

Exploring the Future of Migration

Testing scenarios with online stakeholders

International
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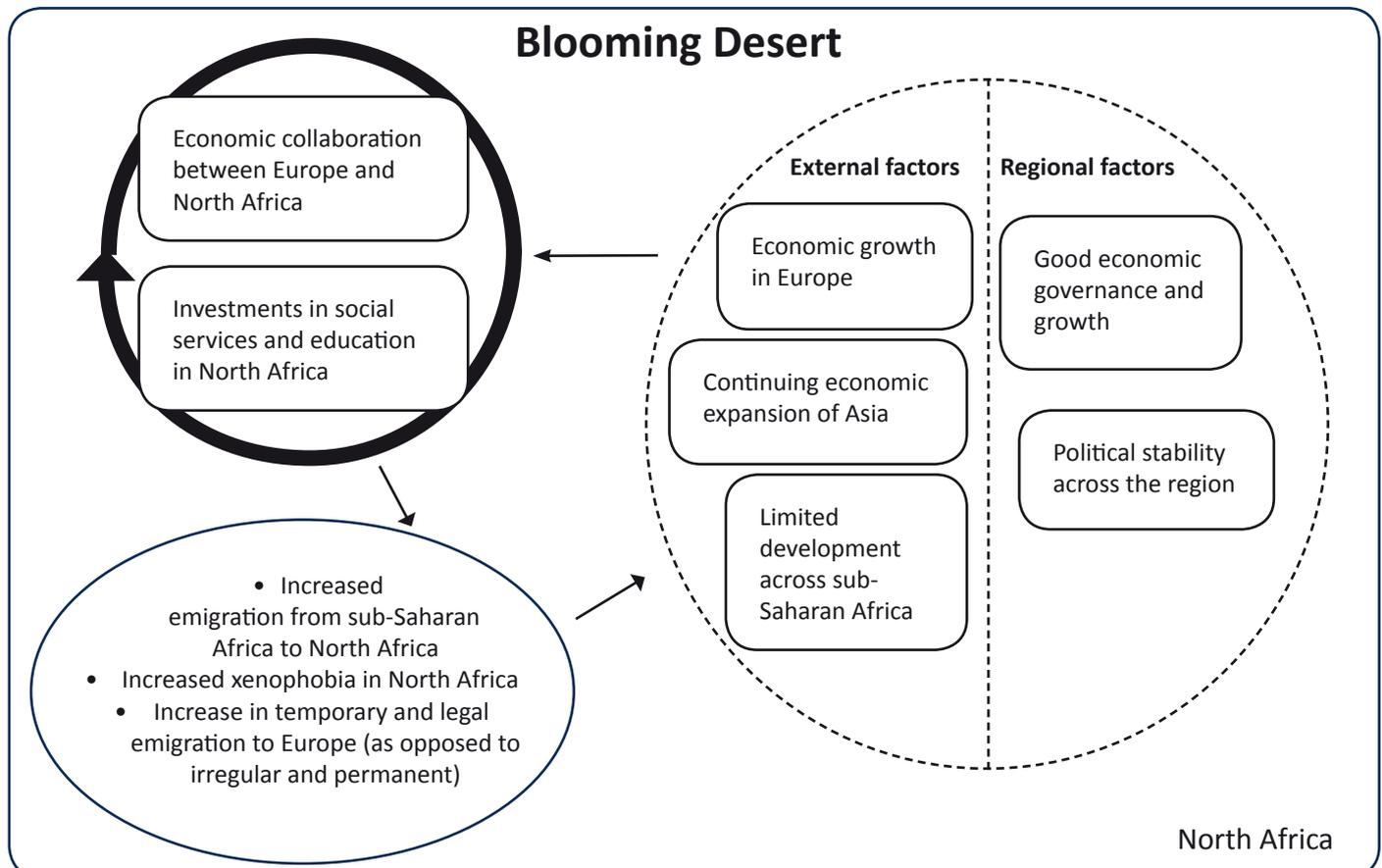
Will improvements in technology and technological access lead to stronger and farther-reaching international networks of people, affecting state politics, economies and international mobility? • Will changing social norms and values in North Africa and Europe impact the makeup of migrant populations? • Is there going to be increased xenophobia across North Africa and how will this affect migration policies? • How will environmental factors affect migration within and across North Africa?

