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Is Migration a Security Issue?

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I.   Introduction

International migration is probably one of the most cited, yet also most contested, areas of the so called new security agenda, which emerged at the end of the Cold War, and resulted in a broadening and deepening of our understanding of what constitutes a security threat or challenge. Migration tends to be viewed as a security issue in security studies since the 1980s. 'The duality of threats apparently caused by migration to both national sovereignty and human security are largely reflected in much of the recent academic literature.'[1]

This essay asks whether migration can justifiably be considered a security issue, and under which circumstances this may be the case. The essay will first ask which terms help us to understand aspects of migration that may be helpful in formulating the claim that in some cases migration can be considered a security issue, relevant for national security and/or human security. It then asks the question 'whose security' is relevant in such a debate – the security of states or humans? It continues by presenting challenges to national security and human security in countries of destination but also countries of origin and transit.

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[1]Thompson, C., 2013. Frontiers and Threats: Should Transnational Migration Be Considered a Security Issue?. Global Policy Journal, 20.11. < http://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/20/11/2013/frontiers-and-threats-should-transnational-migration-be-considered-security-issue > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]

II.   What is Migration? What kind of Migration is Relevant?

At its simplest, migration can be understood as the movement of people from one place to another. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines migration as 'The movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification.'[2] It is thus a broadly understood phenomenon. While the majority of migrants migrate in search of work and economic and social opportunities, a relatively small percentage of migrants are people fleeing armed conflict, natural disaster, famine or persecution.

Human migration has taken place throughout history and has at times been considered as a threat, but more often as an opportunity. Significantly, some argue that while migration took place from Europe to other parts of the world, it was viewed as opportunity, and when the trend reversed to one of immigration into Europe, it became associated with the notion of a security challenge or threat. It is worth noting that estimates of the volume of migration into Europe and other developed countries in the 21st century corresponds roughly to the volume of migration outflow in the 19th century. What has changed between the 19th and 21st centuries is that the process of state consolidation resulted in fixed frontiers policed by state authorities, and that European countries have become an island of peace, stability and wealth.

The UN reports that the number of international migrants worldwide reached 232 million in 2013, up from 175 million in

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[2]IOM, Key Migration Terms. < http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/ iom/home/about-migration/key-migration-terms-1.html#Migration > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]

2000 and 154 million in 1990.[3] As for the European Union, EUROSTAT specifies that there are some 20 million non-EU nationals residing in the EU countries (making up 4 % of its population).[4] Thus, the vast majority of migrants globally do not reside in European countries. Significantly, polls indicate that populations tend to overestimate the numbers of immigrants in EU countries. A recent Ipsos Mori poll indicates that for example 'in Italy the public thinks 30% are immigrants when it's actually 7%; and in Belgium the public thinks it's 29% when it's actually 10%.'[5]

Migration is a phenomenon that must be understood in the context of the complex and interlinked flows of goods, finance and people. While global flows of goods and finance are supported and encouraged as part of a liberalist notion of development, commerce and also security, the flow of people is increasingly being tackled with a variety of restrictive migration management policies which aim at curtailing it.

Indeed, under international law, states are entitled to control movement across their borders. It can be argued that 'states use migration control measures to demonstrate their sovereign control over territory and to palliate public concerns that sovereignty is

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[3]United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2013. The number of international migrants worldwide reaches 232 million, Population Facts No. 2013/2. < http://esa.un.org/ unmigration/documents/The_number_of_international_migrants.pdf > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]
[4]EUROSTAT, Immigration in the EU, data from 2014. < http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/docs/infographics/immigration/migration-in-eu-infographic_en.pdf > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]
[5]Ipsos Mori, 2014. Perceptions are not reality: Things that the world gets wrong. October. < https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3466/Perceptions-are-not-reality-Things-the-world-gets-wrong.aspx > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]

being undermined.'[6] States determine who can enter and who can reside and work in their territories and do so inter alia through their migration management and border management policies. This entitlement to control who enters and who resides is restricted by a number of specific provisions of international law and human rights obligations. Furthermore, not all types of migration are considered a threat and curtailed, as for example migration within the European Union and between developed countries is in general not at the focus of restrictive migration management and border management policies (although one must note occasional attempts by some EU countries to limit intra-EU migration and to weaken the so called Schengen regime which allows for border-less travel within the EU).

