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## Who's Afraid of ... Migration? A New European Narrative of Migration

by Stefano Volpicelli



### ABSTRACT

Human mobility has changed profoundly since the onset of globalisation, with old patterns of south-north movement of male economic migrants being replaced by mixed flows of people moving because of a variety of needs and motivations. In Europe these changes have gone largely unnoticed and the discourse on migration has been conducted in a confused and contradictory way. Policies have swung between two poles: on one end the view of migrants as a problem rather than as an opportunity; on the other, the view of migrants as vulnerable people escaping poverty or persecution. Through the analysis of policies, juridical terminology, concepts and stereotypes, this paper proposes a three-step approach for a different narrative of migration to curb the political manipulation that, labelling migrants as a threat, is dangerously fuelling racism and discrimination towards "aliens".

*European Union | Migration | Public opinion*

keywords

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by Stefano Volpicelli\*

### Introduction

The title of this article echoes the famous play by Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*. In the play two of the characters, a brilliant intellectual couple living in the civilised Western world, engage in dangerous emotional games – including the fabrication of a fake child – as a way to evade the ugliness and failure of their marriage by *attacking the false optimism and myopic confidence of modern society*.

The current, “fabricated” discourse on migration in Europe today seems to mirror the plot of the play: instead of a married couple we have a geopolitical entity (the European Union – the EU) whose members are seemingly involved in a dangerous (mis)representation of reality, thus postponing a profound reflection about the complexity of migration and the way it should be managed.<sup>1</sup>

This misrepresentation can find its origins either in the limited political (and analytical) capacity to manage the new movements of people in the globalised world or in the aim to redirect public opinion away from the many social and economic concerns related to the economic recession and the progressive impoverishment of the middle class.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The first ever EU special summit on migration with the participation of heads of state and government was held on 23 April 2015 in Brussels following the Mediterranean migration crisis generated by the thousands who lost their lives through dramatic shipwrecks.

<sup>2</sup> Some observers raised this possibility: among others see John Wight, “UK Govt using immigration as a scapegoat to cover up austerity failures”, in *RT.com*, 15 January 2014, <http://www.rt.com/op-edge/immigration-issue-in-britain-646>; and the conclusions of the Migration Leaders Policy Seminars organised by the Migration Policy Institute together with the School of Public Policy at Central European University, where Greek public officials “need to redirect public anger away from immigrants (and other scapegoats) and toward the real causes of economic pain”. See *Migration Leaders Policy Seminar Conclusions*, p. 4, <http://spp.ceu.hu/sites/spp.ceu.hu/files/>

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Whatever the origin and the aim, the issue of migration in Europe over the last twenty years has been narrated in a very partial, confused and contradictory way. Instead of focusing on the benefits of an inevitable phenomenon and portraying migration as one of the engines of the journey that has brought the human being to the actual level of civilization<sup>3</sup> and migrants as pioneers in a deeply interconnected world, due to their capacity to create new connections, to move around ideas, goods and services, to create cultural, social and economic relations, and to promote open societies,<sup>4</sup> the public discourse on migration in almost all European Member States has been swinging between two polarised positions on the egoistic/altruistic continuum.

The egoistic perspective is dominated primarily by the rhetoric of migrants portrayed as a problem rather than as an opportunity. In many European countries they are presented as potential corruptors of the social fabric,<sup>5</sup> inevitably provoking economic disturbance and criminal emergency, which in turn call for repressive and security measures.<sup>6</sup>

When the egoistic dimension is not evoked, it is because the narration switches to the "human rights" rhetoric. In this version migrants are portrayed as destitute and vulnerable people escaping natural or man-made disaster, extreme conditions of poverty or extreme (and violent) forms of persecution. In this latter case, however, migrants are intertwined with other characters also on the move, such as asylum seekers and refugees, a pairing that generates more confusion than clarity.<sup>7</sup>

Many experts, including scholars, political analysts and journalists, have been raising the alarm because this misrepresentation, besides the confusion that never helps in designing sound policies, is propelling political manipulation – driven largely by xenophobic parties – that is attracting millions of votes in many European countries.<sup>8</sup> The core of the discourse brought forward by the leaders of these

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general/migration.pdf.

<sup>3</sup> Serena Saquella and Stefano Volpicelli, "Introduzione", in Serena Saquella and Stefano Volpicelli (eds.), *Migrazione e sviluppo: una nuova relazione?*, Roma, Nuova Cultura, 2012, p. 27-30.

<sup>4</sup> Andrea Stocchiero (ed.), "Proposte per uno strategy paper della cooperazione italiana su migrazioni e sviluppo", in *CESPI Working Papers*, No. 33 (February 2007), p. 8, <http://www.cespi.it/WP/WP33-cooperaz.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> In the UK, France, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands and Spain the percentage of people considering migrants a problem rather than an opportunity for the local social fabric ranges between 41 percent (Netherlands) to 64 percent (UK). Only in Germany and Sweden this percentage is lower. See German Marshall Fund, *Transatlantic Trends 2014: Mobility, Migration, and Integration*, September 2014, p. 14-16, <http://trends.gmfus.org/immigration-2014>.

<sup>6</sup> Jef Huysmans, "The European Union and the Securitization of Migration", in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 5 (December 2000), p. 751-777.

<sup>7</sup> This rhetoric comes to the fore particularly on occasions of tragic shipwrecks in the Mediterranean Sea, as happened in April 2015, when some 1,500 persons drowned at sea.

<sup>8</sup> Freedom Party of Austria, Danish People's Party, Front National (France), Golden Dawn (Greece), Jobbik (Hungary), Lega Nord (Italy), Sweden Democrats, all joining the eurosceptics' side in the EU, although with different positions.

political movements is clearly positioned on the egoistic side of the continuum, affirming that migration is a threat to the social security and economic wellness of the citizens of the developed countries.<sup>9</sup>

A section of the most vulnerable part of European society adheres to such conceptualisation because it offers a twofold consolation: on the one hand, it provides an easy scapegoat for the general reduction of social welfare and economic wellness in the Eurozone, while, on the other hand, it gives to those fragile segments of society the opportunity to recover a residual impression of identity.<sup>10</sup>

But this dangerous and sometimes extreme political and social drift would not have occurred so easily if in the last twenty years the discourse on migration had not been addressed by European policy makers – both at local government and at EU institution level – with a good deal of superficiality in understanding, interpreting and managing the deep individual, social, economic, and political changes brought about by globalisation and its impact on migration patterns together with an increasing dose of chauvinism that considers migrants as second-class citizens, thus fuelling the rekindling of a Eurocentric vision.<sup>11</sup>

In consideration of the above, this article explores the social, economic and political changes that have occurred since the advent of globalisation and their impact on human mobility. It then highlights the main policy choices – the restrictive immigration policies pursued by European states<sup>12</sup> and the nation-based selection of those eligible for international protection – that has led to a distorted representation of migrants in Europe, thus consolidating and reinforcing stereotypes and negative generalisations in European public opinion.

