



USING SCENARIOS TO STUDY GLOBAL MIGRATION FUTURES

Hein de Haas

International Migration Institute (IMI)

**Oxford Department of International
Development**

Oxford Martin School

University of Oxford

hein.dehaas@qeh.ox.ac.uk

SCENARIO METHODOLOGY AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

- Global Migration Futures project:
 - To gain insights in possible future migration trends...
 - Focus on North Africa and Europe as case studies
 - ...through the elaboration of *scenarios*, taking into account future social, economic, political, demographic, technological and environmental change



WHY USE SCENARIOS TO STUDY MIGRATION?

- Scenarios as a methodology to develop a better understanding of migration processes, by
 - challenging existing assumptions about migration
 - stimulating creative thinking about the future
- Key role of multiple stakeholders:
 - Bring in experiences and perspectives from different backgrounds and disciplines
 - Challenge conventional thinking by confronting visions



THE NEED TO QUESTION ASSUMPTIONS

- What drives migration ? (*the models, theories*)
 - - “Causal factors” can have a counter-intuitive, often non-linear impact on migration
- How will drivers of migration evolve in the future? (*the context*)
 - Scenarios building: focus on *uncertain* factors and shocks to the system (e.g., Oil Crisis; 9/11; Global Financial Crisis, radical political change)



THE NEED TO QUESTION ASSUMPTIONS

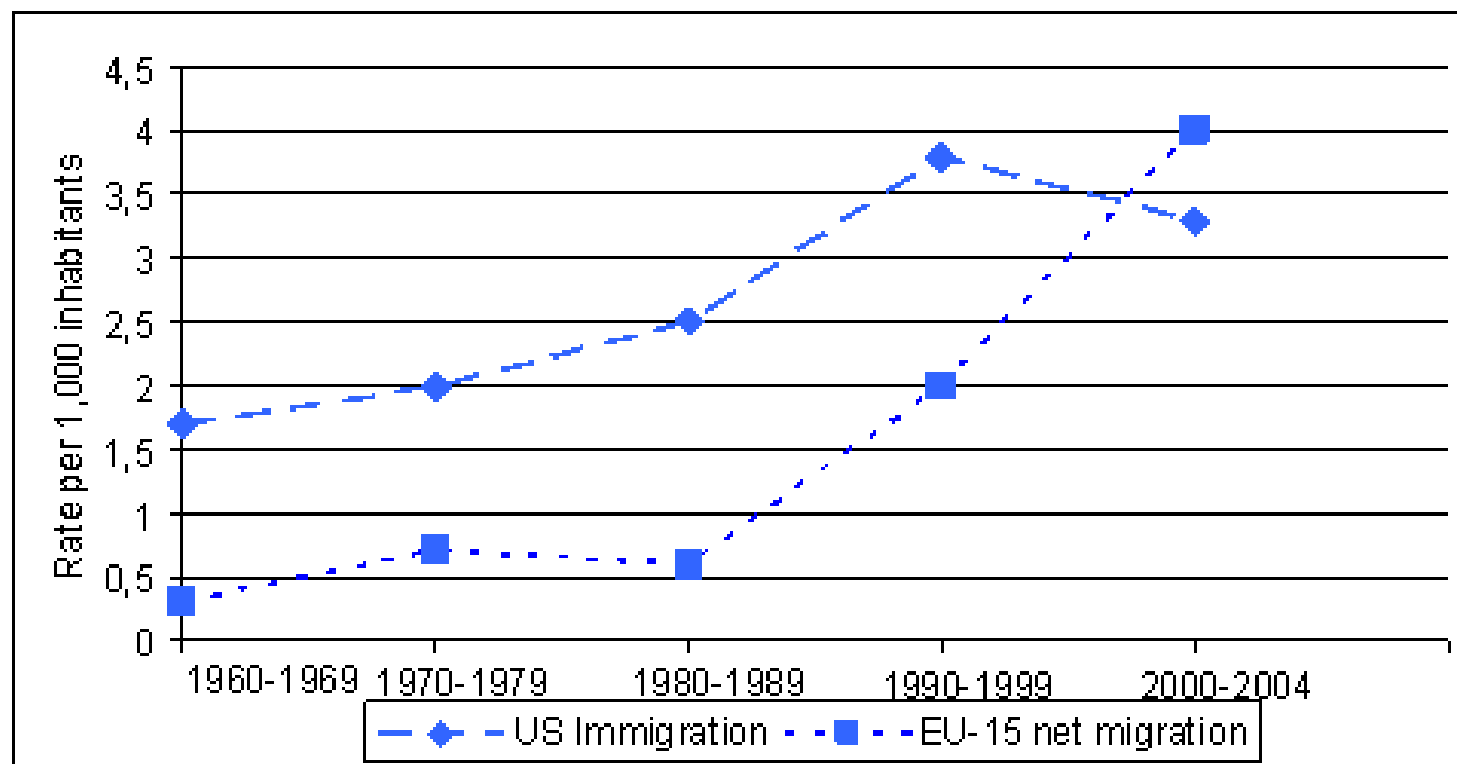
EX.1: THE ROLE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

