

# From Narratives to Numbers

Using Scenario Planning to Strengthen Migration Projections

Michaël Boissonneault  
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Halifax, 24 November 2025

Canada

# Canada's population grew by record 1 million in 2022, spurred by international migration



Total population closing in on 40 million as Canada remains fastest-growing G7 country: StatsCan

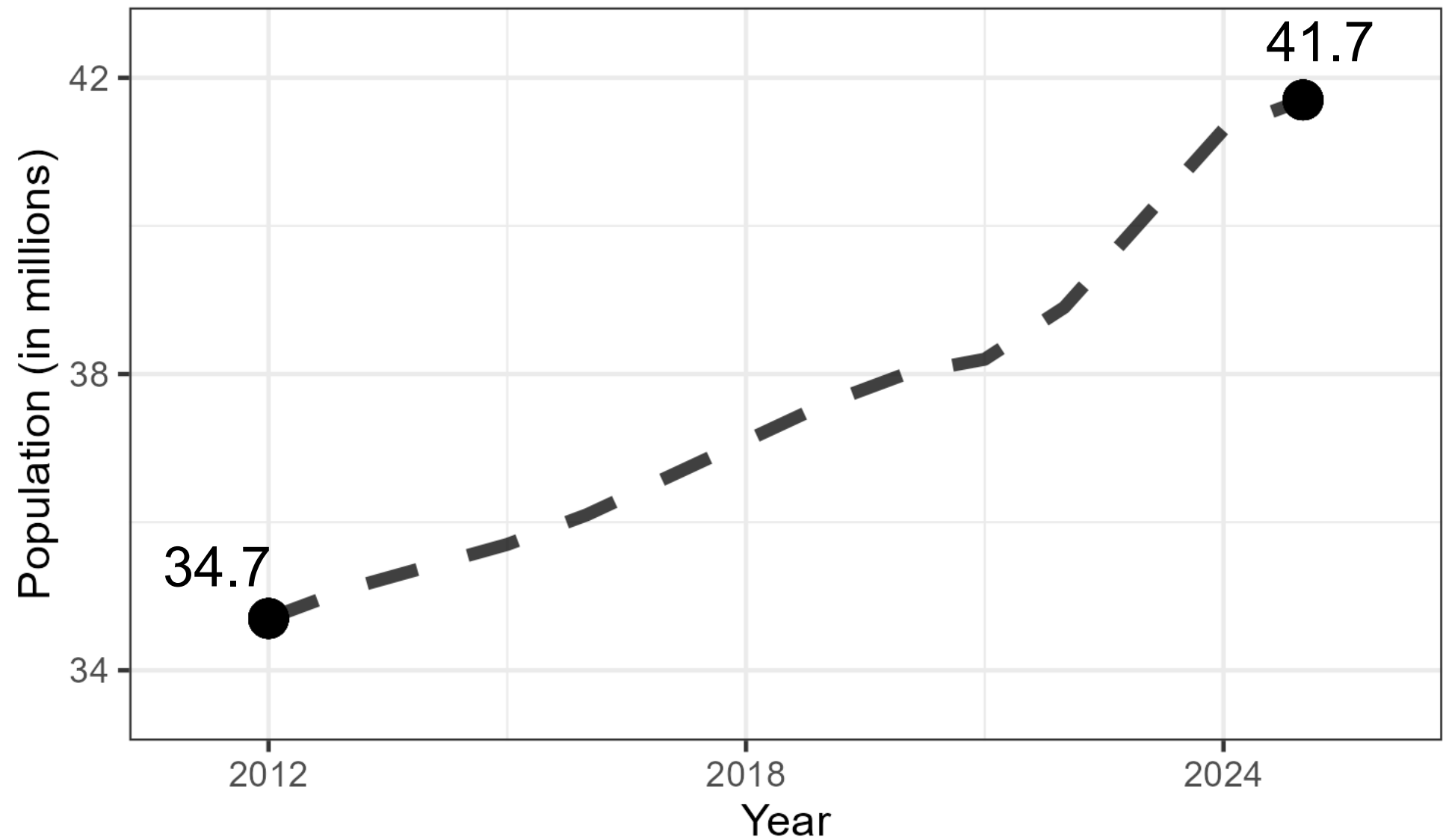
Thomson Reuters · Posted: Mar 22, 2023 5:20 PM EDT | Last Updated: March 23, 2023



