

Key trends: Migration

Jakub Bijak



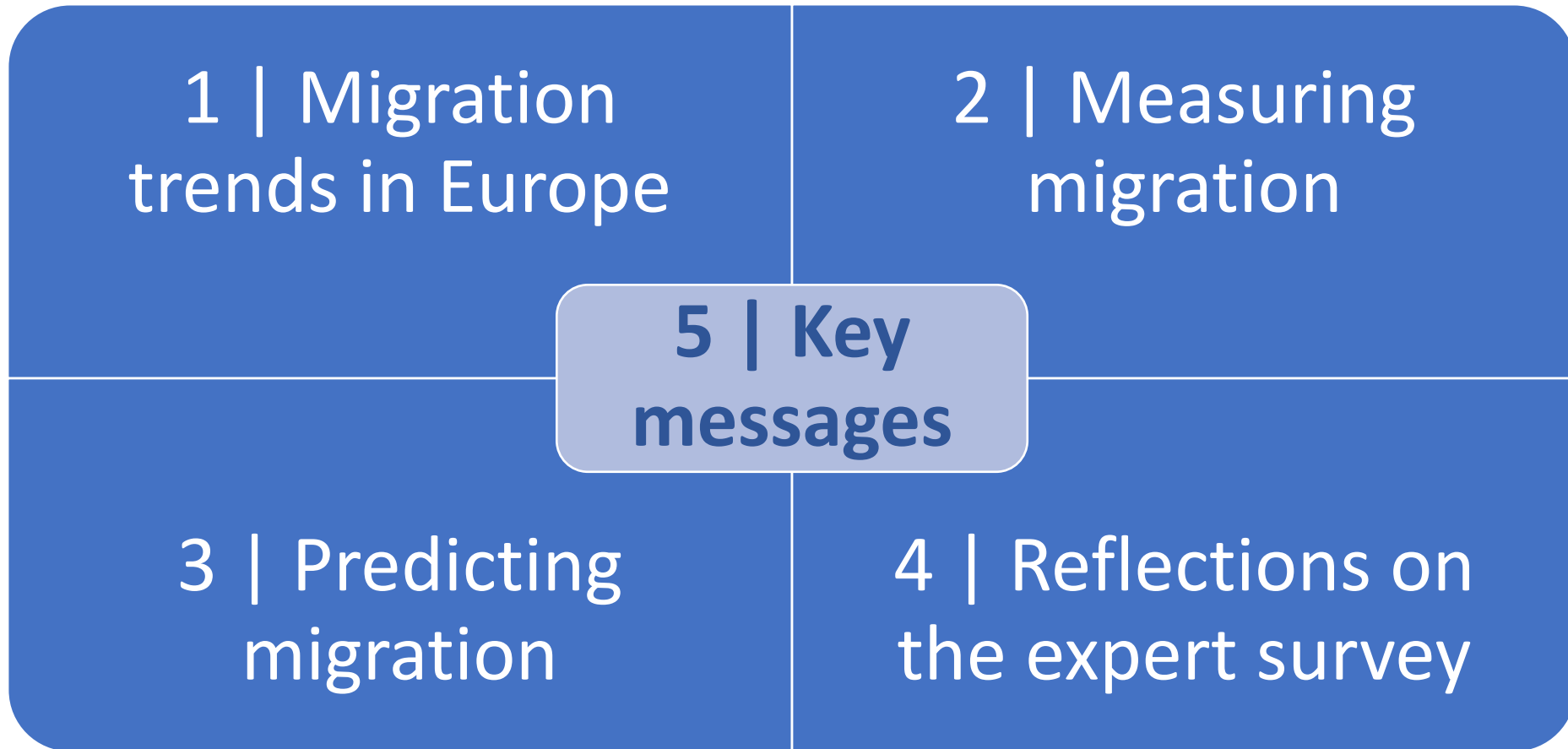
Workshop “Global Demography Expert Survey on Drivers and Consequences of Demographic Change”
JRC | Brussels | 13 December 2023



The project *QuantMig: Quantifying Migration Scenarios for Better Policy* has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 870299

