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Why people move: understanding the drivers and trends of migration to Europe

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Abstract

An effective and durable policy response to the current 'migration crisis' in Europe requires a better understanding of the causes of migration more broadly. Much has been said about these causes, and possible solutions to the 'crisis', often leading to conflicting messages and theories. To shine a light on these, this Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) assesses the quality of the evidence available and identifies a number of clear conclusions.

Despite inconsistencies in the statistical data on irregular migration, it is clear that there has been a significant rise in the number of people attempting to enter Europe via irregular means in recent years, driven by a combination of conflict, political instability and economic insecurity. The evidence is clear that the reasons why asylum-seekers and economic migrants choose to make the dangerous journey to Europe are often similar and a person may fit both of these categories at the same time. At the centre of this is the need for secure livelihood opportunities. Measures to allow entry to asylum-seekers, while restricting the entry of economic migrants, overlook the reasons why a person migrates, and are likely to result in increased irregular migration as migrants seek alternative – and often more dangerous – entry channels. The data shows clear patterns in the routes and nationalities of people entering Europe by irregular means. However, an individual's trajectory is difficult to predict, and a person's motivations and intentions may change frequently throughout their often long and convoluted journey to Europe. The increasing professionalisation of smuggling services and the greater availability of information via online and social media also appear to facilitate migration. As a culture of migration from a particular country grows, local and international networks strengthen, encouraging further migration and providing vital sources of information and resources for the journey. This is seen in many countries, such as Senegal, Morocco, and within ethnic communities. Policies which do not recognise the complex and changing nature of irregular migration are therefore unlikely to effectively address the difficulties which both migrants and governments are experiencing in the current crisis.

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The views expressed are the authors' own and responsibility for this work lies with them.

Acronyms

DFID	Department for International Development
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
REA	Rapid Evidence Assessment
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Executive summary

An effective and durable policy response to the current 'migration crisis' in Europe requires a better understanding of the causes of migration more broadly. Much has been said about these causes, and possible solutions to the 'crisis', often leading to conflicting messages and theories. To shine a light on these, this Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) assesses the quality of the evidence available and identifies a number of clear conclusions.

Despite inconsistencies in the statistical data on irregular migration, it is clear that there has been a significant rise in the number of people attempting to enter Europe via irregular means in recent years, driven by a combination of conflict, political instability and economic insecurity. The evidence is clear that the reasons why asylum-seekers and economic migrants choose to make the dangerous journey to Europe are often similar and a person may fit both of these categories at the same time. At the centre of this is the need for secure livelihood opportunities (e.g. Adikhari, 2013; de Haas, 2011b; Loschmann and Siegel, 2014; Zimmerman, 2011). Measures to allow entry to asylum-seekers, while restricting the entry of economic migrants, overlook the reasons why a person migrates, and are likely to result in increased irregular migration as migrants seek alternative – and often more dangerous – entry channels. The data shows clear patterns in the routes and nationalities of people entering Europe by irregular means. However, an individual's trajectory is difficult to predict, and a person's motivations and intentions may change frequently throughout their often long and convoluted journey to Europe. The increasing professionalisation of smuggling services and the greater availability of information via online and social media also appear to facilitate migration. As a culture of migration from a particular country grows, local and international networks strengthen, encouraging further migration and providing vital sources of information and resources for the journey. This is seen in many countries, such as Senegal, Morocco, and within ethnic communities (Heering et al., 2007; Mbaye, 2014; Schapendonk and van Moppes, 2007). Policies which do not recognise the complex and changing nature of irregular migration are therefore unlikely to effectively address the difficulties which both migrants and governments are experiencing in the current crisis.

Methodological approach

This Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) was commissioned by DFID to examine the state and strength of knowledge on the drivers of irregular migration to Europe in the current Mediterranean crisis. Specifically, it looks at what we know about patterns of migrant flows from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa; the factors influencing migrants' decision to make the journey via irregular means; and the role of social networks in that decision.

The REA was conducted as a semi-systematic literature review, drawing on primary and secondary research studies. The evidence retrieval prioritised studies from 2010 onwards which focused on migration from Syria, Afghanistan and Eritrea (Syrians are the single largest nationality of migrants, followed by Eritreans and Afghans), or on the three main migration routes across the Mediterranean: the Central Mediterranean, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Western Balkans. The studies were categorised according to their quality and relevance and the highest scoring evidence was prioritised in the analysis phase. In total, 137 documents were collected.

Understanding changing migration flows

The review found clear evidence of a substantial increase in the number of people attempting to enter Europe via the three main migration routes. From January to June 2015, 137,000 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe, an increase of 83% over the same period in 2014. Data sets from UNHCR and Frontex differ significantly because of the different methods they use, but it is still clear that the number of people using irregular means of entry into Europe is rising, and that the routes they are using have and continue to change. Countries that were once primarily sources of migrants, such as Turkey, or 'destination countries', such as Libya, are increasingly becoming transit points on a much larger journey.

Studies on irregular migration to Europe demonstrate that migration flows must be understood as trajectories which may cover many years as migrants settle in a country but later move on to another, or return to their home country as conditions change. This makes accurately monitoring migration very difficult using categories such as 'transit migration' or 'asylum-seeker', and statistical data can only provide an indication of the nature of migration flows. Predicting future migration is also very challenging, and requires a detailed understanding of the factors driving migration flows, including conflict, social unrest and economic instability, which are themselves difficult to predict. Possible scenarios suggest a steady increase in migration, with a likely increase in circular migration. Critically, it is not only conflict and political unrest which drive migration: as a country's economy grows, emigration is likely to increase as more people have the necessary financial resources and information to make the journey.

Motivations to migrate by irregular means

The frequently cited factors shaping people's decisions to migrate are personal and political security, and secure livelihood opportunities. However, a person's motives may change in nature and in importance over the course of their journey, suggesting that categorising individuals as 'economic migrants' or 'asylum-seekers' does not reflect the complex and fluid reality of people's migration experience. The fact that refugees can be motivated by the need for a secure livelihood in their decision to migrate to Europe in no way discredits their claim to refugee status as a protected category of persons under international and domestic law. Rather, this review finds that tightening migration policies and discriminating against other migrants on the basis of what are deemed to be 'more genuine' motives, seems both ineffective and unfair given the complexity of people's choices to migrate at different stages of their journeys. Any policy or programme intended to influence current flows of irregular migration should ideally be based on a thorough understanding of these different motivating factors, the relationship between regular and irregular migration, and the role that social networks and information sources play in determining who is migrating, where and how.

The factors influencing an individual's decision to migrate via irregular means operate at a number of levels: international and national policies, economic conditions and political situations are all important in determining why a person of a particular nationality may migrate. Other factors are related to a person's own circumstances – notably whether they have the funds for the journey, as well as the intention to undertake it – and their local and wider social network, all of which can either encourage or prevent them from migrating.

Studies on the influence of different countries welfare and asylum support systems suggests that they are not important to a person's initial decision to migrate. However, the policies and rules of different destination countries may influence later decisions on whether to continue to another country where opportunities and conditions may be better (Kuschminder et al., 2015; Triandafyllidou, 2009). There is strong evidence that while tightening border security may change migration routes, and often results in more people making more dangerous journeys, migration policies are unlikely to influence the actual number of people migrating (Czaika and Hobolth, 2014; de Haas, 2011c; Duvell, 2009).

Migration as a collective effort; the role of social networks

Although this review found little evidence on the role of social networks specific to the current European crisis, the literature generally suggests that social networks and information flows are vital components of migration systems and migrant decision-making. Studies of migration from numerous countries, such as Afghanistan, Morocco, Senegal, and Egypt, show that irregular migration is usually a collective effort in which families and social and religious networks play a crucial role. This includes the role of family members in host countries, who may encourage prospective migrants through remittances and information. During the journey, an individual's access to smuggling networks and their experiences in the different countries they cross are also important factors shaping where and how they decide to migrate.

Members of communities with a history of migration may be more inclined to migrate than people who are less accustomed to such a 'culture of migration'. Beyond the culture of their immediate community, migrants are influenced by broader social networks and are exposed to information through mass media, word of mouth and – increasingly – social media. Internet-based technology and social media are putting different groups of migrants and non-migrant populations in direct contact, and migrants often provide each other with reciprocal support for day-to-day subsistence, sharing food and accommodation, as well as information on travel routes and destinations. These local networks are often informal and concealed.

Evidence gaps

This review also found several significant gaps in the evidence base which would merit further investigation. The evidence on detailed migration routes, especially across North Africa and from Eritrea and Somalia, is limited, and little appears to be known about the factors influencing how long someone spends in different countries during their journey to Europe, or why they move on to other countries after a period spent in a European country.

Gaps in evidence on the role of networks and information flows in the current crisis also merit further inquiry. This includes the role of networks in informing initial decisions to migrate; the role of networks during the journey and in transit locations; the way that technology, communication tools and online media are shaping these networks and affecting decisions; and how individual characteristics, especially gender, relate to these networks.

Another major gap identified in this review concerns smuggling networks, including their influence on the destination of migrants and the overall feasibility of irregular migration. As a result, attempts to tackle smuggling often rely on inadequate information and analysis.

Conclusion

Despite the difficulties in gathering up-to-date rigorous information on the current crisis, there is already significant evidence available to governments on the drivers of this situation. Policymakers should be able to draw on this evidence base to develop more effective interventions which recognise the real reasons motivating migration to Europe, and which facilitate safer channels for migration. The evidence described in this review could therefore inform policies and programmes which are more effective in supporting migrants, and enabling host countries to benefit from this human mobility.

Introduction

In the last two years, and especially during the most recent months of 2015, the European media has been saturated with images and commentary relating to the so-called 'migration crisis' that Europe is currently facing. Large-scale global migration is not an unprecedented phenomenon, nor are mass movements of refugees within Europe. However, within the past two years, and particularly since the beginning of 2015, there has been a marked rise in both the number of people crossing European borders via irregular, and often risky, means, and the number of individuals claiming asylum in European states. Accurate statistics on irregular migration are notoriously difficult to obtain. However, data on border apprehensions[1] shows almost a four-fold increase in the number of people found crossing into Europe irregularly between 2012 and 2014 (Frontex, 2015a, p. 12 PS-6),[2] and the number of migrants recorded crossing the Mediterranean to reach Europe increased from 22,500 in 2012 to 219,000 in 2014 (UNHCR, 2015a, p. 5 SO-2). In order to better understand and respond to this dramatic increase in irregular migration, and the associated risks for the people involved, it is necessary to consider the causes of this movement, the dynamics of these migrations and the extent to which future migration flows and patterns can be predicted.

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) commissioned this Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) to address the following question:

> *What are the drivers of irregular migration to Europe in the current Mediterranean crisis?*

This question is answered through three sub-questions, formulated by DFID, which together examine the current state of knowledge on the drivers of migration in the context of the on-going 'crisis':

1. What do we know about the predictability/patterns of migrant flows from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in this current crisis? Can we use that information to effectively predict future migrant flows?
2. What factors influence decisions to leave Sub-Saharan Africa and MENA and migrate to Europe via irregular means in this current crisis (with a focus on key source countries: Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia)?
3. What is the evidence on the role that social networks (peer, family, others) play in decisions to migrate?

This REA was conducted as a semi-systematic literature review, drawing on primary and secondary research studies guided by experts in this field. The evidence retrieval prioritised studies from 2010 onwards which focused on migration from Syria, Afghanistan, and Eritrea, or on the three main migration routes across the Mediterranean: the Central Mediterranean route, the Eastern Mediterranean route, and the Western Balkans route. The studies were categorised according to their quality and relevance and the highest scoring evidence was prioritised in the analysis phase.

The research question specifically addresses 'irregular migration', not 'irregular migrants', and so concerns the patterns and factors driving irregular means of migration. This therefore includes those who are travelling with the purpose of applying for asylum and who are thus not 'irregular', as well as those seeking to migrate without the ability to obtain a visa or refugee status. The focus on *irregular* migration is in order to understand, not why people migrate, but why people migrate using irregular means.[3] The very simple answer is because there is an absence of legal alternatives. In any investigation of irregular migration this must be made explicit from the outset; the 'choice' to migrate by irregular means is made in the absence of legal migration routes, and that part of a journey could be regular while another part is irregular. Irregularity and irregular or 'illegal' border crossings are brought into being by a set of policy decisions and methods of border control that create categories of 'legal' and 'illegal' migrants, and so, as a person passes through

1 In a recent web article, Nando Sigona highlights the need to consider even these statistics as potentially unreliable. Frontex recently published statistics of total migrant arrivals which double-counted individuals at different border points (see Sigona, 2015).

2 The code 'PS-6' refers to the category of the study referenced and its quality rating. The system for assessing the quality of studies and coding them accordingly is explained in section 2.1.

3 It is also important to note that, in many countries, the majority of irregular migrants in fact travel using legal means (Triandafyllidou, 2009, p. 15-6 SO-4).

different countries, the migration category they fall into may change (Düvell, 2009 p. 3 SO-4). As such, we must recognise the role that state policies and practices of border control have on the nature of irregular migration, and the often long and risky journeys that people take in order to migrate to Europe.

The 'migration crisis' as referred to in the research question is not only a matter of high numbers of entrants. Rather, it is the significant numbers of migrant[4] deaths at Europe's borders, scenes of boat arrivals, of camps housing migrants in cities in Europe and the European neighbourhood, and of large groups of people being confronted by border guards which evoke a sense of crisis. The language of 'crisis' may influence government policy responses, and so it is important that a clear understanding of the evidence base on the drivers of migration flows is available to policy-makers. For this reason, this REA sets out to better understand the drivers, dynamics, and decision-making processes that underlie irregular migration to Europe.

The review begins with a discussion of the main terms used in this evidence review. The review then describes the methodological approach taken in this study and the nature of the existing evidence base. The findings from the evidence are reviewed with reference to the three sub-questions, and the report concludes with a discussion of the key findings, the strength of the evidence on which they are based, and suggestions for particular areas where further research would be beneficial.

Terminological clarifications

Migrants and/or refugees?

'Migrant' is used throughout the paper as an all-encompassing term that includes the large numbers of individuals who are refugees or who will be eligible for other forms of legal protection under EU and international law. This is in keeping with the UN definition of international migration, and conforms with Jorgen Carling's assertion that 'migrant' is a valuable umbrella term that does not attempt to paint a black and white picture in what is a very complex situation (Carling, 2015 C-2). This is not to discredit the protection claims of many of those who are currently travelling to Europe, but to recognise the fact that, whilst not all migrants are refugees, all refugees are also migrants, and that rejecting the term migrant or creating a refugee/migrant binary is both theoretically and practically problematic in the context of the current crisis. The term refugee is used, however, when referencing authors who have used this label.

Transit migration

The term 'transit migration', and 'transit locations' are used here in line with their usage in many studies retrieved during this literature search. However, more recently the term 'transit migration' has come under scrutiny, and its contested nature should be kept in mind when reading this report. Commentators have highlighted the politicised nature of the labelling of certain countries as 'transit' countries, arguing that it relates to a broader securitisation discourse on migration (Icduygu and Yukseker, 2012 SO-3). Others have also questioned the legitimacy of the term, arguing that it artificially presents a linear narrative of origin-transit-destination, masking the much more complex reality of contemporary migration (Collyer and de Haas, 2012 C-4). It has also been argued that the terms reinforce the highly misleading image that all Sub-Saharan migrants present in North Africa are on their way to Europe, whereas in reality both temporary and long-term settlement are common, and certain transit countries are also destinations in their own right (Collyer and de Haas, 2012 C-4; see also Schapendonk, 2012 PS-7). However, despite these limitations, it is clear that the broad concept of 'transit' and the studies it has engendered remain useful in discussions of migration to destinations in Europe in helping us to look beyond the traditional origin-destination dichotomy and consider the dynamism of irregular migration, in which migration aspirations, intentions and decisions change over time and space throughout the migration journey.

