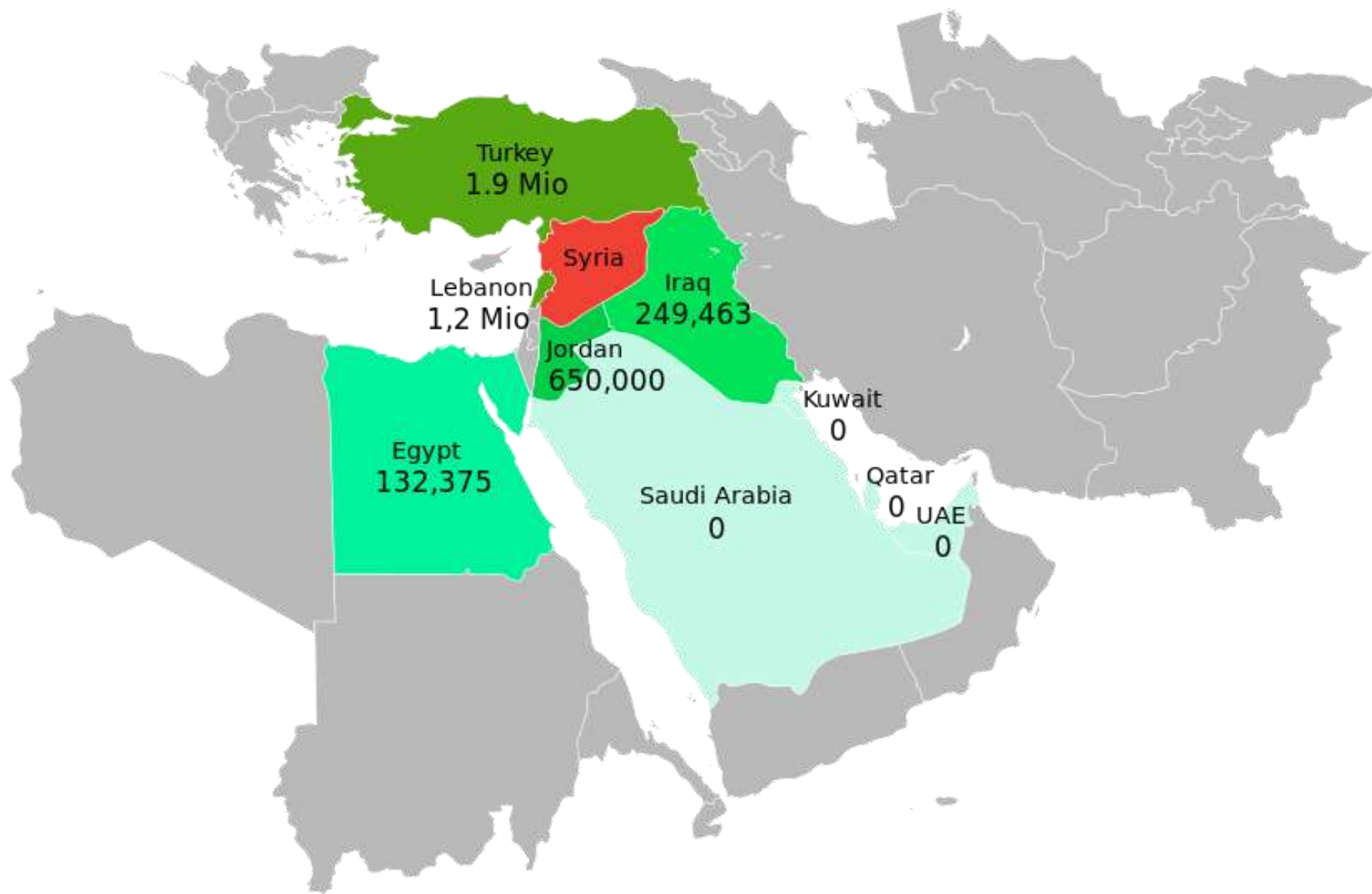


10 0 10 20 km

Figure 3. Evolution of migrant/ refugee flows to Lesbos and Chios in the period January-October 2015



Map 4. The dispersion of Syrian refugees in various countries (2014)