Starting from the analysis of the juridical terminology and the way it translates into concepts, the article proposes a three-step approach for a possible different narrative of migration. Finally, the conclusion hints at some possible and unwelcomed consequences that could ensue if this misrepresentation of migration and migrants remains unaddressed.

<sup>9</sup> Salvatore Palidda, *Mobilità umane. Introduzione alla sociologia delle migrazioni*, Milano, Cortina, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Ermeneutica delle migrazioni. Saggi, discorsi, contributi*, Milano, Mimesis, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, "reflecting a tendency to interpret the world in terms of European or Anglo-American values and experiences."

<sup>12</sup> Hein de Haas, "Mobility and Human Development", in *Human Development Research Papers*, No. 2009/01 (April 2009), p. 11, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/node/576>.

## 1. Migration in the globalised world: how "the new world order" has impacted on human mobility

Migration has changed substantially in the aftermath of globalisation, inducing a progressive reshaping of the migratory routes that had been prevalent until 1989.

During the so-called Cold War, human mobility was directed mainly from south to north. In line with the predominant geopolitical division at that time, the people involved in migration processes, the migrants, were moving south-north within the boundaries of the two opposing blocs: the United States and Europe in the West, and the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence in the East. With very few exceptions, migrants from developing countries under Western influence moved to North America, Europe and Oceania. Migrants from countries under a communist regime moved to the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries.

During this historic phase that was characterised by a frantic struggle to prove the superiority of their respective economic models, migration became one of the possible tools for ideological manipulation and political influence. In the West the rhetoric of universal civil rights and freedoms, in the East the rhetoric of universal equality provided the ideological basis for financial investments in the Third World countries,<sup>13</sup> for the provision of know-how and military protection in return for the exploitation of primary goods.

The fall of the Berlin Wall, an event that the Western world usually portrays as the end of the Cold War and division of the world in two blocs, profoundly altered that geopolitical balance of powers and influenced the destinies of many countries, especially in the Third World. Migration flows, too, were affected by this radical change. The main change did not occur at quantitative level, however, as it may appear from a first-glance analysis. In fact, the ratio of migrants to world population has remained more or less the same since the increasing number of migrants is matched by the increase in population worldwide.<sup>14</sup> What have changed are the *qualitative* elements of migration. The routes are now less (globally) south-north but increasingly south-south; the gender ratio is always around the 50:50 mark,<sup>15</sup> but an increasing number of women nowadays migrates alone, while before

<sup>13</sup> The use of "Third World" in this paragraph reflects the fact that in the 1970s this noun was used in reference to all the countries excluded by the First and Second Worlds, meaning the two superpowers. Nowadays the term has been dismissed in favour of other more politically correct terms such as "developing countries" or "Global South."

<sup>14</sup> The global stock of international migrants increased by 50 percent from 156 million in 1990 to 231 million in 2013. This represents 3 percent of the world's population in 2013 and the migrant share of the global population has remained stable at 3 percent over the past several decades. See Carlos Vargas-Silva, *Global International Migrant Stock: The UK in International Comparison*, Oxford, The Migration Observatory, 8 August 2014, <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/global-international-migrant-stock-uk-international-comparison>.

<sup>15</sup> In some regions the percentage is 45 percent, in others 55 percent. For more detailed information see the UN Dept of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) website, <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp>.

women used to follow their families/husband; there is an increase of "mixed flows" made up of migrants with a variety of protection needs and motivations,<sup>16</sup> as well as different directionality,<sup>17</sup> including an increasing number of unaccompanied minors.

The factors that contributed to this progressive and on-going change in old migration patterns are linked to globalisation and its associated paradoxes. The new order of "economic globalisation", that has now become the prevalent economic model worldwide, and which was formally recognised in 1994 with the Marrakech agreement, setting up the World Trade Organisation (WTO),<sup>18</sup> envisages the liberalisation of commercial and financial trade, which postulates the dismantling of the barriers to free trade, financial markets and goods' productive chains. However, in this new economic order, everything moves except persons and labour force.

The globalisation paradox is the result of the contradictory forces of this new economic order: the liberalisation of international markets combined with the fragmentation of the productive chain is not matched by a liberalisation of the mobility of persons, that is, of the labour force. Goods and financial assets move easily across borders, at increasingly lower costs, along swift and secure channels; but people face ever greater difficulties in both leaving their countries of origin and accessing destination countries in pursuing their personal development goals.<sup>19</sup>

Another consequence of the accelerated interdependence of macroeconomic, social and cultural components postulated by the globalised economic order is the progressive reduction of public welfare mechanisms<sup>20</sup> and, more generally, of the state's intervention in the economy, since this is considered to be a brake on the

<sup>16</sup> According to the author, such a flow could include bona fide refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, victims of trafficking, smuggled migrants and other persons in need of protection, including women and children. Further, the protection needs and motivations of these people may change according to their point in the migration journey in a country of origin, transit and/or destination and are not necessarily reflective of the status they may have in a country, for example student, migrant worker, or other categories. Finally, the destination of migrants in mixed migration flows may change based on the opportunities available to them or dangers occurring in certain geographic areas, transforming transit countries into countries of residence or destination. The IOM's Glossary on Migration defines mixed flows as "complex migratory population movements that include refugees, asylum-seekers, economic migrants and other migrants". See Richard Perruchoud and Jillyanne Redpath-Cross (eds.), *Glossary on Migration*, 2nd ed., Geneva, IOM, 2011, p. 63, <http://www.corteidh.or.cr/sitios/Observaciones/11/Anexo5.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Nicholas Van Hear, *Mixed Migration: Policy Challenges*, Oxford, The Migration Observatory, 29 March 2011, <http://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/policy-primers/mixed-migration-policy-challenges>.