Irregular migration

According to the Migration Observatory (Vollmer, 2011, p. 2 C-2), 'irregular migration' usually refers to 'the cross-border flow of people who enter a country without that country's legal permission to do so. In contrast, the term 'irregular migrants' typically refers to the stock of migrants in a country who are not entitled to reside there, either because they have never had a legal residence permit or because they have overstayed their time-limited permit […] In addition to – and partly because of – the complexities of definitions, data on irregular migration and migrants are very limited. Irregular migration is by definition not recorded and eludes statistical coverage. Therefore, precise measurement is unfeasible'. This evidence review concerns the patterns and factors driving irregular means of migration, rather than 'irregular migrants', in order to include those who are travelling with the purpose of applying for asylum and who are thus not 'irregular', as well as those seeking to migrate without the ability to obtain a visa or refugee status. Given that the focus of the research is on migration flows and the current crisis, it is

4 UNHCR (2015) Dead and Missing in the Mediterranean Sea 2010-2014 https://infogr.am/sea_arrivals_to_southern_europe [25/09/2015]

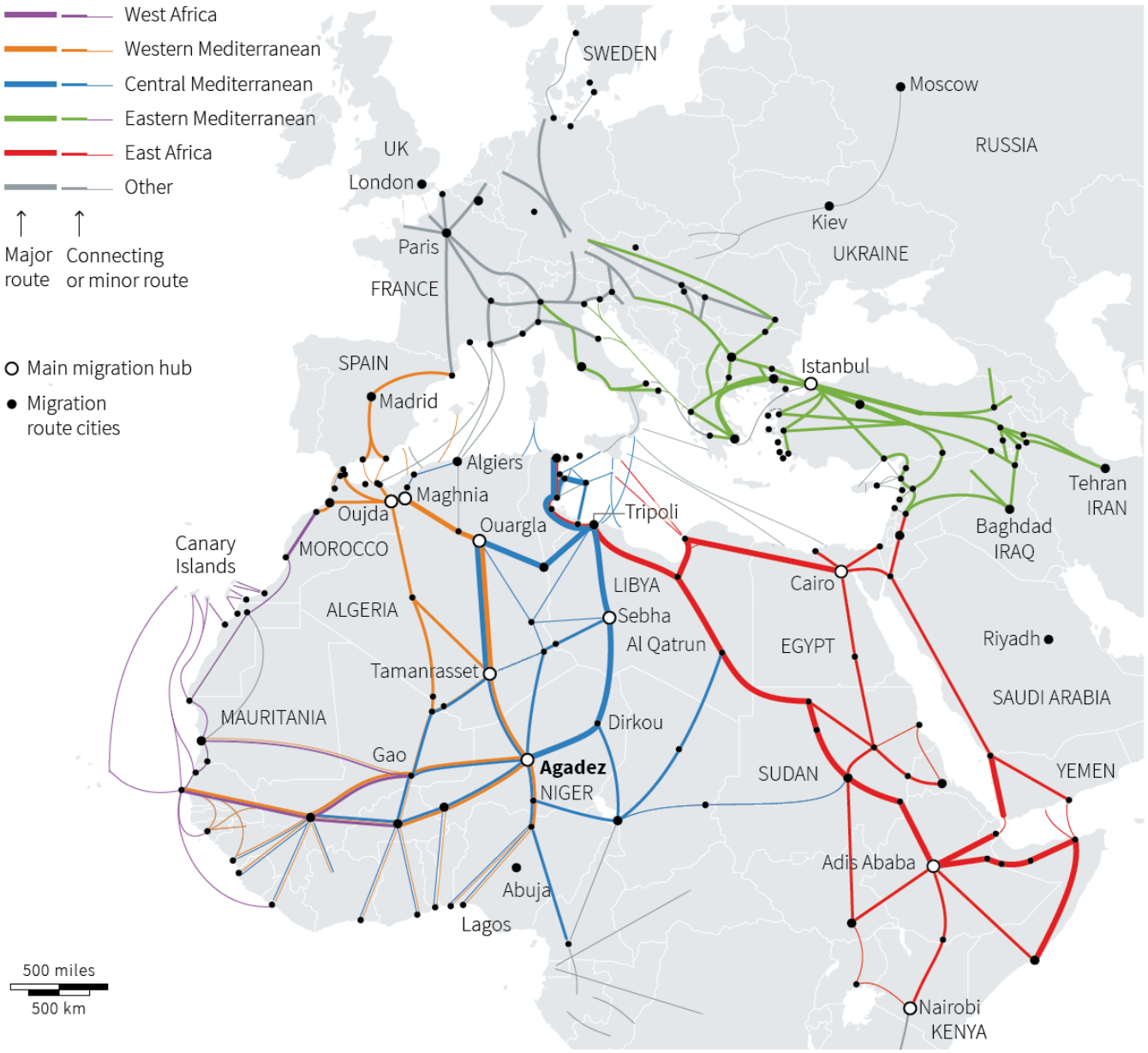
less important to differentiate between those who will have the right to refugee status and those who will be rejected, but rather understand the reasons why people may stay in 'source' or 'transit' countries, and which factors are most significant in motivating migration by irregular means to an EU country.

Pathways

Three major routes of irregular migration in the current crisis, as defined by Frontex, are examined by this evidence review (Figure 1). These are:

- Central Mediterranean: 'This route refers to the migratory flow coming from Northern Africa towards Italy and Malta through the Mediterranean Sea.'
- Eastern Mediterranean: 'The Eastern Mediterranean route is defined for Frontex purposes as the passage used by migrants crossing through Turkey to the European Union via Greece, southern Bulgaria or Cyprus.'
- Western Balkans: 'The Western Balkan route describes two main migratory flows: from the Western Balkan countries themselves, and the secondary movements of mainly Asian migrants who originally entered the European Union through the Bulgarian-Turkish or Greek-Turkish land or sea borders and then proceed, through the Western Balkans, into Hungary.' (Frontex, 2015b SO-2)

Figure 1: Main irregular migration routes to Europe



Source: International Centre for Migration / Reuters

Countries of focus

Based on the pathways identified, the focus countries for the REA are Syria and Eritrea, since an initial review of statistical data on migration flows suggests that particularly high numbers of migrants from these countries are using irregular migration sea routes to Europe. Other countries considered in the search strings are Afghanistan, Somalia, and Ethiopia. These countries have been chosen because their nationals also feature significantly in data on irregular migration routes to Europe, and because of the on-going conflict and insecurity in Afghanistan and Somalia, which is assumed to be an important factor driving irregular migration. Iraq, Libya, and Turkey[5] also feature prominently in data on irregular migration, but due to time constraints were not searched for specifically.

Timeframe for 'the crisis'

There are estimates to suggest that the period 2014/2015 (especially 2015) has been unprecedented in terms of both the increase in overall numbers of asylum-seekers arriving in Europe (at least since the early 1990s) and migrant deaths en route to destination countries in the EU (UNHCR, 2015b J-2). The available statistics on the numbers of people attempting to enter Europe via irregular means are not conclusive but do indicate general trends in irregular migration in this region. Therefore, for this REA, the migration crisis is studied using evidence from 2010 onwards in order to capture the impact of the Arab Spring and the breakdown of Libya and the beginning of the civil war in Syria as probable drivers of irregular migration flows. Older source materials are included where they are particularly relevant to understanding the current crisis and useful for comparing current migration flows to those of earlier periods.

5 Turkey is of particular interest due to the high number of migrants arriving there from Syria, Afghanistan and other conflict-affected states, and due to interest in understanding the extent to which Turkey may be a destination or a transit country for migrants.

Methodology

Research and analysis process

An REA was considered an appropriate research approach for this topic due to the limited available evidence on the current crisis and the importance of verifying the quality of existing information. An REA is an efficient way of reviewing the content and quality of current knowledge on a topic and identifying questions which require further research. As stipulated in DFID's definition of an REA, the research process includes a clear review question, a structured literature search with a clear protocol and rationale for how the search is conducted, appraisal of the quality of evidence, and a synthesis of the evidence base. Based on these requirements, the methodological approach taken combines elements of a systematic evidence assessment with a more reflexive form of evidence-focused literature review. This approach involves several stages, as outlined in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: research and analysis process

1 Search	Database, library, journal, community of practice, organisation assigned **Search** conducted Downloads
2 File	**Assess** type, design and quality of study **Pre-Screen** against inclusion criteria **File** in Zotero reference database
3 Coding	**Record** type, design and quality of study in Excel spreadsheet **Assign** tags for thematic coverage and search method used in Zotero reference database
4 Review	Verify coding (sample basis) consistency across team
5 Analysis	Team workshop for key messages, writing assignments Reading and analysis of studies/data, recording strength of evidence from which conclusions are drawn
6 Review	**Review** and finalisation of report

The first stage of the research and evidence retrieval involved developing search strings for Google and Google Scholar, and searching migration databases and academic journals.[6] This process was guided by experts in this field to ensure that key literature was included which could potentially be missed if only using rigid search strings. This is based on experience of conducting rigorous literature reviews, which found that evidence retrieval that is triangulated via structured inquiries ('snowballing') with thematic experts and specialist communities of practice, and that uses specific protocols for grey literature, will produce a more appropriate evidence base for assessment than a purely systematic review.

The evidence retrieval is streamlined by a focus on literature that, in line with the research questions, has as its primary focus the current migration crisis in the Mediterranean. Sources are limited to those produced in the last ten years in English, though earlier literature informed the scope of the study. To ensure transparency of the search process, the search strings used and the databases accessed were recorded during evidence retrieval (see appendix 1). To ensure that the sources retrieved were both high-quality and relevant to the research question, sources from academic and grey literature were assessed for their quality using agreed criteria. This meant that documents which were found to be high quality could be prioritised during the analysis. The quality assessment protocol used is described in the following section. During the retrieval process sources were also coded by theme, and the key findings were extracted in order to develop an overview of the content of the evidence base from which to begin analysis. The research team[7] then met to examine the evidence retrieved and develop an outline for closer analysis of the source documents. This involved extracting information relevant to the research questions and drawing conclusions. During the analysis and writing stage, the quality rating of the sources used has been included in the in-text citation so that the reader can assess the strength of the evidence on which a conclusion has been made.

6 Details of the databases, platforms, communities of practice, journals and search strings used are in appendix 1.

7 The team consisted of four researchers.

Quality assessment protocol

The evidence retrieved has been coded according to the research type (primary, secondary, or conceptual) and its quality was assessed using four key dimensions, which were adapted from previous evidence reviews undertaken by ODI:

1. Relevance of the study to the research questions: does it refer to the current 'crisis', and/or key source countries, and/or the role of social networks in motivations for migration?
2. Methodological transparency
3. The validity of the findings
4. Conceptual framing

Primary and secondary sources were assessed using specific indicators of quality and four inclusion criteria, as detailed below. Any sources not meeting the criteria were excluded from analysis. The indicators used to assess evidence quality were discussed and agreed in the research team, and each researcher applied them to the sources they retrieved. At the end of the retrieval process the scores were compared by the researchers to check the consistency of the way evidence had been rated. The research team also discussed the nature of the evidence body in aggregate, and this report describes their findings with respect to the size, quality, and applicability of the body of evidence.

Inclusion criteria:

- 10 years
- In English
- Must discuss current crisis or the role of social networks in migration to Europe or drivers of irregular migration to Europe
- Must be rated 'medium' or 'high' quality (see below)

Protocol for grading and coding

Table 1: study types and designs

Type	Design [Tags]
Primary	Experimental or Quasi/Natural Experiment [PE] Comparative [PC] Single Case Study or Evaluation [PS]
Secondary	Systematic [SS] Other review [SO]
Conceptual[8]	[C}
Journalistic[9]	{J]

Note: Study type is independent of study quality.

Table 2: assessing quality – primary studies

Principle	Questions	Scoring
Conceptual framing	a) Does the study have a conceptual framework and clear research question? b) Does the study appear to draw conclusions based on its results rather than theory or policy?	0 Neither 1 One 2 Both
Methodological transparency	a) Does the study explain its research design and data collection methods? b) Does the study present or link to data sources?	0 Neither 1 One 2 Both
Internal and external validity[10]	a) Is the study internally valid? Or, are alternative causes of impact or the study's limitations considered? b) Is the study externally valid? Or, can findings be generalised to other contexts and populations?	0 Neither 1 One 2 Both
Journalistic	a) How relevant is the study to the research topic?	1 Partially 2 Directly
Score (Sum)		0-8

Scoring: 0-4 Low [Excluded] 5-6 Medium 6-8 High

8 Conceptual and journalistic articles are graded for quality according to the criteria for secondary sources (while some journalistic articles may use a mixture of secondary and primary sources, they are unlikely to be written in a scientific manner, hence the use of secondary source criteria for quality assessment).

9 A journalistic article was considered to be an article published by a news publication, such as *The Economist* or *The New Statesman*.

10 Validity is considered with respect to whether a study considers the limitations of the conclusions drawn and/or whether other variables could have influenced the findings. This applies to all studies retrieved, whether they make claims of causal impact or only present correlations and links between phenomena. Assessing the validity of the evidence was challenging and relied on each researcher's own judgement. The research team decided to take an inclusive approach so as not to unnecessarily exclude useful studies. Discussion over how to apply the criteria meant that the researchers were assessing the studies in a consistent manner.

Table 3: assessing quality – secondary studies

Principle	Questions	Scoring
Relevance	Does the study directly address the research topic?	0 No 1 Yes
Methodological transparency	Does the study describe where and how studies/data were selected for inclusion?	0 No 1 Yes
Internal and external validity[10]	Does the study assess the quality of the studies/data included?	0 No 1 Yes
Journalistic	Does the study draw conclusions based on the studies/data reviewed and consider alternative conclusions and/or limitations to the conclusions?	0 No 1 Yes
Score (Sum)		0-4

Scoring: 0-4 Low [Excluded] 5-6 Medium 6-8 High

Note: Most systematic reviews should score at least 3.
Example code included in the referencing: 'PC – 6' = Primary research, comparative study, quality rating of 6
e.g. xxx (Smith: 2015 PC-6)

Detail on the quality of the study is recorded in a spreadsheet using the reference information (see appendix 2).

Nature of the evidence base

The evidence collected consists of 138 documents. Table 4 below shows that the sources collected are spread quite evenly across primary (39%) and secondary methodologies (61%), with the largest proportion of sources (47%) being 'secondary other' (non-systematic study of secondary data) or primary single studies. The 'secondary other' sources vary in quality, with many being relevant to the research question but not always providing detail on the methodology used to gather and analyse the data they reference. This is especially the case for journalistic articles which often provide the most recent data, but are not written in a scientific manner. The primary sources tend to be of a higher quality, explaining the research methods used and reflecting on the nature of the conclusions drawn. Although the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) has recently awarded grants for comparative research work on the Mediterranean migration crisis, there are currently few comparative studies or systematic reviews on this subject, and the external validity of sources is not always clear.

The evidence which has been retrieved for this study largely consists of statistical analysis of migration flows, literature reviews of the drivers of migration, and studies of single cases, rather than comparative research. As expected, the evidence available on the current crisis is limited and most data is provided by organisations, in particular UNHCR, which are working practically to respond to the crisis, rather than scientific studies of the drivers, although academic research specifically addressing the dynamics of the crisis is being carried out.[11] The most recent evidence tends to have been gathered to inform policy and programme responses. There are more rigorous studies within the older literature, which is to be expected given the time needed to undertake in-depth research. Most of these involve detailed primary research examining the experiences of people who have migrated to Europe. Some are studies of countries outside the focus countries mentioned in the research questions, but which are relevant in terms of understanding the broader context of current irregular migration across the Mediterranean.
In general terms, the focal points in the evidence base on the current crisis are:

- how the conflict in Syria is affecting migration flows;
- the impact of EU countries' migration policies and asylum systems on migration routes and the regularity of migration;
- the importance of migration networks to continuing migration flows; and
- the situation in Turkey, and the extent to which North African and Middle Eastern countries are source, transit, and/or destination countries of irregular migration.