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Outline



1 | Migration trends in Europe



Stylised facts



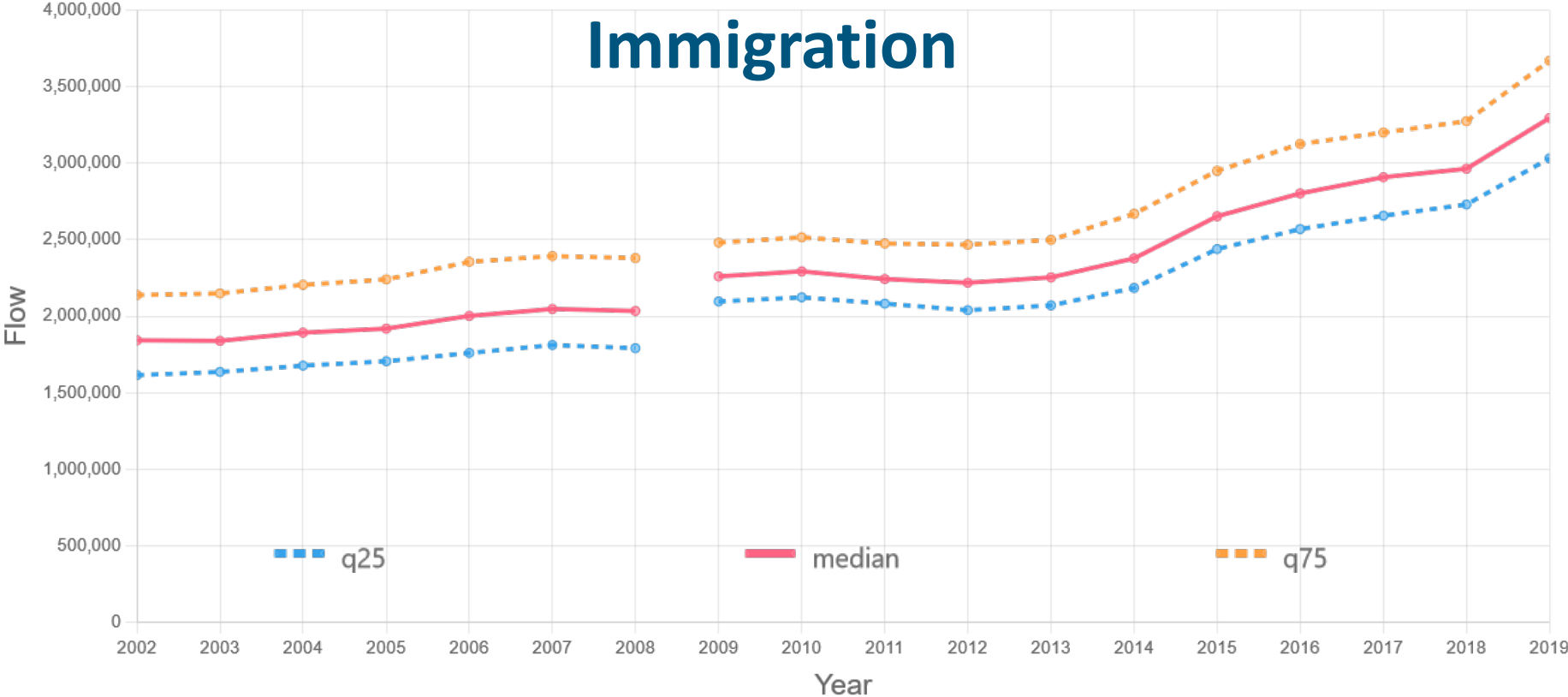
- **IOM World Migration Report 2022**

- **Headline figure: 281m migrants worldwide (global stock, by CoB)**
- Europe on par with Asia (86m), but European migration is mostly within Europe (70%) – true for most other regions except Americas
- Migrant share: at 12%, Europe is below N. America and Oceania
- Stocks steadily increasing – cohort effect – but **what about flows?**



QuantMig

Europe: Flows in the 2000s and 2010s



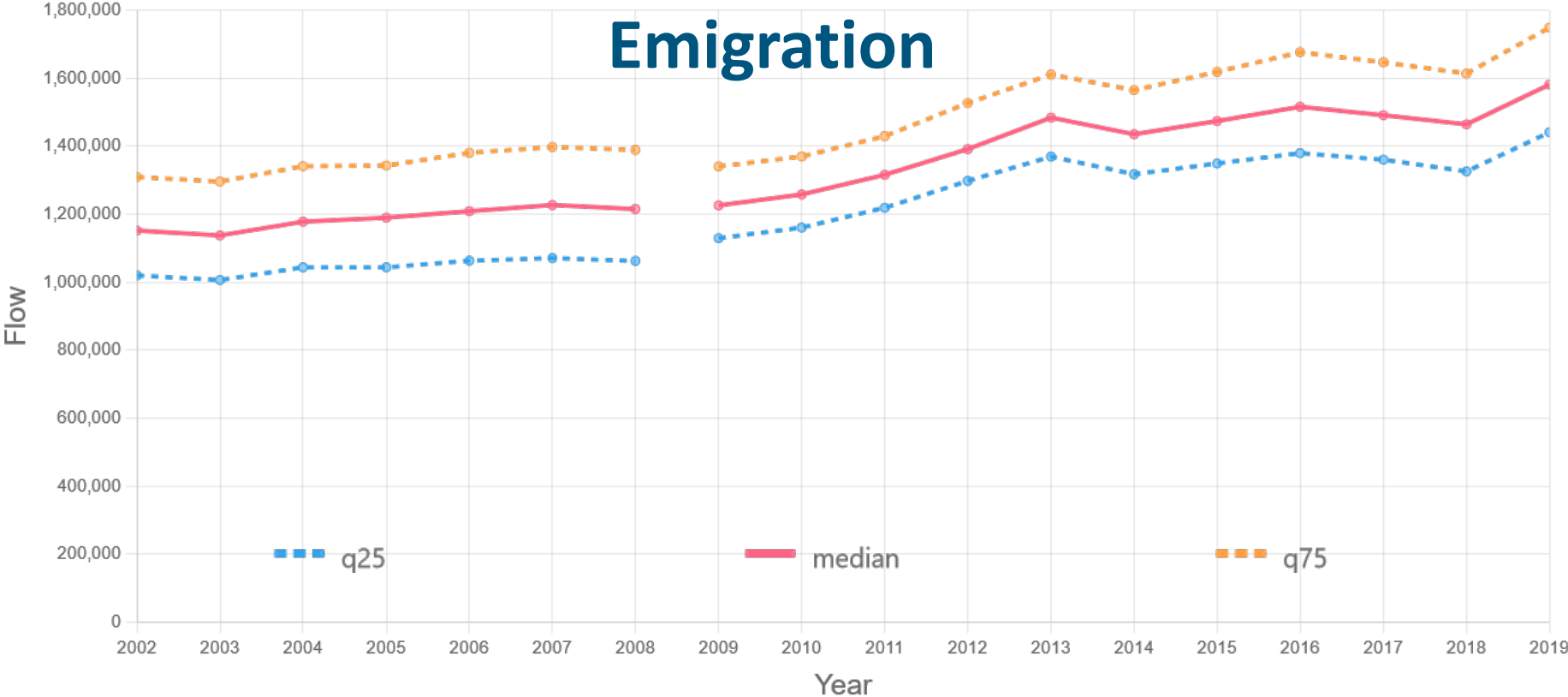
Harmonised estimates for 2002–08 (IMEM) and 2009–19 (QuantMig), EU+EFTA+UK