<sup>18</sup> The Marrakech Declaration of 15 April 1994 of the Uruguay round agreement is considered the date of birth of globalisation.

<sup>19</sup> Teresa Albano, Stefano Volpicelli, "Il mancato sviluppo: le conseguenze sugli individui e gli stati delle patologie della migrazione", in Serena Saquella e Stefano Volpicelli (eds.), *Migrazione e sviluppo: una nuova relazione?*, Roma, Nuova Cultura, 2012, p. 155-180.

<sup>20</sup> See WTO Submission in follow-up to HRC resolution 15/25 "The Right to development", <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Development/Session12/WTO.pdf>.

free expression of the market and financial forces.<sup>21</sup>

This new international setting has progressively eroded the political and economic capacity for action of individual states, especially the economically weak, binding their policies to the swinging moods of international financial markets.

Contrary to expectations of greater prosperity, this new economic order has deepened wealth inequalities,<sup>22</sup> thus increasing economic instability and social dissolution in many areas of the world,<sup>23</sup> particularly in those areas of the Third World which have benefited from the technical and military assistance of the former superpowers.<sup>24</sup>

Apart from the economic dimension, in the last twenty-five years migration has been affected by other issues such as the rise of geopolitical (in)stability, the changes in individuals' system of representations and beliefs<sup>25</sup> and the increasing barriers to human mobility worldwide.<sup>26</sup>

### 1.1. The increasing number of armed conflicts across the world

Since the 1990s, a succession of "complex emergencies" and "new wars" has shattered any optimism that the end of the Cold War might lead to a more peaceful world order. Countries established as a result of the First or Second World Wars split up, separatist ethnic movements flourished, conflicts over resources and power fuelled the displacement of vulnerable people. The last twenty years have seen a dramatic increase in the number of conflicts requiring peace support operations,<sup>27</sup> from 18 in 41 years (from 1948 to the end of the Cold War) to 15 in 5 years, between

<sup>21</sup> Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents*, London, Penguin Books, 2002.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents*, cit., ILO, *World of Work Report 2008. Income inequalities in the age of financial globalization*, Geneva, International Institute for Labour Studies, November 2008, [http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS\\_100354/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_100354/lang-en/index.htm); Anthony B. Atkinson and Salvatore Morelli, "Chartbook of Economic Inequality", in *ECINEQ Working Paper Series*, No. 324 (March 2014), <http://www.ecineq.org/milano/WP/ECINEQ2014-324.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents*, cit., p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid. Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009, p. 24.

<sup>25</sup> Giovanna Gianturco, "Cultura e identità. Orientamenti concettuali di base per l'interculturale", in Francesca Colella e Valentina Grassi (eds.), *Comunicazione interculturale. Immagine e comunicazione in una società multiculturale*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2007, p. 11-29.

<sup>26</sup> Hein de Haas, "Mobility and Human Development", in *Human Development Research Papers*, No. 2009/01 (April 2009), p. 13, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/node/576>.

<sup>27</sup> The term "peace support operations" (PSOs) is widely used to describe multifunctional operations in which impartial military activities are designed to create a secure environment and to facilitate the efforts of the mission's civilian elements to create a self-sustaining peace. Today, they encompass a range of operations that take place in all phases of the conflict, including conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace-making, humanitarian operations and even reconstruction and development roles.

1989 and 1994 (from the end of the Cold War to the advent of globalization) up to 35 in 20 years, from 1994 to 2014.<sup>28</sup>

Crisis and post-crisis scenarios usually affect the mobility of people, in both directions, in and out the interested zone. On the one hand, the local population is forced to evacuate the most dangerous post-conflict zones, fleeing the break-up of the social fabric and political instability, in search of security and a better future. In this case people are forced to migrate, moving involuntarily from their place of origin. On the other hand, people are attracted to the post-crisis zone by the opportunities represented by the stabilisation process. Reconstruction of infrastructures, of the local economy and the institutional systems are the cause of a strong demand for labour, attracting not only local but also external human resources. In this case, people move voluntarily, attracted by new economic opportunities.

### 1.2. The diffusion of new "Western-oriented" lifestyle and values

Globalisation has also strongly impacted on the media of communication, which has experienced an impressive development in terms of number, capacity and quality. From the traditional "one way, passive" media (satellite television, radio and magazines) to the brand new "social, active" media (World Wide Web, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Skype and WhatsApp, just to mention the most popular), the possibility to get in contact with, increase knowledge of and strengthen relationships with traditions, costumes and people belonging to other "worlds" has increased enormously.

The media of communication has always played the role of "mobility multiplier"<sup>29</sup> in sharing and shaping lifestyles and models, thus influencing both the social imaginary and behaviours of the world population. The development communication, have always aimed at "increasing the productivity of their labour and the size of the national economies in order that these citizens of developing countries could enjoy a better life. Countries would be helped to shift from subsistence [...] to up-to-date scientific agriculture [...]. Handicraft industries would be replaced by modern industrial processes [...]. Rural life would give way to urban life."<sup>30</sup>

In the last twenty years this capacity has become almost instant and the goals of the development of communication have changed. Today mass media, instead of promoting (only) a different way of producing goods, focus their efforts in promoting a lifestyle in line with the values promoted by the liberal market economy, which

<sup>28</sup> See the UN Dept of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) website: *Peacekeeping operations timeline*, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/operationslist.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*, Glencoe, Free Press, 1958.

<sup>30</sup> Colin Sparks, *Globalization, Development and the Mass Media*, London, Sage, 2007, p. 20-21.

are largely based on consumption, an ideal towards which everyone is supposed to aspire. The value of a person is nowadays measured in materialistic rather than ethical terms;<sup>31</sup> the different kind and quality of the house where I live, the car I drive, the clothing I wear and the quantity of money I dispose of tell far more to the other who I am than my honesty in relationships, my reliability as a person, my availability to the community.