Table 4: nature of the evidence recieved

Quality	Primary		Secondary				Total
	Primary Comparative	Primary Single Case	Secondary Systematic	Secondary Other	Conceptual	Journalistic	
High	1	10	2	33	4	1	51
Medium	7	36		33	4	8	88
Total	8	46	2	66	8	8	138

11 See for example CTPSR (2015) Coventry-led study seeks to unravel Mediterranean crisis http://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/research-directories/research-news/2015/coventry-led-study-seeks-to-unravel-mediterranean-migration-crisis/ [01/10/2015].

Research into migration from Syria features predominantly, and far fewer studies are available on other source countries in the research question (i.e. Eritrea, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Ethiopia). Likewise, evidence on the current crisis focuses mostly on sea routes across the Mediterranean rather than land routes, and tends to discuss the migration of asylum-seekers from countries in conflict more than broader factors behind the irregular means of migration of non-asylum-seekers.

With respect to evidence which is relevant to the first research question regarding migration flows, statistics on the flow of irregular migration to Europe are not available given that, by definition, 'irregular migration' concerns unrecorded migration. However, sources of data gathered from Eurostat and UNHCR can indicate changes in the number of asylum applications being made, the number of people arriving in Southern Europe by crossing the Mediterranean, and the number of deaths recorded of undocumented migrants. Evidence from Frontex indicates changes in the number of people found attempting 'illegal border crossings' into Europe, as well as data on smuggling. While this data is collected in a rigorous and reliable manner, it does not claim to be comprehensive, and while it may indicate an increase in irregular migration, increased public and political attention to migration across the Mediterranean may have prompted greater efforts to record migration flows. It is also important to emphasise that irregular crossings are not the same as irregular migration since many of those crossing irregularly are seeking asylum, which is their right. The evidence base is also generally limited in studies which predict or forecast future patterns of migration. Only one high-quality study (de Haas, 2011a SO-4) was retrieved which discusses possible future migration flows, and this study emphasises the difficulty of making reliable and specific predictions related to migration.

With regard to the second question, concerning drivers of migration, academic literature has been retrieved which attempts to unpack the complexity of migration dynamics and motivations. There is also a relevant set of literature and information around the fluid dynamics of migration motivations and intentions, and how these can change over space and time. However, in-depth research in this area is mostly 'pre-crisis', and is often not directly focused on migrants from the countries of interest. That said, there are some limited studies on the motivations of both migration from countries of interest, and onward or secondary migration from these countries that connects with the broader literature.

Regarding the research question which considers the role of social networks, the search process has identified a large amount of theoretical and conceptual literature discussing social networks and migration, including the link between social networks and migration motivations. Research directly relating to the countries of interest remains limited, especially within the timeframe of the crisis, although there are some case studies of other MENA and Sub-Saharan African countries that are of interest. There is also a burgeoning set of literature on the role of online social media networks in the facilitation of migration, which is mirrored by anecdotal evidence on the role of technology and the Internet in facilitating Syrian journeys to Europe.

Evidence review: migration flows

Key findings:

Since 2010 the number of irregular arrivals into Europe by sea or land has increased substantially. From January to June 2015, 137,000 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe, an increase of 83% over the same period in 2014. Syrians are the single largest nationality, followed by Eritreans and Afghans. Most are likely to qualify as refugees in EU countries.

The main migration routes are through the Eastern and Central Mediterranean and the Western Balkans. The Eastern Mediterranean route is currently the most popular, substantially increasing flows through the Western Balkans as only a small minority of people apply for asylum in Greece.

Estimates of the actual number of irregular arrivals into Europe vary between agencies, in part because migrants may be counted more than once as they make multiple crossings between EU and non-EU countries in order to reach their preferred destination. This is particularly the case across the Eastern Mediterranean and the Western Balkans routes.

The meaning of transit migration and transit migration countries is changing. Turkey, for many years considered a country of emigration, is today seen as a 'transit' country, where most asylum-seekers receive 'temporary protection' status which allows them to apply for resettlement in other countries. Libya is evolving from a country of immigration from sub-Saharan Africa to a major 'transit country' between countries such as Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Chad, and Europe.

Future trends of migration flows and patterns are extremely difficult to predict. This is largely due to the difficulty of predicting changes in the drivers of migration, including political unrest, conflict, and patterns of economic growth.

This section addresses the first research question:

What do we know about the predictability/patterns of migrant flows from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa in this current crisis? Can we use that information to effectively predict changes in future migrant flows?

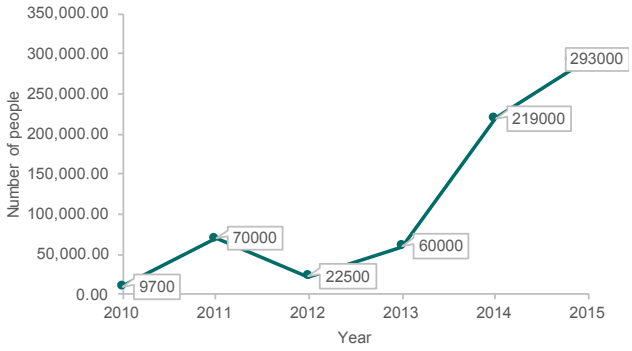
Introduction

Drawing on data published by UNHCR and Frontex and other sources, this section reviews the statistical information on the number of people migrating via irregular means to Europe since 2010. The difficulties of accurately measuring these flows are discussed, followed by an overview of changes in flows across the three main irregular migration routes. This section then presents data on changes in the number of irregular migrants using different transit countries to travel to Europe, and how these routes have evolved over recent years. While there are clear patterns in the flow of migrants from particular countries and via particular routes, this section discusses the difficulties in making reliable predictions for future irregular migration flows based on data of past and current flows.

Changes in migration numbers 2010–2015

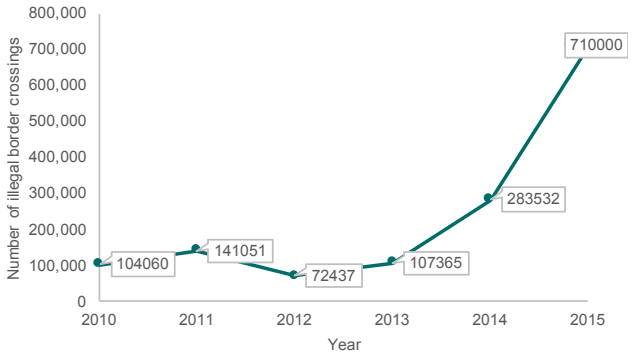
Since 2010, the numbers of irregular arrivals into Europe have increased substantially. UNHCR figures (2015a, p. 5 SO-2) (Figure 3) show the number of migrants arriving by sea, based on government sources, and Frontex figures (2015a, p. 12 PS-6) (Figure 4) account for all detected irregular border crossings between EU states.

Figure 3: Migrants arriving by sea to Europe



Source: UNHCR (2015c SO-2) – note; data recorded until 24th August 2015

Figure 4: Total number of detected irregular border crossings



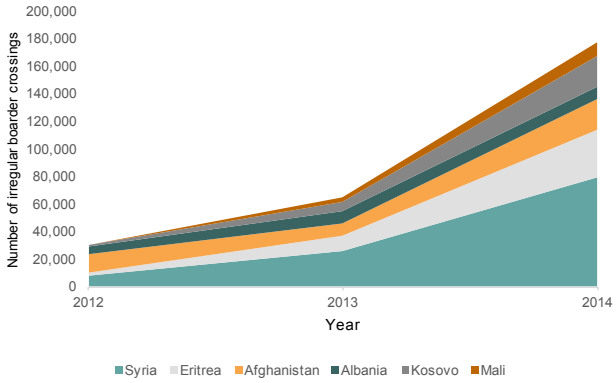
Source: Frontex (2015a, p. 12 PS-6) – note: data recorded up until October 2015

Between 2010 and 2012, the number of irregular arrivals by sea was relatively low. This has been put down to a number of factors, including Italy's controversial agreement with Libya on intercepting and returning migrants, Spain's closure of the Canary Islands route and improved surveillance systems and border control action by Frontex (Fargues and Bonfanti, 2014, p. 4 SO-3; RMMS, 2014, pp. 84–5 PC-7). Irregular crossings surged in 2011, mainly caused by political instability in North Africa related to the Arab Spring (Fargues and Bonfanti, 2014; Morehouse and Blomfield, 2011, p. 6 SO-3; RMMS, 2014, pp. 84–5 PC-7). There has been a large increase in irregular arrivals by sea and irregular border crossings between 2013 and 2015.

An upsurge in migration since 2013

According to Frontex (2014a, p. 30 PS-6), the increase in irregular migration in 2013 was due to a rise in the number of Syrians seeking asylum in Europe, combined with migrants crossing the Mediterranean from North Africa and irregular migration across the border between Hungary and Serbia. As shown in Figure 5, in 2013 Syrians were by far the most common nationality recorded entering Europe irregularly (25,546 detections), accounting for almost a quarter of the total. Eritrean migrants came next (11,298 detections), for whom the number detected crossing irregularly was more than four times that of the previous year (2012). Other nationalities frequently recorded in 2013 were Afghans (9,494), Kosovans (6,357), and Albanians (9,021) (Frontex, 2015a, p. 57 PS-6).

Figure 5: Number of irregular border crossings by nationality – all borders



Source: (Frontex, 2015a, p. 57 PS-6)

Sustained rise in irregular migration during 2014

In 2014, according to Frontex data, overall irregular border crossings to Europe reached a record 283,532, a 165% increase on 2013. The vast majority (78%) were detected at a sea border (2015a, p. 57 PS-6). Frontex recorded 79,169 irregular crossings by Syrian nationals in 2014, constituting more than a quarter of all detections, as well as the majority of asylum applications to European member states (Frontex, 2015a, p. 18 PS-6). Eritreans were the second most commonly detected nationality making an irregular border crossing in 2014 (more than 34,500 crossings); most were from Libya, taking the Central Mediterranean route (Frontex, 2015a, p. 18 PS-6). There was also a large increase in Afghans taking the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkans route into Europe, and in the number of Kosovans being detected on the border between Serbia and Hungary (Frontex, 2015a, p. 18 PS-6).

Exponential rise in irregular migration in 2015

During 2014 and 2015 there has been an exponential increase in the number of irregular migrants entering Europe. According to UNHCR (2015a, p. 6 SO-2), from January to June 2015 137,000 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe, an increase of 83% compared to the same period in 2014. Syrians were again the single largest nationality, accounting for 34% of all arrivals by sea, followed by Eritreans and Afghans (UNHCR, 2015a, p. 12 SO-2). Many of these migrants first moved to neighbouring states but, after spending several years in refugee camps, decided to migrate further to Europe (UNHCR, 2015a, p. 6 SO-2).

Changing migration routes

As previous research on irregular migration shows, migration routes are continuously evolving (Fargues and Bonfanti, 2014, p. 3 SO-3; Schapendonk, 2012, p. 30 PS-7). For example, from 2010 to 2015 the Central Mediterranean route to Italy and Malta, the Eastern Mediterranean route from Turkey to Greece, and the Western Balkans route became the main routes of irregular migration to Europe (Figure 6). The Central Mediterranean Route was the dominant one in 2014, with most people arriving in Italy from Libya, Tunisia or Egypt. However, in the first six months of 2015 the Eastern Mediterranean route became the primary maritime route, especially for Syrians, Afghans, and Iraqis. Finally, in 2015 the Western Balkans route became increasingly established as the third main route, including migrants and refugees from Greece as well as people from Kosovo and Albania (Banulescu-Bogdan and Fratzke, 2015, p. 2 J-2; UNHCR, 2015a, p. 3). It is however important to note that other routes are less patrolled and so less data on border crossings is recorded, and many people who become irregular migrants entered Europe legally, but no longer have the right to remain (e.g. over-staying a visa).

The Central Mediterranean route

The Central Mediterranean route is a traditional migration route for Sub-Saharan and West African immigrants, transiting through Libya and then departing from the coast near Tripoli, Zawiyah and Benghazi to Italy and Malta (Altai Consulting, 2015 PC-7; Frontex, 2015a PS-6). More recently, migrants have also passed through Egypt and Tunisia (Altai Consulting, 2015 PC-7). According to Frontex, the Central Mediterranean route was the main area of irregular border crossing to the EU in 2011, 2013 and 2014, accounting for 60% of all border detections (Frontex, 2015a, p. 18 PS-6).

Since the mid-2000s, Sicily, and particularly the islands of Lampedusa and Linosa, have become the main point of access to Italy for migrants from North Africa (Fargues and Bonfanti, 2014, p. 4 SO-3). Most of the migrants using this route rely on smugglers to make their journey to Europe (RMMS, 2014, p. 78 PC-7). Italy saw a large increase in arrivals in 2011, following political instability in Tunisia. Numbers dipped in 2012, then rose again in 2013, with people from the Horn of Africa, predominantly Somalis and Eritreans, accounting for the largest proportion of detections by Frontex. Syrians constituted almost a quarter of the total number of recorded arrivals (Frontex, 2014a, p. 33 PS-6).

In 2014 Italy received a record number of migrants (170,000), mostly Eritreans and Syrians (Altai Consulting, 2015 PC-7; UNHCR, 2015a SO-2). The main point of departure for these migrants was Libya, and research suggests that the increase in violence and instability in Libya was a major cause of this record influx (Altai Consulting, 2015 PC-7). During the first six months of 2015 Italy received 67,500 people, similar to Greece, although since June the number of migrants arriving in Greece has increased dramatically, reaching 210,824 in October alone (UNHCR, 2015d PS-2). According to UNHCR, the main nationalities arriving in Italy in 2015 were Eritreans (25%), Nigerians (10%), and Somalis (10%), followed by Syrians (7%) and Gambians (7%) (UNHCR, 2015a, p. 11 SO-2, 2015e SO-2).
Malta has received far fewer arrivals than Italy in recent years (UNHCR, 2014 SO-3). Arrivals peaked at 2,100 in 2013, only to decrease again in 2014. The main nationalities were Somalis (40%) and Eritreans (16%) (UNHCR, 2014 SO-3). Despite Malta's controversial detention policy for asylum-seekers (Altai Consulting, 2015 PC-7), an increasing number of migrants who have been granted asylum in Italy move on to Malta in the expectation of greater opportunities for work and/or to follow other family members (Altai Consulting, 2015 PC-7).

The Eastern Mediterranean route

The Eastern Mediterranean route refers to migrants arriving in Greece via Turkey, Bulgaria or Cyprus (Frontex, 2015a PS-6). In 2015 it surpassed the Central Mediterranean in terms of the number of arrivals.