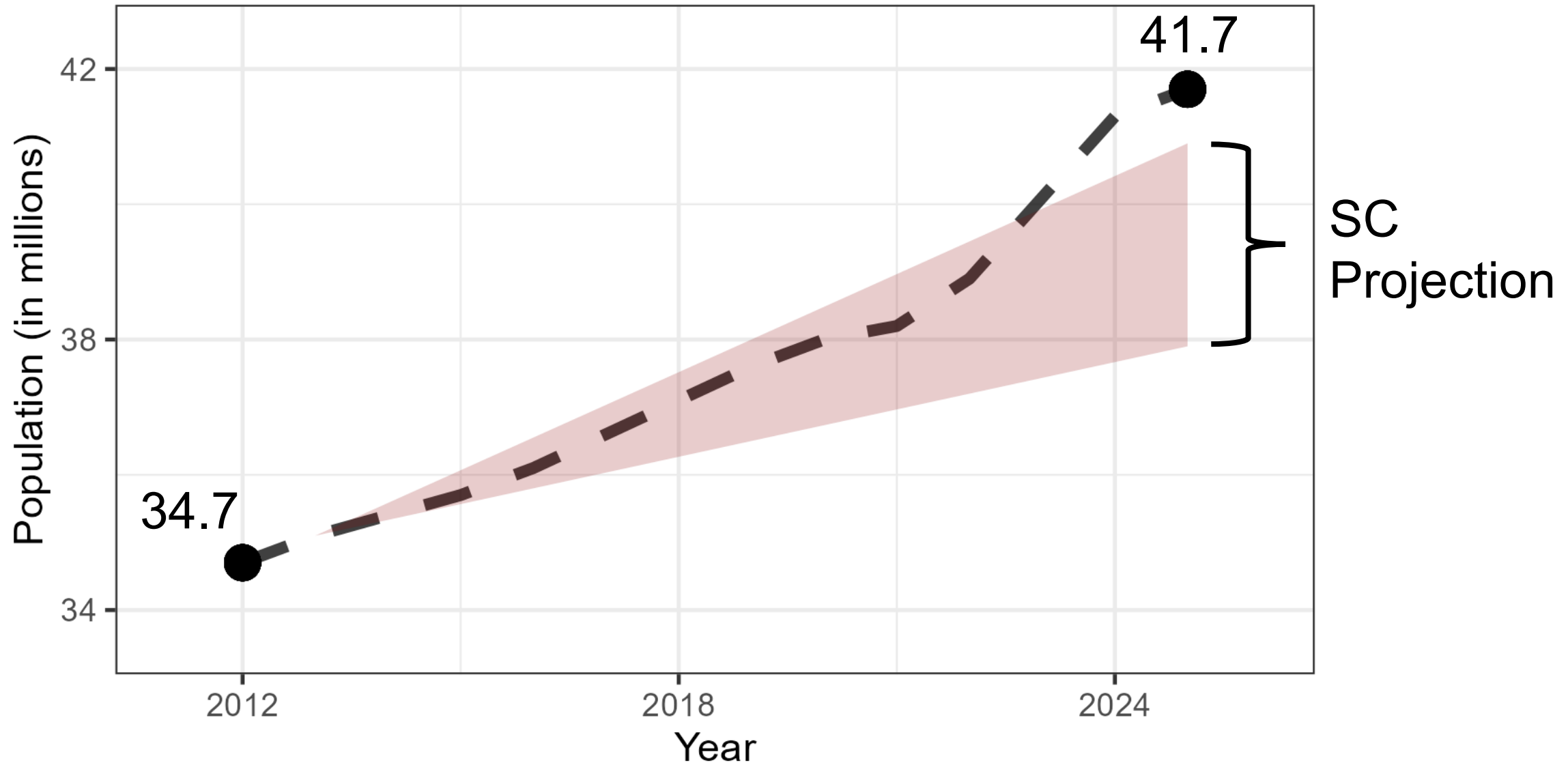
## Statistics Canada says population growth rate in 2023 was highest since 1957