- *Assumption:* Restrictions reduce immigration
- *Policy recipe:* Open/close ‘immigration tap’
- *Assumption:* Policies are a main migration driver
- *Uncertainty:* Unintended and limited effects of policies.



FORTRESS EUROPE?

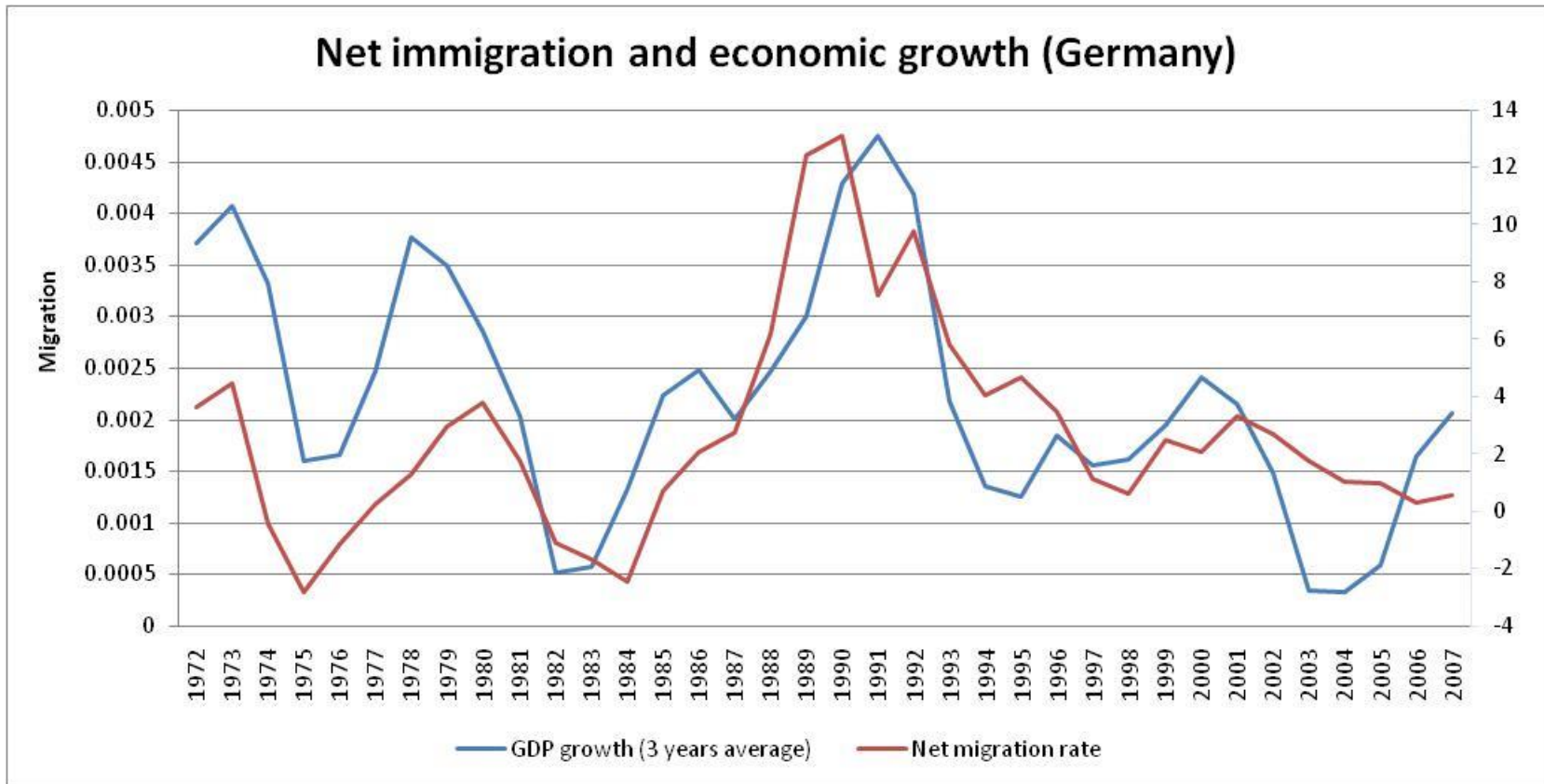
Chart 1 – recent increase in immigration to the EU and the US