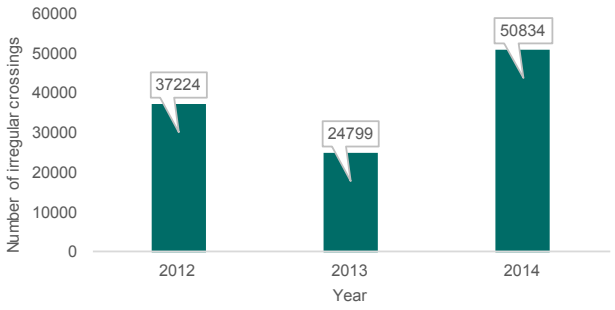
Disputed Frontex data

While the data collected by UNHCR and Frontex clearly shows an exponential rise in irregular migration since 2012, the actual number of irregular arrivals to Europe is disputed. By September 2015, UNHCR was estimating more than 487,000 arrivals by sea, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) had published a similar figure of 590,000. Frontex figures were much higher, at 710,000, possibly because the agency counts all detections of 'illegal border crossings' as an indicator of the number of people arriving irregularly in Europe. This means that an individual migrant may be counted more than once, since many make more than one crossing between EU and non-EU countries in order to reach their preferred destination. This is particularly the case across the Eastern Mediterranean and the Western Balkans routes, where people are registered on their arrival in Greece, and then counted again when they leave the EU and pass through Albania, Macedonia or Serbia, only to re-enter the EU via Croatia or Hungary (Sigona, 2015 J-4).

The number of migrants arriving via the Eastern Mediterranean route rose consistently between 2008 and 2011, then decreased in 2012 and 2013, probably due to the erection of a fence in 2012 along the border between Greece and Turkey (Fargues and Bonfanti, 2014, p. 5 SO-3; Frontex, 2014a PS-6). Even so, in 2014 this route still ranked second for all irregular crossings into the EU according to Frontex (Frontex, 2014a, p. 8 PS-6), and since 2012 the number of migrants arriving irregularly by sea to Greece has increased substantially each year (Figure 7). Syrians were the most numerous nationality using this route in 2013 (12,727 or 51%), followed by Afghans (6,129) (Frontex, 2014a, p. 35 PS-6).

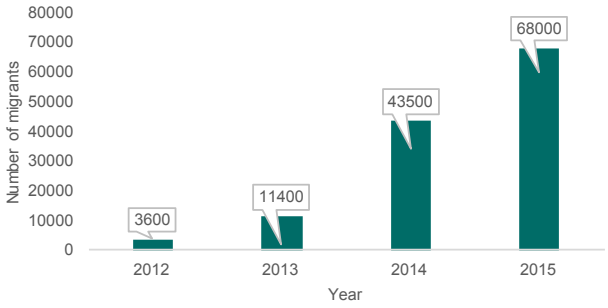
Overall detections through the Eastern Mediterranean route doubled between 2013 and 2014, reaching over 50,800, or 18% of all irregular arrivals registered by Frontex (Figure 6) (Frontex, 2015a, p. 22 PS-6). According to Frontex, this increase was due to more migrants crossing the Aegean, departing from more points along the coast and arriving at a larger number of Greek islands, with Lesbos, Chios, and Samos the most affected (Frontex, 2015a, p. 22 PS-6).

Figure 6: Number of irregular border crossings detected on the Eastern Mediterranean route[11]



Source: (Frontex, 2015a, p. 16 PS-6)

Figure 7: Number of migrants arriving irregularly by sea to Greece



Source: (UNHCR, 2015a, p. 13 SO-2)

In the first six months of 2015, the Eastern Mediterranean route was the most popular for irregular migration (UNHCR, 2015a SO-2). The main nationalities using this route were Syrians (57%), followed by Afghans (22 %) and Iraqis (5 %) (UNHCR, 2015a, p. 11 SO-2). According to UNHCR, only a small minority of people apply for asylum in Greece (5,115 out of 68,000 in 2015). The majority of migrants continue their journeys northwards through the Balkans, often facilitated by smugglers (UNHCR, 2015a, p. 11 SO-2).

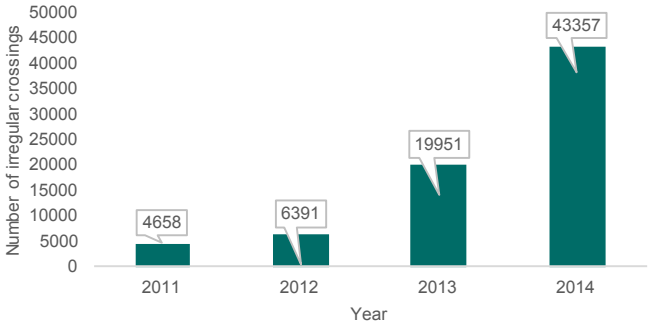
The Western Balkans route

The Western Balkans route encompasses two main groups of migrants: those from non-EU Western Balkan countries themselves, and migrants from Asia and the Middle East, who enter through Greece and proceed towards Hungary (Frontex, 2015a PS-6). From 2010 to 2013, the number of irregular border crossings remained low in comparison with the other two routes. These crossings were mainly made by nationals from Western Balkan countries, particularly Albania, Serbia, and Kosovo, using fraudulent documents or who applied for asylum to enter an EU country (Frontex, 2015a PS-6).

12 Crossings detected on the borders of Greece, Bulgaria and Cyprus.

Figure 8 shows that there was an initial increase in irregular crossings in 2013, with the main detections registered by Frontex at the Serbian–Hungarian border (Frontex, 2014a, p. 8 PS-6). A third of these migrants were from Kosovo, and there was a substantial increase in the number of Albanians (60% increase on 2012). Migrants from both countries often applied for asylum (Frontex, 2014a, p. 37 PS-6). According to Frontex, there was a sharp decrease in the number of migrants from Afghanistan, North Africa, and Somalia, while the number of migrants from West Africa increased (Frontex, 2014a PS-6).

Figure 8: Number of irregular border crossings detected on the Western Balkans route



Source: (Frontex, 2015a, p. 16 PS-6)

In 2014 Frontex recorded a sharp increase of 65% in irregular crossings (2014b, p. 5 PS-6). Again, most were registered at the Serbian–Hungarian border (Frontex, 2014b, p. 5 PS-6). Over half of irregular crossings were by Kosovans, though there was a large increase in the number of Syrians and Afghans using this route compared to 2013 (Frontex, 2015a PS-6).

The number of migrants using the Western Balkans route has continued to increase, with over 1,000 people crossing into Greece every day since June 2015 (UNHCR, 2015a SO-2). Syrians represented more than 50% of arrivals recorded thus far in 2015, followed by Eritreans, Afghans, and Kosovans. According to UNHCR, of those submitting asylum claims, Syrians and Eritreans are the most likely to be successful (Banulescu-Bogdan and Fratzke, 2015, p. 2 J-2).

Patterns of transit migration

This section discusses how some countries that were previously countries of emigration have become countries of transit migration and destination. As noted in section 1.2, 'transit migration' should be understood as a fluid category encompassing various types of mixed migratory statuses and experiences, including asylum-seekers and cyclical labour migrants (Triandafyllidou, 2009, p. 23 SO-4). While the focus of this discussion is on non-European transit countries, it would also be worthwhile examining to what extent some European countries, such as Italy, are transit countries since migrants do not always settle in the first European country they arrive in (Fargues and Bonfanti, 2014, p. 17 SO-3). The analysis below focuses primarily on Turkey and Libya as the main 'transit countries' in the current migration crisis.

Turkey

Turkey has long been considered a country of emigration, referring particularly to waves of labour migration to Western Europe since the 1960s (Icduygu and Yukseker, 2012, p. 442 SO-3). However, since the 2000s Turkey can also be considered a destination country for various groups of migrants (de Haas, 2011b SO-4; Icduygu and Yukseker, 2012, p. 442 SO-3).

More recently, Turkey has also come to be considered a 'transit' country for various migratory groups. There are at least three separate migratory patterns: transit migration, circular labour migration, mainly from poorer post-Soviet states and Iraq and Iran, and refugee movements. Turkey's geographical position between Europe and Asia, bordering low-income Central Asian states as well as politically unstable countries in the Middle East, may be one reason for its popularity as a transit and destination country (Icduygu and Yukseker, 2012, p. 442 SO-3).

As a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, but not the 1967 Protocol, which lifts the geographical limitation to European countries, most asylum-seekers arriving in Turkey receive 'temporary protection' status, which allows them to apply for resettlement through the UNHCR to other countries (Icduygu and Yukseker, 2012, p. 449 SO-3). In this sense, their status can be understood as transient or temporary. 'Temporary protection' status affords asylum-seekers some security, whilst leaving them free to seek resettlement in a European country. According to Kirisci and Ferris (2015 SO-2), UNHCR data from 2014 shows that Turkey was hosting more than two million Syrian refugees, straining Turkish economic resources and eroding political will to continue to support this inflow. A lack of international cooperation on sharing the responsibility for Syrian refugees, in terms of both financial assistance and resettlement, is likely to mean that many Syrians are trying to 'self-resettle' in Europe (Kirisci and Ferris, 2015 SO-2).

Libya

Historically, patterns of emigration from North African countries can be divided into two main groups: migration from the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia) to Europe; and migration from Egypt, mainly to the Gulf states (Kassar et al., 2014, p. 2 SS-3). By 2014 Morocco had become an important transit country for migration from North Africa to Europe, with France as the primary destination, followed by Italy and Spain (Kassar et al., 2014, p. 4 SS-3). Sub-Saharan Africans have increasingly

joined Maghreb migrants in their attempts to cross the Mediterranean irregularly (Collyer and de Haas, 2012, p. 474 C-4). This has meant that several North African countries have gradually become countries of settlement and transit, representing a structural change in this traditional pattern of migration (de Haas, 2011b, p. 562 SO-4).

In the current crisis many migrants taking the Central Mediterranean route have departed from Libya. While Libya has a history of immigration from other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Horn (Fargues and Bonfanti, 2014; RMMS, 2014, p. 17 SO-3), the political instability caused by the collapse of Gaddafi's regime has seen large numbers of people from countries such as Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and Chad leave the country for Italy, Malta, Egypt, Tunisia, or Algeria (RMMS, 2014, pp. 42–3 PC-7). In recent years, especially since the beginning of 2013, many Syrians have also passed through Libya in an attempt to enter Europe via irregular means (RMMS, 2014, pp. 42–3 PC-7).

There are numerous reasons why people currently living as irregular migrants in Libya may choose to migrate across the Mediterranean. Firstly, conditions in Libya are in violation of international standards: Libya is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention, UNHCR has no official status, and migrants may be arrested if found to be in the country irregularly (Altai Consulting, 2015; RMMS, 2014 PC-7). In addition to arbitrary arrest and prolonged detention, migrants also face risks such as labour exploitation. Syrians and Palestinians, as well as religious minorities, are vulnerable to attacks by militia groups, while Sub-Saharan Africans in general may experience racism or exploitation (Altai Consulting, 2015 PC-7; RMMS, 2014, pp. 51–62 PC-7). Finally, migrants may be at risk of human trafficking for forced labour or sexual exploitation, in which smugglers may be working in collusion with the authorities (RMMS, 2014, pp. 51–62 PC-7).

Predicting future trends

Future trends of migration flows and patterns are extremely difficult to predict. The evidence is generally weak in terms of high-quality published sources, which tend to focus on the factors influencing migration trends and flows, rather than on actual trends themselves. This is largely due to the difficulty of predicting changes in the drivers of migration, including political unrest, conflict and economic change. The difficulty of accurately predicting trends was confirmed by the experts consulted for this study. This section is largely based on a study by de Haas (2011b SO-4) which focuses on scenarios for patterns of migration in the Mediterranean over the next 50 years. Although we recognise the limitations of this approach, we believe that this study, by one of the most prominent migration scholars, provides a unique example of a methodology and analytical framework to approach this complex question.

De Haas' study examines migration trends since the 1950s from Southern Mediterranean countries (such as Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt) to Northern Mediterranean ones (such as Italy, Spain, and Greece), in relation to the broader geographical, social, political, and economic factors affecting past and current migration in the region. The methodology examines moments of rupture and changes in past migration patterns to identify the most important drivers of change and determinants of future migration patterns. For each of these drivers, the author assesses the relative level of certainty and uncertainty with regard to future patterns (de Haas, 2011b, p. 560 SO-4). Based on this analysis De Haas proposes two main possible scenarios for future migration patterns to Europe from Southern Mediterranean countries. These are not strict predictions or forecasts, but rather plausible deductions about what might happen following a change in the most relevant migration drivers. 'As such they are not expected to necessarily come true, but rather to present conceivable future developments in migration trends' (de Haas, 2011b, p. 560 SO-4).

Two possible scenarios discussed by de Haas are:

1. The expanding Euro-Mediterranean core'. In this scenario, Southern Mediterranean countries undergo a period of significant economic growth and political change leading to EU expansion and liberalisation, to include countries such as Turkey and Tunisia. The easing of barriers to migration between existing Northern Mediterranean EU countries and new EU Southern Mediterranean countries will lead to a brief temporary increase in emigration from Southern to Northern countries. With time, this type of migration will turn into a more circular movement. De Haas also suggests that Turkey will become a migration destination, including from Eastern Europe, Central Asia and North Africa. The successive transformation of Southern Mediterranean countries from emigration to destination countries will also lead to increased migration from Sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia. Within this scenario, de Haas imagines European policies to be relatively liberal for both high- and increasingly low-skilled workers due to global economic competition and labour demand (de Haas, 2011b, p. 567 SO-4). De Haas also suggests that, in addition to Turkey, it is possible that countries such as Tunisia and Morocco will evolve into migration destination countries in 2020–30, if economic growth improves, along with institutional reform and political stability (de Haas, 2011b, p. 565 SO-4).
2. The second scenario is one of 'decline and nationalism'. This sees the coupling of economic stagnation in Southern Mediterranean countries and growing inequalities with Northern Mediterranean countries

with a rise in nationalism and xenophobia in Northern Mediterranean countries. In this scenario, a combination of economic crisis, human rights abuse and growing aspirations in Southern Mediterranean countries would lead to continuing migration towards Northern Mediterranean countries. However, due to nationalism and increasingly restrictive immigration policies in Northern countries, these flows would be mainly irregular. Authoritarian Southern Mediterranean regimes will continue to tolerate emigration. Emigration from Sub-Saharan Africa will continue to grow, though at a slower pace compared to the first scenario (de Haas, 2011b, p. 568 SO-4).

While it is difficult to make predictions, it is likely that potential future EU integration and expansion will be a key determinant of regional trends, as it is likely to increase overall stability and economic growth in the region (de Haas, 2011b, p. 567 SO-4). Past experience in Spain, Portugal, and Greece indicates that EU expansion does not necessarily result in a significant increase in permanent migration, but might instead lead to more circular migration. 'However, a temporary increase in emigration after EU membership is also possible, as the more recent East European example suggests, particularly from countries which offer low levels of social security' (de Haas, 2011b, p. 567 SO-4).

The future and pace of political and institutional reform in Southern Mediterranean countries such as Turkey and Egypt is an even more important factor in determining future migration patterns. These are not likely to affect the region in a uniform way. As de Haas notes: 'political trends in Turkey and Egypt since the 1970s provide contrasting examples of the diverse pathways future political trends may take. While Turkey has combined democratisation, institutional reform and economic growth, Egypt descended into a permanent state of emergency and autocratic rule by a small elite, with high levels of political discontent' (de Haas, 2011b, p. 566 SO-4).

Demographic trends appear to be more marginal determinants of migration drivers (de Haas, 2011b, p. 568 SO-4). They also appear to be more predictable, especially until 2030, given existing birth rates and comparatively stable patterns of ageing and mortality. It is likely that reductions in fertility and birth rates in all Southern Mediterranean countries in the 1960s and 1970s will lead to a reduction in population growth (de Haas, 2011b, p. 568 SO-4). (This contrasts with Sub-Saharan Africa, where birth rates are very high.) In combination with political stability, democratization, growing equality and economic growth, this may lead to increased growth and immigration to Southern Mediterranean countries, 'a phase which Turkey might already have entered' (de Haas, 2011b, p. 568 SO-4).