Thus, arguably migration as a broad, generic term does not really help us in the effort to explore whether migration is a security threat. Clearly, it would be difficult to claim that migration overall is a security issue. More specific terms are necessary.

The literature on the subject uses several different categories and terms for the type of migration that may cause security challenges. While some authors attempt to explain differences in attitudes towards migrants by discussing a division into acceptable and unacceptable migrants[7], and polls and studies also point to the fact that racial considerations play a role in attitudes towards migrants, these categories do not lend themselves easily to a discussion of security implications. The most useful categorization as far as security studies are concerned may be one that refers to the status of migrants. In particular, authors speak of

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[6]International Council on Human Rights Policy, 2010. Irregular Migration, Migrants Smuggling and Human Rights: Towards Coherence, p. 2. < http://www.ichrp.org/files/reports/56/122_report_en.pdf > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]
[7]Ford, R., 2011. Acceptable and Unacceptable Immigrants: How Opposition to Immigration in Britain is Affected by Migrants' Region of Origin. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 37:7, 26.4.

undocumented migration[8], unauthorized migration, clandestine migration[9], illegal migration[10], and irregular migration. In particular such migration is increasingly perceived by the governments and citizens of wealthier countries as a security threat. Papademetriou argues that '(n)o aspect of ... interdependence seems to be more visible to the publics of advanced industrial societies than the movement of people. And no part of that movement is proving pricklier to manage effectively, or more difficult for publics to come to terms with, than irregular (also known as unauthorized, undocumented, or illegal) migration'. [11] Indeed, recent polls also point to this: the Migration Observatory's Report on public opinion on immigration in Britain suggests that publics distinguish between legal and illegal migration and that opposition to migration if often focused on illegal migration.[12]

While the various terms used by scholars, policy-makers and media and listed above are similar in that they refer to those migrants who are not authorized by countries of destination (and in some cases by countries of origin and transit), many reservations have been expressed about the impact these formulations may have on the perceptions of such migrants and on the consequences of such perceptions for policy-making and the welfare of migrants, inter alia. In fact, some authors actually point

[8]Platform for International Co-operation on Undocumented Migrants, 2014. Who are Undocumented Migrants. PICUM. < http://picum.org/en/our-work/who-are-undocumented-migrants/ > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]

[9]Lutterbeck, D., 2006. Policing Migration in the Mediterranean, Mediterranean Politics, Vol. 11, No.1, March. < ftp://budgie6.ethz.ch/gcspmigration09/ e/publications/Issues_Institutions/ME_Med/Academic_Papers/Lutterbeck-Med_Politics-March06.pdf > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]

[10]See for example Collier, P., 2014. Illegal Migration To Europe: What Should Be Done? Social Europe Journal, 9.9. < http://www.social-europe.eu/2014/09/illegal-migration/ > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]

[11]Papademetriou, D.G., 2005. The Global Struggle with Illegal Migration: No End in Sight. Migration Policy Journal, 1.9. < http://www.migrationpolicy.org /article/global-struggle-illegal-migration-no-end-sight > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]

[12]The Migration Observatory Report, 2011. Thinking Behind the Numbers: Understanding Public Opinion on Immigration in Britain. 16.10., p. 3 and 4.

out that all of the terms available do not do justice to the phenomenon, and attempt to find new terms (such as 'desperate migration', or in the context of the Mediterranean 'boat people').[13] For the purpose of this paper, the term 'irregular migration', which although not universally accepted, and not very precise (it encompasses a variety of types of migrants: economic migrants, asylum seekers, refugees) is used by organizations such as the International Organization for Migration[14] and the European Union[15], will be applied.

IOM defines irregular migration as migration that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries. Thus, 'from the perspective of destination countries it is entry, stay or work in a country without the necessary authorization or documents required under immigration regulations. From the perspective of the sending country, the irregularity is for example seen in cases in which a person crosses an international boundary without a valid passport or travel document or does not fulfil the administrative requirements for leaving the country.'[16]

It has been noted that the number of irregular migrants have been growing. Authors point out that this is the result of several