Source: QuantMig Migration Estimates Explorer, bit.ly/quantmig-estimates



QuantMig

Europe: Flows in the 2000s and 2010s



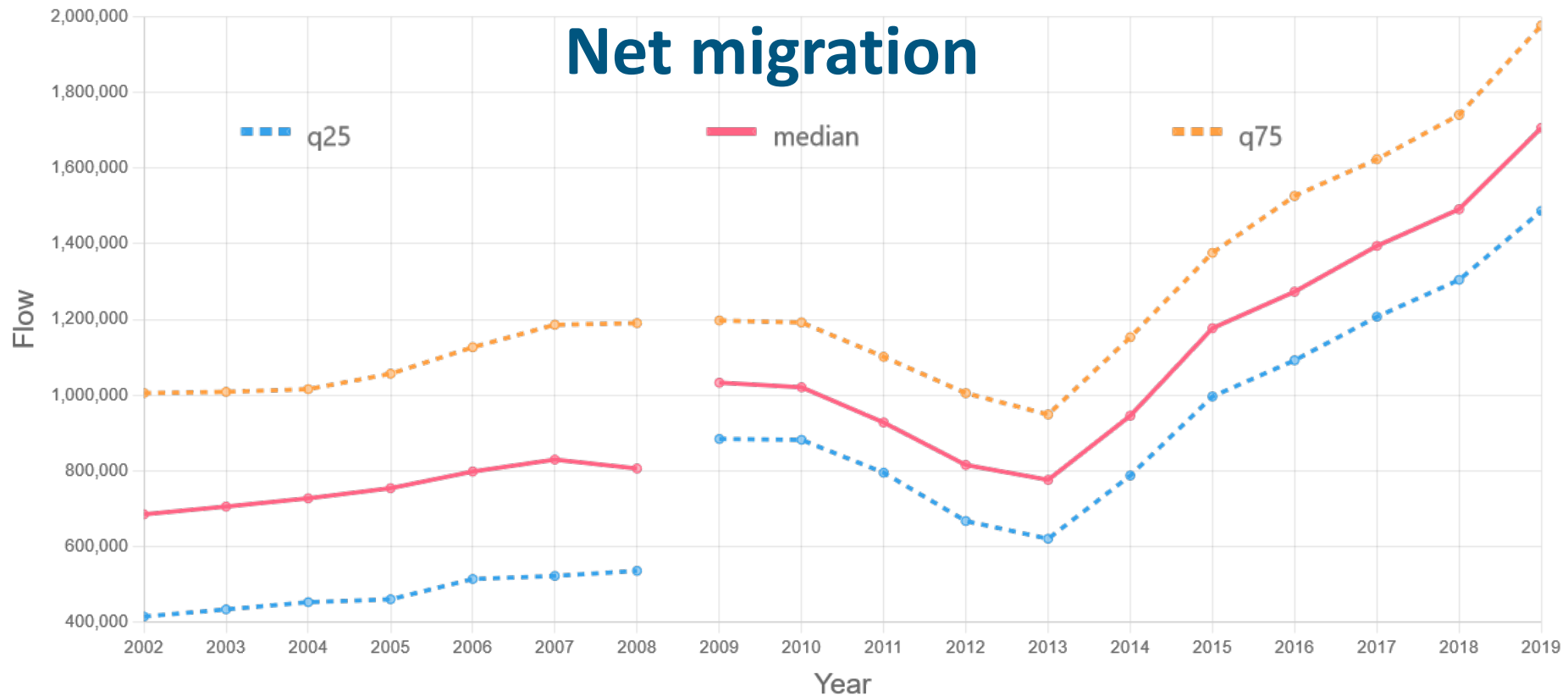
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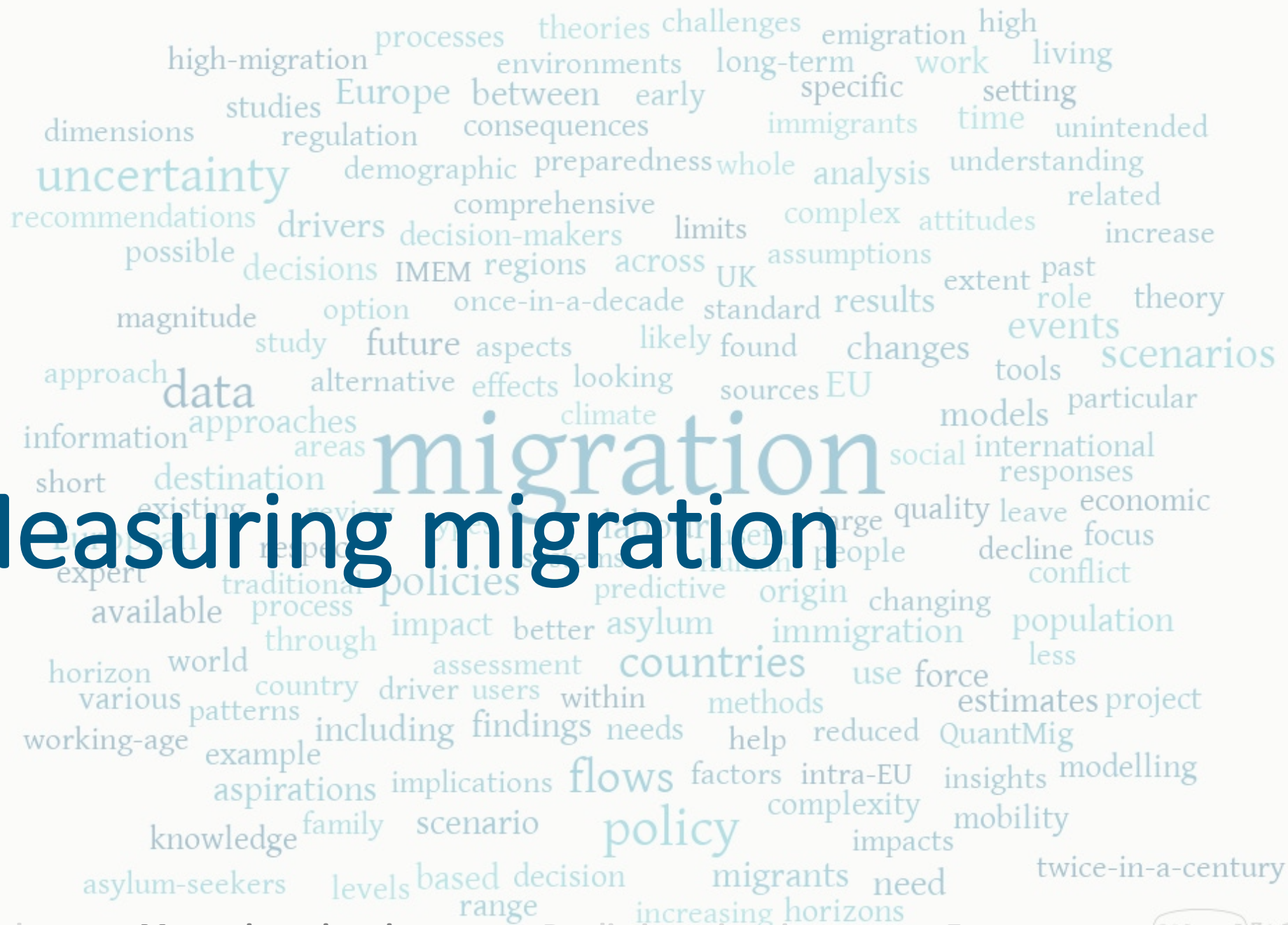
Europe: Flows in the 2000s and 2010s