The overall finding from de Haas's analysis is that the future of migration to Europe is unlikely to be 'business as usual', based on 'demographic trends and the fact that demand for high- and low-skilled labour will continue to attract migrants from outside the EU and that there is significant chance that those migrant will come from increasingly geographically distant countries' (de Haas, 2011b, p. 565 SO-4). Reflecting on the two scenarios described by de Haas, it appears that the current situation is much closer to the second scenario than the first, with Turkey already a destination country for some. The attacks in Paris on 13 November, media reporting conflating terrorism with migration, and public perceptions of the migration crisis are likely to shape government responses, although it is not possible to say what form these will take.

Conclusion

There is a clear and ongoing increase in the number of people attempting to enter Europe via the three main routes in the Central Mediterranean, Western Balkans, and Eastern Mediterranean. Although data collected by UNHCR and Frontex differs due to the different indicators they use to measure irregular migration, it is evident that the number of people migrating to Europe via irregular means is rising. It is also clear from the available data that the routes used to enter Europe irregularly have and continue to change. In 2015, greater numbers of migrants have been recorded entering Europe via the Eastern Mediterranean route, and migrants are using new and different crossing points across the Aegean.

It is also clear from studies on irregular migration to Europe that migration flows must be understood as trajectories which may cover many years as migrants settle in a country but later move on to another, or return to their home country as conditions change. It is thus very difficult to accurately monitor migration, especially irregular migration, using categories such as 'transit migration' or 'asylum-seeker'. As such, statistical data can only provide an indication of the nature of migration flows. Predicting future migration flows based on existing statistical data is also very challenging, and requires a detailed understanding of the factors shaping different migration flows. It appears that, in order to predict large changes in migration flows, future conflicts, revolutions, and other instances of severe political and economic instability must also be foreseen, which is of course problematic.

Although the evidence base on the nature of the current crisis clearly shows that the majority of people migrating irregularly to Europe are of Syrian, Eritrean, Afghan, or Kosovan nationality, the reasons why people from these countries are migrating to Europe are very different. Therefore, any policy or programme which aims to influence the current flow of irregular migration to Europe needs to be based on a thorough understanding of the differing motivating factors behind the current crisis, the relationship between regular and irregular migration, and the role which social networks and information sources have in shaping who is migrating, where and how. The current evidence on these issues is discussed in sections 4 and 5.

Evidence review: deciding factors

Key findings:

The reasons why people migrate are often multiple and changing, and the categories of 'economic migrant' and 'asylum-seeker' are too rigid to reflect reality. There are many shared motivations for regular and irregular migration.

Having the capability and economic means to migrate is particularly important; in conflict situations people may be very keen to migrate, but may not have sufficient resources to do so.

Lack of economic opportunities in the country of origin and the hope of greater opportunities in another country are important drivers of irregular migration, though expectations vary according to the nature and reliability of the sources of information individual migrants have.

Irregular migration is usually a collective effort in which families and social and religious networks play a crucial role. Irregular migrants are commonly supported financially by friends or family; as migration from a society becomes common, a 'culture of migration' may emerge in communities of origin which drives further migration.

Many people who migrate irregularly use the services of smugglers or agents, who influence which destination is offered, promoted, or available, and the route taken. Smugglers' networks have become increasingly professionalised, in particular as a result of the ability of Syrian migrants to pay for more sophisticated services.

While tightening border security may change migration patterns and routes, migration policies are unlikely to influence the volume of people migrating. A person's need to leave their home is likely to be far more important to them than different countries' welfare and asylum support systems.

Trade and investment in a source country is likely to increase, not reduce, migration. It is not individuals from the poorest households who migrate to Europe, but rather those who have access to sufficient resources to pay for their journey.

This section addresses the following question:

What factors influence decisions to leave Sub-Saharan Africa and MENA and migrate to Europe via irregular means in this current crisis (with a focus on key source countries: Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia, and Ethiopia)?

Introduction: key factors influencing irregular migration

The literature on drivers of migration in general is substantial, but few studies examine the factors driving irregular migration specifically (Mbaye, 2014, p. 4 PS-7). There are many common motivations for regular and irregular migration, such as conflict and insecurity or a lack of economic opportunities (Kuschminder et al., 2015, p. 13 SS-4). This evidence review therefore discusses the factors influencing decisions to migrate via irregular means, but also draws on wider evidence (gathered non-systematically) of factors driving migration to Europe from the regions of interest.

With respect to the current migration crisis, it is difficult to distinguish between the numerous factors influencing migration for asylum or migration for work. The reasons for migration are often multiple and changing, and the categories of 'economic migrant' as opposed to 'asylum-seeker' are too rigid to reflect reality. The focus of this evidence review is therefore on the drivers of migration without legal means, rather than the category into which a person who is migrating could be placed.

This section begins by describing the definitional difficulties of examining the factors which determine a person's decision to migrate via irregular means. The impact of political and economic insecurity on the decision to migrate is then discussed, followed by a review of further factors, such as personal characteristics, the influence of family, the role of smugglers and the

emergence of a culture of migration. Finally, this section summarises the findings on the influence of broader, long-term forces shaping flows of irregular migration to Europe.

Definitional difficulties in understanding reasons for migration

A concept which is critical to this evidence review is the categorisation of refugees as 'involuntary' migrants (Bakewell, 2007 C-2) and to consider those who fall outside of this category as 'voluntary'. However, there are strong criticisms of this binary categorisation. Theorists have argued that, ultimately, there is always some degree of choice for all migrants even in the most constraining of situations, and understanding the specific reasons why an individual has left their country of origin is important for all groups of migrants (see for example Richmond, 1994 C-2; Van Hear, 1998 C-2). Equally important is the assertion that individuals can move between the categories of refugee and economic migrant, and indeed be present in both categories at the same time (Zimmerman, 2009 PS-5; 2011 PS-5).

Timmerman et al. (2014b, p. 224 PC-6) provide a general framework for factors which influence migration, whether regular or irregular, and categorise these factors as macro, meso, or micro. At the macro-level, factors which influence all migrants, albeit not necessarily in the same way, include immigration policies, the strength of a country's economy, and a country's political situation. At the meso-level are factors linking an individual migrant to wider society, such as social networks and whether a person lives in a region where migration is common. Factors at the micro-level concern personal characteristics, such as education, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status (Timmerman et al., 2014b, p. 224 PC-6). This framework emphasises that regular and irregular migration are not driven by one factor alone, but by numerous social, economic, political, and environmental issues (Loschmann et al., 2014, p. 6 SO-4). Given the constantly changing international context in which migration occurs, statistical analysis or scenario modelling cannot accurately explain how interactions between drivers at different levels result in decisions to migrate (de Haas, 2011b, p. 559 SO-4).

The transient nature of migration is especially important in understanding the drivers of irregular migration. Irregular migration does not always follow 'well-considered plans' (Schapendonk, 2012, p. 34 PS-7), and a migrant may come across different information while in a transit country, forming new contacts and finding new opportunities which change their intended destination (Kuschminder et al., 2015, p. 68 SS-4). It is thus highly problematic to consider the aspirations and capabilities which enable irregular migration as fixed and unchanging (De Clerk, 2015, p. 278 PS-6; Reitano, 2015, p. 17 SO-3) and it must also be recognised that the migration drivers, flows, and smuggling networks described in this review are also in a constant state of change.

Political insecurity and conflict

There is broad agreement in the literature that conflict often forces people to consider fleeing their home. However, it is unclear what specific triggers result in someone taking the decision to leave (Adikhari, 2013, p. 82 PS-6). For example, looking at why Ethiopian and Somali refugees had left their home countries, it was found that people often undergo a waiting period, attempting to make-do until the political situation improves (Zimmerman, 2011, p. 47 PS-6). Often, changes in personal circumstances, such as access to income, property, or health, within the broader context of insecurity, lead to a person eventually deciding to flee (Zimmermann, 2011, p. 64 PS-6). Adhikari (2013, p. 83 PS-6) describes the decision of whether or not to flee conflict in terms of opportunity cost: 'people tend to stay in their homes and villages when the opportunity cost of fleeing, measured in terms of forgone economic opportunity at the place of origin as well as one's attachment to home, outweighs a physical threat to life'. While political insecurity and conflict may increase a person's desire to migrate, a repressive state may prevent people from leaving, as in Eritrea, or, if economic opportunities are still present, political repression may not automatically provoke mass migration, as shown by the Gulf countries (de Haas, 2011b, p. 563 SO-4). This underlines the importance of economic as well as personal security in the decision to migrate.

Having the capability to migrate is a particularly important factor in understanding migration flows. In a situation of conflict, people may not have sufficient resources to migrate even if their intention to migrate is high (IMI and RMMS, 2012, p. 10 PS-6). For example, a large decrease in the number of Somali migrants arriving in Yemen in early 2010 is thought to be due to a deterioration in the situation in Somalia, which meant fewer resources to fund the journey. Disruption to transport systems due to conflict may also constrain people's ability to migrate (IMI and RMMS, 2012, p. 10 PS-6).

With respect to current irregular migration to Europe, several situations of political instability in countries of origin are thought to be contributing to this in-flow of people, including the conflict in Syria and instability in Libya and Tunisia. Natter (2015 SO-3) reports that 'Libya's political and economic instability, civil war, and growing Islamist threat have prompted thousands of Libyans and foreigners to leave', many of whom have entered Tunisia or been repatriated to countries such as Egypt, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Gambia. Likewise, political instability in Tunisia during the Arab Spring resulted in an increase in irregular migration to Europe as border security was disrupted (Natter, 2015 SO-3).

Economic security and opportunity

Political insecurity and conflict cannot be considered in isolation from the wider impact political instability can have on economic opportunities and the labour market. As de Haas (2011b, p. 563 SO-4) explains, 'Taken together, such factors will determine the extent to which people can fulfil their life aspirations locally and, hence, their aspirations and intentions to migrate as a perceived way to achieve their life'. Zimmerman (2009, p. 93 PS-5) finds that Somali refugees chose to continue their journey beyond the closest areas of safety to countries where they believed they could attain a greater quality of life, not just immediate safety. The study argues that 'safety was not all that they [refugees] sought because it was not all that they had lost'. Thus, rigid distinctions between migration to seek asylum and migration to seek economic opportunity are unhelpful in understanding migration flows (Zimmerman, 2009, p. 93 PS-5).

It is unsurprising, therefore, that a lack of economic opportunities in the country of origin and the hope of greater opportunities for work in a European country are important drivers of irregular migration (e.g. Czaika and Hobolth, 2014, p. 17 SO-4; Wissink et al., 2013, p. 1094 PS-8). A UNHCR study (2010, p. 15 PS-7) found that many young Afghan migrants to Europe had previously been working in Iran, where work opportunities were better than in their home country. However, economic opportunities in Iran have been decreasing and hostility towards Afghan migrants has been rising, prompting them to make the more difficult and dangerous journey to seek work in Europe instead. Similarly, a study of irregular migration from Senegal to Europe found that the prospect of greater economic opportunity in Europe – in particular, the presence of large informal economies in Spain and Italy – was an important factor motivating attempts to migrate there (Schapendonk and van Moppes, 2007, p. 11 PS-6).

The importance of economic opportunity in driving irregular migration is reflected in the risks which migrants take in travelling via irregular means to Europe. While a migrant's understanding of the risks they are taking is dependent on their own experience and that of other migrants (Wissink et al., 2013, p. 1099 PS-8), studies show that irregular migrants generally have a very high tolerance of risk. For example, a study by Mbaye (2014, p. 10 PS-7) found that 'half [of potential illegal migrants from Senegal] think there is a risk of death higher or equal to 25%' and that 'the vast majority of the sample of potential illegal migrants (77%) reported that they are willing to risk their life in order to emigrate', thus underlining the strength of their intention to migrate despite the current absence of conflict in Senegal.

Numerous factors may shape a migrant's expectations of the possible standard of living available in a European country, including information available via the Internet and social media, information from contacts who have already migrated, and advertisements by companies invested in international migration, such as Western Union (Schapendonk and van Moppes, 2007, p. 9 PS-6). Migrants already established in Europe may feel a social pressure to report positively on their new life to their relatives, which in turn encourages others to migrate. Private sector actors, such as banks and internet sites, should also be considered agents in facilitating and motivating international migration (Schapendonk and van Moppes, 2007, p. 9 PS-6). The role of the Internet, technology and communication tools in facilitating and influencing the nature of migration networks is discussed further in Section 5.

Evidence suggests that the importance of different countries' welfare and asylum support systems as a pull factor for migration is weak. One study reports that the need to leave their home country is of far more importance to migrants than their destination, and that few asylum-seekers arriving in the UK had specific knowledge of the benefits they may be eligible for (Robinson and Segrott, 2002, p. 27 PS-7). However, differences in particular countries' systems for receiving migrants may influence the decision to continue on to another destination, including within the EU (Kuschminder et al., 2015, p. 59 SS-4): 'onward movements are also caused by a lack of social, economic and legal opportunities in the first country of arrival. This could include unfair asylum procedures and/or lack of local integration prospects for refugees, unviable economic conditions, generally hostile environments, e.g. discrimination, racism, racial violence and police harassment' (Triandafyllidou, 2009, p. 101 SO-4). Conditions for migrants arriving in countries such as Greece and Italy are very difficult and the wait for refugee status is long, so migrants choose to move on (Kuschminder et al., 2015, p. 59 SS-4). Hostility towards Africans in Istanbul has also been a factor prompting them to move on (Kuschminder et al., 2015, p. 59 SS-4). Likewise, refugees arriving in Ukraine were motivated to continue to Western Europe because they saw the limited humanitarian support there as a sign that establishing themselves in Ukraine would be difficult (Rechitsky, 2014, p. 175 PS-6).

Personal characteristics

Factors driving irregular migration inevitably vary between individuals, and numerous personal characteristics influence whether or not a person chooses to migrate. Studies commonly report that the majority of irregular migrants are male, unmarried, in their early 20s, and have low levels of education (Heering et al., 2007, p. 334 PS-6; Loschmann et al., 2014, p. 3 PS-6; Mbaye, 2014, p. 7 PS-7). While it is not uncommon for irregular migrants to have secondary-level education, those with a higher level of education generally have more opportunities to migrate legally (Mbaye, 2014, p. 15 PS-7). With respect to gender, a study by Heering et al. (2007, p. 326 PS-6) identified

three reasons for a woman to migrate: '(1) the traditional motivation as trailing spouse; (2) to work in the city or abroad to earn money for the family; and (3) a way out from a life with a traditional dependent status, and away from obedience to male kin.' The first of these motivations is likely to be by far the most common, but women who may have a low level of education but who are still able to secure domestic work may have a strong motivation to migrate (Heering et al., 2007, p. 334 PS-6). The relationship between gender and migration is discussed in greater detail in Section 5.

Migration as a family affair

Irregular migration is usually a collective effort: irregular migrants are commonly supported financially by friends or family, and are more likely to travel with acquaintances than with their family (Loschmann et al., 2014, p. 13 PS-6). This suggests that irregular migration may at times be part of a household strategy to increase income (Loschmann et al., 2014, p. 19 PS-6; Loschmann and Siegel, 2014, p. 145 SO-4). Kibreab's (2013, p. 644 PS-6) study of Eritrean migration underlines the importance of financial support at the outset of a migrant's journey to cover smugglers' fees and bribes for government officials. At the other end of the journey, the prospect of being able to send remittances back is identified as a key driver for young Eritreans to migrate, as is the potential for family reunification in the destination country (Kibreab, 2013, p. 644 PS-6). It may also inform a migrant's decision to migrate to a particular European country (Robinson and Segrott, 2002, p. 42 PS-7).