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[13]See for example Joseph Chamie, former director of the UN Population Division, writing on 'desperate migration'. Chamie, J., 2013. The Dillemma of Desperate Migration. Humanitarian aid adds incentives for migrants to take risks in fleeing homelands. YaleGlobal, 14.11. < http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/ dilemma-desperation-migration > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014], and Roderick Pace writing on 'Mediterranean boat people'. Pace, R., 2012. Migration in the Central Mediterranean. Jean Monnet Occasional Paper 2. <https://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/179058/JMProfPacePaper Migration022013webv3.pdf > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]
[14]IOM, Key Migration Terms. < http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/ home/about-migration/key-migration-terms-1.html#Irregular-migration > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]
[15]European Commission, Home Affairs, 2014. Irregular Migration. 21.8. < http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/immigration/irregular- immigration/index_en.htm > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]
[16]IOM, Key Migration Terms.

trends. The first one is increased mobility as a result of globalization, and advances in transport and communications, and indeed also the general growth of migration. The second one is the increasing limitation of legal migration possibilities, as governments respond by restrictions. The third is that there is substantial mismatch between the supply and demand sides for labour. And the fourth is that cases of mass migration often result from mass infringements of human rights and conflict, such as is the case in Syria, Libya, Iraq or the Middle East.

The actual numbers of irregular migrants globally can only be estimated. The IOM indicated in 2010 that '(t)he overwhelming majority of migration is fully authorized. Estimates, while not exact (...), suggest that only some 10–15 per cent of today's … international migrants are in an irregular situation.'[17] The EU does not provide an estimate of the numbers of irregular immigrants, but points to the fact that 'in 2009, the number of irregularly staying non-EU nationals apprehended in the EU was about 570 000 (7 % less than in 2008)'[18]. The Clandestino project provides an estimate of the numbers of irregular migrants in the EU for 2008 as 1.9-3.8 million[19]. This estimate is used widely in relevant literature. With the EU population reported as 505.7 million[20], the size of irregular migration cannot in itself really constitute the problematic part. Rather, it is the trend of growing numbers of migrants and irregular migrants, and it is the lack of clarity and control on who enters developed countries and stays in them and

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[17]IOM, World Migration Report 2010. The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change, p. 29. < http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/ free/WMR_2010_ENGLISH.pdf > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]

[18]European Commission, 2014. Irregular Immigration. August. < http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/immigration/irregular-immigration/index_en.htm > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]

[19]ELIAMEP, Clandestino Project Final Report, 2009, p. 15. < http://cordis.europa.eu/documents/documentlibrary/126625701EN6.pdf > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]

[20]European Commission EUROSTATS, 2014. Population and population change statistics. Data from May 2014. < http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/ statistics_explained/index.php/Population_and_population_change_statistics > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]

for what purpose, associated with irregular migration, that causes real or imagined threat perceptions.

III. Whose Security?

i. States and Humans

The public debate on the migration-security nexus tends to focus on a variety of aspects related to national security, understood as the protection and promotion of the well-being of the citizens and legal residents of the State and its territory. As Khalid Koser argues, 'the perception of migration as a threat to national security has certainly heightened in recent years, in part in response to the rapid rise in the number of international migrants (…) and especially of 'irregular' or 'illegal' migrants '.[21] There are of course other factors that may intensify that threat: if such irregular migration is large scale or occurs during periods of recession, and so on. Real or imagined links to terrorism, organized crime and health threats are at the core of the perception of irregular migration as a security threat. Surely security concerns of this kind must be taken seriously and migration management and border management policies designed to respond are needed. However, most authors argue that the relevance of such links tends to be overestimated.[22] Such threat perceptions also emphasize threats to the social and economic fabrics of countries of destination. This may be the case, because clearly, migrants 'are also different: they bring new lifestyles and languages, traditions and values. Throughout human history, the outsider, the 'other', has been the focus of suspicion and often hatred.'[23]

[21]Koser, K., 2011. When is Migration a Security Issue? Brookings, 31.3. < http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2011/03/31-libya-migration-koser > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]
[22]Ibid.
[23]International Council on Human Rights Policy, 2010. Irregular Migration, Migrant Smuggling and Human Rights: Towards Coherence, p. 1-2. <