Source: Eurostat, US Office of Immigration Statistics, US Census Bureau



IT'S THE ECONOMY...!?



Source: Own calculations based on UN PD and WB data

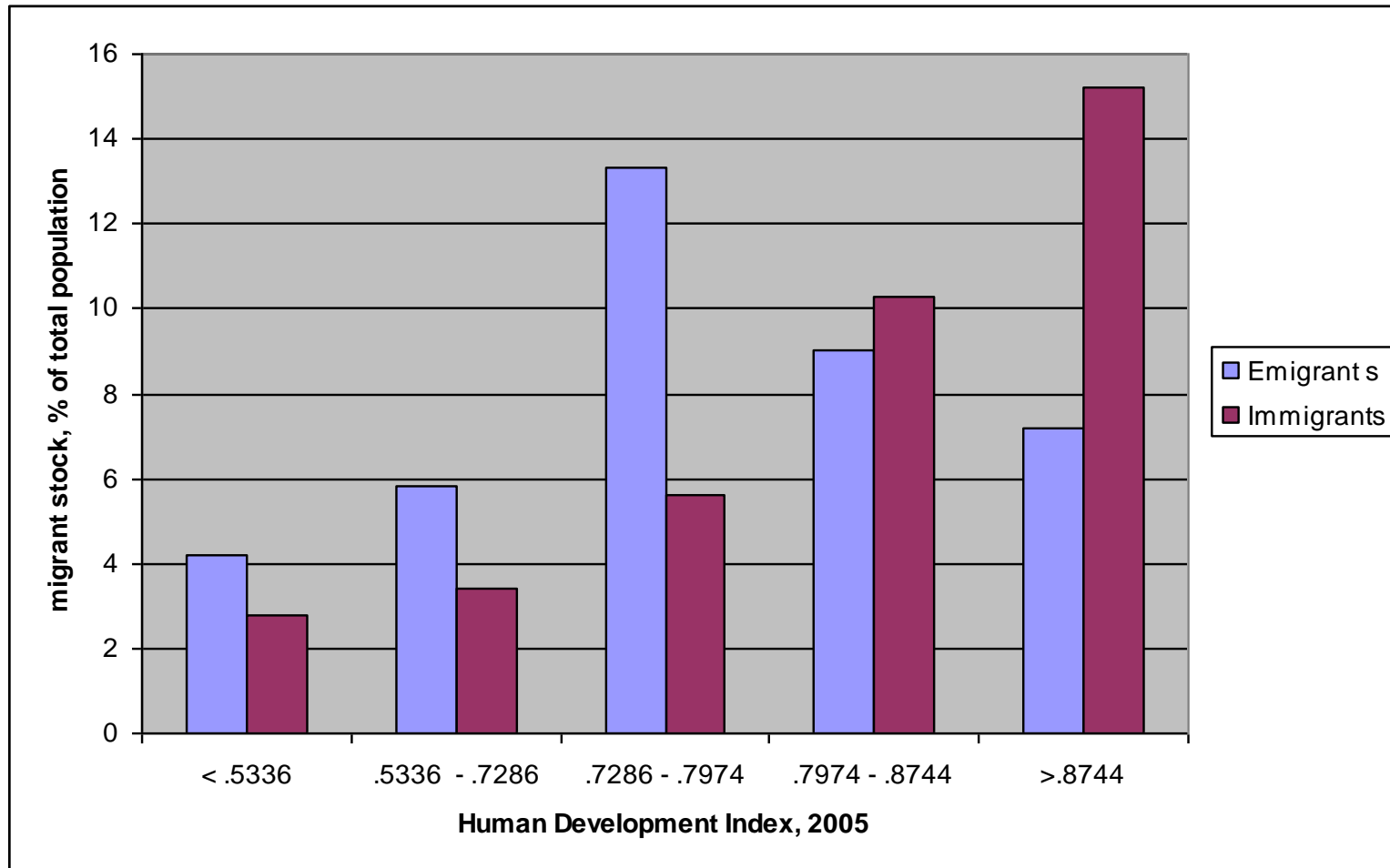
THE NEED TO QUESTION ASSUMPTIONS

Ex.2: WILL DEVELOPMENT REDUCE MIGRATION?

- *Conventional wisdom*: South-North migration is driven by poverty and underdevelopment
- *Assumption*: development and migration are substitutes
- *Policy recipe*: “Marshall plan for Africa”
- *Uncertainty*: non-linear effects of ‘development’ on migration



HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION



Source: de Haas, H. 2010. *Migration transitions: a theoretical and empirical inquiry into the developmental drivers of international migration*. IMI Working Paper, University of Oxford