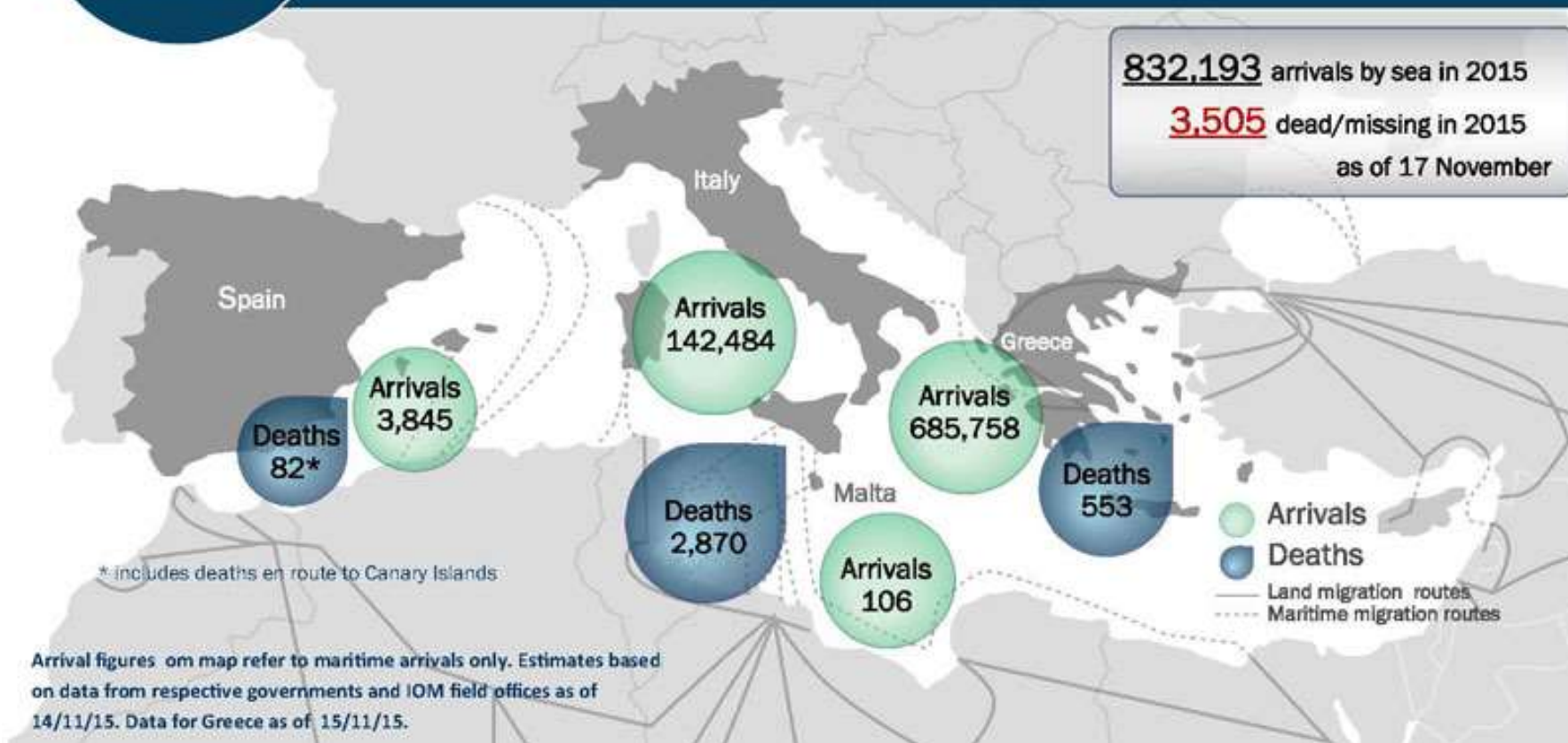


Map 5. The death toll of migration/ refugee flows towards Europe



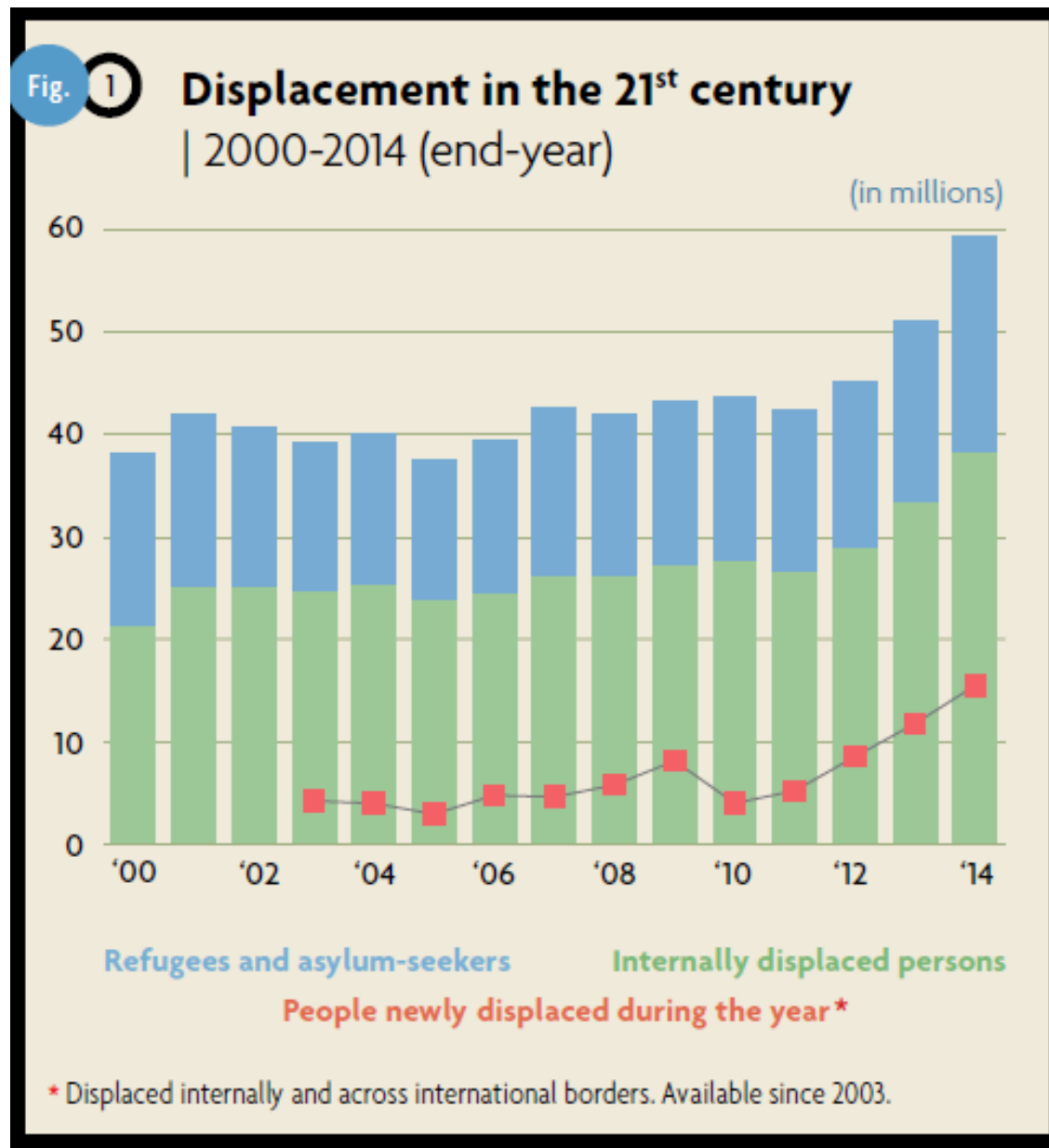
Mediterranean Update