Jacob Serebrin The Canadian Press Mar 27, 2024 Updated Mar 28, 2024

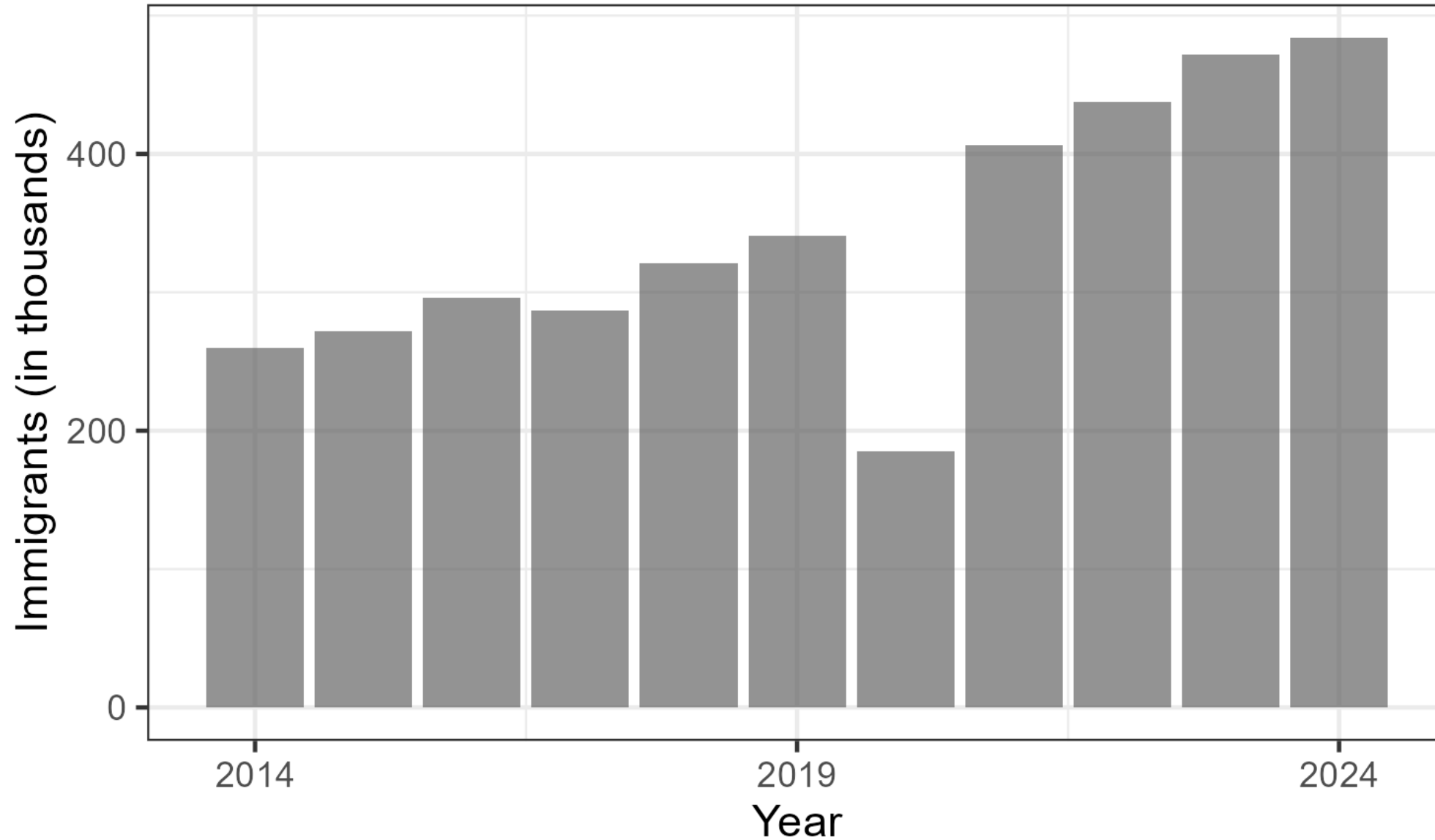
# Population growth, Canada, 2012-2025



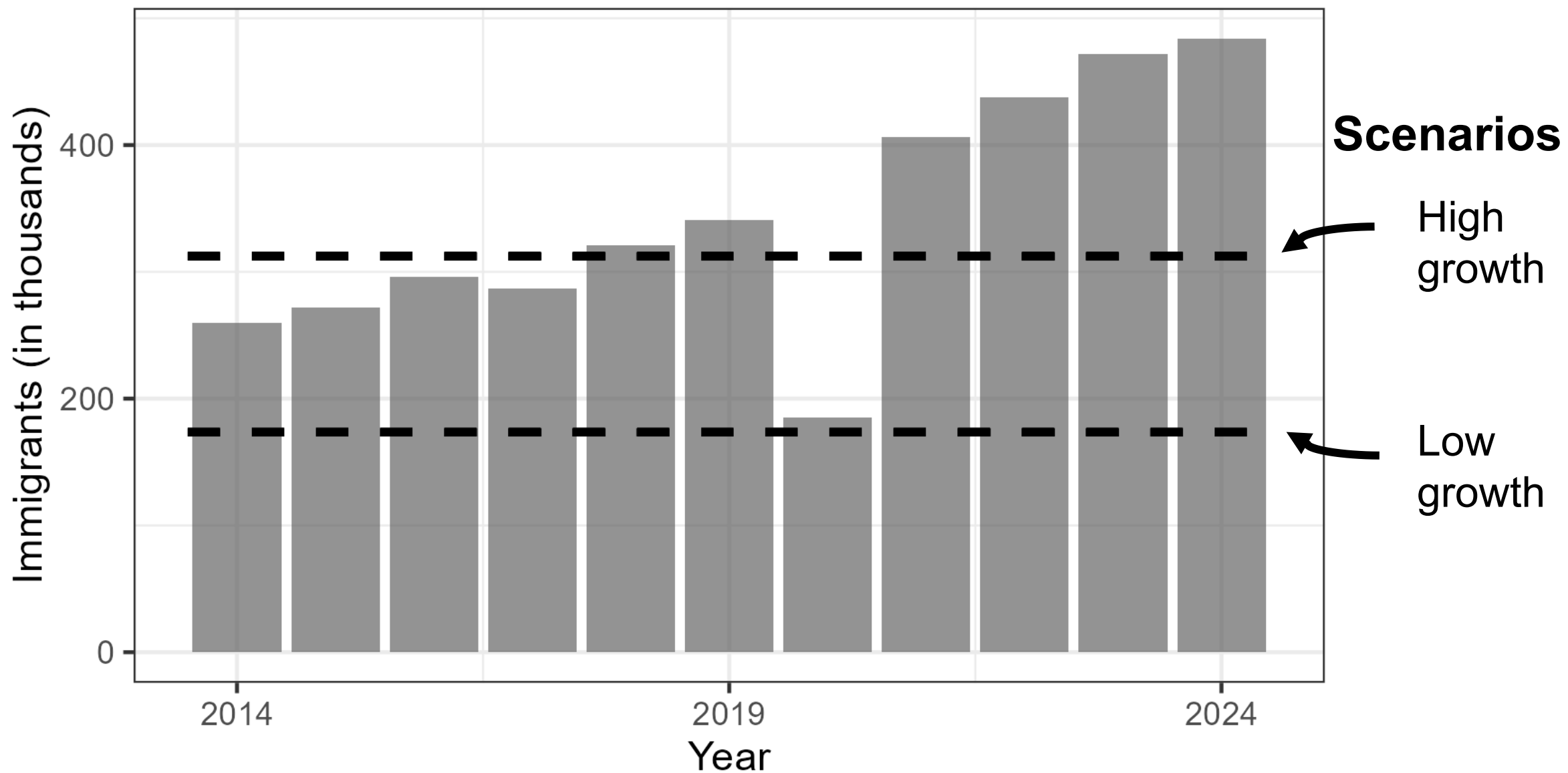
# Population growth, Canada, 2012-2025



# Immigration since 2014



# Immigration since 2014



# Context for the historical increase

- Search for growth after the pandemic
- Low number of births
- Unstable political climate abroad
- Roxham road
- Government favoring high levels