This explains why the perception of migration as the only way to improve living conditions or satisfy personal ambitions takes root in the community's collective consciousness:<sup>32</sup> because the added value of migration is not only linked to the material benefits for individuals, countries of origin or host communities. In the global village, mobility heavily affects the status of a person: "mobility assumes the highest level among the values which confer a status, and freedom of movement [...] becomes rapidly the main factor of social stratification of our time."<sup>33</sup> Today the world is split in two, separating those who can cross borders freely, the "nomads", and all the other forced to lead a sedentary life. In this respect mobility is assuming another meaning: a value measuring the individual's self-esteem and the capacity to determine the individual's "success" in a community.

Together with the media, the globalised lifestyle is promoted by another important "testimonial": the (mega)cities. Modern times are experiencing a constant increase of urban population;<sup>34</sup> (mega)cities are growing worldwide,<sup>35</sup> all characterised by similar patterns:

- a core, inner circle (*downtown*) where financial and commercial districts are located;
- an immediate bordering belt (more or less green) where the residential districts are located;
- an area surrounding the first two where the majority of the "haves not" ("new poors") live.

<sup>31</sup> Some authors have studied this value change. Among others, Swadźba and Yusuf analysed the impact of globalisation on culture and value system in Poland and Nigeria respectively. Urszula Swadźba, "The Impact of Globalization on the Traditional Value System", in *The Scale of Globalization. Think Globally, Act Locally, Change Individually in the 21st Century*, University of Ostrava, 2011, p. 332-337, [http://conference.osu.eu/globalization/publ2011/332-337\\_Swadzba.pdf](http://conference.osu.eu/globalization/publ2011/332-337_Swadzba.pdf); Adulraheem Yusuf, *Impact of Globalization on Culture*, Dept of Arts and Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, 2008, [http://www.musero.org.ng/publications/impact\\_globalization\\_culture.pdf](http://www.musero.org.ng/publications/impact_globalization_culture.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> There are many articles, essays and books backing this statement. Almost every report of qualitative researches or project interventions that gives voice to migrants reports the same narration. In my work as researcher I have recorded such perception among youth in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia.

<sup>33</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization. The Human Consequences*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1998.

<sup>34</sup> Today there are nearly 4 billion people living in urban areas, and by 2050 there will be 6.3 billion (66 percent of the global population), according to UNDESA. See *World Urbanization Prospects. The 2014 Revision*, June 2015, p. 12, <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/FinalReport/WUP2014-Report.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> Joel Kotkin, *The Problem with Megacities*, Orange, Chapman University Press, 2014, [http://www.chapman.edu/wilkinson/\\_files/megacitiesupdated%20version.pdf](http://www.chapman.edu/wilkinson/_files/megacitiesupdated%20version.pdf).

All the most prominent (mega)cities worldwide, from Europe to Africa, from North America to South America and Asia all look the same. They are lighthouses attracting the other, the "haves not", either from the rural areas of the country or from the poor, underdeveloped areas of bordering countries. They represent one powerful factor influencing the shift of the migration routes from south to north to south-south. It is no use embarking on a long and perilous trip north if the means to change the social status are at hand in the same geographical area. Between now and 2030, urban conglomerations are likely to continue to be magnets for migration, including continued internal rural-to-urban migration in the developing world, urban-to-urban migration of poor people between neighbouring countries, and migration of people to cities in Europe, and in strong emerging economies.<sup>36</sup>

### 1.3. The increasing barriers to human mobility in the world

The reaction of countries to the increased complexity in human mobility patterns, subject to the new influencing factors related to globalisation, has been progressively defensive. In the last two decades both developed and less developed countries have increasingly tightened their emigration and immigration policies. Generally, it has become more and more difficult for would-be migrants to obtain the proper documentation requested for moving, such as exit and entry visas, passports and so on.<sup>37</sup>

The result is that currently a large sector of international migration takes place outside the law and in the absence of legal safeguards. Among the currently estimated 232 million of international migrants there are approximately 30 to 40 million irregular migrants worldwide, comprising 15 to 20 percent of the world's immigrants.<sup>38</sup> Deprived of a legal way for moving, especially in the Mediterranean area, an increasing number of migrants moving northwards have to face tortuous journeys organised in an irregular fashion that often put their lives at risk. The fee of such transportation services can vary between 700 and 5.000 dollars,<sup>39</sup> and are paid to a wide number of different networks of "travel agencies" and intermediaries, individuals and "grey" organisations working to move people without documents from one country to the borders of the targeted country, mainly by land and sea, in order to overcome the restrictions imposed by states on people's mobility.

<sup>36</sup> "Mega-cities and Migrants", in *GT2030 Blog*, 12 July 2013, <http://wp.me/p2dSXI-el>.

<sup>37</sup> As an example, in Morocco only persons who have a long-term employment can obtain the issuance of a passport, implying a somehow discriminatory access to international mobility vis-à-vis those Moroccan citizens who do not hold an employment contract. This situation is common in many countries where not only the illegal entry is considered an illicit act but also the illegal exit from the origin country.

<sup>38</sup> Source UNDESA, *International Migration Policies. Government Views and Priorities*, December 2013, p. 91, <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/policy/international-migration-policies-report-2013.shtml>.

<sup>39</sup> See Havocscope, *Global Black Market Information* website, <http://www.havocscope.com/black-market-prices/human-smuggling-fees>.

The length of, and the risks attached to, such journeys are not the only consequences of the barriers to human mobility. Progressively, immigration laws worldwide have reduced the already thin gap separating legality from illegality once arrived at destination. Any change in living conditions can transform a regular migrant into an irregular one. In a very brief period of time, a person can end up in a situation of extreme uncertainty, becoming vulnerable to exploitation and/or mistreatment.

As a result of the combination of the above-mentioned paradoxical effects of globalisation, migration processes have been progressively pictured as a contest of the poorest (migrants) versus the richest (native population at destination). The inadequate response of the states has fuelled the "mixed flows" already mentioned, making even more arduous the identification and distinction of the different characters travelling for different reasons and bringing different needs such as economic migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors.