Migration Flows Europe: Arrivals and Fatalities



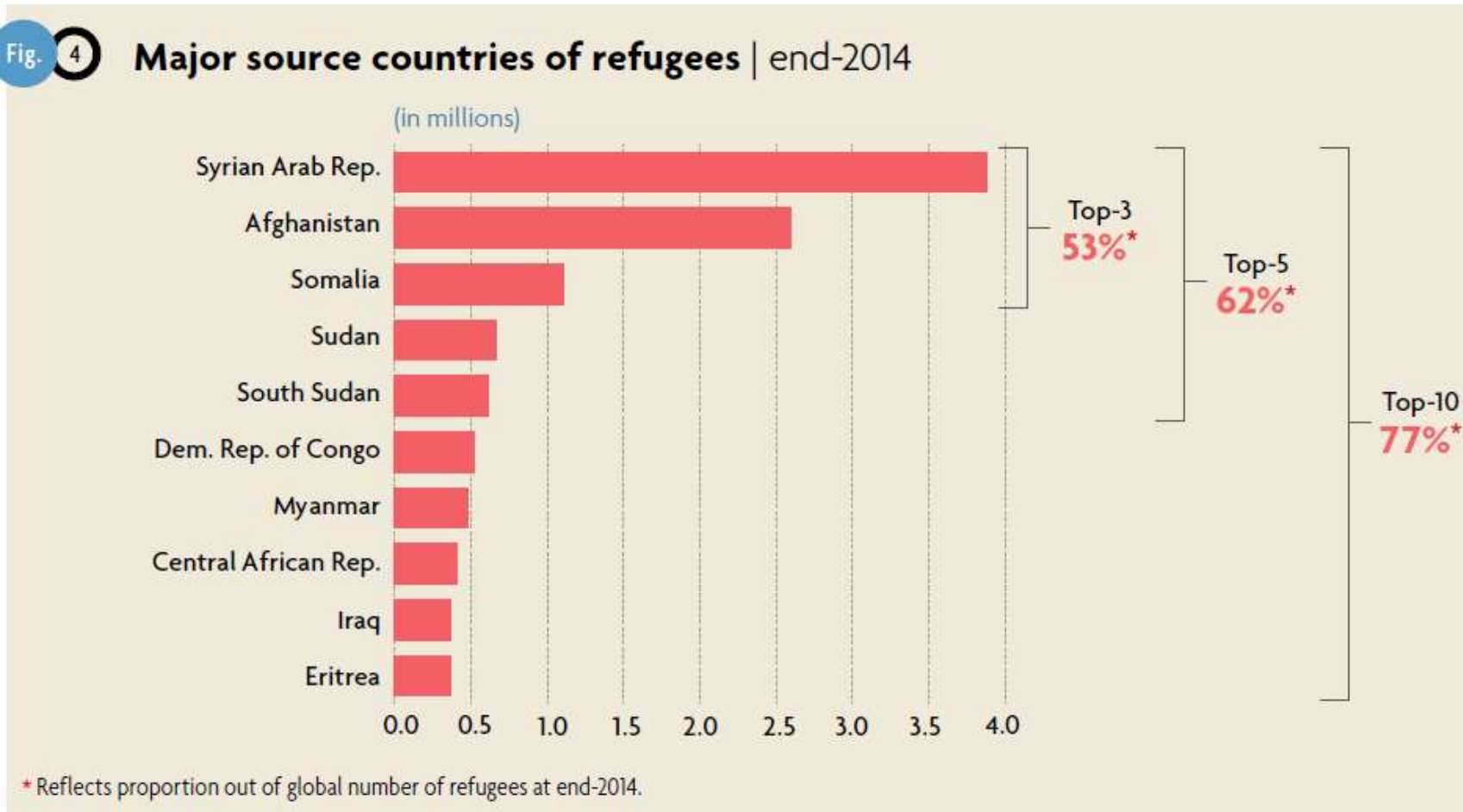
Source: <http://www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-migrants-latest-developments>