➤ 2022-2024 a perfect storm

**Could it have been predicted?**









# Scenario planning: the intuitive logics approach

## A review of scenario planning

Muhammad Amer, Tugrul U. Daim  , Antonie Jetter

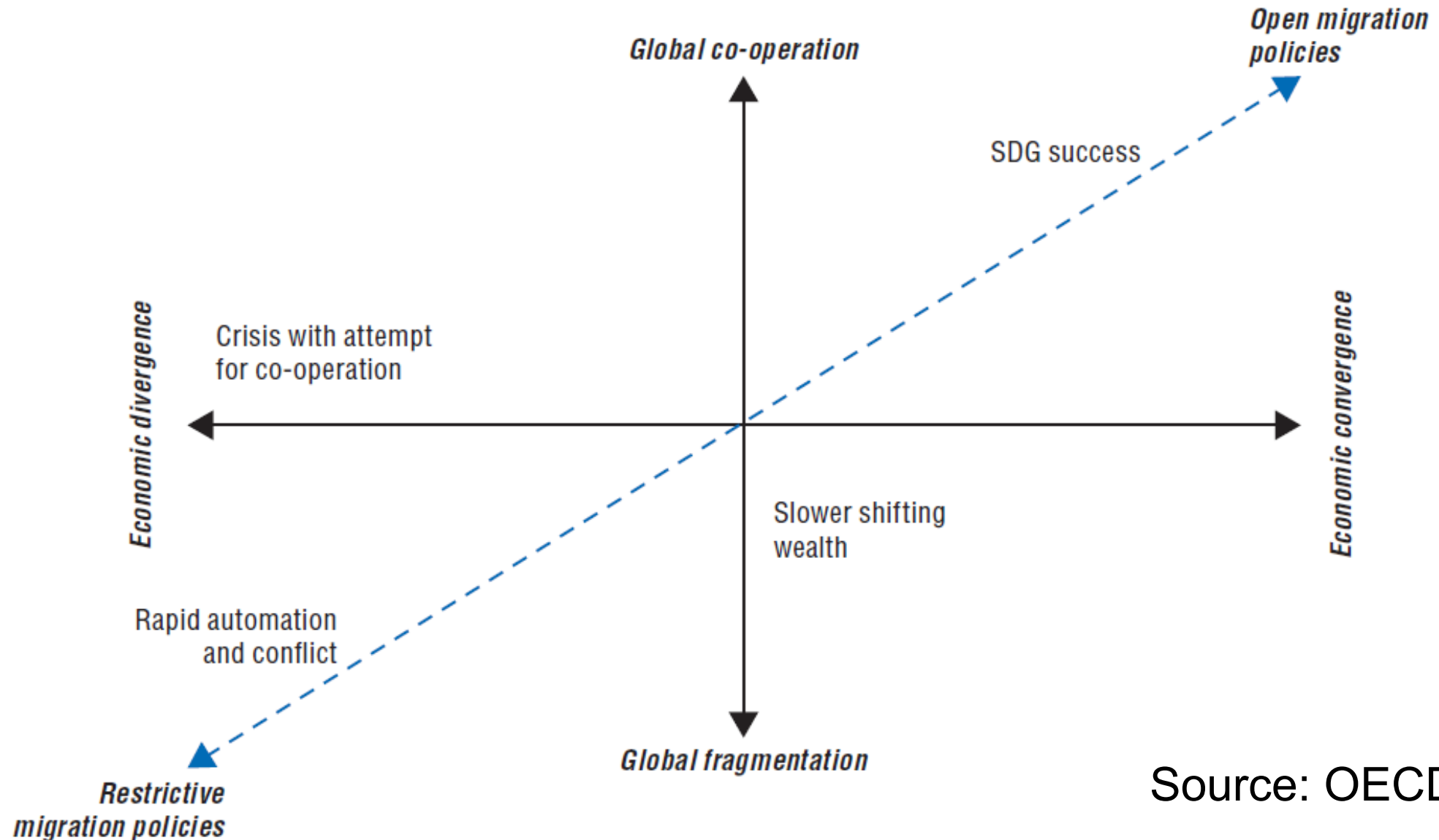


## The origins and evolution of scenario techniques in long range business planning

Ron Bradfield <sup>a</sup>  , George Wright <sup>b 1</sup> , George Burt <sup>a 2</sup> , George Cairns <sup>b 3</sup> ,  
Kees Van Der Heijden <sup>a 4</sup> 