However, not all foreigners are perceived, and treated, as the poor and undesirable. In public opinion, those third-country citizens born in one of the twenty major economies (members of the G20 group) or belonging to the wealthier section of the developing countries that can afford to travel first class are allowed another form of mobility. They are not "migrants", they are "expats", people perceived as sharing the same set of values, personal attitudes, glamorous lifestyle and, most of all, economic availability.

The impression is that the old ideological barriers that once impeded the circulation of persons have been replaced by new divisions, based on the economic value of the individual: I travel because I have; I am because I travel; I am because I have. And this equation is valid both in the "Global North" and in the "Global South,"<sup>40</sup> levelling out the old distinction between a wealthy north opposed to a poor south.

The others, the poor migrants, or supposedly so, are all undistinguished "aliens," or, worse, *non-persons*;<sup>41</sup> the constant incertitude of their legal status forces them into a limbo that erodes their identity and deprives them of their legal capacity. No matter if voluntary or forced migrants, the attitude of destination countries in the Global North, including in the EU, is one of rejection. Such a prohibitionist attitude towards the mobility of those who have not, or supposedly have not, has

<sup>40</sup> The Global North refers to the 57 countries with high human development that have a Human Development Index (HDI) above 0.8 as reported in the United Nations Development Programme Report 2005. The Global South refers to the countries of the rest of the world, most of which are located in the southern hemisphere. It includes both countries with medium human development (88 countries with an HDI less than 0.8 and greater than 0.5) and low human development (32 countries with an HDI of less than 0.5). See Prof. Harold Damerow definition in the Union County College website: [http://faculty.ucc.edu/egh-damerow/global\\_south.htm](http://faculty.ucc.edu/egh-damerow/global_south.htm).

<sup>41</sup> In the sense of "differing in nature or character typically to the point of incompatibility" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*). See Alessandro Dal Lago, *Non-persone. L'esclusione dei migranti in una società globale*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1999.

progressively increased the vulnerability of persons on the move.

In such situations, the already thin distinction between voluntary and involuntary migrant becomes a matter of style. The poor are progressively segregated into dirty slums and involved in dangerous jobs, both in the countries of origin and in the countries of destination. Migration is progressively less accessible as a coping strategy to individuals, households, and communities in the Global South.

## 2. Distorted representation of migrants in Europe

Instead of embracing the complexity by accepting – and ruling on – the new reality of migration and the variety of the individuals involved, European policy-makers and national politicians, together with media professionals, have privileged the opposite direction, considering all individuals on the move as migrants, thus promoting further confusion (“disorder,” from the Latin *confusionem*). The result is the production of more and more distortions in the perception and understanding of the phenomenon, up to phantasmal proportions.<sup>42</sup>

The European Union twofold approach in ruling the phenomenon has a role in this confusion:

- entry and residence in the state’s territory is allowed on the basis of a work contract, preferably if signed already in the country of origin,<sup>43</sup> or if the person is in a position to demonstrate that s/he has the financial means to support his/her living in the destination country;
- residence is allowed to those who already entered the state’s territory, most often irregularly, and asked for protection as refugee, asylum seeker or as victim of trafficking.

The consequences attached to this separation are important because they further poison the narration of migration and the perception of migrants, creating two categories, the good and the bad migrants.

The good ones are those wealthy foreigners arriving regularly in Europe as individual entrepreneurs or within highly skilled intra-company movement schemes. These persons are most welcomed in the EU Member States for their beneficial effects, as already discussed, on the local economy and fiscal balance.

<sup>42</sup> The gap between reality and mental representation (“phantasmal” in the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*) of European citizens in respect of the number of foreigners living in Europe is measured every year by the Eurobarometer. For the same gap in UK see Bobby Duffy, Tom Frere-Smith and Hans-Juergen Friess, *Perceptions and Reality: Public attitudes to immigration in Germany and Britain*, London, Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, November 2014, <https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/publications/1712/>.

<sup>43</sup> For an exhaustive description of the requirements to get to Europe refer to Schengen Visa Information, <http://www.schengenvisa.info.com>.

Bad migrants are those arriving irregularly on the shores of the southern European coasts or at the eastern land borders. Without documents, they apply for international protection – refugee status or subsidiary protection status – once in a European country (preferably in the north<sup>44</sup>). And here the situation reaches its complexity peak, as refugees and labour migrants travel together, tell the same stories, show the same (physical and psychological) scars due to a long and fragmented journey. The categories end up by being blurred and intertwined<sup>45</sup> and end up in the category of mixed flows.

In this way the discourse on migration has been flattened. By putting in the same boat – and not only metaphorically – disadvantaged economic migrants and people fleeing situations of danger, the variety of status, motivations, expectations and identity of individual migrants has been levelled out.

In the improper use of migration-related language, another trend is also to be recognised: the association of certain nationalities with some categories of persons on the move. One example for all can help in understanding this trend. In the Frontex FRAN Quarterly for Q4 2013, it is reported that: “the majority of African irregular migrants detected along the Central Mediterranean route were Eritreans.”<sup>46</sup> How did the agency come to the conclusion that Eritreans were “irregular migrants” considering that around 90 percent of Eritrean asylum seekers have been successfully recognised as refugees in the last years? By qualifying Eritreans as “irregular migrants” a hidden message is being sent: Eritreans, as a whole, are no longer to be considered as eligible for international protection. As “irregular migrants” and not “refugees/asylum seekers” they belong to a category that no longer deserves protection.

The combination of states’ restrictive attitudes towards migration, making regular and “legal” migration progressively a “mission impossible,” associated with the growing tendency in restricting access to protection to the “stronger” category of refugees, has the consequence of “forcing” persons on the move to fall into the increasingly thin category of those recognised as refugees. Individual stories and nationalities tend to be “customised” and levelled in order to present the features usually requested to receive protection in the desired countries of destination.

As a consequence, this channel becomes overstretched, because “when only one group in distress receives protection, others in comparable straits naturally look to enter those protection mechanisms and procedures, precisely because they may

<sup>44</sup> Due to the discussed Dublin II regulation a person who applies for an international protection scheme in a Member State is not allowed to move to other EU countries.

<sup>45</sup> Jesper Bjarnesen, “Refugees or Migrants?”, in *The Nordic Africa Institute Articles*, 27 June 2014, <http://www.nai.uu.se/news/articles/2014/06/27/104657>.