A culture of migration

A culture of migration is discussed in numerous studies as a factor driving regular and irregular migration. According to de Haas (2011c, p. 22 C-3), 'migration processes tend to become partly self-perpetuating, leading to the formation of migrant networks and migration systems'. As networks and systems get stronger, it becomes easier for migrants to overcome obstacles to migration, and thus migration is likely to become self-reinforcing (de Haas, 2011c, p. 22 C-3). As migration from a community or society becomes common, this behaviour is normalised and expected. Heering et al. (2007, p. 325 PS-6) report that 'over time foreign labour migration becomes integrated into the structure of values and expectations of families and communities. As a result, young people contemplating entry into the labour force do not consider other options'. Similarly, Schapendonk and van Moppes (2007, p. 8 PS-6) find that 'the investments of migrants in their families or local communities are a strong encouraging factor for other families and communities, who do not yet have members abroad, to start their own migration project'. Certainly, community members seem to notice the benefits other families receive from relatives who have migrated, and feel poor in comparison, which strengthens others' intentions to migrate (Mbaye, 2014, p. 5 PS-7). A culture of migration is very significant in driving male migration, but not statistically significant for women, for whom the presence of a family network in a foreign country is a stronger driver (Heering et al., 2007, p. 334 PS-6). Social pressure to migrate also comes from religious communities. In their study of Senegalese migration, Schapendonk and van Moppes (2007, p. 8 PS-6) found that religious leaders often urge individuals to migrate in order to support their religious community through remittances. The varying importance of a culture of migration on the decision to migrate is discussed in more detail in Section 5.

The influence of migrant smugglers

As noted earlier, an important difference in regular and irregular migration is the influence of migrant smugglers on the ability of a person to migrate by irregular means. A review by Kuschminder et al. (2015, p. 56 SS-4) found that smugglers influence irregular migration in three key ways: '1) the routes and destination choices that they offer (or exclude) to the migrant, 2) in making the destination decision for the migrant, and 3) in deviating from an agreement with a migrant and delivering/leaving them in a different destination than agreed'. The extent to which a smuggler determines a migrant's destination depends upon the nature of their relationship, which could simply be a financial transaction or could be more exploitative (Wissink et al., 2013, p. 1100 PS-8).

Smuggling networks are becoming increasingly important, and increasingly professionalised. One study notes that 'the number of Eritrean migrant facilitators arrested by the EU in 2014 grew by four-fold [and that] cases of document fraud committed by Eritrean nationals has grown by threefold since the previous year' (Reitano, 2015, p. 9 SO-3). One important driver in the professionalisation of smuggling is thought to be the relative wealth of Syrian migrants, which enables them to pay for more sophisticated services (Reitano, 2015, p. 7 SO-3). The importance of contact with smugglers is discussed in further detail with respect to social networks in Section 5.

Asylum policy and border control

The influence of a country's system for processing asylum applications and the strength of its border controls is important to the flow of irregular migration to Europe (Kuschminder et al., 2015, p. 59 SS-4). Changes to immigration policies can influence the routes irregular migrants take; for example, when visa regimes were made more open in Turkey and in the Western Balkans, there was an increase in migrants using these countries as transit routes (Kuschminder et al., 2015, p. 46 SS-4). A

number of studies have concluded that efforts to intensify border controls have resulted in migrants seeking other, sometimes more dangerous, routes into Europe (e.g. Czaika and Hobolth, 2014, p. 19 SO-4; Duvell, 2009, p. 2 SO-4; Reitano, 2015, p. 13 SO-3). Tightening border security in Southern Europe has resulted in a proliferation of new migration routes across the Mediterranean (de Haas, (2011b, p. 561 SO-4). As border controls between Libya and Italy increased in 2009, irregular migration into Europe moved to Greece, via Turkey. More recently, as security at the Turkish border with Greece has been increased, more migrants have been using sea routes or entering via Bulgaria (Kuschminder et al., 2015, p. 52 SS-4).

While tightening border security may change migration patterns, migration policies are unlikely to influence the volume of people migrating (de Haas, 2011c, p. 26 C-3). Czaika and Hobolth (2014, p. 19 SO-4) report that, while increasing the restrictiveness of asylum policy appears to reduce the number of asylum applications, it also appears to increase the number of people migrating irregularly to the extent that 'the deflection effect may balance out or even exceed the deterrence effect'. According to Mbaye (2014, p. 14 PS-7), 'restrictive immigration policies may be less effective in staving off illegal migration and can incite potential migrants to turn to illegal methods'. Similarly, the Clandestino Project (Duvell, 2009, p. 2 SO-4) argues that inefficient or complicated regulations and policies for managing migration contribute to migrants choosing to ignore formal systems and entering via irregular means instead.

Broader development progress

Socio-economic development in source countries will continue to enable migration to Europe. The relationship between development and migration has been described as a 'migration hump', explaining that it is not individuals from the poorest households who migrate to Europe, but rather those who have access to sufficient resources to pay for their journey (de Haas, 2011b, p. 562 SO-4; Loschmann and Siegel, 2014, p. 145 SO-4). De Haas (2011b, p. 562 SO-4) states that 'the combination of modest levels of economic development and education (which enable and inspire people to migrate) and relative poverty (or deprivation) on the one hand, and the persistence of significant opportunity gaps with geographically proximate countries on the other' drives people to migrate. Patterns showing that 'middle income countries have the highest average levels of emigration' reflect this theory, and support the understanding that trade and investment in a source country reinforces, rather than reduces, emigration (2011b, p. 562 SO-4).

The growing youth population in the Horn of Africa may also drive further migration from the region. Increasing employment and education opportunities in these countries would be unlikely to counteract this since people migrate not only to seek better education opportunities, but also to earn higher wages for their labour (IMI and RMMS, 2012, p. 19 PS-6). As de Haas (2007, p. 833 SO-3) concludes: 'as long as aspirations increase faster than the livelihood opportunities in sending regions and countries, social and economic development will tend to coincide with sustained or increased out-migration'. The significant differences in opportunities in European countries and Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East will not disappear quickly; if immigration into Europe from these regions continues to be restricted, it is likely that high levels of irregular migration will also persist (IMI and RMMS, 2012, p. 27 PS-6).

Conclusion

It is clear from the evidence that the factors influencing an individual's decision to migrate via irregular means operate at a number of levels. International and national policies, economic conditions, and political situations are important in determining why a person of a particular nationality may migrate. However, there are many other factors related to a person's own circumstances, the culture of their community, and their local and wider social network which can encourage or prevent them from migrating. Several factors seem to be particularly important: personal security from conflict, economic opportunity and security to rebuild and improve their and their family's life, and having the financial resources to be able to migrate. The literature is clear that, in the current crisis, the factors influencing a person's decision to migrate irregularly differ for different nationalities and for individuals, and that these factors may change en route and over time. For those who chose to migrate despite lacking the legal means, their access to smuggling networks and their experiences in the different countries they cross are also important factors which shape where and how they decide to migrate. Finally, the influence of varying types of social network is particularly important in informing migrants' decisions and capacity to migrate. The role of social networks is discussed in more detail in the following section.

Evidence review: social networks

Key findings:

Kinship, religious and other social networks play a key role in the decision to migrate, and in determining migration journeys and return. This includes the role of family members in host countries, who may encourage prospective migrants through remittances and information.

Migrants proactively seek information from broader networks and are exposed to information through mass media, word of mouth and social media.

Technology has changed the ways in which social networks operate in relation to migration. TV and mobile technology remain a main source of information for migrants, but recent evidence points to the increasing role of online and social media.

Internet-based technology and social media are putting different groups of migrants and non-migrant populations in direct contact. However, the documentation on the use of mobile social media is almost exclusively confined to Syrians.

Local social networks often involve ties with other migrants, and with smugglers. Migrants often provide each other with reciprocal support for day-to-day subsistence, sharing food and accommodation, as well as information on travel routes and destinations. These local networks are often informal and kept 'under the radar'.

This section addresses the following question:

What is the evidence on the role that social networks (peer, family, others) play in decisions to migrate?

Introduction: the role of networks in migration

Theory and research on social networks is very well established in studies of migration. As early as the late nineteenth century connections were being made between migrants' links back to their country of origin and growing numbers of migrants. In 1907, the US Commissioner General for Immigration recognised the power of positive stories transmitted back home by immigrants via letters and during visits, and said of transatlantic migration that 'almost innumerable "endless chains" are thus daily being forged link by link' (Commissioner General, 1907, p. 60 cf. Herman, 2006 p. 198 PC-6). Commentators have highlighted the vital importance of understanding how migrant networks influence migration at different stages of the migration process, and how migrant networks can affect outcomes for migrants, their families and their wider communities (Poros, 2011 C-2). This section outlines the evidence on the role of social networks in decisions to migrate, especially within the context of contemporary migrations to Europe. Firstly, an overview of network theory and how it has been studied in the context of migration from MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa is offered. Secondly, a discussion of theory and evidence to support a more nuanced understanding of migration networks is put forward. Following this is an extended discussion focused on the role of technology, communication tools and online media in migration networks. Finally, studies of migrant social networks in 'transit locations' are scrutinised, before concluding remarks are made on the state of the evidence.

Understanding migration networks

Network theory, which has developed significantly in migration studies over the past few decades, demonstrates how migrants in places of origin and destination are connected through ties of kinship, friendship, and ethnicity. According to this theory, 'an expanding network increases the likelihood of migration, as the social capital that lies embedded in these personal ties reduces the costs and risks of migration' (Herman, 2006, p. 198 PC-6). These

networks operate at different scales – from personal ties such as family and friends, to broad patterns of social links or 'migration channels' (Gold, 2005 SO-3).

A number of studies were retrieved during the literature search that shed light on some of the ways that networks at different levels can help to illuminate migration dynamics. In one of the few cross-country studies on migration networks found in this literature search, Barthel and Neumayer (2015 SO-4) find evidence of substantial 'spatial dependence' in asylum migration among geographically proximate source countries: i.e. a migrant may draw on networks of support which include migrants from other source countries which are similar to their own (Barthel and Neumayer, 2015, p. 1132 SO-4). Complementing this macro-level study, a number of researchers have drawn from case studies to illuminate the role of networks at the level of the individual. Herman's (2006 PC-6) study of migration from Morocco and Senegal to Spain, and from Egypt and Ghana to Italy, confirms the importance of family networks in the propensity and ability to migrate. In her study, the strength of a migrant's ties largely determined the amount of assistance that their network could provide. In other words, friends and acquaintances provided the least assistance, and family the most. However, for those who had migrated irregularly, help was received predominantly from friends, rather than relatives.

In their research on Senegalese migration to Europe, Schapendonk and van Moppes also confirm the importance of 'traditional migration encouraging factor[s]', including settled migrants in the host country. Settled migrants, according to the authors, send financial support (remittances) and 'pre-ordained positive information' back home, and as a result both directly and indirectly encourage the migration of other family or community members (Schapendonk and van Moppes, 2007, p. 2 PS-6)

Gender, migration and social networks

A growing body of research has documented the influence of social networks in international migration and important gender differences in the migration process, though research integrating these two aspects is rare. Most research has assumed that networks affect male and female mobility in the same way (Toma and Vause, 2010, p. 1 SO-4). More recent work has attempted to correct this bias. Toma and Vause, in their longitudinal study of Congolese (Democratic Republic of Congo) and Senegalese migrant networks, identify several ways in which gender affects migrant networks in these contexts. Firstly, men's networks tend to be larger and more diffuse, whereas women's are smaller and most often composed exclusively of close family members. Women are also much less likely to move to a place where no member of their network is located. Another study using the same data set (Liu, 2013 SO-4) reaches similar conclusions: for men, non-household migrant networks have significant effects on migration, whereas household migrant networks are most significant for female migration. There is, however, significant 'spouse bias' in these findings (i.e. when women migrate to join husbands), which exaggerates these household network effects.

In an earlier study on Moroccan family networks and migration culture, Heering et al. (2007) find further differences in the factors driving men and women to migrate. Their analysis found that migration intentions are stronger for men living in regions with a migration culture, and that the presence of family networks overseas has a slightly negative effect on these intentions. Conversely, for women, living in a region with a migration culture has no effect on migration intentions, whereas family networks abroad seem to have a positive effect on intentions to move. They also reveal a difference between women in employment 'who judge their financial situation negatively' and 'more conservative Moroccan women'. The former have the highest migration intentions, whereas the latter are unlikely to have intentions of migrating independently (Heering et al., 2007, p. 323 PS-6). Combined, these studies point to important differences between female and male migration networks, and the important role that gender norms play in determining these differences.

No studies were found that investigated gender and migrant social networks in Eastern Africa or the Middle East. Since the majority of migrants currently arriving in Europe are from these regions, this constitutes a significant gap in the evidence. Only one study (Koser Akcapar, 2010 PS-6) found in the literature search discussed gender in relation to social networks in transit contexts. This is discussed in more detail later.

Dynamic and diffuse migration networks

Recent research has moved beyond traditional understandings of networks as static and unchanging entities to look at the dynamic nature of networks and the ways in which they always also involve networking i.e. the creation, maintenance and mobilisation of different networks at different times (Schapendonk, 2014 C-2; Poros, 2011 C-2). Schapendonk's research with Sub-Saharan African migrants highlights the changeability of network connections (new ties and lost ties, changing power relations and new forms of exchange), the effort required to create and maintain social networks, and the relational aspect of networks (Schapendonk 2014 C-2). Schapendonk and others consider the ways in which networks evolve during the migration journey, between origin and destination. This is exemplified by studies of migrants in 'transit' locations, and will be discussed further below.

Related to this more nuanced understanding of networks is the idea that the feedback mechanisms that influence migration patterns are not limited to direct social

networks. These are 'absent ties' (Granovetter, 1973 cf. Bakewell and Jolivet 2015, PC-6), or broadcast feedback. Broadcast feedback can be: (i) induced, i.e. information is sought out by a prospective migrant; (ii) general, i.e. information on migration is disseminated indiscriminately to a wide audience by the mass media; or (iii) embedded, i.e. when images and ideas are transmitted either through visible signs or through stories and rumours that indicate the condition of migrants lives (ibid., pp. 6–7). Feedback through direct social networks and through these broader mechanisms is especially relevant to discussions about technology and communication tools in migration, and are investigated in more detail later in this section.

When settled migrants discourage additional migration

Studies of migration networks have tended to assume that the existence of social networks perpetuates migration movements. More recently, however, studies have emerged that point to the role of networks in discouraging migration (Timmerman et al., 2014a, p. 500 PS-5; see also Engberson, 2013 PS-7). For example, there is evidence that settled migrants may deliberately seek to reduce further migration from within their social networks. In their study of declining migration rates between Morocco and the Netherlands, Snel et al. find that Moroccan-born residents in the Netherlands are willing to provide substantially less assistance to potential migrants than they received during their own migration (Snel et al., 2013, p. 3 PS-7). They argue that, in the case of the Netherlands, macro-level developments, such as declining work opportunities, more restrictive immigration policies and growing hostility in public opinion towards immigrants, have not just direct negative effects on migration rates, but also affect the willingness of settled migrants to support potential newcomers (ibid., p. 11, See also Engberson, 2013 PS-7).

Technology, social networks and migration

The role of technology and communications tools in migration has gained increasing prominence in studies of social networks and migration. Modern means of communication, especially TV and the Internet, shape perceptions towards migration and expose people to the idea of migrating (Timmerman et al., 2014 PS-5, Schapendonk and van Moppes, 2007 PS-6). Schapendonk and van Moppes, in their study of migration aspirations in Senegal, find that biased images of wealth and Western luxury spread by these media contribute in the eyes of young people in particular to 'the widely acknowledged view that "Senegal is misery and Europe is paradise"' (Schapendonk and van Moppes PS-6 2007, p. 2 PS-6). However, although many Senegalese migrants arrive in Europe misinformed and ill-prepared, a large number of migrants, possibly even the majority, are aware of and ready for the difficult conditions they may face in Europe, underlining their determination to migrate.