THE NEED TO QUESTION ASSUMPTIONS

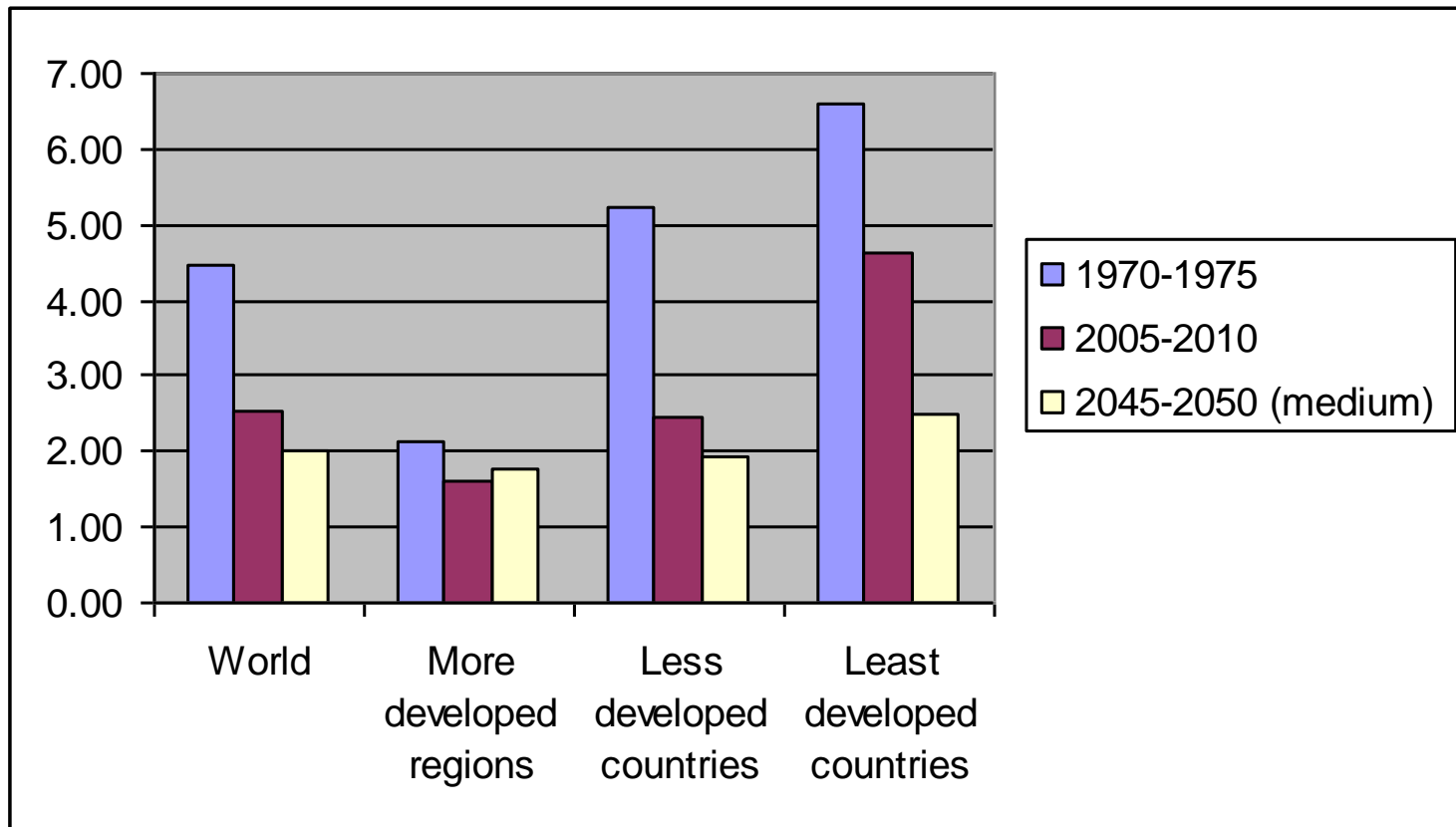
Ex.3: WHERE WILL FUTURE MIGRANTS COME FROM?

- *Conventional idea:* Quasi unlimited supply of low-skilled migrant workers
- *Assumption:* Continued high fertility and population growth
- *Problem:* Ignores global demographic transformations
- *Lesson:* We cannot extrapolate from current trends
- *Uncertainty:* How will demographic shifts affect future migration?



GLOBAL DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE AND MIGRATION

IS THE WORLD RUNNING OUT OF CHILDREN?



Total fertility rate

Source: UNPD projections



COMPONENTS OF THE GMF PROJECT

- *Theoretical framework* on migration drivers; background research on migration drivers
- Elaboration of *migration scenarios* during stakeholder workshops (The Hague 2010 and Cairo 2011)
- *Refining of initial scenarios* through analysis and online stakeholders feedback
- *Developing scenarios on future policy responses*



ADAPTATIONS TO THE METHODOLOGY

- Time Frame: 2050 → 2035
- Unit of analysis (Shell vs 'North Africa' / 'Europe')
- 'Relative' Certainties and 'Relative' Uncertainties
- Combine scenarios and social science methodologies



EXAMINING WHAT IS UNCERTAIN:

- Economic Growth in EU and North Africa
- Future of the EU
- Xenophobia
- Political Conflict
- Democratization