<sup>46</sup> Frontex, *Risk Analysis Network Quarterly Report, October-December 2013*, April 2014, p. 5, [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/Fran\\_Q4\\_2013.pdf](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Fran_Q4_2013.pdf).

be the only security offered."<sup>47</sup>

Whatever the reason moving third-country nationals to come to Europe outside the regular channels, in the public discourse managed by the media they are portrayed as illegal immigrants, clandestine, criminals, boat people, "gate-crashers," "invaders," people who exploit host countries' generosity. All the above has contributed in firmly rooting these basic stereotypes in public opinion which, in turn, backs the position of those political leaders who affirm that migrants should have no rights at all, leading to racism and discrimination.<sup>48</sup>

It is important to underline that stereotypes in themselves are not negative in nature;<sup>49</sup> they enable us to respond rapidly to situations that may be similar to past experiences. However, stereotypes displays negative effects when they become an automatic response to certain solicitations, and therefore they prevent us from considering situations below the surface, thus falling in the trap of generalisations.

In the case of migration, the EU's inability to provide a common, positive and proactive approach to migration management has resulted in the progressive stratification in European public opinion of stereotypes and misconceptions about migrants, which has made it increasingly difficult to set up policies different from a simplistic push-back approach. In other words, it has become more and more difficult to promote a positive narrative of migration.

### 3. Bridging the gap between reality and perception

The stereotypes outlined above are in contrast to the following observations:

- Migrants are clandestine because we force them into a condition of irregularity; furthermore, their numbers are such that they could be manageable. The percentage of third-country nationals in the EU28 amounts to 6.7 percent of the total population;<sup>50</sup> from 2012 to 2014 only 463,334 people entered Europe irregularly.<sup>51</sup> With these numbers native Europeans will not be overwhelmed.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Johan Ketelers, *Unmixing Migration to Fill Gaps in Protection and Bring Order to Mixed Migration Flows*, statement to the 96th Council Session of the IOM, Geneva, 5 December 2008, p. 2, [http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/about\\_iom/en/council/96/Unmixed\\_migration\\_Johan\\_Ketelers\\_2008.pdf](http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/about_iom/en/council/96/Unmixed_migration_Johan_Ketelers_2008.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> Amnesty International, *People on the Move*, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/people-on-the-move>.

<sup>49</sup> According to Cardwell, stereotypes are "a fixed, over simplistic generalization about a particular group or class of people". Mike Cardwell, *Dictionary of Psychology*, Chicago, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1996.

<sup>50</sup> Eurostat, *The EU in the world 2015 edition*, September 2015, p. 27, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-statistical-books/-/KS-EX-15-001>.

<sup>51</sup> According to Frontex data, 1,131,806 overstayers were detected during the same period. Frontex, *Annual Risk Analysis 2015*, April 2015, [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/Annual\\_Risk\\_Analysis\\_2015.pdf](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annual_Risk_Analysis_2015.pdf).

<sup>52</sup> The first research work that completely dismantled the theory of the "invasion" has been carried

- Migrants are not naturally inclined to criminal acts and they do not increase the criminal ratio. Unfortunately, due to various juridical and social factors,<sup>53</sup> for the same crime the percentage of migrants in jail is higher than that of autochthones because in many cases they cannot access the alternative measures to imprisonment.<sup>54</sup>
- Migrants' integration process is hindered not only by prejudice but also by a continuous precarious and volatile legal status that makes their life project difficult to be realised.
- In the countries of destination, the tax contributions<sup>55</sup> of the migrant workforce substantially support the retirement pensions of aging Europeans,<sup>56</sup> with the high probability that the migrants will not receive a pension themselves in the future.<sup>57</sup>

Although the available figures, statistics and demographic projections clearly point out that migrants counterbalance Europe's declining demography and aging population and that they fulfil important niches in fast-growing and receding sectors of the economy,<sup>58</sup> the migration opposition rhetoric still prevail.

So the question is: is it possible to rewrite the narration of migration and thereby revise the role of migrants in our society, even though the evidence-based representation of the phenomenon promoted by many scholars seems to go substantially unnoticed?

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out by Hein de Haas's research report *The Myth of Invasion. Irregular migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union*, IMI Research Report, Oxford, International Migration Institute, October 2007, <http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/pdfs/reports/irregular-migration-west-africa.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> The sociological mechanism of criminal induction has been known for a long time. See Robert K. Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie", in *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 3, No. 5 (October 1938), p. 672-682. For a literature review on the relations between migration, crime and victimisation see Brian Bell and Stephen Machin, *The Impact of Migration on Crime and Victimisation*, A report for the Migration Advisory Committee, December 2011, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/impact-of-migration-on-crime-and-victimisation>.

<sup>54</sup> For an overview of the literature about the European penal sanctioning system see Vanessa Barker, "Global Mobility and Penal Order: Criminalising Migration, A View from Europe", in *Sociology Compass*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (February 2012), p. 113-121.

<sup>55</sup> The fiscal impact of migration is positive in 20 OECD countries. See OECD, "The fiscal impact of immigration in OECD countries", in *International Migration Outlook 2013*, June 2013, p. 147.

<sup>56</sup> According to Yannis Tirkides, considerably larger number of immigrants will be needed to maintain the population of working age needed to support Europe's retirees in the future. See Yiannis Tirkides, "Europe's Demographic Challenge and immigration", in Elvire Fabry (ed.), *Think Global - Act European III*, Paris, Notre Europe, 2011, p. 59-66, <http://www.delorsinstitute.eu/media/tgae2011itirkides.pdf>.

<sup>57</sup> On the different portability regimes of social security provisions see Robert Holzmann, Johannes Koettl, and Taras Chernetsky, "Portability Regimes of Pension and Health Care Benefits for International Migrants: An Analysis of Issues and Good Practices", in *Social Protection Discussion Paper Series*, No. 0519 (May 2005), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2005/05/6024891/portability-regimes-pension-health-care-benefits-international-migrants-analysis-issues-good-practices>.

<sup>58</sup> OECD, "The Fiscal and Economic Impact of Migration", in *OECD Policy Briefs*, May 2014, <http://www.oecd.org/policy-briefs/PB-Fiscal-Economic-Impact-Migration-May-2014.pdf>.