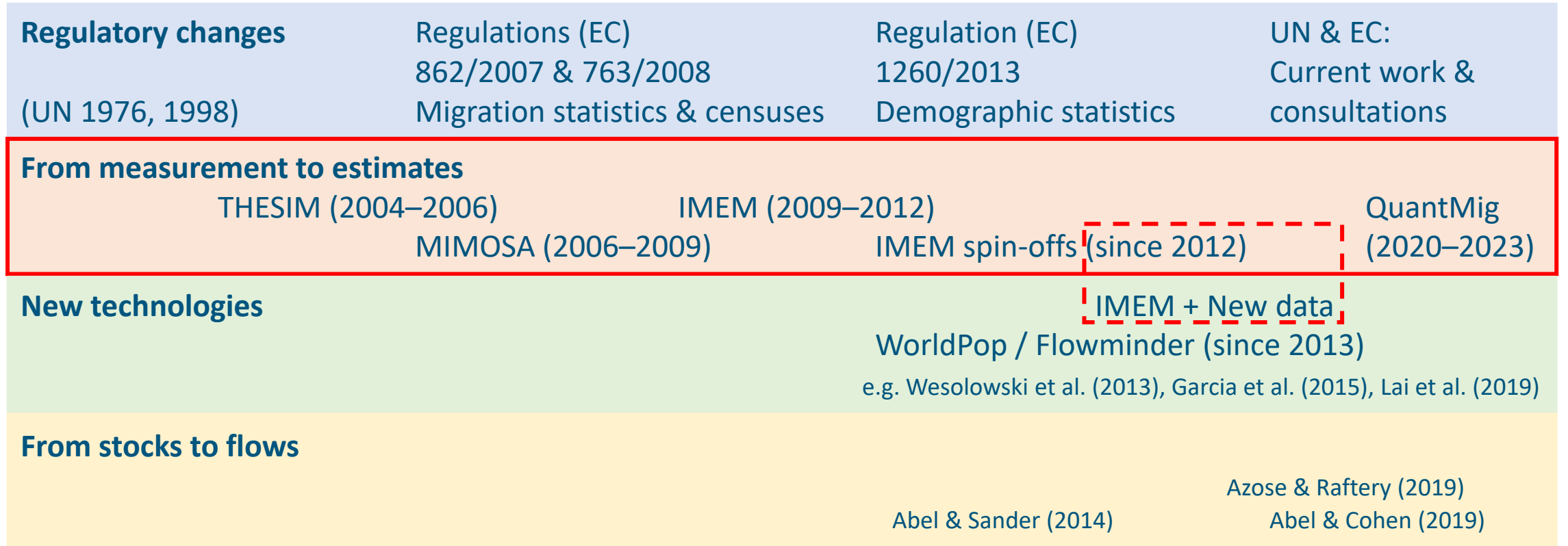
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2 | Measuring migration



Research timeline



Towards HMigD...