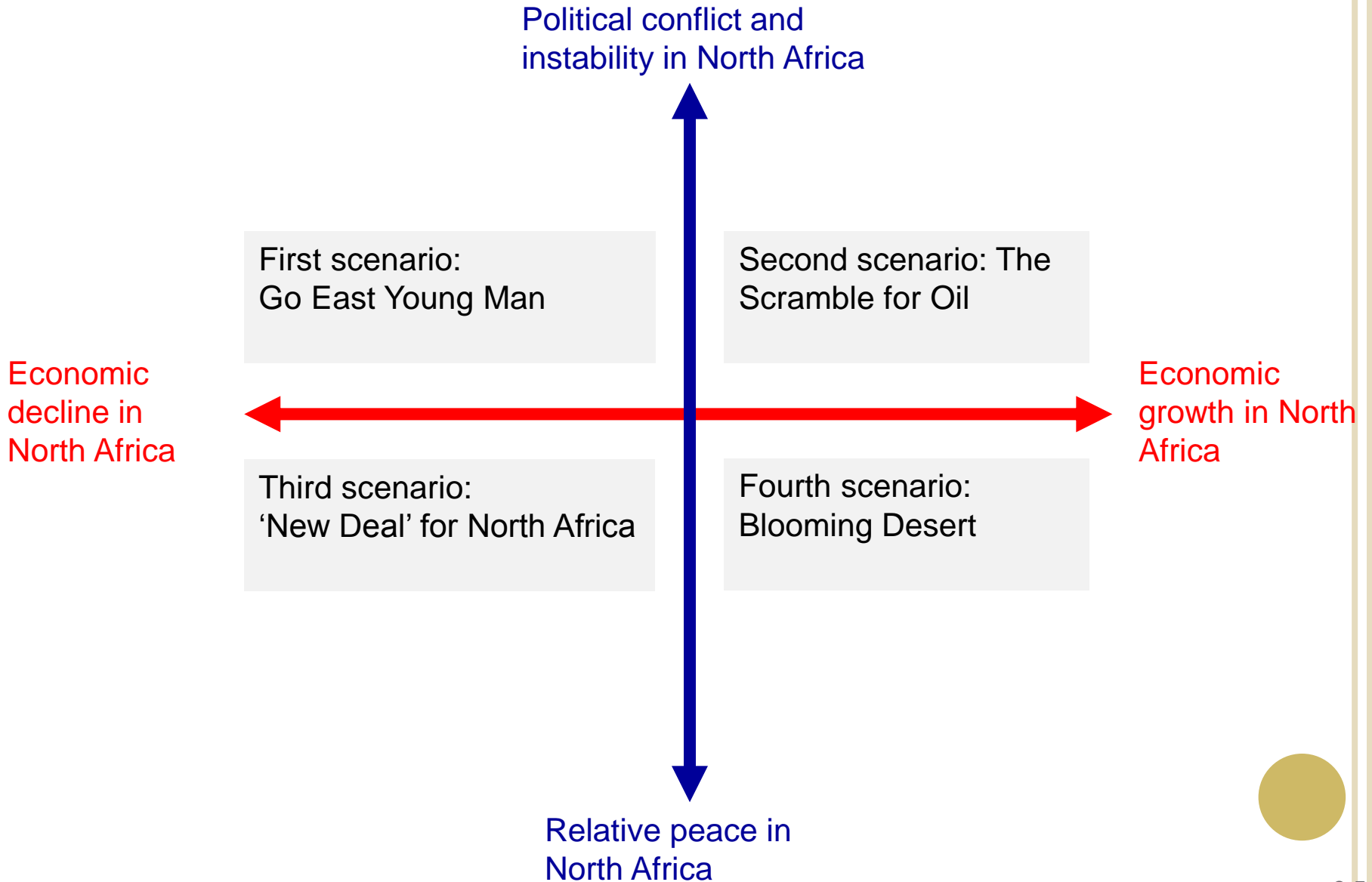


EXAMINING WHAT IS RELATIVELY CERTAIN: MEGATRENDS

- Increasing literacy and education
 - Economic diversification and urbanization
 - Technological advances
 - Demographic transitions and population ageing
- Effects on migration are uncertain because they are mediated by crucial economic and political *uncertainties*.



Scenario matrix for North Africa



INSIGHTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP IN CAIRO, 13-14 MAY 2011

- Demographic change and migration



- Technological change and migration



INSIGHTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP IN CAIRO, 13-14 MAY 2011 – NORTH AFRICA

- Education, cultural change and migration aspirations
- Demographic change and ageing
- Democratization and reform
- Climate change
- Increasing sub-Saharan settlement in North Africa
- New destinations
- Female mobility