At the same time, the debate on migration and security reflects the general trend in security studies to move beyond the national security perspective to embrace a human security perspective. While the national security perspective focuses on border management challenges that may undermine a state's sovereignty as well as migration's real or imagined threats to the population of countries of destination, human security as an alternative approach to migration has placed the migrant as the referent object of threats. 'The structural violence that causes many to migrate, the impact of deportation and detention policies and the hazards to personal safety of migrants resulting from the increasing reluctance of states to offer sanctuary to those genuinely in need are just some of the aspects of the nexus between migration and human security.'[24] Arguably thus, from the human security perspective, 'the main imperative is not to curb migration by all possible means but rather to prevent the loss of life in the Mediterranean, protect the migrants against the human smugglers and ensure the rights of genuine refugees.'[25]

Koser argues that understanding migration as a national security issue has consequences for the kind of policies that are used to counter the threat. Thus, it is used to justify 'greater surveillance, detention, deportation and more restrictive policies'.[26] This in turn has an impact on the human security of migrants (by encouraging them to use more dangerous routes, using migrant smugglers and human traffickers, limiting the possibilities of reaching access to safe countries), and publics (by encouraging anti-immigrants tendencies), which in turn also has an impact on the human security of migrants. This is certainly true for the Mediterranean region. It is for this reason that many authors conclude that human security threats to irregular migrants by far outweigh the national security threats that they may create.

http://www.ichrp.org/files/reports/56/122_report_en.pdf > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]
[24]Thompson, Frontiers and Threats.
[25]Lutterbeck, p. 64.
[26]Koser, When is Migration a Security Issue?

In fact, the two approaches (national security and human security) are often seen as standing in tension with each other. Thus, the debate centres on the question of whose security it is that we ought to be concerned about – is it really the security of states that should be focused on, or should we be studying the impact first and foremost on the humans, in this case the irregular migrants?

Kerwin argues however pointedly that '(h)uman security is often set against the concept of national security, but the two need not be at odds. Properly crafted national security policies should further human security. However, the human security framework moves the migration discussion beyond national security's narrow preoccupation with border control, detention, and the criminalization of migrants, and opens it to the conditions of insecurity that drive irregular and crisis migration. Human security also asks whether policies developed out of a misguided view of national security put people in less secure positions, like the hands of traffickers and smugglers.'[27] Thus, adequate migration management and border management policies would address national security problems while enhancing human security of the migrants. This, arguably, is a rather complex task.

ii. Security of which States?

Another aspect of the ongoing debate is that work on the migration-security nexus focuses to a large degree on security challenges to developed countries as countries of destination, and a number of scholars point to the fact that the impact on developing countries as countries of destination but also of transit and of origin is neglected. Migration is of course not purely a South-North phenomenon. Indeed, migration routes or pathways can be summarized as follows: there are South–North, South–

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[27]Kerwin, D., Human Security, Civil Society and Migration. Center for Migration Studies of New York. < https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/HSU/ Kerwin%20statement.pdf > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]

South, North–South or North–North migrations, as the IOM outlines in the latest edition of its World Migration Report.[28] Most migrants (and irregular migrants) do not arrive in European countries, but rather in developing countries, either as countries of transit or destination, which disproportionately carry the brunt of the impact and costs of migration caused for example by the Syria crisis or the situation in Iraq. Yet, their voices are hardly heard in the debate.

Thus, the Euro-centric nature of the debate concentrates on impact on developed countries, even though irregular migration affects poorer countries disproportionately harder. From a human security, but also from a national security perspective, migration management presents a far greater security challenge to weak states than to developed states, whether the latter are destination countries, transit countries of countries of origin. '(L)ess developed countries have their own concerns about unauthorized migration. These include the seeming gross disregard for the human rights, labor rights, and other basic rights of their nationals who enter the illegal immigration stream, and the trafficking industry that has grown around such movements.'[29] It is also the brain drain that irregular migration movements cause, and the impact on social and economic situation in the countries of origin, but also countries of transit. Furthermore, for states of origin, irregular migration often is an essential economic factor for both their citizens and their economies because of remittances, now probably approaching $404 billion (in 2013). The outlook for remittances remains strong.[30] It is also in some cases a 'security valve', allowing young people without a perspective in their own country to pursue their future elsewhere, thus curtailing the danger

[28]IOM, 2013. IOM World Migration Report 2013: Migrant Wellbeing and Development. < http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/WMR2013_EN.pdf > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]
[29]Papademetriou, The Global Struggle with Illegal Migration.
[30]The World Bank, 2014. Migration and Remittances: Recent Developments and Outlook. Migration and Development Brief 22, 11.4., p. 2. < http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1288990760745/MigrationandDevelopmentBrief22.pdf >

of social explosions in countries of origins faced with demographic and economic challenges. Significantly, it is these perspectives that are often overlooked in the debate on the security-migration nexus.