In doing so, I believe it is important to reflect on the words that are used to represent the migration phenomenon, since naming things means to indicate their own substance in the framework of a relation, between the person and the surrounding reality. And human mobility is no exception. The terminology mirrors the relations among the individuals involved, and the conceptualisation of the "global" society they live in.

In this regard, we tend to forget that there is no internationally agreed definition of migrant. There exist, indeed, some "working definitions," elaborated by those international agencies active in the field of migration-related issues – such as the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). These definitions are framed around the concept of the "voluntary" movement of a person, with the "intention" to establish his/her temporary or long-term residence in another country, crossing a politically recognised border, or moving to another geographical area within the same state. In the light of these "working definitions," a first element is to be acknowledged: there is no agreement on the concept of migrant, making the speculations on the "object" of our discussion more difficult.

Conversely, there is an internationally agreed definition of a person who is not voluntarily outside his/her country of nationality. Such definition, contained in the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, refers to a person who is out of his/her country of nationality and cannot return to it due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. This category of persons are called refugees and their "being outside of their country of nationality" refers to a cross-border movement carried out "involuntarily," forced to leave as a consequence of acts perpetrated to the detriment of their life and dignity, grounding their request for protection outside the country of origin. The asylum seeker is the person who is waiting for his/her request for protection to be accepted by the state, different from the country of origin, where the asylum seeker is looking for refuge.

Indeed, having defined only one of the two categories of persons on the move, it is necessary to explore which concepts are associated with one category and the other in order to capture the "meaning" connected to each term. Such "meaning" can allow us to measure the "value" that we give to the one and the other category beyond and besides international definitions and regulations, which usually are the result of historical events and socially constructed realities, in line with the Aristotle's motto "Ubi societas ibi ius."<sup>59</sup>

If we explore how the term migrant is used, we will find that very often it is associated with the term "alien." This word is a synonym for stranger, meaning a person who is "extraneous" (a word derived from the Latin "extra," meaning, in a true physical

<sup>59</sup> Meaning, "Where a (civil) society is, there is the law".

sense, that which is "out" compared with what is "in").

The use of such a word translates into the concept of who is in and who is out of the geographical space we live in. Those who violate our physical and metaphorical borders automatically represent a threat because their intentions are unknown.<sup>60</sup> This process of making a migrant an "extraneous" feature of the receiving society has been consecrated in numerous national legislations through the introduction of the crime of "illegal migration." "Illegal migrants" – that is, those migrants who have entered the country of destination through irregular channels, without holding the proper titles for entry and residence – are the most extraneous people among our receiving societies. They are made a threat to our individual well-being and cultural traditions, a crime that calls for the state to protect its "citizens" against the "aliens." The citizens are "legal" – "in" the law; the aliens are not – they are "outside" the law.

The constant association of negative meanings with the term migrant – up to the criminalisation of irregular migration status – has led to inappropriate labelling of these persons: a migrant is no longer a person, he/she is either a worker or a threat; any other possible features that are usually associated with individuals seem irrelevant in the case of migrant persons.

Such preliminary reflections on migration-related language and concepts, and their consequences on the reality of the current migration scenario, allow me to identify some possible strategies for future action.

The first step would be to restore the conceptual distinction between people travelling for personal reasons (migrants) and people forced to flee for reasons related to persecution (refugees and asylum seekers). In this way, each category would be perceived in more realistic terms (the number of refugees accounts for the 7 percent of the migrant stock), thus assuaging Europeans' perception of being invaded. As part of this step, proactive and timely protection measures for the most vulnerable, including those from crisis zones, could be established in order to avoid their having recourse to the services of intermediaries such as smugglers and traffickers. Such an evidence-based approach, would allow natural feelings of attention, care and empathy towards each category of persons to come through.<sup>61</sup>

The second step would be to elaborate and promote an adequate legal framework identifying feasible, credible and accessible legal channels for searching for a job and accessing economic/studying/internship/apprenticeship opportunities for

<sup>60</sup> Before a threat, the most basic psychological response mechanism is an anxious and panicking "reaction" that means an action of resistance or response to another action of power aimed at keeping the threat distant. See American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM IV-TR), 4th ed., Washington, American Psychiatric Association, 2000.

<sup>61</sup> According to Edith Stein, empathy is an act "in which foreign experience is comprehended". Edith Stein, "On the Problem of Empathy", in *The Collected Works of Edith Stein*, Vol. 3, Washington, ICS Publications, 1989, p. 6.

voluntary and economic migrants.

The third step would be to restore the individual identity of each person on the move, by attributing a positive value to the individuals. Beyond technical distinctions over terms and language, there is a lack of personalisation of the human side of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. A more relaxed approach on the part of the state to migration movements, entailing more feasible and accessible channels for both categories of migrants – voluntary and involuntary – would allow their true individual stories to be known, their attitudes, values, skills, culture and experience to be recognised and appreciated – the starting point for a true process of integration.<sup>62</sup> It is only by meeting each other, thanks to policies that allow such meeting without the need to “customise” the respective identities, that the “alien” becomes a “neighbour.” Indeed, when an individual genuinely “meets” another human being, the sense of threat turns into its opposite, into a sense of “trust, grounded in our evaluation of his/her ability, integrity, and benevolence.”<sup>63</sup>

All the above considered, there is the need of a radical change in European policies on mobility. EU Members should put migration at the top of the political agenda, engaging in a profound reflection about their system of common values,<sup>64</sup> looking at how to update and apply them to the new economic and social order deeply shaped by globalisation. These values would indeed represent the solid basis for building a new social pact in a culturally diversified society, overturning the current fragmented approach to govern it.

### Conclusion: Who bears the costs of misrepresenting migration?

It is legitimate to try to work out what the possible consequences of a long-lasting misrepresentation and distortion of the discourse about migration and mobility could be. Indeed, the costs of a demagogic approach to this phenomenon are shared equally between migrants and natives for the same simple reason: mystification generates loss of confidence and trust on each side.

When approaching EU borders both categories of “bad” migrant, those forced to leave and those pushed by the genuine desire to enjoy a fruitful experience in a new society, are addressed with a sentiment of general refusal and disaffection

<sup>62</sup> The conceptualisation of the term integration used in this article stems from the etymology of the term, by which integration means being renewed or restored (from Latin verb *integrare*, to render something whole).