Several scholars demonstrate the importance of mobile telephones in migration. Collyer, for example, claims that trans-Saharan migration 'would be virtually impossible without cheap mobile communications' (Collyer, 2007 cf. Schaub, 2012, p. 127 PS-6). Schaub's research with Congolese migrants in Morocco concludes that mobile phones are central to the migration process, and that 'migrants draw on the unprecedented accessibility of contacts equipped with mobile phones to tie together novel, geographically expansive networks' (Schaub, 2012, p. 126 PS-6). Chatelard's (2005 PS-5) study of Iraqi migrants in Jordan argues that the country is an important migration hub because 'Iraqi prospective migrants to the West can … obtain information on where best to leave to by calling their relatives who are already in the West, or get information on asylum procedures via the Internet'.

New media sources, particularly social media, are playing an increasing role in communication between migrants in Western Europe and non-migrants in origin countries (Dekker et al., 2015 PC-6; Dekker and Engbersen, 2012 PS-8). These new media sources provide a forum where information, stories, photographs, and videos are exchanged, and, unlike traditional media, which mainly allows for one-to-one communication, online media are often also accessible to people beyond the migrant's direct social network (Dekker et al., 2015 PC-6). Dekker et al., in their study of migrants in four Western European destination countries (the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the UK) and non-migrants in three origin countries (Brazil, Morocco, and Ukraine), find that online media have become important channels of communication. Using social media helps migrants to maintain strong ties with family and friends, facilitates communication that can be useful in the migration process, establishes new networks, and is also 'a rich source of unofficial insider knowledge on migration' (Dekker and Engbersen, 2012, p. 2 PS-8).

Work by Dekker and Engberson (2012, p. 2 PS-8) finds that newly-established ties are only a small part of online transnational communication, but are actively transforming migration networks and facilitating migration (Dekker and Engberson, 2012, p. 4 PS-8). However, there are to date no quantitative studies that test the relationship between international migration decision-making and the use of online media (Dekker et al. 2015 PC-6). This is a significant gap in migration research.

'Facebook refugees'

A 2014 report from the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) is the only publication by a research centre found during this evidence search that discusses social media in relation to irregular migration to Europe (RMMS, 2014 PS-6). In the study, many respondents highlighted using social media (including

Facebook, YouTube and online fora) to obtain up-to-date information, for instance on irregular migration routes and weather conditions.

The role of technology and the Internet as a tool in irregular migrations to Europe has been extensively reported in the mainstream press, notably Brunwasser's 2015 New York Times article entitled 'A 21st-Century Migrant's Essentials: Food, Shelter, Smartphone' (Brunwasser, 2015 J-2; see also Byrne and Solomon, 2015 J-2; New Scientist, 2015 J-2; Price, 2015 J-2; Watson et al., 2015 J-2). Brunwasser highlights the use of tools including smartphone maps, GPS apps, social media and messaging apps like WhatsApp by migrants travelling to Europe. Reporting from Belgrade, Serbia, he claims that migrants there 'depend on them to post real-time updates about routes, arrests, border guard movements and transport, as well as places to stay and prices, all the while keeping in touch with family and friends' (Brunwasser, 2015 J-2). Watson et al. (2015 J-2) for CNN quotes UNHCR official Alessandra Morelli as saying 'There's a lot of technology … the level of organization that I see here in this context is new', and that 'Facebook indeed is playing an incredible role'. Brunwasser explains that Syrians' migration journeys are helped by Arabic-language Facebook groups such as 'Smuggling into the EU', with over 23,000 members, and 'How To Emigrate to Europe', with more than 39,000. He indicates that traffickers and smugglers may also be connected to these online networks; on the Arabic-language Facebook group 'Trafficking to Europe', one 'trafficker' gives information on the costs and services provided for the journey from Turkey to Greece, and even offers a 50% discount for children under five. Brunwasser also suggests, however, that technological tools are allowing migrants to bypass smugglers and undertake large parts of their journeys independently.

Aid organisations are responding to the Internet capabilities of 'refugees from Syria and other countries' in Europe (IRC, 2015 SO-2). The International Rescue Committee (IRC), in partnership with Google and Mercy Corps, has recently launched a smartphone-accessible website providing up-to-date, location-specific information to refugees arriving in Europe (ibid. SO-2). Business Insider UK reports that aid workers in Belgrade have developed a web-based app providing information about essential services, such as the correct cost of taxis, toilet locations and places to buy food (Price, 2015 J-2). New Scientist recently ran an article featuring an interview with Kate Coyer, director of the Civil Society and Technology Project at Central European University in Budapest, who has been working with others in Hungary to provide power outlets and Wifi hotspots for migrants because 'people were desperately trying to find ways to charge their phones' (New Scientist, 2015 J-2).

These articles indicate some of the ways in which feedback mechanisms via the Internet and online social media platforms are being used to gather information and obtain assistance from networks that go far beyond family or kinship (2015 PC-6). This can come from official news sources, but also from public online forums where co-nationals and other stakeholders in the migration journey (in this case, smugglers) can feed information back to prospective migrants.

This evidence is of course anecdotal, and there has as yet been no systematic research on the role of technology and the Internet in current migration to Europe, nor any attempt to test the relationship between migration decision-making and online media use. In particular, the role of technology and the Internet in Syrian migration requires systematic research. One survey in the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan found that '89% of respondents own a mobile handset and 85% own at least one SIM card', and 'more than 60% reported accessing the internet via their mobile phone only' (Maitland and Xu, 2015 PS-5). This may be indicative of a generally high level of mobile technological connectivity among Syrian refugees (migrants discussed in these news articles are exclusively Syrian). Although Brunwasser and Byrne and Soloman (for the Financial Times) suggest that these technological tools are used by migrants from across Africa and the Middle East, and previous research points to the use of mobile technology and the Internet by migrants of other nationalities, the RMMS report is the only source of information referencing the use of social media by migrants of other nationalities in current irregular migrations to Europe. Given that both migrants and non-migrants 'are likely to be subject to digital inequalities' (Dekker et al., 2015 PC-6), it is important not to generalise from these findings, especially since systematic research in this area is entirely absent.

Local and transnational ties in transit

As discussed earlier, both transnational and local ties are of great importance for migrants in transit contexts. Transnational networks radiate from the transit area back to the country of origin, and forward towards contacts in Europe and other destination countries. Local contacts are forged in the transit location, often with other migrants from the same ethnic group or religion, but also with others, including smugglers. Several studies have detailed the ways in which networks are being used in these contexts to cope with the day-to-day precariousness of being an irregular migrant in a transit zone, and to facilitate migrants' onward movements. Wissink et al.'s (2013 PS-8) study in Turkey concludes that local and transnational social networks were of utmost importance in a transit context where migration intentions are in the process of being shaped (these assertions have been mirrored in other studies, e.g. Schapendonk, 2014 C-2, Koser Akcapar, 2010 PS-6, Kuschminder et al., 2015 SO-4, Schapendonk and van Moppes, 2007 PS-6). Much of this research in transit zones also demonstrates 'network

failures, disconnections, social frictions, and hard network work' (Schapendonk, 2014 C-2).

Maintaining and consolidating transnational contacts with relatives and close friends both at home and abroad, as well as creating other personal contacts through ethnic and religious links, are what Koser Akcapar says are 'the outcomes of living in a transit country' (Koser Akcapar 2010, PS-6). Wissink et al. argue that the financial and emotional support of transnational networks, both in the country of origin and with relatives in Europe, is vitally important in the formation of migrant intentions. In addition to this, some migrants maintained ties with other migrants whom they had met en route, but who had since reached Europe. According to Wissink et al., networks connecting migrants with their countries of origin influence the migration pathway by 'encouraging a certain strategy', whereas the existence of ties in Europe was mainly utilised in order to facilitate onward migration or to access resources for day-to-day subsistence (Wissink et al., 2013, p. 1098 PS-8).

These transnational links are not static, however, and can be subject to failures and disconnections over time. Wissink et al. show how support from a network can be interrupted if, for example, mobile phones are confiscated upon arrest, or if families abroad decide or are compelled to stop providing financial assistance (Wissink et al., 2013, p. 1098 PS-8). In his study of Iranian migrants in Turkey, Koser Akcapar suggests that, although existing contacts in Turkey can lower the initial costs of migration, they cannot be depended on for continuing support, especially if a migrant's stay is extended in another transit country. However, his study also demonstrates how local networks that are (re)created in Turkey among Iranians 'sometimes provide better opportunities and access to information and assistance' (Koser Akcapar, 2010, p. 185-6 PS-6).

Local social networks are key to understanding migration in transit locations. Migrants often provide each other with reciprocal support for day-to-day subsistence, sharing food and accommodation with fellow migrants in transit locations (Wissink et al. 2013, p. 1099 PS-8). According to Schapendonk and van Moppes, Sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco 'form collectives, often along ethnic lines, in which information on security matters and work possibilities is shared' (Schapendonk and van Moppes 2007, p. 2 PS-6). Migrants also access information within these social networks about travel routes and destinations, informing their subsequent migration decisions and onward movements (Kuschminder et al., 2015 p. 60 SO-4). The transient nature of migrant populations in these locations means that these local networks are highly dynamic and changeable. Wissink et al.'s study in Turkey found that local ties are generally both weak and short-lived, but nevertheless vital for the exchange of information regarding onward migration to Greece (Wissink et al. 2013, p. 1,099 PS-8).

Despite the seemingly high levels of connectivity and information-sharing between migrants in transit contexts, individual migrants may keep certain information secret. Wissink et al. (2013 PS-8) and Schapendonk and van Moppes (2007 PS-6) argue that migrants do not tend to disclose concrete plans for border crossings, for fear that these plans may be jeopardised through disclosure to other migrants. Schapendonk and van Moppes even detect a level of competition between Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco. Nevertheless, local, as well as transnational, networks clearly provide a vital resource for many migrants travelling to Europe (Schapendonk and van Moppes, 2007 PS-6).

Gender and religion in transit migration

The only study of social networks and transit migration found in the literature search that includes an extended discussion of gender is Koser Akcapar's (2010 PS-6) study of Iranian migrants in Turkey. Like studies of men's and women's social networks in countries of origin, his work suggests that gender affects the nature of an individual's networks. He argues that, in the context of Iranians in Turkey, men are obliged to work in the informal economy, while women are in touch with other members of their social groups, creating connections and sourcing information. Whilst some of his respondents retained links with Iran, and others received assistance and financial help from relatives in 'the West', women also worked to create new networks in Turkey to provide local mutual support. These networks, predominantly made up of close friends, co-ethnics/religionists, and kin, are similar to the networks respondents had in Iran (ibid., p. 183).

Koser Akcapar's research is also one of two key studies found that discuss the role of religious networks for migrants in transit (see also Chatelard, 2005). Both of these studies concern the role of Christian (and Baha'i, for Koser Akcapar) churches and networks and their connections with migrants. Chatelard's study of Iraqi migrants in Jordan discusses how, in the absence of relief from foreign NGOs or Jordanian institutions, Jordan's thriving Christian community and church charities provide assistance to Iraqis. She notes, however, that the vast majority of Iraqis connected to these charities are Christians or Sabeans, and, 'in practice, it is true that Christian charities offer some of their services more willingly to Christian than to Muslim Iraqis' (Chatelard, 2005 PS-5). Similarly, Koser Akcapar's study finds that non-Muslim social networks (i.e. Christian and Baha'i) offer more to Iranians than Islamic institutions (Koser Akcapar, 2010, p. 17 PS-6). Beyond basic assistance, Koser Akcapar argues that religion may also provide a way for migrants to forge new social networks, stating that some respondents 'received psychological, financial and institutional support from churches and Baha'i spiritual assemblies in Turkey and abroad'; others ended up

converting to Christianity (ibid.). He also mentions cases where Iranians have gained resettlement through sponsors found by the churches as a result of their global networks (ibid., pp. 180–81). These studies, though important in highlighting the role that factors such as gender and religion can have on social networks for migrants in transit locations, are both context- and time-specific. There also appears to be a gap in research on the role of identity characteristics, such as age and ethnicity, and reasons for migrating in shaping the networks of migrants of other nationalities during their journeys to Europe.

Conclusion

Social networks and information flows are vital components of migration systems and migrant decision-making. Despite this, evidence on the role of networks in current irregular migrations to Europe remains scarce. To quote Poros, policy-makers (and indeed researchers) 'might do well to focus more on the effects social networks can have on migration flows' in this rapidly evolving context (Poros, 2011 C-2). Gaps in evidence on the role of networks and information flows in the current crisis that require further investigation include: the role of networks in informing initial decisions to migrate; the role of networks during the journey and in transit locations; the way that technology, communication tools and online media are shaping these networks and affecting decisions; and how individual characteristics, such as age, gender and religion, relate to these networks. As the research outlined above demonstrates, a better understanding of migration networks is essential to developing a clearer picture of current movements from MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe.

Conclusion

This review has assessed the available evidence on key factors affecting irregular migration in the current Mediterranean crisis, and potential future changes. By definition the evidence on irregular migrants who enter a European country with a visa and overstay is difficult to find and assess, and therefore this review focused on irregular means of migration, i.e. the illegal routes and means that migrants use when legal ones are not available to them. While the current situation of migration and refugee flows towards Europe is commonly defined as a 'crisis', the review found that it follows pre-existing dynamics, even though the number of deaths and the large number of people on the move is clearly unprecedented. The evidence review is structured around the following three questions.

1. What do we know about the predictability/patterns of migrant flows from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in this current crisis? Can we use that information to effectively predict future migrant flows?

While data on irregular migration is by definition not always accurate or reliable, analysis of current trends points to a clear increase in people migrating via irregular means, most of whom are of Syrian or Eritrean nationality. Accurately predicting future migration trends is not possible based on currently available data because too many – often unpredictable – variables are likely to influence future flows and patterns of migration. Even so, possible scenarios appear to point to a steady increase in migration, with a likely increase in circular migration, but not necessarily in the short term.

The routes that migrants take evolve according to a number of factors, including the means and information that people have and the influence of smuggling networks, as well broader factors like the border regimes in different countries and the economic opportunities available to migrants along the way. The category of countries along migration routes is also changing, with some traditional 'destination' countries turning into transit or emigration countries (e.g. Libya). This also affects the decisions migrants make, not just to move, but also where to go and how to get there.

2. What factors influence decisions to leave Sub-Saharan Africa and MENA and migrate to Europe via irregular means in this current crisis (with a focus on key source countries: Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia)?

Turning to causes and inhibitors of migration, it is important to recognise that people's reasons for migrating may be the same whether or not they have the legal right to enter a country. Personal security and economic security are important drivers of migration, whether regular routes are available or not and, importantly, regardless of whether a person is entitled to asylum status or not. The evidence suggests that having the capacity (financial or otherwise) as well as intention to migrate are both critical factors determining whether a person migrates or not: Syrians are wealthier than many other migrant groups affected by conflict and economic underdevelopment. Restricting entry does not appear effective in reducing migration flows, but rather tends to force more people to take irregular and potentially dangerous routes. The evidence suggests that a lack of regular means to migrate is not a strong deterrent to migration.

Drivers of migration can also be social or cultural in nature: the evidence describes a self-perpetuating culture of migration which develops over time, as smuggling networks grow, information increases and transnational networks develop. Decisions to migrate are affected by sudden changes, such as revolution, as well as more slowly changing situations, such as the employment opportunities that different countries offer.

3. What is the evidence on the role that social networks (peer, family, others) play in decisions to migrate?

Social networks play an important role not just in an individual's decision to migrate, but also on the choices people make along their journeys. These networks operate at different levels and can be grounded in or determined by family relationships, religion and nationality. These can reflect existing or emerging relationships between individual migrants, largely through the use of social media, but also with smugglers and with broader diaspora networks. Social networks can also play a variety of roles in a person's ability and motivation to migrate, such as social pressure to provide for one's family, offering resources to pay for the journey and providing information on possible routes and opportunities once in the destination country.