Figure 4. People displaced in the 21st century



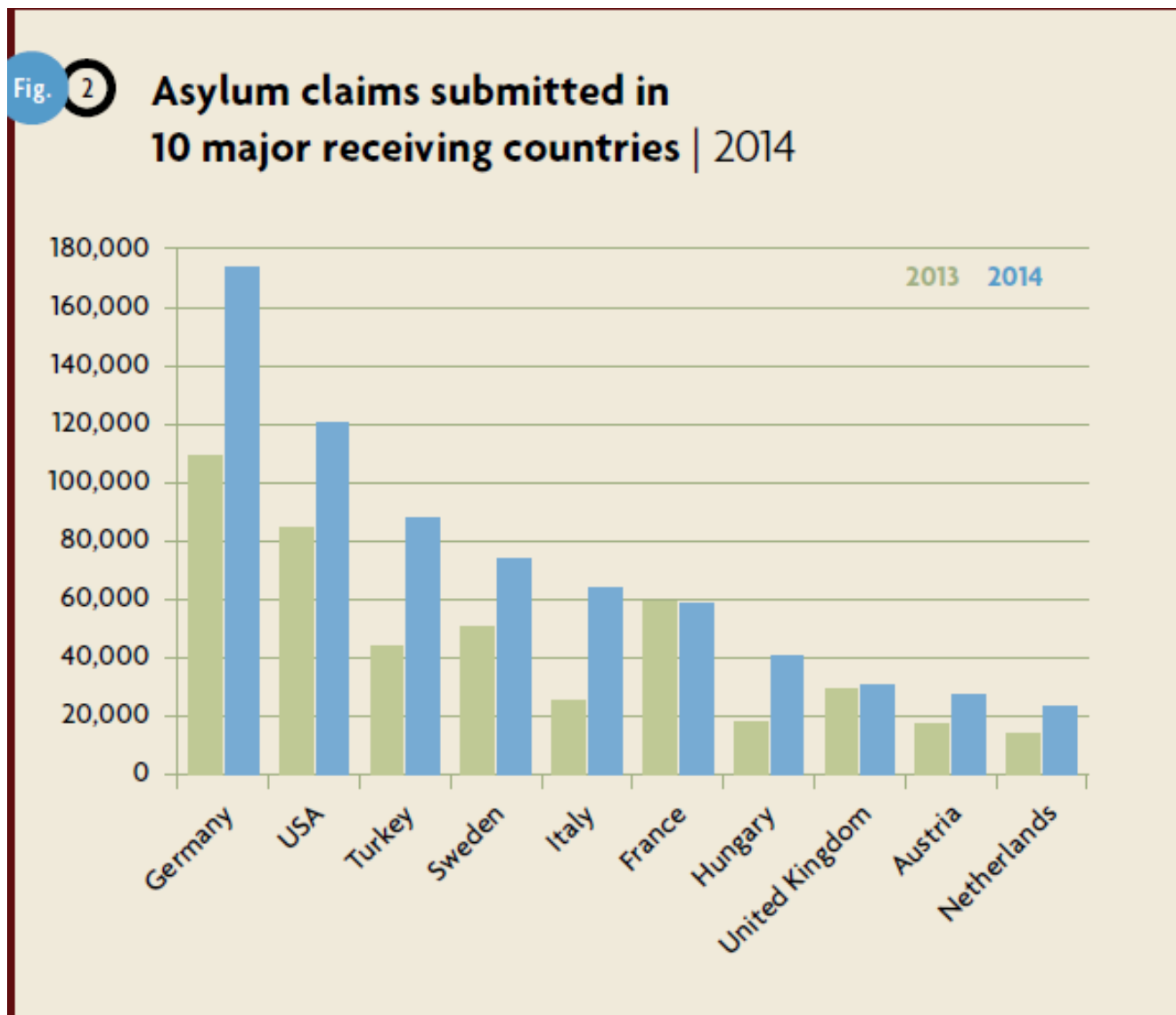
Source: UNHCR 2015a: 5

Figure 5. Major source countries of refugees in the year 2014