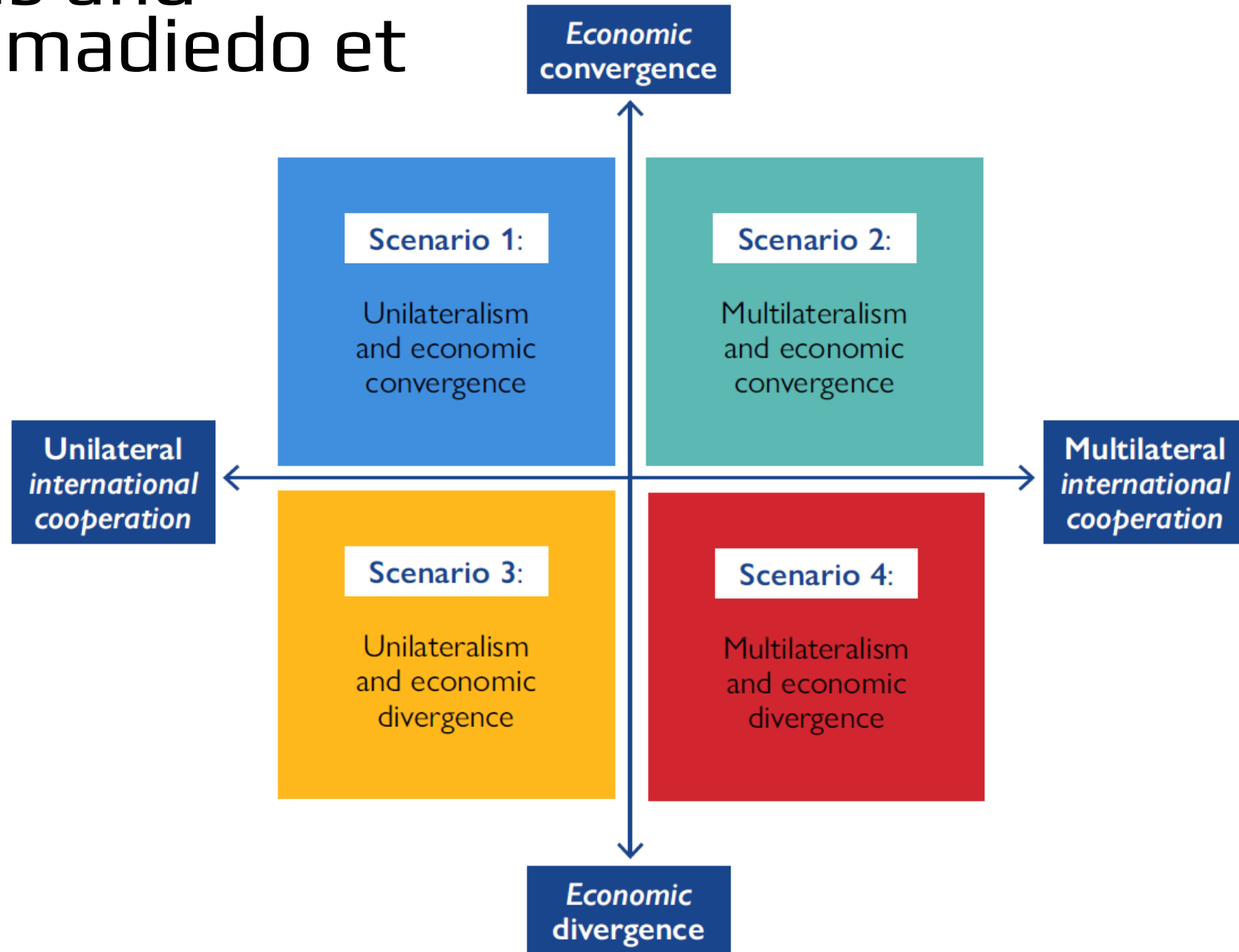
# Scenario planning : an example with migration

Figure 9.3. **Four illustrative future scenarios are developed along three axes**