2000 2002 2004 2006 2008 2010 2012 2014 2016 2018 2020 now

Migration trends

Measuring migration

Predicting migration

Expert survey

Key messages

Achievements so far

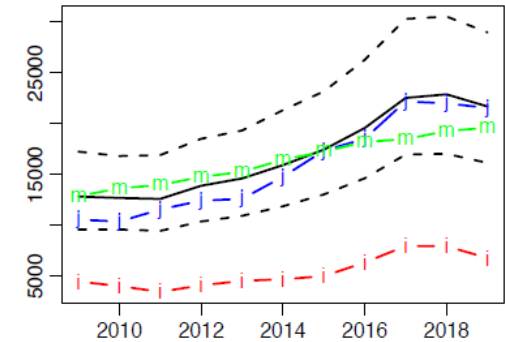
- **Much better understanding of the data and collection processes**
- Several sets of harmonised probabilistic estimates for different European migration stocks and flows, plus global matrices
- Estimates ideally based on probability distributions: point estimates reported with the assessment of uncertainty
- Statistical methods provide a natural way of integrating different data sources, their uncertainty assessment, and expert opinion
- Still work in progress

Estimates

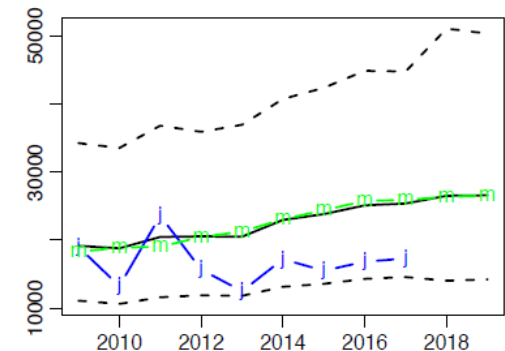
- **No single data source is sufficient**
- Since 2009, EU data **comparability has improved**, at the cost of availability
- Increased **uncertainty of estimation** whenever some data not available



QuantMig



Italy to Spain



Germany to UK

Source: QuantMig Deliverable 6.3

Observations

- Despite efforts to harmonise migration statistics at the European level, some discrepancies in the reported figures remain
- Potential to use new data sources, **but not on their own**, ensuring consistency in concepts, definitions and estimates (flows and stocks)
- **Key message:** a lot of European migration reality is still uncertain
- **Challenge:** going beyond Europe, especially in the LMIC context, with different data situations (Global Compact on Migration, objective 1)

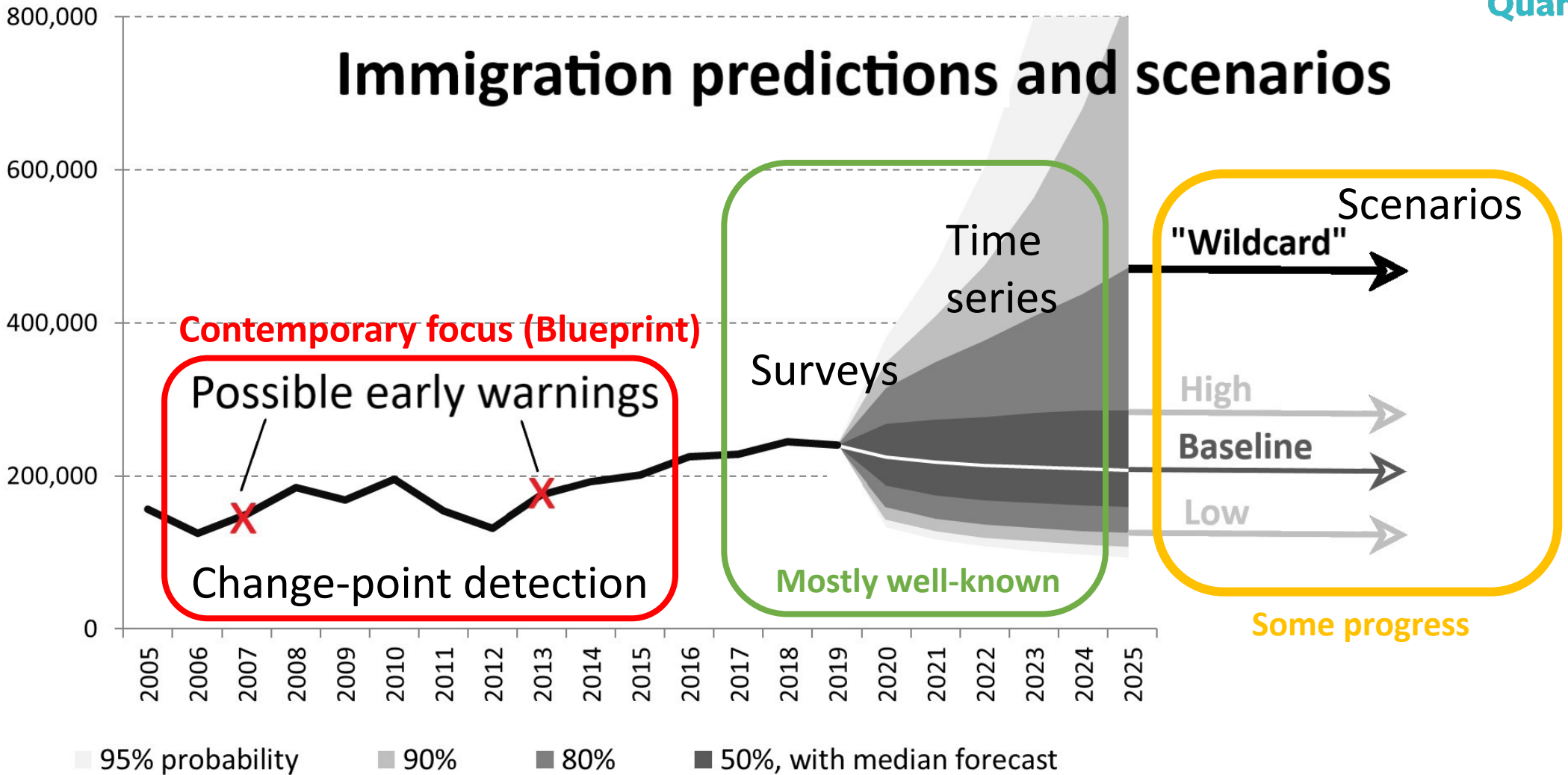
3 | Predicting migration





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Forecasting migration: State of the art



