Global Migration Futures: Towards a Comprehensive Perspective

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• The International Migration Institute (IMI) and The James Martin 21st Century School at the University of Oxford, and the Dutch Foundation The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration (THP) have joined together to develop the project **Global Migration Futures: Towards a Comprehensive Perspective**.

• Drawing on the views of a range of academic and non-academic stakeholders, the purpose of the project is to elaborate scenarios to understand the future of global migration.

• Work in progress.
Predicting the Future is difficult!
(even in the short run)

The UK decided to open labour markets to the A10 countries on May 1, 2004.

Dustmann et al. (2003), a report commissioned by the Home Office to forecast net immigration from the A10 to the UK after the enlargement of the EU:

- “Since these scenarios are based on rather high growth rate of the overall population in the AC-10, it seems safe to argue that these figures are predictions at the upper bound of potential immigration”.

- Net immigration to the UK from the A10 will be “relatively small at between 5,000 and 13,000 immigrants per year up to 2010.”

- In fact, the two baseline projections were baseline model $1 = 4,872$ and baseline model $2 = 12,568$.

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Migration from A10

Even with a relatively sound estimation they missed the actual number dramatically.

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Different ways of looking at the future

1. You need to make sure that you are lucky.

2. Not such a good idea.

3. You need data.

\[ v_q = -r_{i_d} + \frac{\omega_r}{\omega_b} \Psi_d + \frac{p}{\omega_b} \Psi_q, \]
\[ v_d = -r_{i_d} - \frac{\omega_r}{\omega_b} \Psi_q + \frac{p}{\omega_b} \Psi_d, \]
\[ v_o = -r_{i_o} + \frac{p}{\omega_b} \Psi_o, \quad p\theta_r = \omega_r, \]
\[ 0 = r_{q_{i_{aq}}} + \frac{p}{\omega_b} \Psi_{aq}, \quad p\theta_e = \omega_e, \]
\[ v_f = r_{i_f} + \frac{p}{\omega_b} \Psi_f, \quad \delta = \theta_r - \theta_e, \]
\[ 0 = r_{ad_{i_{ad}}} + \frac{p}{\omega_b} \Psi_{ad}, \quad \omega_m = \frac{2}{p} \omega_r, \]
\[ T_e = \frac{3}{2} \frac{P}{2} \frac{1}{\omega_b} (\Psi_d i_q - \Psi_q i_d), \]
\[ \rho \omega_r = \frac{P}{2J} (T_a - T_e), \]

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Data is often a problem….

• First, when data exists you have the issue of the **definition of a migrant** (e.g. citizenship, country of birth, ethnic background, duration of stay).

• Second, in many cases the data doesn’t exist and the parameters must be estimated **using historical migration data** for other countries. An therefore it is necessary to assume the same structure across countries.

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But even if we have no data problems, we have uncertainties

Two major uncertainties:

Migration = f (y_{host}, y_{home}, networks, policy, natural disasters...)

Model uncertainties, which are comprised of the insufficient understanding of the mechanisms that operate in the migration process.

Explanatory variable uncertainties, which are found in the constantly changing environment in which migration occurs.

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Explanatory Variables

- Explanatory variables in sending and receiving countries have to be forecasted.

- Moreover, these variables must be forecasted for the entire prediction period.
Even Without “Explanatory Variable Uncertainty” there are Complex Different Levels of Impacts and Feedback

Contextual Environment (‘external factors’)  
- Global economy
- Host country policies
- Oil prices
- Social values
- Technology
- Geo-political trends
- Environmental change
- Local policies
- Development
- Media
- Demographics

Transactional Environment (‘internal factors’)  
- Interest groups
- Local policies
- Development
- Media
- Demographics

Migration flows

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Even Without “Explanatory Variable Uncertainty” there are Complex Different Levels of Impacts and Feedback

Contextual Environment (‘external factors’)
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- Demographics
- Migration
- Flows

Transactional Environment (‘internal factors’)
- Interest groups
- Media
- Demographics

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It is basically unknown how fundamental changes will affect future migration patterns.

