The Notion of 'Crisis': Do we need to rethink the links between mobility, development and inequality?

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Asylum seekers at Budapest Keleti Railway Station, 4.9.15 – on the way to Germany

A 'new normal'?

The central question:

Is the rapid growth of refugee flows and migration to Europe in 2015 and 2016 merely a passing phenomenon or a 'new normal', not just for Europe but for the world as whole?

The rise of *'emergency migration'* :

Migration driven by desperation, whether because of:

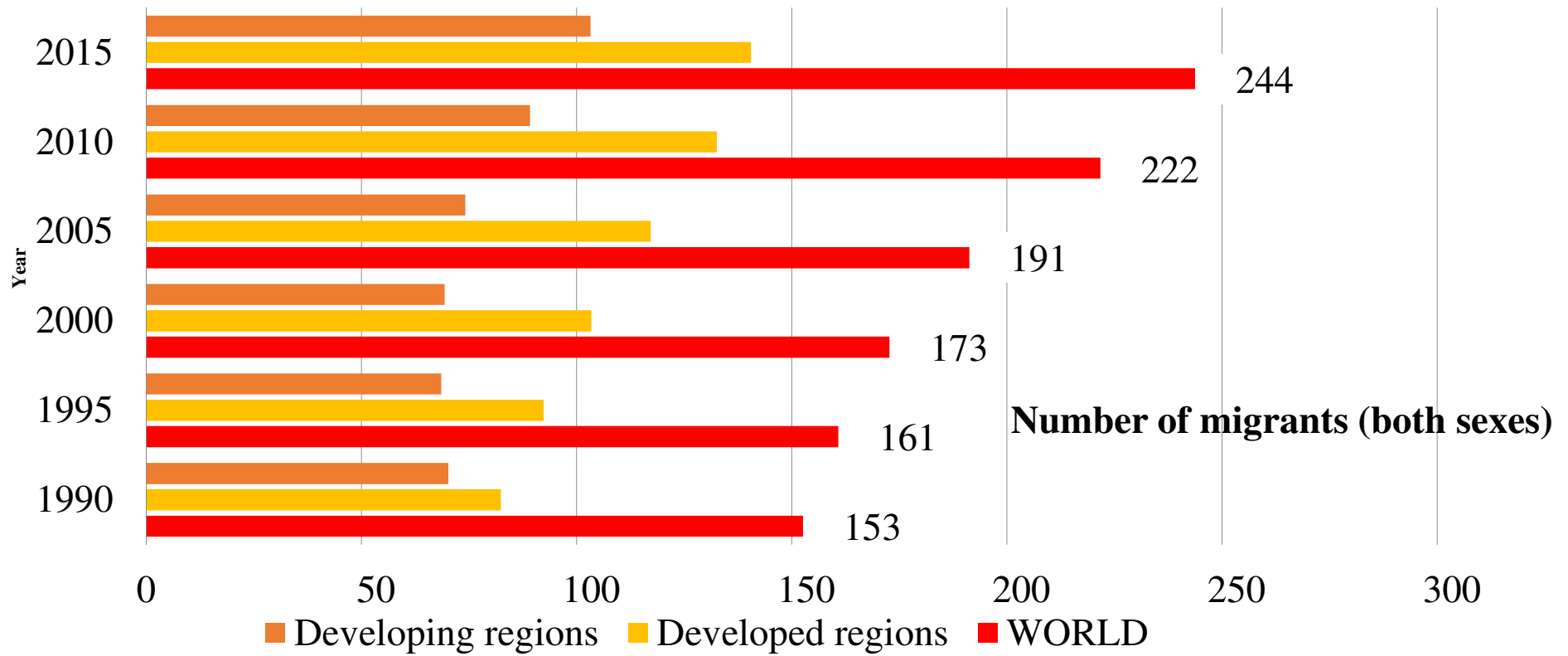- war and persecution, or
- poverty, insecurity and loss of livelihoods
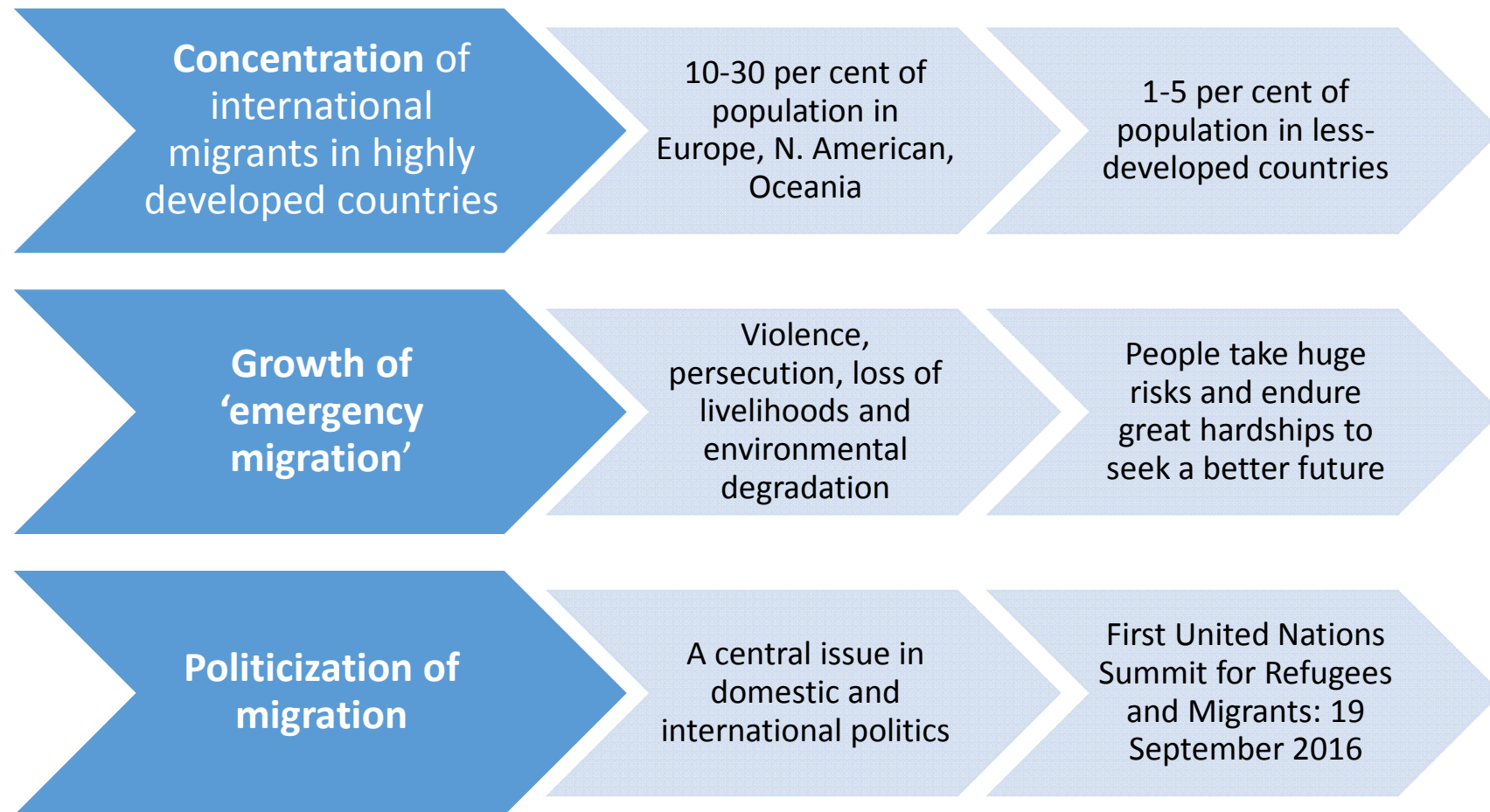
Rohingya refugees in SE Asia, 2015