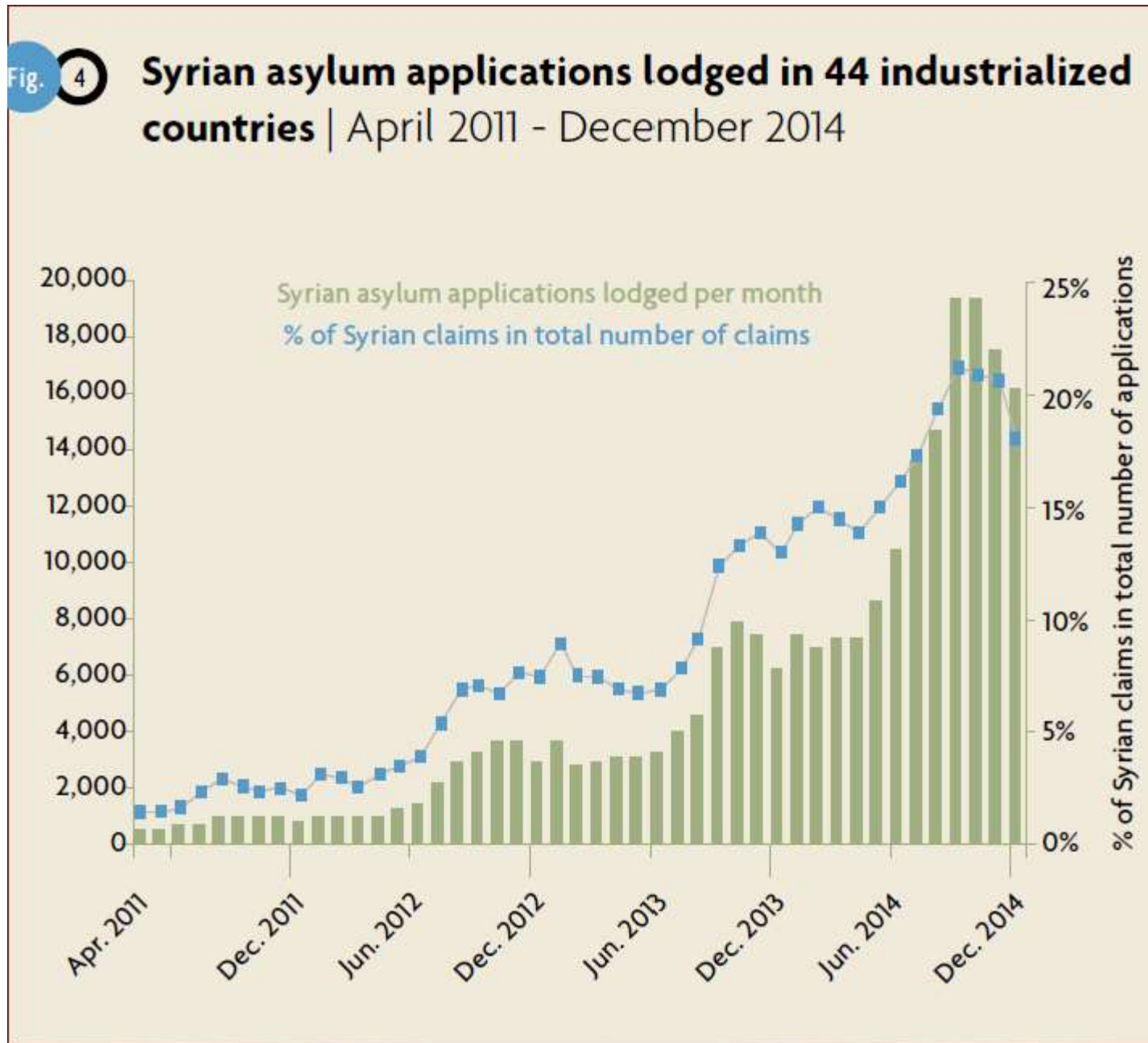
Source: UNHCR 2015a: 14

Figure 6. Ten major countries which receive the highest number of asylum