Migration trends

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Key messages

Different flows – different predictability

- Arguments for disaggregation and varying focus

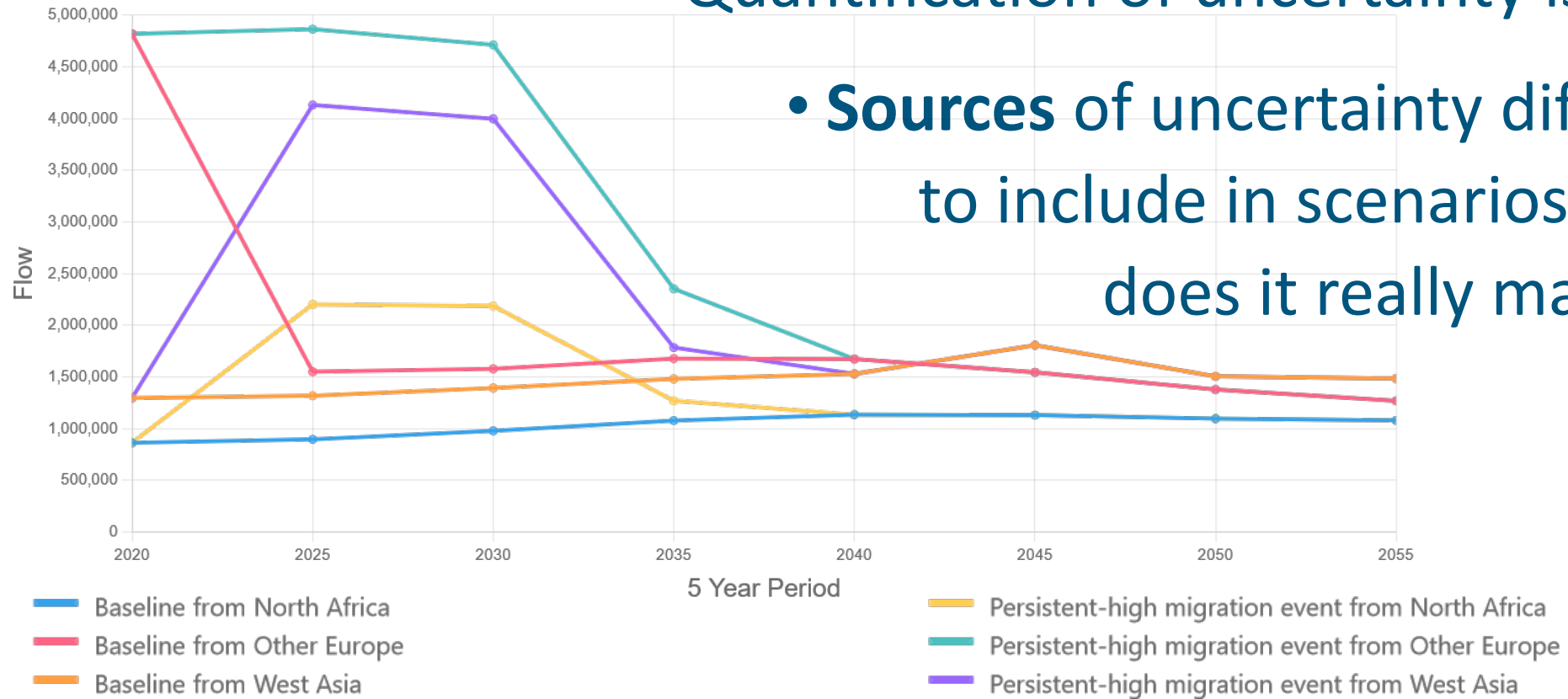
Impact \ Uncertainty	Low	Medium	High
Low		Migration of nationals	Short-term migration
Medium		Family migration	Economic migration Study migration
High		Settlement migration	Asylum Migration
Prediction horizon	Long-term	Mid-term	(Very) short-term

Adapted from: Bijak J et al. (2019) *Journal of Forecasting*, 38(5), 470–487.

