

## Miscellaneous Articles

This system is still widely practiced in the *Annales d'Éthiopie*, which, however, also allows its authors to use any other system they may prefer. The established practice of the *Institute of Ethiopian Studies*, the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* and most éthiopisants working on philological questions differs slightly, now using the *ä* for the 6<sup>th</sup> order (despite the fact that in international linguistic practice this sign stands for the *ä* and therefore often leads to misunderstandings among non-Ethiopianists):

1 <sup>st</sup> [አ]	2 <sup>nd</sup> [ኡ]	3 <sup>rd</sup> [ኢ]	4 <sup>th</sup> [አ]	5 <sup>th</sup> [ኤ]	6 <sup>th</sup> [አ]	7 <sup>th</sup> [አ]
'ä	'u	'i	'a	'e	'ə	'o

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### **Global Migration Futures: Developing Scenarios for the Horn of Africa and Yemen – Reflections on the Occasion of a Workshop in Nairobi<sup>1</sup>**

by Ayla BONFIGLIO, Hein DE HAAS & Simona VEZZOLI<sup>2</sup>

On April 25-26, 2012, the International Migration Institute (IMI), in collaboration with the Regional Migration Secretariat (RMMS), held a workshop in Nairobi to promote discussions on possible long-term developments in the Horn of Africa and Yemen and to create scenarios for future international migration to, from and within this region in 2030. The workshop is an extension of IMI's Global Migration Futures (GMF) project, which explores possible political, economic, social and technological and environmental changes and their potential effect on international migration. With this workshop, the research team investigated the patterns and drivers of contemporary movement in the Horn of Africa and Yemen, potential future developments of migration, as well as the scale and scope of various protection and assistance mechanisms required for the near and mid-term future.

The GMF project uses the scenario methodology, an innovative approach conventionally used in the business sector that is gaining recognition as a complementary research method. Unlike projections, scenarios are not forecasts of *likely* futures; rather, they are robust narrative representations of *possible* futures within which researchers and policymakers can explore *possible* migration outcomes. By exploring 'potential' futures, the scenario methodology is not solely reliant on data availability and can better address the

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<sup>1</sup> The report *Global Migration Futures: Using scenarios to explore future migration in the Horn of Africa and Yemen* provides a more detailed description of the Global Migration Futures project, the scenario methodology and the scenarios on the future of migration in the Horn of Africa and Yemen; see [www.imi.ox.ac.uk/publications].

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conceptual challenges found in migration research. This methodology complements traditional social science research components, such as the development of a conceptual framework on future migration, quantitative data analysis of trends affecting migration, and a survey of existing perceptions about migration in the region (de Haas, Vargas-Silva and Vezzoli 2010) with less conventional approaches, such as the creation of a network of migration experts and stakeholders from civil society, governments, the private sector, the media, and international organisations who are engaged throughout the scenario building process and a two-day scenario building workshop.

The involvement of stakeholders from different sectors is a core component of this project's methodology. It recognises the diversity of knowledge, interests, and capacities that exist in the migration space and ensures they are considered in explorations of potential futures. Participants took part in exercises that encouraged discussions on the forces that drive and shape migration. Participants identified factors they perceived to be relatively certain in the future, as well as factors which were highly uncertain and had the potential to significantly impact migration. Participants used these relatively certain and uncertain factors to develop future migration scenarios. The workshop exercises helped stakeholders to increase their awareness of migration processes in the region, recognise the possibility of a wider range of futures that may be coming our way and think critically about how to best prepare for future uncertainty (Van der Heijden 2005).

### **Theoretical framework**

Historical and current empirical evidence shows that *human and economic development is associated with higher levels of mobility and migration* (Zelinsky 1971, Massey 1988, Skeldon 1997). Transition theories argue that societies and countries, in parallel with economic restructuring and concomitant social change and demographic transitions, tend to go through a sequence of initially increasing emigration, then significant but diminishing emigration and increasing immigration and eventually sustained net immigration (de Haas 2010b). This reveals why middle-income countries generally experience the highest relative levels of emigration. The practical and policy implication is that development in the poorest and least developed countries – such as countries in the Horn of Africa and Yemen – is likely to initially lead to a medium-term increase in (relatively costly and risky) international migration to wealthy countries because *human development tends to increase people's capabilities and aspirations to migrate* (de Haas 2010b). Transition theory is also crucial for understanding why impoverishment (for instance, through economic crises, war or environmental factors) may actually decrease people's capabilities to migrate, particularly over long distances.