It is clear, that given such different interests, broader policies aimed at addressing the security-migration nexus, will have to reconcile the positions of developed countries of destination and developing countries of destination, transit and origin. Without such an effort, the efficiency of EU's migration management and border management policies will be severely limited. Indeed, the proper approach to the migration–security nexus needs to focus on the needs of developing countries just as much as developed countries, and on countries of transit and origin just as much as on countries of destination.

IV. Consequences of Securitization of Migration

Authors suggest that a securitization process of migrants and migration, especially irregular migration, takes place, increasing the perception of migration as a threat to national security. Securitization is understood as the process in which perceptions of security problems emerge and evolve as a result of speech acts. A number of authors indicated that migration is one such securitized security threat.

Threat perceptions related to migration have heightened in recent years, because:

i. The security agenda has been linked to many aspects of policy (broadening and widening of the concept of security).
ii. There has been a rapid rise in the numbers of migrants crossing borders and especially of irregular migrants.

iii. The notion of 'the war on terrorism' and other so-called transnational threats have been linked to migration[31], especially irregular migration.

As Lutterbeck says, *'(o)ne consequence of this growing preoccupation in European countries with irregular migration and (supposedly) related transnational challenges from across the Mediterranean has been a considerable expansion and intensification of policing and law enforcement activities in and across the Mediterranean sea. ..., this has involved both an increasing deployment and upgrading of various types of security forces involved in policing the Mediterranean, as well as a considerable deepening of law enforcement co-operation between countries north and south of the Mediterranean.'[32]* Apart from this, it is used to justify detention, deportation, pushback and other restrictive policies.

The irregular migrants from North Africa and sub-Sahara, and others making their way to North Africa in order to reach the northern shore of the Mediterranean, consequently increasingly turn to more dangerous routes and to human smugglers and traffickers, and pay exorbitant fees to board dangerously small and overcrowded vessels. It also limits their chances of reaching access to safe countries. Thousands of migrants have died in recent years trying to reach the shores of Italy, Malta, Spain and Greece.

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[31]IOM, 2004. Essentials of Migration Management, Volume Two: Developing Migration Policy. Section 2.8. Migration and Security, p. 6. < http://www.rcmvs.org/documentos/IOM_EMM/intro/V2Intro_CM.pdf > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]
[32]Lutterbeck, p.60.

V. Situation in the Mediterranean

Indeed 'the Mediterranean is nowadays considered one of the most important gateways through which undocumented immigrants seek to reach the EU'. [33] There has been a considerable increase of numbers of irregular migrants arriving on boats since 2011, especially in Italy, but also other northern Mediterranean states. The majority of irregular migrants arrive in the EU across the Mediterranean Sea. Frontex, the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union reports that in the second quarter of 2014, some 90% of the irregular migrants arriving in the EU were reported from its sea border, mostly in southern Italy. [34]

Frontex suggests also that '(i)t has been a truly disastrous year for irregular migrants attempting the perilous sea-crossing from North Africa to Europe. A troubling spike in serious armed conflicts around the world, from Mali in West Africa through to Gaza, Syria, Iraq and beyond, has proved a bonanza for the people smugglers – with strife-torn Libya now by far the most favoured point of departure. The figures are staggering.' [35] So far some 2500 are known to have drowned in 2014 while attempting to cross the Mediterranean as irregular migrants.

The EU response to the situation in the Mediterranean points to an unresolved tension between a national security and human security approach. While the rhetoric points to both humanitarian considerations of saving lives and guaranteeing human rights of irregular migrants, and to the need to address the root causes of such increased migration (conflicts, human rights abuses, poverty,