Common assertions that may involve uncertainties and/or important feedback effects:

- population ageing in wealthy societies will fuel mass immigration
- climate change will force millions to migrate
- fertility decline in the developing world will dry up the supply of migrants
Too often, future migration trends are explored using linear projections of current trends

- This doesn’t take into consideration structural, social, cultural, economic and environmental changes on the global level which are likely to lead to fundamental changes in migration.
Sometimes we can even miss the direction of the impact…

• **Guest worker program Germany:**

  **Planned**
  - Workers would come and stay for as long as economically necessary
  - Economic downturn
  - Unemployed workers will return home where their savings should go further

  **Reality**
  - Workers did not return, job opportunities at home were non-existent
  - Workers using some of their acquired rights had their families join them

Max Frisch: We wanted workers, we got people.

Philip Martin: There is nothing more permanent than temporary foreign workers.

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A possible approach is to analyze a range of expected and less expected possibilities.
Many papers such as Dustmann et al. (2003) use multiple forecasting scenarios.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Average Annual Net Migration Forecast for Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline 01</td>
<td>Typical sending countries</td>
<td>20,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseline 02</td>
<td>High emigration sending countries</td>
<td>73,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic 01</td>
<td>Typical sending country – medium convergence</td>
<td>48,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic 02</td>
<td>Typical sending country – no convergence</td>
<td>55,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic 03</td>
<td>High emigration sending country – medium convergence</td>
<td>96,859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic 04</td>
<td>High emigration sending country – no convergence</td>
<td>103,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic 05</td>
<td>Fixed effects – medium convergence</td>
<td>209,651</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our use of the term scenarios…

• In this example, scenarios refer to assumptions (e.g. convergence in relative income) that affect the specification of the model.

• In our use of the term, a scenario is NOT a forecast or a projection of today into the future nor an alternative specification of the forecasting model.

• Our scenarios are not predictions and we do not necessarily expect them to come true.
**Scenarios are...**

- Stories about possible futures for migration.

- While forecasting exercises are relevant for policy and research, the use of scenarios is also essential as a method of looking into the future in order to:

1. Gain insights into future possible trends and developments.

2. Rethink our assumptions about migration.

3. Identify key uncertainties.

4. Encourage “out of the box” thinking about the future.

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Benefits of Scenarios

• **Recognise the underlying assumptions** that might be obsolete and fail to address what happens in the future.

• **Identify weak signs** that might show what will happen in the future and we often fail to see because we are locked into a certain way of thinking.

• **Break down the old ‘framework’** to be able to see what usually goes unnoticed and perceive a new reality.

• **Be prepared**, because in times of crisis or of rapid change, we are often too overwhelmed to be able to sit back and rationally analyze the situation.
A word about coherence…

- While scenarios are not predictions and we do not necessarily expect them to come true, we need coherent stories.

- It is important for the elements of the scenario to be compatible.

- It is also necessary for the scenarios to be possible, even if they are creative and unexpected.

- “Doom” scenarios and “paradise” scenarios are not necessarily the most informative.
Strategic looking at the future is very common...

- In sports to analyze possible strategies of the other team.

- In politics to develop responses to the campaign of the adversary.
Some of those looking at the future have used scenario approaches.

- The military uses scenarios to strategize responses to different situations of conflict.

- Businesses use them regularly as a tool for developing strategies for the future and take advantage of possible profitable opportunities that may develop.
Example

To help think about the future of energy, Shell developed two scenarios that describe alternative ways it may develop.

1. **Scramble** – policymakers pay little attention to more efficient energy use until supplies are tight. Likewise, greenhouse gas emissions are not seriously addressed until there are major climate shocks.

2. **Blueprints** – growing local actions begin to address the challenges of economic development, energy security and environmental pollution. A price is applied to a critical mass of emissions giving a huge stimulus to the development of clean energy technologies, such as carbon dioxide capture and storage, and energy efficiency measures. The result is far lower carbon dioxide emissions.
“When we reflect on situations or the future, we see the world through our own frames of reference. The purpose of scenario work is to uncover what these frames are, respecting differences rather than aiming for a consensus that puts them to one side.”