For migration scenarios development, it is useful to link the temporal notion of migration transitions to the spatial concept of migration systems. A

migration system can be defined as a set of places or countries linked by flows and counterflows of people, goods, services and information, which tend to facilitate further exchange, including migration, between the places (Mabogunje 1970, Fawcett 1989, Massey et al. 1998, de Haas 2010a). The migration literature has identified various feedback mechanisms which explain why, once started, migration processes can become self-perpetuating, leading to the formation of migrant networks and migration systems. This also explains why migration is a relatively autonomous social process that is difficult for states to control, particularly if they are liberal democracies which are bound to respect some fundamental human rights, such as the right to asylum or family life (cf. Castles 2004).

### **Challenging assumptions**

The literature and the regional dialogue on migration have largely focused on political and economic factors as the key drivers of migration in the region. Indeed, the high levels of political volatility and repression in Ethiopia and Eritrea and the protracted Somali and Sudanese conflicts account for a large part of migration. In addition, environmental variability and environmental degradation have been reported as important regional migration drivers. Yet empirical evidence shows that the environment has an indirect role in driving migration; migration is only one of the possible options, with adaptation to environmental change being a possibility; and in case of severe conditions, deprivation may prevent people from migrating, particularly over longer distances.

The focus on refugee migration in emergency conditions conceals significant other forms of migration and mobility, such as migration of workers and (to some extent) students in the region, where Saudi Arabia and other wealthy Gulf countries are the main destination region, and Yemen and Kenya seem to function as intra-regional destinations. Yemen and Kenya also tend to be seen as ‘staging grounds’ to move further afield – such as to the Gulf for Yemen and to South Africa for Kenya. The most striking observation is that *migration from and to the region is relatively low* compared to most other world regions.

### **Relative certainties and relative uncertainties**

Although the future is largely unpredictable, some degree of certainty exists for a limited number of migration drivers in the coming one to two decades. Demographic, health, education, technological and infrastructural and urban trends in the Horn of Africa and Yemen seem to indicate that there will be an increase of migration capabilities and aspirations of the inhabitants of this region. This is because even under the most optimistic scenarios of high growth, political stability, democratisation, and development gaps with other parts of the world will remain high.

A unique feature of the scenario methodology is the identification of factors with a high potential impact on the volume and direction of future migration and with a high degree of uncertainty in terms of how they will take shape in the future. These factors must be analysed and monitored, as they can provide clues to future migration patterns. Participants identified several uncertain factors in the political, economic, social, demographic, technological and environmental spheres ranging from expected uncertainties such as economic growth and political relations in the region to less intuitive uncertainties, such as forms of governance, access to health care and social services, gender inequality and levels of xenophobia and social cohesion<sup>3</sup>.

### **Preliminary insights**

The scenario methodology challenges our understanding of the world and forces us to correct assumptions on migration and on the belief that the future will be an extension of what we see today. When thinking about the future, the scenario approach teaches us to raise questions and to reconsider the shifts that have occurred in the past and how they may have revolutionised our lives in an unexpected way, e.g. the internet and mobile phone not only as means of communications but also as tools for financial services. What changes may be already in progress today that we are unable to recognize? Are we trapped in categorisations of migration in the region that prevent us from seeing its true complexity? Given the complex interrelationships of the political, economic, and social factors driving migration, it is difficult to distinguish refugees from other migrants and to determine who deserves protection. In this light, how can actors concerned with migrant and refugee protection in the Horn of Africa and Yemen adapt to recognize the multiple and complex combination of factors that affect migration decision making? What does such complexity reveal about the diverse nature of future protection needs and of future solutions?

Given the impact of governance on migration in the region, what may be the role of states and how should they develop their capacities for working with a wider range of actors in the migration field, particularly migrant employers, the media, academic institutions (to engage student migrants), and local authorities? Will the private sector and civil society play a greater role in the development process in the region? Is development the way we know it today going to continue in the future?

Existing research indicates that the climate change impacts on migration and mobility are likely to take significant effect after 2030. Environmental variability (e.g., cycles of dry and wet years) and degradation (e.g. from unregulated industrial growth) are of greater concern to policy when exploring the future of the region within a 2030 time horizon. Strengthening people's

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<sup>3</sup> See full report.

capabilities and enhancing their resilience to change or facilitating their migration may be effective approaches to increasing people's capability to cope with such changes.

These preliminary insights invite a careful consideration of the diversity of factors that may change the future context in the Horn of Africa and Yemen, and the new drivers of migration that may arise while others become less relevant in alternative visions of the future, leading to significant changes in mobility patterns to, from and within the region.

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