applications, comparing 2013 and 2014



Source: UNHCR 2015b: 9

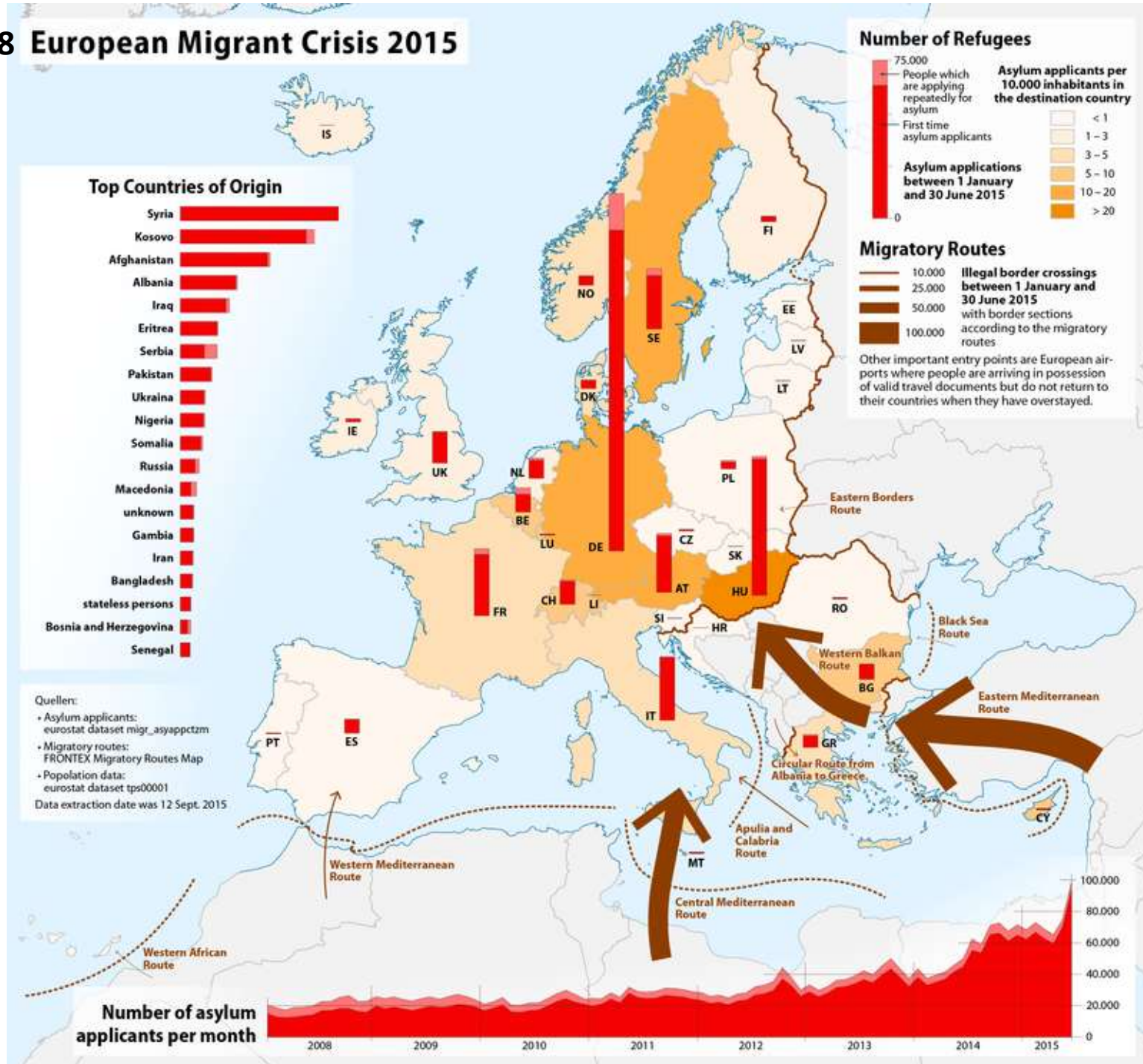
Figure 7. Asylum applications of Syrians in the period 2011-2014