“Scenarios are particularly useful in situations where there is a desire to put challenges on the agenda proactively and where changes in the global business environment are recognised but not well understood.”

“Good scenarios are ones that explore the possible, not just the probable.”

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Involving Stakeholders

• The scenario method requires the **continuous** engagement of migration stakeholders to
  – ensure their ‘needs’ are addressed
  – build ownership of the scenario process
  – gain important insights from different perspectives.

• **Who are the stakeholders?**
  – Entrepreneurs; international, national and local policy-makers; government agencies; community leaders; scholars; migrants and their associations.

• **How are stakeholders engaged?**
  – Individual interviews
  – Stakeholders’ workshop
  – Deepening of scenarios

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From zero to initial scenarios

- 1st generation scenarios for different types of countries (it may also include processes).
- Up to three or four scenarios for each country.

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From initial scenarios to complete scenarios

1st Generation Scenarios → Selection of 3 or 4 Scenarios → Collection of pertinent country level data → Deepening of the Scenario → Scenarios send to stakeholders for feedback.

- Only the most insightful and/or interesting scenarios will be selected.
- Data from the relevant countries will be drawn to provide a complete picture of the scenario.
From complete scenarios to final scenarios

- Scenarios will be revised in response to any relevant feedback from stakeholders.
- Data from the relevant countries will be used to produce traditional forecasts for comparison purposes.
- This is important because the scenario doesn’t have to be true in order to be useful, but it is relevant to compare to what we may expect according to current data.

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Individual interviews

- The main purpose of the 2 hour interviews was to:
  - Explore previous important events that have affected migration significantly.
  - Learn what remains uncertain in regards to migration for the future.
  - Discuss what are the important decisions about migration that we will make today, but that will have long-term consequences.
  - Investigate the role of policy and policy-makers in regards to migration.
  - Examine the constraints that limit the ways in which migration can be beneficial.
  - Gain insights into potential outlets for our work.
Individual interviews

• 40 stakeholders were selected for their experience with and vision on migration issues.

• Once the set of interviews were completed, the information collected was recorded in a database, then analyzed and clustered along key themes.

• All interviewees will receive the summary document and this will be part of the background material for the workshop.

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Workshop

The first opportunity for an open dialogue among the stakeholders will be the international stakeholders’ workshop (April 19-20, 2010, The Hague).

Its objectives are:

- To build an understanding of the main factors the participants consider important in driving migration today and in the future.

- To uncover the underlying assumptions that commonly shape our thinking and our vision of migration in the future.

- To create stories on possible and plausible futures of migration taking into account economic, political, demographic, environmental changes that might occur.

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Workshop

- We aim at selecting a strategic set of case study countries that are 'representative' for the different regions in Europe and main sending countries, such as NW Europe, S-Europe, Maghreb, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

- Using a series of scenario developing techniques, the goal is for the participants in each group to:

  1. Review the main migration events in each country type.

  2. Think about the current certainties and uncertainties.

  3. Use the main uncertainties and the certainties to create possible scenarios.

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About 5 participants and one facilitator per group…

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Deepening of scenarios

• Using some of the brief stories that were created during the stakeholders’ workshop, the IMI will develop detailed scenarios.

• The specific stories to be developed will be selected by the workshop participants.

• The stories will also be compared with results from traditional forecasting techniques.

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Engaging Stakeholders

• Early stage so that they will become active contributors to the production of knowledge, as well as ‘users’ of the scenarios in future work.

• First, we are incorporating the views of stakeholders in the interviews in the key themes paper.

• Second, we are developing the scenarios as part of a broader discussion process in the workshop.

• Third, we would like to promote a continuous discussion among stakeholders as an online community (e.g. IMI blog).
Uses of Scenarios

- Policymakers (local, national, international) might be helpful in developing policies to anticipate major future shifts in global migration patterns as well as understating the factors driving these processes.