These are some of the questions raised by 50 individuals working within academia, civil society, governments, the private sector, and international organisations in their responses to an online survey of the Global Migration Futures (GMF) project.

Through this initiative, the GMF team sought to gather feedback and insight on four scenarios exploring future migration patterns and trends in North Africa and Europe between now and 2035. The scenarios are based on the migration expertise of stakeholders from the project's first workshop in June 2010.

This policy brief presents the key themes and questions arising from the responses to the survey. The data will form the basis of discussions during the second workshop in May 2011.

A select number of survey respondents will go on to participate in an online discussion forum hosted by the GMF team, which will generate in-depth and creative analyses of the scenarios and inform and challenge participants' existing notions about migration drivers and consequences.



Renaissance of European Nation States

In this scenario, the weakening of the European Union as a political union takes place alongside the strengthening of European nation states. Flourishing economic policies attract migrants from sub-Saharan Africa as well as Russia.

Respondents highlighted two factors absent from this scenario: nationalist sentiments within European states, and the rise of extreme right-wing, xenophobic political parties. They also suggested that population ageing would prompt open labour migration policies. Hence respondents ranked a thriving labour market and health system over technological innovation and international inequality as having the greatest impact on migration in Europe. Slightly less than 3/4 considered this scenario to be either plausible or very plausible.

- How can states respond simultaneously to mounting xenophobia and labour market demands?
- How will global economic reorganisation and industries becoming increasingly international affect labour market and entry/exit policies?
- How will the growing frequency of natural hazards and complex emergencies in North Africa affect European migration policies?

Mad Max

This scenario is characterised by economic stagnation and fertility rates below replacement levels in Europe. China and sub-Saharan African states are enjoying booming economies and have become key migrant destinations.

According to respondents, more than 3/5 of whom determined this scenario to be either implausible or very implausible, European out-migration is triggered by booming economies across South-East Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa as well as a lack of employment opportunities within Europe. As a result of weakening political institutions, private businesses become more influential and provide public goods.

- In the context of worsening economic conditions, which skills and segments of the labour force are more and less likely to remain in Europe? How will this affect the mobility of men versus women, youth versus adults, and families?
- What would policies aimed at preventing people from leaving and avoiding brain drain look like and how would European governments justify them?
- To what extent will weak political institutions promote environmental innovation and respond to movements related to natural disasters?

Blooming Desert

This is a scenario whereby North Africa develops democratic institutions while it strengthens collaboration with Europe; emigration declines; and immigration from sub-Saharan Africa increases.

After a period of unrest and transition, in 2035 North African countries develop solid democratic institutions, leaving behind decades of authoritarian rule. Approximately 3/4 of respondents deemed this either a plausible or very plausible scenario. With a flourishing economic market and gradual strengthening of democracy, a number of questions emerge, such as:

- How will communication and transport technologies affect both migration patterns and related policy responses?
- Will ultra-nationalist parties and strong xenophobia surface in newly democratic North African states, prompting the emergence of a new set of restrictive migration policies?
- Will democratisation lead to the increased migration of women?

Go South Young Man

This scenario features increased poverty across North Africa and the rise of a new generation of authoritarian rulers. The increasing prosperity of Turkey, China and sub-Saharan African states encourages migration to the 'South', rather than to stagnant and increasingly xenophobic countries in Europe.

Slightly less than 3/4 of respondents deemed this scenario either plausible or very plausible. However, they believed that the impact of climate shifts and natural disasters had been under-estimated in this scenario. In 2035, limited access to, and mismanagement of, natural resources (most notably water) will contribute to worsening economic conditions across the region.

- How will North African governments respond to an increasing loss of their labour forces? Will they introduce new immigration and emigration policies?
- How will growing, strengthening, and spreading international social networks, through which information, goods and services, and money circulate, influence state policies and international mobility?