Evidence gaps

The review revealed some significant gaps in the evidence base. The evidence on detailed migration routes and their different components, especially across North Africa and from Eritrea and Somalia, is limited. In contrast, the evidence on the various and ever-changing routes out of Syria and towards Europe is fast improving, providing much-needed insights to develop policy actions and pilot new and different ways to address the crisis. Details are also scarce on the factors influencing how long a person spends in different countries during their journey to Europe (and little is known about people who move on to other countries after a period spent in a European country). This knowledge gap extends to migrants previously settled in a different country, e.g. Iran, when they attempt to enter Europe through irregular means/routes.

A major gap in the evidence relates to smuggling networks, especially ones that are more informal or fluid in nature, including their influence on the destination of migrants and the overall feasibility of irregular migration. This poses serious constraints to the various attempts currently being discussed and increasingly funded to fight smugglers to deter migration, as they often rely on inadequate information and analysis. Across all themes, inadequate accurate and reliable data imposes significant limitations on the kind of analysis that can be done and the conclusions that can be reached, especially on future trends and patterns. In turn, this limits what can be put forward as realistic policy recommendations to address the current crisis.

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Wissink, M., Düvell, F., van Eerdewijk, A., 2013. Dynamic Migration Intentions and the Impact of Socio-Institutional Environments: A Transit Migration Hub in Turkey. J. Ethn. Migr. Stud. 39, 1087–1105. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2013.778026
Zimmerman, S., 2011. Danger, Loss, and Disruption in Somalia After 1991: Practicalities and Needs Behind Refugee Decision-Making. Refug. Surv. Q. 30, 45–66. doi:10.1093/rsq/hdr004
Zimmerman, S., 2009. Irregular Secondary Movements to Europe: Seeking Asylum beyond Refuge. J. Refug. Stud. 22, 74–96. doi:10.1093/jrs/fen048

Appendix 1

Search strings and sources of evidence accessed

Databases accessed

Google and Google Scholar
http://www.knomad.org/
http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/projects/demig
https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=MIG
http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/
http://go.worldbank.org/JITC7NYTT0
http://www.migrationpolicy.org/

Communities of Practice used

- IOM
- Migration Policy Centre
- International Migration Institute
- UNHCR
- Frontex
- Migration Policy Institute

Principle journals used

- Journal of Refugee Studies
- Migration Studies
- Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies
- International Migration Review
- Refugee Survey Quarterly
- International Migration
- Population, Space and Place
- Migration and Development

Experts consulted

- Hannah Postel, Centre for Global Development
- Melissa Siegel, United Nations University at the University of Maastrict
- Jorgen Carling, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)
- Nando Sigona, University of Birmingham

Search Strings used

Google Scholar:

- Migration "and" flows "and" Mediterranean [since 2010]
- Irregular migration "and" pattern "and" Mediterranean" [since 2010]
- Season "and" Irregular migration "and" Europe [since 2010]
- social networks "and" irregular migration [2005-2015]
- Mediterranean "and" migration "and" social "and" networks [2005-2015]
- social networks "and" forced migration [2005-2015]
- social networks "and" drivers "and" migration [2005-2015]
- illegal "and" migration "and" causes [2005-2015]
- people "and" smuggling "and" Mediterranean "and" networks [2005-2015]
- onward migration "and" motivation "and" Libya [2005-2015]
- irregular secondary movements "and" motivation [2005-2015]
- "individual choice "and" forced migration [2005-2015]
- Ethiopia "and" migration "and" causes [2005-2015]
- Syria "and" Migration "and" causes [2005-2015]
- Afghanistan "and" migration "and" causes [2005-2015]

- Eritrea “and” migration “and” causes [2005-2015]
- Migration to Europe “and” motivation [2005-2015]
- Somalia “and” secondary migration [2005-2015]
- Syria “and” secondary migration [2005-2015]
- Syria “and” onward migration [2005-2015]
- irregular “and” onward migration “and” refugees “and” causes [2005-2015]
- Forced migration “and” individual “and” choices [2005- 2015]
- Determinants “and” migration “and” Europe [2005-2015]
- Determinants “and” migration [2005-2015]
- Driver “and” irregular migration “and” Europe [2005-2015]
- Migration crisis “and” motivation [2010-2015]
- Mediterranean crisis “and” motivation “and” migration [2010-2015]
- Motivation “and” Irregular migration “and” Europe [2005-2015]
- Mediterranean “and” migration “and” social “and” networks
- social “and” networks “and” migration “and” Ethiopia
- social “and” networks “and” migration “and” Syria
- social “and” networks “and” migration “and” Afghanistan
- social “and” networks “and” migration “and” Somalia
- social “and” networks “and” migration “and” Eritrea
- social “and” networks “and” migration “and” decision-making
- social “and” networks “and” refugees “and” Europe [2005-2015]
- transnational “and” networks “and” migration “and” motivation [2005-2015]
- social “and” networks “and” migration “and” motivation [2005-2015]

Google:
- Drivers “and” forced migration “and” Syria
- social “and” networks “and” migration crisis
- irregular “and” secondary “and” movements

Refugee Survey Quarterly:
- social “and” networks
- motivation

Journal of Refugee Studies:
- social “and” networks
- motivation

Journal of Migration Studies:
- social “and” networks
- motivation

International Migration Review:
- social “and” networks “and” motivation

Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies:
- social “and” networks “and” motivation
- social networks

Migration Policy Institute:
- social “and” networks
- Mediterranean “and” crisis

Migration Policy Centre:
- social “and” networks
- drivers
- motivation
- Mediterranean “and” crisis

Migration Policy Group
- drivers
- social “and” networks
- motivation “and” migration

IMI.ox.ac.uk:
- social “and” networks
- drivers
- motivations

RSC.ox.ac.uk:
- social “and” networks

UNHCR.org:
- Browse by country: Somalia
- Browse by country: Ethiopia
- Browse by country: Eritrea
- Browse by country: Syria
- Browse by country: Afghanistan

IOM.int:
- Publications – Search – social networks
- Publications – Search – motivation
- Publications – Search – Mediterranean crisis

Knomad.org
- Publications

Appendix 2

Table 5: Table recording the quality of the sources retrieved

Author	Title - if necessary for differenciation	Year	Type and design (code)	Quality if primary								Quality if secondary or conceptual				
				Conceptual framing		Methodological transparency		Validity		Relevance	Score (0-8)	Quality	Methodological transparency	Validty	Relevance	Score (0-4)
				a	b	a	b	a	b							Observations
Adikhari, P.		2013``	PS	1	1	1	1	1		1	6					0
Altai Consulting		2015	PC	1	1	1	1	1		2	7					0
Altai Consulting/UNHCR		2013	PS	1	1	1	1	1		2	7					0
Arar		2015	PS	1	1	1	1			1	5					0
AsliSirin Oner, N. and Genc, D.		2015	SO								0		1	1	1	3
Baizan and Gonzalez-Ferrera		2014	SO								0	1	1	1	1	4
Bakewell and Jolivet		2015	PC	1	1	1	1	1		1	6					0
Banulescu-Bogdan and Fratzke		2015	J								0			1	1	2
Barthel an Neumayer		2015	SO								0	1	1	1	1	4
Boubarki		2013	SO								0			1	1	2
Bredeloup and Priez		2011	SO								0			1	1	2
Brunwasser		2015	J								0			1	1	2
Bryne and Soloman		2015	J								0			1	1	2
Chatelard		2005	PS	1	1	1				2	5					0
Collyer and de haas		2012	C								0	1	1	1	1	4
Collyer, M.		2005	PC	1	1	1	1			2	6					
Czaika and Holborth		2014	SO								0	1	1	1	1	4
de Clerk, H.		2015	PS	1	1	1	1	1		1	6					0
de Haas		2011a	SO								0	1	1	1	1	4
de Haas		2010	C								0					3

de Haas et al.	2014	SO								0		1	1	1	3
de Haas, H.	2011b	C								0	1		1	1	3
de Haas, H.	2007	SO								0	1		1	1	3
de Haas, H.	2015	SO								0			1	1	2
Dekker and Engerbersen	2012	PS	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	8					0
Dekker et al.	2015	PC	1	1	1	1	1		2	6					0
Delauney, G.	2015	SO								0			1	1	2
Doanvo	2015	SO								0	1	1			2
Docquier F, et al.	2014	SO									1	1	1	1	4
Doomernik	2013	SO								0			1	1	2
Doucet, L.	2015	SO								0			1	1	2
Duvel	2009	SO								0	1	1	1	1	4
Engberson	2013	PS	1	1	1	1	1		2	7					0
Epstein	2008	C								0			1	1	2
Fahim and Samaan	2015	SO								0			1	1	2
Farguez	2013	SO								0					3
Farguez and Bonfanti	2014	SO								0		1	1	1	3
Fanguez and Fandrich	2012	SO								0	1		1	1	3
Flauhaus and de Haas	2014	SO								0	1	1	1	1	4

Frontex	Western Balkans Annual Risk	2015c	PS		1	1	1	1	2	6						0
Frontex	Annual Risk Assessment	2015b	PC		1	1	1	1	2	6						0
Frontex	Migratory routes map	2015a	PS							0		1			1	2
Frontex	Western Balkans Annual	2014b	PS		1	1	1	1	2	6						0
Frontex	Annual Risk Assessment	2014a	SO		1	1	1	1	2	6						0
Frontex		2013	PS		1	1	1	1	2	6						0
Gold		2005	SO							0	1			1	1	3
Hatton and Williamson		2009	SO							0	1	1		1	1	4
Hatton, T.		2009	SO							0		1		1	1	3
Heering et al.		2007	PS	1	1	1	1	1	1	6						0
Herman		2006	PC	1	1	1	1		2	6						0
Herandez -Carretero and Carling		2012	PS	1	1	1	1		2	5						0
Horst		2006	PS	1	1	1	1		1	5						0
Human Rights Watch		2015	PS		1	1			2	4						0
Icduygu and Yukseker		2012	SO							0	1			1	1	3
IMI		2012	PS	1	1	1	1	1	1	6						0
Kaasar and Dourgnon		2014	SO							0				1	1	2
Kane		2011	SO							0				1	1	3
Kassar et al.		2014	SS							0		1		1	1	3
Kawakibi		2013	SO							0				1	1	2
Kelley, C. et al		2015	SO							0				1	1	2
Kibreab, G.		2013	PS	1	1	1		1	2	6						0
Kirisci and Ferris		2015	SO							0				1	1	2
Klvanova		2010	PS	1	1	1			1	4						0
Korfali, D.K. and Sert, D.S		2015	PS	1	1	1	1		1	5						0
Koser Akapar		2010	PS	1	1	1	1		2	6						0
Koser and Pinkerton										0		1		1	1	3

Kraler et al	2014	C								0	1		1	1	3	
Kuschminder et al	2015	SS								0	1	1	1	1	4	
Liu	2013	SO								0	1	1	1	1	4	
Long	2015	SO								0	1		1	1	3	
Loschmann, C. and Siegel, M.	2014	SO								0	1	1	1	1	4	
Loschmann, C. et al.	2014	PS	1	1	1	1		2		6					0	
Mbaye	2014	PS	1	1	1	1	1	2		7	1	1	1	1	4	
Melander and Oberg	2007	SO								0		1	1	3	3	2
Melander and Oberg	2006	SO								0		1	1	2	3	1
Migration Policy Centre	2015	SO								0				0	2	1
Mironova et al.	2015	PS	1	1	1			2		5				0	0	2
Mironova et al.	2014	PS	1	1	1					6					0	2
Monsutti	2010	PS	1	1	1					5					0	3
Monsutti		PS	1	1	1			2		5					0	2+3
Moore, H.	2015	SO								0			1	1	2	1+2
Morehouse and Blomfield	2011	SO								0	1		1	1	3	1
Moret et al.	2006	PC	1	1	1	1		1		5					0	2
Natter	2015	SO								0	1		1	1	3	1+2
Naude, W.	2010	SO								0	1	1	1	1	4	2
New Scientist	2015	J													2	3
Nyberg Sorensen	2006	SO								0					2	1
OECD	2015	SO								0	1	1	1	1	4	1
OECD	2015	SO								0			1	1	2	1
Ozden	2013	PS	1	1	1	1	1	1		6					0	1+2
Phillips	2015	SO								0			1	1	2	1+2
Piguet and Pecoud	2011	SO								0			1	1	2	1
Poros	2011	C											1	1	2	3
Price	2015	J														

Rechitsky		2014	PS	1	1	1	1		2	6						0	2+3
Reitano, T.		2015	SO							0	1			1	1	3	1+2
RMMS	Blinded by Hope	2014b	PS	1	1	1	1		1	5						0	2
RMMS	Going West	2014a	PS	1	1	1	1	1	2	7						0	1+2
Robinson and Segrott		2002	PS	1	1	1	1	1	2	7						0	2
Schapendonk		2014	C							0				1	1	2	3
Schapendonk		2012	PS	1	1	1	1	1	2	7						0	1+2+3
Schapendonk		2009	PS	1	1	1			2	5						0	3
Schapenkdonl and Van Moppes		2007	PS	1	1	1		1	2	6						0	2+3
Schaub		2012	PS	1	1	1		1	2	6						0	3
Shaw and Mangan		2014	PS		1	1	1		2	5						0	1+2
Sigona		2015	J							0	1	1		1	1	4	1
Sirkeci and Martin		2014	PS							0				1	1	2	2
Snel et al.		2013	PS	1	1	1	1	1	2	7						0	3
Staring		2004	PS	1	1	1			2	5						0	3
The Economist		2015	J							0				1	1	2	1
Thibos		2014	SO							0				1	1	2	1
Timmerman , C. et al	Imagining Europe from the Outside	2014b	PC	1	1	1	1	1	1	6						0	2
Timmerman, C. et al	The relevance of a 'culture of migration'	2014a	PS	1	1	1	1		1	5						0	2+3
Toma and Vause		2010	SO								1	1		1	1	4	3
Triandafyllidou		2009	SO							0	1	1		1	1	4	1+2
UNHCR		2015c	SO							0				1	1	2	1
UNHCR		2015b	SO							0				1	1	2	1
UNHCR		2015a	SO							0				1	1	2	1
UNHCR		2015	SO							0	1			1	1	3	1
UNHCR		2015	PS	1	1	1	1	1	1	6						0	2
UNHCR																	

UNHRC	2015	PS		1	1				2	4							0	2
UNHRC	2015	SO								0				1	1		2	2
UNHRC	2015	SO								0				1	1		2	1
UNHRC	2015	J								0		1			1		2	1
UNHRC	2015	SO								0					1		1	1
UNHRC	2015	SO								0				1	1		2	
UNHRC	2015	SO								0				1	1		2	1
UNHRC	2014	SO								0				1	1		2	2
UNHRC	2014	SO								0	1			1	1		3	1
UNHRC	2010	PC	1	1	1	1	1		2	7							0	2
UNHCR in Greece	2015	SO								0				1	1		2	1
Valenta et al.	2015	PC	1	1	1				2	5							0	2
Venturini et al.	2013	SO								0							2	2
Vervlit, M. et al.	2012	PC		1	1		1		2	5							0	2+3
Volmer	2011	C								0				1	1		2	1
Watson et al.	2015	J								0				1	1		2	3
Wissink et al.	2013	PS	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	8							0	2+3
Yazgan et al.	2015	SO								0				1	1		2	1+2
Zimmerman	2011	PS	1	1	1	1			2	6							0	2
Zimmerman, S.	2011	PS	1	1	1				2	5							0	2
Zimmerman, S.	2009	PS	1	1	1				2	5							0	2

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