- Academics may increase awareness on future lines of investigation that have remained overlooked so far.

- Business may enhance their capacity to plan for future labor needs.

- Migrant Organizations should help them prepare for major challenges that the future may bring.

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Expansion/Dissemination

- Develop more case-studies to test and refine the framework to be carried out in selected European countries.

- Dissemination through the media, academic journals, conferences, informal networks and internet communities, and organisation of informal meetings with stakeholders from politics, business, big cities, academia and wider civil society as well as national, EU, and international institutions involved in migration policy.

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Example of an Scenario

• This is one of the scenarios that resulted from a previous migration scenario workshop at Oxford.

• After indentifying the main events in Moroccan migration history the participants identified a series of certainties and uncertainties with regards to migration in Morocco.

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## Important Events that have affected Migration in Morocco

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle Ages</td>
<td>Trans-Saharan Trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>French Colonization of Algeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>French Protectorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Creation of Israel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950/1960s</td>
<td>Opening Universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Oil Crisis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Start Fertility Decline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Colonization of Western Sahara.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>Decentralization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>EU enlargement: Spain and Portugal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## Certainties and Uncertainties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Certainties</th>
<th>Uncertainties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ageing in Europe</td>
<td>Economic Growth in Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Universal Literacy</td>
<td>Xenophobia in EU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Global Warming</td>
<td>Exit Restrictions in Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rise of New Powers (multi-polar world)</td>
<td>Foreign investment in Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Declining Population Growth in Morocco</td>
<td>Tourism in Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Access to Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Economic Growth West Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Economic Growth EU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Democratization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>African Union Regional Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Identifying key uncertainties

Uncertain vs. Impact

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It is also possible to analyze certainties.
Using the two most important uncertainties

Acceptance of Moroccans in the EU

Labour Reservoir
- 1970s strategy safety approach.
- EU demand for high skilled and low skilled labour.
- Moderate immigration.
- Sustained emigration.

BAU
- Sustained emigration.
- Clandestine emigration to EU (low skilled).
- New destinations (others powers that the EU).
- More high skilled emigrants.

Morocco as an Immigration Country
- Emigration halt.
- Attract African Low Skilled Labour.
- Lifting Visa Restrictions in EU.
- Competition with EU for Labour.
- Increased Xenophobia with West Africa.

Morocco Turns its Back on Europe
- Diversified Economy.
- EU refusal, strategic alignment.

Economic Decline

Economic Growth

Lack of Acceptance

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Morocco as an Immigration Country

Increased Openness + Economic Growth

Large scale emigration decline

EU lifting of visa restrictions

Cross-border firms EU/Morocco

External border of EU

Increased transnational mobility

Aligning policies towards EU

Return Migration

Demand for labour immigration increases

Strategic recruitment of migrant labour from specific West African countries

Increased visa restrictions + border enforcement

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Is this a possible and coherent scenario?

- Have something similar happened in the past?

Arguably, countries like Ireland and Turkey have changed from being countries of emigration to being countries of immigration.

- Will Europe under some circumstances expand it’s border towards the South?

Europe has been expanding its border to encompass more and more countries.

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The Next Step

• We will collect data from Morocco and established how the world would look like in an scenario like this.

• We will create a story that is being narrated in about 2050 about what has happened in the country during the last four decades.

• The scenario will also be compared with results from traditional forecasting techniques.

• However, while constructing the scenario it is important to avoid focusing just on quantitative data and specific forecasts, event thought they appear reliable. Their apparent precision can be a distraction.
Last thought

If we do not think creatively about the possibilities for the future, it would be impossible to think creatively about the responses to those possibilities.
In this context we believe that considering scenarios is important

– As a way to prepare us for the eventuality of something unexpected happening.

– As analytical tools that allow us to discover the underlying structural forces and the uncertainties about the future.

– As process tools that compel participants in the scenario-building activities to rethink their assumptions about migration.
Thank You for Your Attention!

Questions, Comments, Ideas are Welcome

More information visit: http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/

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