Source: UNHCR 2015b: 15



Figure 8 European Migrant Crisis 2015



Source:
Eurostat
data

The EU response to the crisis

- The EU has responded (May 2015) to the migrant/ refugee crisis by an *European Agenda on Migration* (EC 2015) which actually reinstates many measures that have been already mentioned, but also launched new actions.
- The new EU agenda on migration is structured along four pillars:
- **Firstly, reducing the incentives for irregular migration.** By addressing the root causes of irregular and forced displacement in third countries. By fighting against the smugglers and traffickers. By implementing return policies.
- **Secondly, border management – saving lives and securing external borders.** By strengthening FRONTEX role and operations. By implementing ‘smart border’ technology and surveillance. By strengthening the capacity of member states to control their borders.

The EU response to the crisis

- **Thirdly, Europe's duty to protect: a strong common asylum policy.** By pursuing a coherent implementation of a common asylum policy (e.g. a new monitoring and evaluation system of Common European Asylum System, guidelines to fight abuse of the asylum system, hotspots, resettlement). By ensuring greater responsibility sharing among member states (evaluation of the Dublin system).
- **Fourthly, a new policy on legal migration.** By improving the management of regular migration and visa policy (e.g. modernizing the Blue Card scheme, modernization of visa policy, recruitment and placement in the labour market). By pursuing effective integration (e.g. reprioritizing integration policies). By maximizing the development benefits for countries of origin (e.g. facilitating remittances transfer).
- Migration policy agenda becomes a complex set of issues cross-cutting internal and external affairs as well as citizenship, mobility and border management provisions. A mega-policy is gradually built that touches upon every single aspect of life within the EU (asylum policy, border management and legal migration).

‘Mixed migration flows’

- There is an increasing recognition of the complexity of migration dynamics and of the challenges they pose for migration policy which has led to the growing purchase in policy circles of the notion of ‘mixed migration’. Managing such diverse migratory populations present obvious policy challenges (van Hear 2011).
- Mixed migration has been an analytical concept, which bridges the continuum between ‘forced’ and ‘voluntary’ migration.
- ‘Mixed migration’ has been seen as a policy concept adopted by multilateral organizations (as e.g. by UNHCR). Therefore, mixed migration should be addressed through a ‘balancing act’.
- There is a tension between sorting of migrants into (policy) categories and their mixed motivations for moving.

‘Mixed migration flows’

- The migrant/refugee flows are extremely complex and driven by a complicated mix of factors. Although the majority of those arriving have protection needs (nearly three-quarters will qualify for refugee status or other protection), many are departing for Europe not from their countries of origin—where they face violence and persecution—but from places of first asylum, such as Turkey and Jordan that have become overwhelmed by protection responsibilities (Banulesku-Bogdan and Fratzke 2015).
- Europe receives mixed flows composed of three basic groups:
 - Firstly, people whose protection claims are likely to be recognized by European authorities (Syrians and Eritreans);
 - Secondly, individuals fleeing from instability or violence in their home countries but may not qualify for refugee status; however, they are at risk for other reasons (Somalis and some Syrians);
 - Thirdly, migrants who feel compelled to leave their countries for largely economic reasons (Western Balkans and sub-Saharan nationals) (Banulesku-Bogdan and Fratzke 2015).

‘Mixed migration flows’

- The use of the term ‘mixed migration flows’ is tricky at least because policy makers because of their inability/ incapacity to manage migration / refugee flows, they center their concern on what they see as the potential danger of abuse to a system that is, in principle, based on human rights and international legislation on refugees. This rhetoric compartmentalizes different kinds of mobility and selects some of them (e.g. refugees) as more legitimate than others (Isotalo 2010: 120).
- A more global perspective on migration can provide the analytical lens that would allow scholars of migration to think beyond the re-imposition of nationalist interests. Migration studies are at a crucial juncture: we can follow the former patterns and let our research be shaped by public opinion moods and the political moment, or developing a new scholarship that can build on understanding of global processes and highlight them, so that it is documented how migrants live their lives as constitutive actors in multiple social settings (Glick Schiller 2010: 51).