<sup>63</sup> Roy J. Lewicki and Edward C. Tomlinson, “Trust and Trust Building”, in Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess (eds.), *Beyond Intractability*, Boulder, Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, December 2003, <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/trust-building>.

<sup>64</sup> The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values, which are set out in Article I-2 of the Constitution, are common to all Member States.

from a good percentage of the local population.<sup>65</sup> This rejection is not personal, related to specific "individual human patterns," but general, directed to a "category," the broad category of the "alien." This process of depersonalisation of migrants deprives individuals of their biography (made of feelings, emotions, expectations, skills, family and friends relations, attitudes, etc.) – in a word, of their identity and, at the same time, fuels the xenophobic rhetoric.

This negative impact – mostly unexpected on the part of the migrant<sup>66</sup> – promotes a spiral of distrust and deep disillusion: once arrived migrants remain in a sort of limbo, in a precarious legal status, constantly unbalanced between ir/regularity. Many are irregular from the beginning; others become irregular during their stay because of incidents on the perilous path of preserving their legal status. In other words, labour migrants live in a perpetual state of insecurity and deportability, making them by definition exploitable and subject to capitalist control not only of their mobility but well-being.<sup>67</sup>

These observations are not limited to the newcomers, but invest the whole category of migrants and are confirmed by the trends relating to second-generation youngsters.<sup>68</sup> Indeed some of these young migrants are slowly detaching themselves from the sense of belonging to European society and are becoming increasingly (self) marginalised into a "racial or ethnic minority status<sup>69</sup> that entails systematic disadvantage vis-à-vis members of the societal mainstream."<sup>70</sup> This process of social exclusion creates profound disillusionment with the Western lifestyle and

<sup>65</sup> Percentages of EU citizens saying immigrants are a burden because they take jobs and social benefits ranges from 29 percent (Germany) to 70 percent (Greece). For a complete picture of these percentages in France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain and UK, see Pew Research Centre, *A Fragile Rebound for EU Image on Eve of European Parliament Elections*, 12 May 2014, p. 28-29, [http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/05/2014-05-12\\_Pew-Global-Attitudes-European-Union.pdf](http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/05/2014-05-12_Pew-Global-Attitudes-European-Union.pdf).

<sup>66</sup> When collecting the experience of the Tunisians youth arrived in Italy in the aftermath of the Arab spring in 2011, I was struck by the genuine sense of delusion expressed by the interviewees for the way they were welcomed in Italy, especially because they were curious to visit a country known through the stories of migrants or the image portrayed by tourists, and they were not only disgusted but eager to proceed to another, more hospitable country.

<sup>67</sup> Alessandro De Giorgi, "Immigration Control, Post-Fordism, and Less Eligibility. A Materialist Critique of the Criminalization of Immigration across Europe", in *Punishment & Society*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (April 2010), p. 147-167.

<sup>68</sup> A term encompassing the children who grow up in immigrant homes, whether they are born in the receiving society or enter it at a young age. See Richard Alba and Mary C. Waters (eds.), *The Next Generation. Immigrant Youth in a Comparative Perspective*, New York, New York University Press, 2011.

<sup>69</sup> This process of marginalisation is proudly reaffirmed through the enrolment of second-generation youth in juvenile ethnic gangs. For a detailed analysis of this phenomenon, see Scott H. Decker, Frank van Gemert and David C. Pyrooz, "Gangs, Migration, and Crime: The Changing Landscape in Europe and the USA", in *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (November 2009), p. 393-408, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12134-009-0109-9>.

<sup>70</sup> Richard Alba and Mary C. Waters, "Dimensions of Second-Generation Incorporation", in Richard Alba and Mary C. Waters (eds.), *The Next Generation*, cit., p. 2. Alejandro Portes, Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Legacies: the story of the immigrant second generation*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2001.

values<sup>71</sup> that can push European-born youngsters in search of new meanings in life to travel to far off conflict zones to participate as combatants.<sup>72</sup>

While this phenomenon deserves further analysis, it raises serious concerns about the increasing fissure in the European social fabric, especially among the lower classes, resulting in an increasing hostility among native Europeans and "foreigners," including second-generation migrants.

As some observers have already pointed out, human mobility is the "litmus test" for a more secure future, given that "no other force – not trade, not capital flows – has the potential to transform lives in the sustainable, positive ways and on the scale that migration does."<sup>73</sup>

Unfortunately, recent discussions at European level have gone in the opposite direction, with EU Member States arguing harshly for the redistribution of newcomers in the European territories while further strengthening repressive policies to the detriment of sound policies of reception and real integration of future European citizens.

Updated 3 September 2015

<sup>71</sup> Khaled Fouad Allam, *Il jihadista della porta accanto. L'Isis a casa nostra*, 2nd ed., Milano, Piemme, 2014; Marco Orioles, *E dei figli, che ne facciamo? L'integrazione delle seconde generazioni di immigrati*, Roma, Aracne, 2015.

<sup>72</sup> Rachel Briggs and Ross Frenett, "Foreign Fighters, the Challenge of Counter-Narratives", in *Institute for Strategic Dialogue Policy Papers*, March 2014, [http://www.strategicdialogue.org/Foreign\\_Fighters\\_paper\\_for\\_website\\_v0.6.pdf](http://www.strategicdialogue.org/Foreign_Fighters_paper_for_website_v0.6.pdf). While there is no reliable data, the number of Europeans estimated to have entered Syria as foreign fighters is about 4,000. See Peter R. Neumann, "Foreign fighter total in Syria/Iraq now exceeds 20,000; surpasses Afghanistan conflict in the 1980s", in *ICSR Insights*, 26 January 2015, <http://icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syriairaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s>.

<sup>73</sup> Peter D. Sutherland, *Migration Is Development: How Migration Matters to the Post-2015 Debate*, speech at the High-level Panel Expert Policy Dialogue on Migration in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, Stockholm, 26 February 2013, [http://esa.un.org/unmigration/Migration\\_is\\_Development\\_by\\_PoSutherland\\_MPP.pdf](http://esa.un.org/unmigration/Migration_is_Development_by_PoSutherland_MPP.pdf).

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