Central American minors on the roof of 'the Beast', 2014

World Migrant Stock (millions)

Why is there a widespread perception of a 'Migration Crisis'?

Concentration of international migrants in highly developed countries

10-30 per cent of population in Europe, N. American, Oceania

1-5 per cent of population in less-developed countries

Growth of 'emergency migration'

Violence, persecution, loss of livelihoods and environmental degradation

People take huge risks and endure great hardships to seek a better future

Politicization of migration

A central issue in domestic and international politics

First United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants: 19 September 2016

Violence, conflict, lack of human security

Global forced migration at end 2015 : highest level since WWII:

- Total forced migration: 65.3m

- Internally displaced persons (IDPs):   40.8m

- Refugees: 21.3m

- Asylum seekers: 3.2m

Syria: Total population: 23m

4.8m refugees
> → 1.2m Syrians applied for asylum in Europe (April 2011 – Aug 2016)
> → 2.7m are in Turkey, 1m in Lebanon; 0.7m in Jordan

6.1m IDPS (still in Syria)

Inequality

- **Huge income differentials** between rich and poor countries

  → *Economic development* has priority over *human development*

- Globalization often leads to **destruction of livelihoods**

- **Growth in inequality** within countries:

  → **Precarious work, underemployment and unemployment**

- **Poverty** means: → **exclusion from political power**

  → **lack of human security**

  → exposure to **violence and corruption**

Networks, media and communications

LINKS between pressure to leave and beliefs about opportunities at possible destinations

- Past migration leads to more migration
- Migrant networks provide social and cultural capital to facilitate mobility
- New communications technologies: e.g. use of mobile phones by Syrian refugees
- Global mass media provide information
  - but often giving misleading messages about opportunities in rich countries

Time and refugees

Long-term exile
- Protracted refugee situations
- 6.7m people displaced for at least 5 years; average 26 years
- Mainly hosted in low-income countries that offer few opportunities

Resettlement
- about 100,000 resettlement places per annum worldwide
- 'The queue' for resettlement can last up to 70 years

Refugee agency
- Desire to build a family future
- Can mean onward migration to higher-income country
- *Refugees* can become *irregular migrants*

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Time and migrants

Migrant intentions

- A poor guide to long-term migration outcomes
- Motivations change in the course of the life-cycle
- Conditions in origin country may prevent return

Economic migration

- Flight from poverty and lack of human security can lead to 'emergency migration'
- Economic migrants may claim asylum
- Failed asylum-seekers may become refugees
- For example: Sri Lankan migrants denied entry to Australia arrested on return to Sri Lanka

Conclusions

The causes of emergency migration are likely to persist and grow

Refugees and migrants are quite distinct in international law

- But difficult to distinguish in mixed flows
- May have motivations which cut across official categories
- Aims and plans may change over time

How should the international community respond?

- Need for a charta of human rights to protect all migrants, irrespective of legal status
- This requires a new global body to set and enforce standards
- A long-term strategy for reducing global inequality and enhancing human development is essential

BREAKING POINT

The EU has failed us all

We must break free of the EU and take _____ our borders.

Leave the E

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