Scenario uncertainty: Immigration to EU27



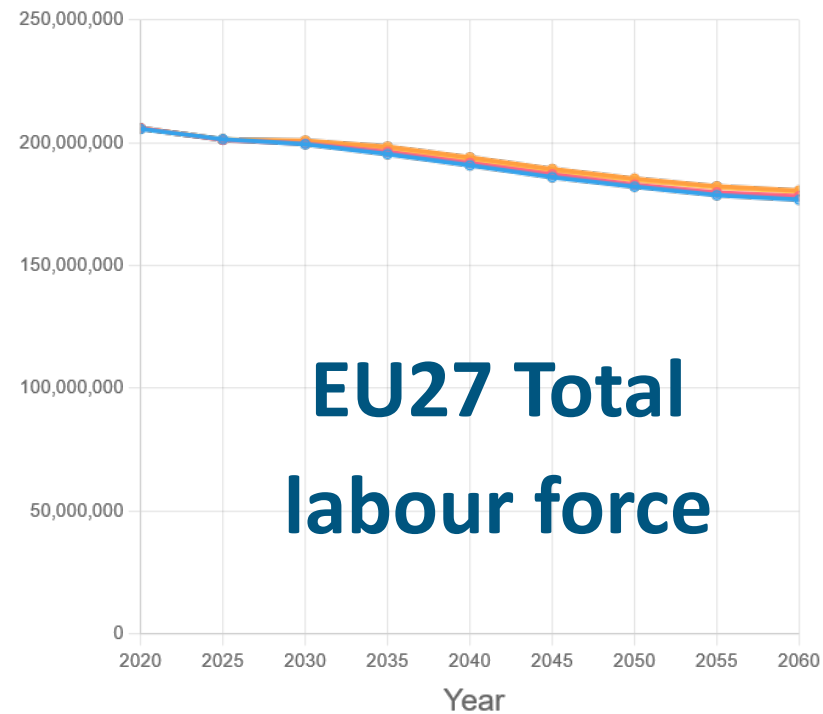
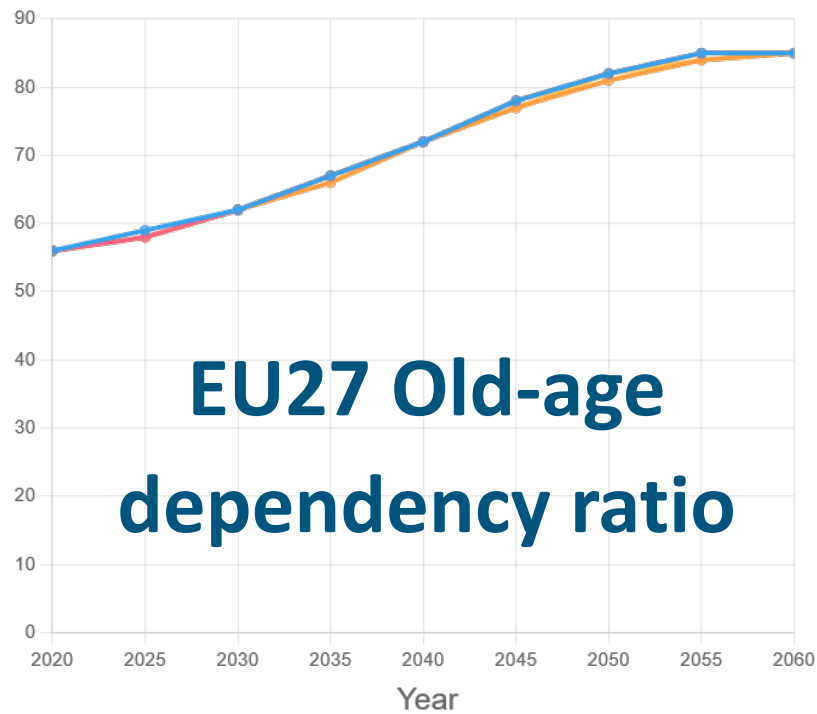
- Quantification of uncertainty is rare
- **Sources** of uncertainty difficult to include in scenarios, but: does it really matter?



Source: QuantMig Migration Scenarios Explorer, bit.ly/quantmig-scenarios

Scenarios: Demographic Implications

- Impact predictably limited – short term and localised



Source: QuantMig Migration Scenarios Explorer, bit.ly/quantmig-scenarios

The work continues

- Horizon Europe Project **FutuRes: Towards a Resilient Future of Europe**
- Resilient policies in the face of ageing and demographic change
- Migration as an important and less predictable driver of change
- Led by Arnstein Aassve (Bocconi)