The 'domino effect' (I)

- There is a significant 'domino effect' when the migrant/ refugee flows advanced from the Southern and Southeast edge of Europe towards Central and Northern Europe.
- Within only some months most of the EU member states announced their inability to manage the flows and/or their difficulty to handle the migrant/ refugees.
- Many EU member states already constructed fences (e.g. Bulgaria, Hungary) or decided to raise fences in the near future (e.g. Croatia). Even some Balkan countries joined the European countries in this venture (i.e. Serbia and FYROMacedonia).

The 'domino effect' (II)

- Many EU member states reinstated border controls within the Schengen zone (e.g. Germany, Sweden, France, United Kingdom).
- Very soon it became clear that many countries didn't want to share the cost of receiving migrants/ refugees and many do not accept the EU plan for the resettlement of refugees [only a small number of refugees – just 300 people - have been relocated from Greece and Italy to other member states]
- There is a lack of trust among the EU member states despite that now it is more obvious than ever that the migrant / refugee issues deserve a common EU approach.

The 'domino effect' (III)

- Despite that the member states sense that they are surpassed by the pressure/reality of flows they do not accept the implementation of a common approach. Just four days ago the EU Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos stated that:
- *“To alleviate the situation of the frontline Member States, we adopted in record time the first European relocation and resettlement schemes. But decisions are not enough. We all agree that these schemes have not delivered the expected results. All Member States have to play the game and show more solidarity.” (Speaking points from the meeting with the LIBE Committee, 14/1/2016, p. 2).*

Migration as a political issue – for what cause?

- The politicization of migration has made migration more than ever before a key issue in national and international politics.
- The politicization of migration (or migrant transnationality) means that new security conceptualizations put the individual as the reference point of security and they are increasingly operationalized on behalf of state security and at the expense of migrant and refugee security (Isotalo 2010: 134).
- Moreover, the politicization of migration is illustrated in the rising anti-migrant sentiments expressed by means of political movements across Europe (e.g. the Golden Dawn in Greece, the Pegida movement in Germany, the UKIP party in the UK, the National Front in France).
- It is not to be neglected that there are extreme right –wing governments or ruling coalitions in EU countries that have an anti-immigrant stance (e.g. the Victor Urban in Hungary, the Polish government, the Slovenian government).

Concluding remarks

- Migration / refugee flows are not even close to cease or decelerate in the near future; while the management of the flows is a very difficult and costly business. Past and recent scientific evidence loom large towards this direction!
- There are increasing concerns over the new European architecture of surveillance at the EU border, but also of migrant/ refugees flows within EU member states. The new EU policies aim at transferring the control outside the single member states.
- However, the securitization of migration and the externalization of migration policy are some instruments towards the transfer of control to EU mechanisms under the suspicious gaze of EU sovereign nation states that don't want to hand over control over their borders (Fotiadis 2015).

Concluding remarks

- Because of the current economic crisis which is linked to the further decline of the welfare state and of the so-called democratic deficit (or the crisis of democracy) within EU institutions (Habermas 2011), migrants and refugees are conveniently presented as potential or actual abusers of the welfare system and competitors in the EU labour market.
- Anti-immigrant discourse remains a nation-state building process by engaging its participants in defining their loyalty to a country and by differentiating themselves from migrants and refugees (Glick Schiller 2010).
- Migration scholars should work for changing the dominant discourse by examining both migrants and refugees not as indicators of a lack of security, but rather as subjects of security - and also as subjects of human rights (Isotalo 2010; Nash 2015).

Concluding remarks

- There is a “politics of protection”, which signals the attempt to make visible the politics at play in the existing refugee protection regime. While the latter is presented as strictly humanitarian and apolitical, it is clear that the provision of protection as well as human rights cannot be thought outside of the political sphere (De Genova *et al.* 2014; Nash 2015).
- The refugee protection regime is a partitioning (segmentary) instrument, reproducing a binary logic that is based on a distinction between forced (political) and voluntary (economic) migrants. Yet, researchers have convincingly revealed that this clear-cut distinction is empirically untenable, as the motivations for movement are always mixed and above any simplistic dichotomies, reproduced by international organizations and governments (Isotalo 2010; De Genova *et al.* 2014).

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