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[33] Ibid., p.61.
[34] Frontex, 2014. FRAN Quarterly, Quarter 2, April-June 2014., p. 5. < http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/FRAN_Q1_2014.pdf > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]
[35] Frontex, 2014. People smugglers: the latter day slave merchants. < http://frontex.europa.eu/feature-stories/people-smugglers-the-latter-day-slave-merchants-uarkn1 > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]

and socio-economic factors such as unemployment in the countries of origin), the response focuses largely on measures intended to curtail the irregular migration by means of migration management and border management. The Italian Mare Nostrum operation which, after particularly glaring cases of loss of lives in the Mediterranean, provided humanitarian help to boat people in need, is scheduled to conclude, although as of 1 November 2014, there were conflicting reports on this issue. The EU's Frontex operation Triton that was intended to succeed the Italian operation as of 1 November 2014 could only be agreed upon after considerable debates among the EU states. The Triton operation will be confined to a 30-mile zone around Italy's coastal waters, possess a third of Mare Nostrum's maritime capacities, and be coordinated through Frontex. It is reported that '(t)he UK Foreign Office stirred ire in Brussels ... when it announced that it would not participate in any future operations, because of their "pulling factor" in encouraging economic migrants to set sail for Europe'[36]. This stance points to the difficulties in conceptualizing migration policies that take into account the human security perspective. Part of the explanation may be that, as Joseph Chamie, former director of the UN Population Division argues, '(w)ould-be host nations confront a dilemma: aid adds incentives for more people to undertake treacherous journeys.'[37]

Public opinion and the changing political landscape in a number of EU member countries, in which right wing forces became stronger in the last number of years, are likely to further impact on changing the balance of national security and human security approaches towards irregular migration. But the securitization of migration, especially irregular migration, poses

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[36]Nelsen, A., 2014. Italian navy says it will continue refugee rescue mission despite plan to scrap it. The Guardian, 28.11.
< http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/28/italian-navy-refugee-rescue-mission-mare-nostrum > [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2014]
[37]Chamie, The Dillemma of Desperate Migration.

significant consequences and hidden costs and creates a vicious cycle of supply and demand for security. Such processes serve short-term needs but arguably not the long-term interests of the developed countries of destination with respect to the preservation of human rights and liberal values.

VI. Conclusion

This essay asked the question whether migration can be understood as a security issue. It first asked which terms help us to understand which aspect of migration may be helpful in formulating the claim that in some cases migration can be considered a security issue, relevant for national security and/or human security. It suggested that it is irregular migration that is seen as posing both national security and human security threats. While the two perspectives on migration and security are often seen as contradictory, they can be brought together inter alia by adequate migration and border management policies, which take human security of migrants into account. It then asks the question 'whose security' is relevant in such a debate – states or humans, developed countries or developing countries, countries of destination or countries of transit and origin? It suggests that while currently policies and practices tend to focus on developed states of destination, this has an impact on the effectiveness of policies.

Labelling an issue a security threat has significant implications in term of laws, norms, policies and procedures. In the migration context, the label has been used to justify harsh and restrictive policies. These policies impact the migrants, resulting in inability of asylum seekers to access safe countries, migrants smuggling and human trafficking, unsafe passages and contributing to a growing anti-migrants tendencies. They also result in a gap between the protection that migrants formally enjoy under international law (see chapter by Dr. Grech) and the realities they experience as they travel and work across different countries. Consequently, one also has to note emerging differences between the interests of migrants and the states trying to control their

movements and entry but also the interests of governments and NGOs and civil societies in these countries.

In the Mediterranean, the complexity of the situation, characterized by sea borders, weak nation states and conflicts, and the recent surge in irregular migration and loss of human life make the issue particularly relevant. The current policies of the EU show how difficult it is to develop approaches that provide a balanced combination of national security and human security perspectives. It is possible to reconcile the two perspectives in the Mediterranean? There is urgency to the question for Europe and the Mediterranean, as some argue that 'Europe's immigration nightmare is only beginning', given the socio-economic gradient and the conflicts that ravage the region. The Mediterranean Sea is becoming one of the most militarized and heavily patrolled areas of the globe. Current events, such as the drownings of irregular migrants and the debate on the maritime operations Mare Nostrum and Triton expose the difficulty of the EU in framing the issue.

Apart from proper policies aimed at migration management and border management, innovative broad policies aimed at on the one hand toning down the aggressive public debate by presenting hard facts, and on the other hand to work towards protecting human rights and human security of the migrants are needed. They must go hand in hand with policies targeting the security challenges to developing countries linked to irregular migration, and a development agenda which tackles root causes of irregular migration. Clearly, for the EU much work lies ahead in crafting appropriate migration management and border management efforts embedded in such broad policies. But the first step will be to acknowledge that its actions so far belied its rhetorical focus on the human security of migrants and to start acting in accordance with its declared principles and founding documents.