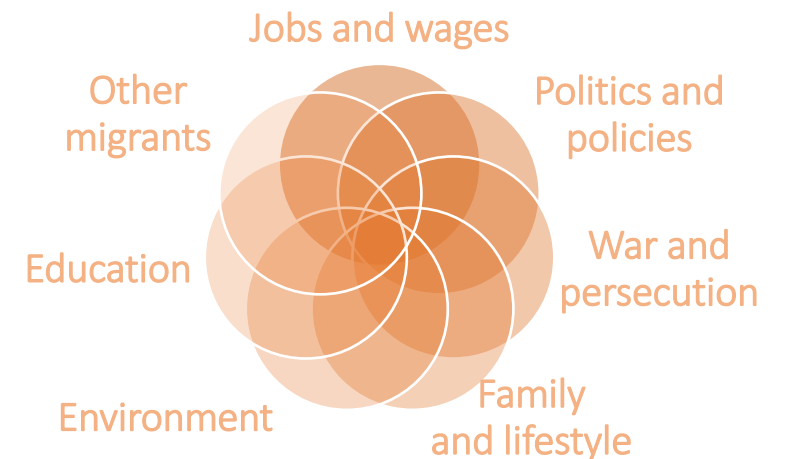
futu-res.eu



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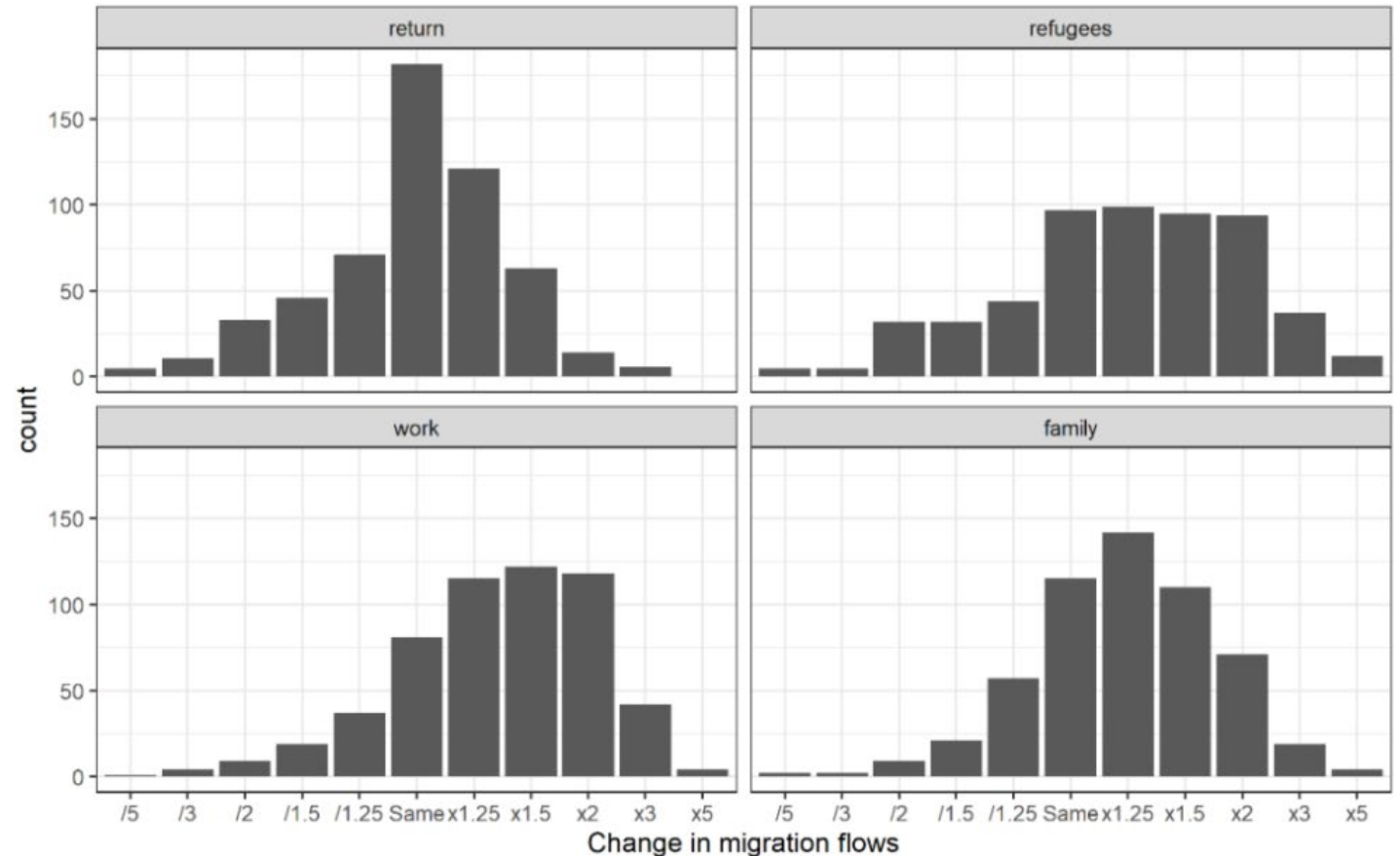
Migration: Weak signal

- Varying, but rather low levels of consensus between the experts: **to be expected**, given the uncertainty of migration
- **High variability of answers**, as measured by standard deviation (with caveats about using a discrete five-point measure)
- Uncertainty particularly visible for:
 - Climate-related variables
 - Returns and duration of stay
 - Policies aiming at reducing migration
- Findings **qualitative in nature**, as expected: quantification would be very challenging



Which drivers for which migration?

- Lessons from a vignette study on migration from MENA to Europe
- **Different signal** for the impact of demography (origin & destination), economic convergence, political instability (origin) as well as attitudes and policies (destination)



Boissonneault et al. (2022). QuantMig Deliverable D7.2

Consequences and policies

- **Between interventionism and abstentionism:** so-called “root causes” drive aspirations rather than migration
- **But:** changes in policies and driver environments alter the numbers, trends, and composition of flows, **often in unpredictable ways**
- **Uncertainty of governance:** ‘pivot to status quo’ and negativity bias
- Some policies in name only, but also new trends and challenges: securitisation, instrumentalisation and weaponisation of migration

DEMIG-QuantMig Migration Policy Database <https://bit.ly/quantmig-policy>

5 | Key messages



Key messages

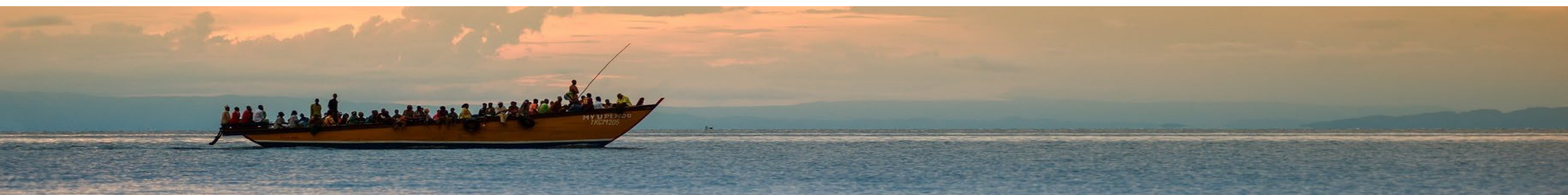
- From our experience, driver-based scenarios can be problematic:
 - **Complexity:** interactions with and between the many drivers are complex
 - **Uncertainty:** future pathways and relationships remain unknown
 - **Main use:** baseline as an input to argument-based projections
 - **Suitability:** mainly qualitative – quantification remains a challenge
 - **Alternative:** impact of rare events for contingency planning
- **Corollary:** Strategic policies should not focus on numbers
- Migration policies are means to an end, not specific targets
- Policies should be driven by their purpose, not headlines

More in: White Paper on Migration Uncertainty, bit.ly/migration-uncertainty

Thank you!

For details, see www.quantmig.eu

White Paper: bit.ly/migration-uncertainty



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