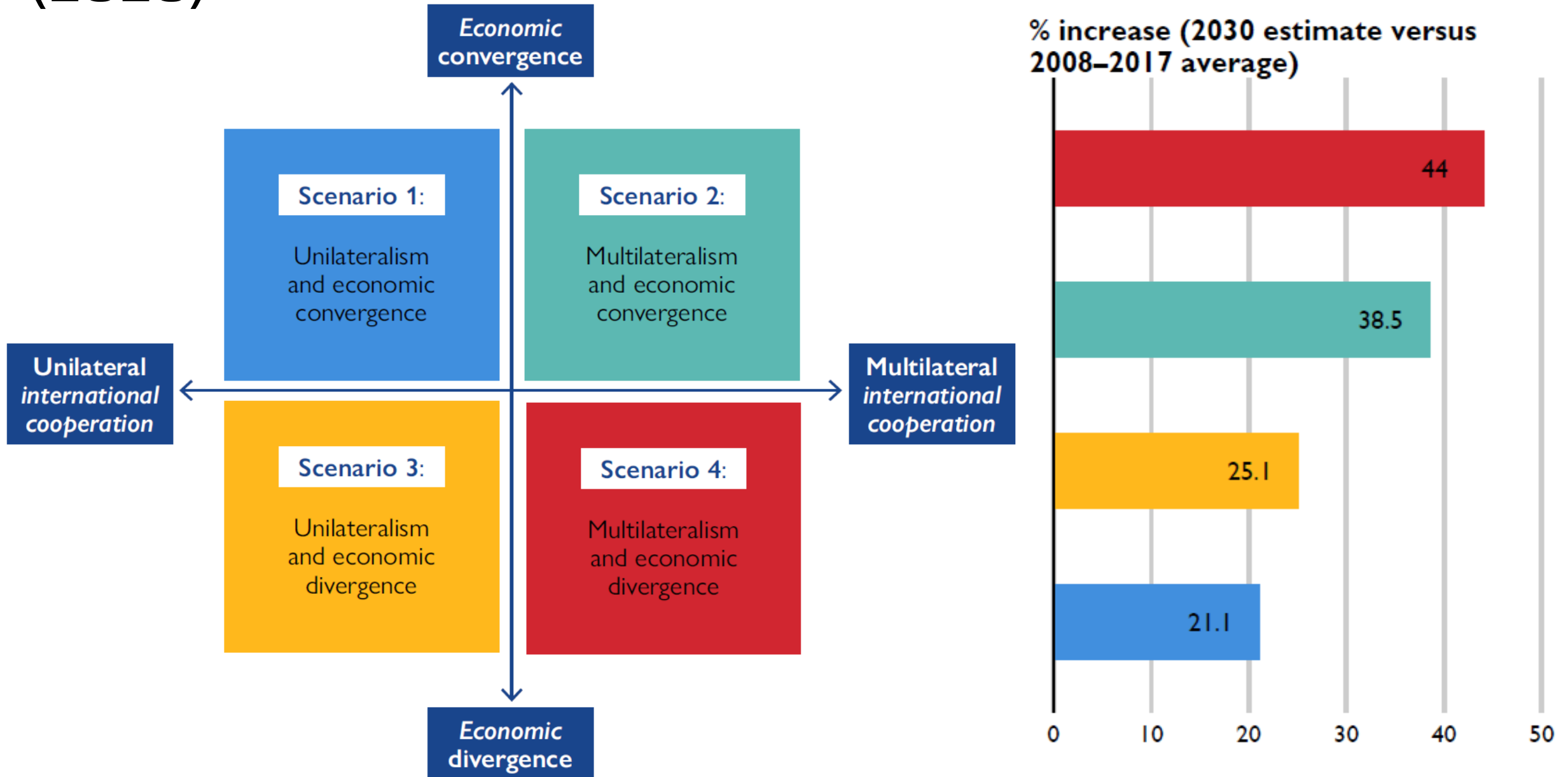


Source: OECD 2016

# Combining stories and numbers: Acostamadiedo et al. (2020)



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# Migration drivers

- International cooperation
- Economic convergence

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Receiving  
vs.  
Sending countries

# Experts' assessments of migration scenarios between the Middle East & North Africa and Europe

[Michaël Boissonneault](#)  & [Rafael Costa](#) 

- Seven drivers
- MENA vs. EU
- 128 unique scenarios
- Factorial design (vignettes)
- 138 experts
- Four flow types
  - Family, work, refugees, return



# What is a vignette ?

During the period 2021-2030,

**In the Middle East & North Africa,**

The proportion of young people has **increased** as women have been having **more** children.

Religious fundamentalism has **lost** ground.

Countries have become **less** politically stable.

Unemployment rates have reached **much higher** levels compared to Europe.

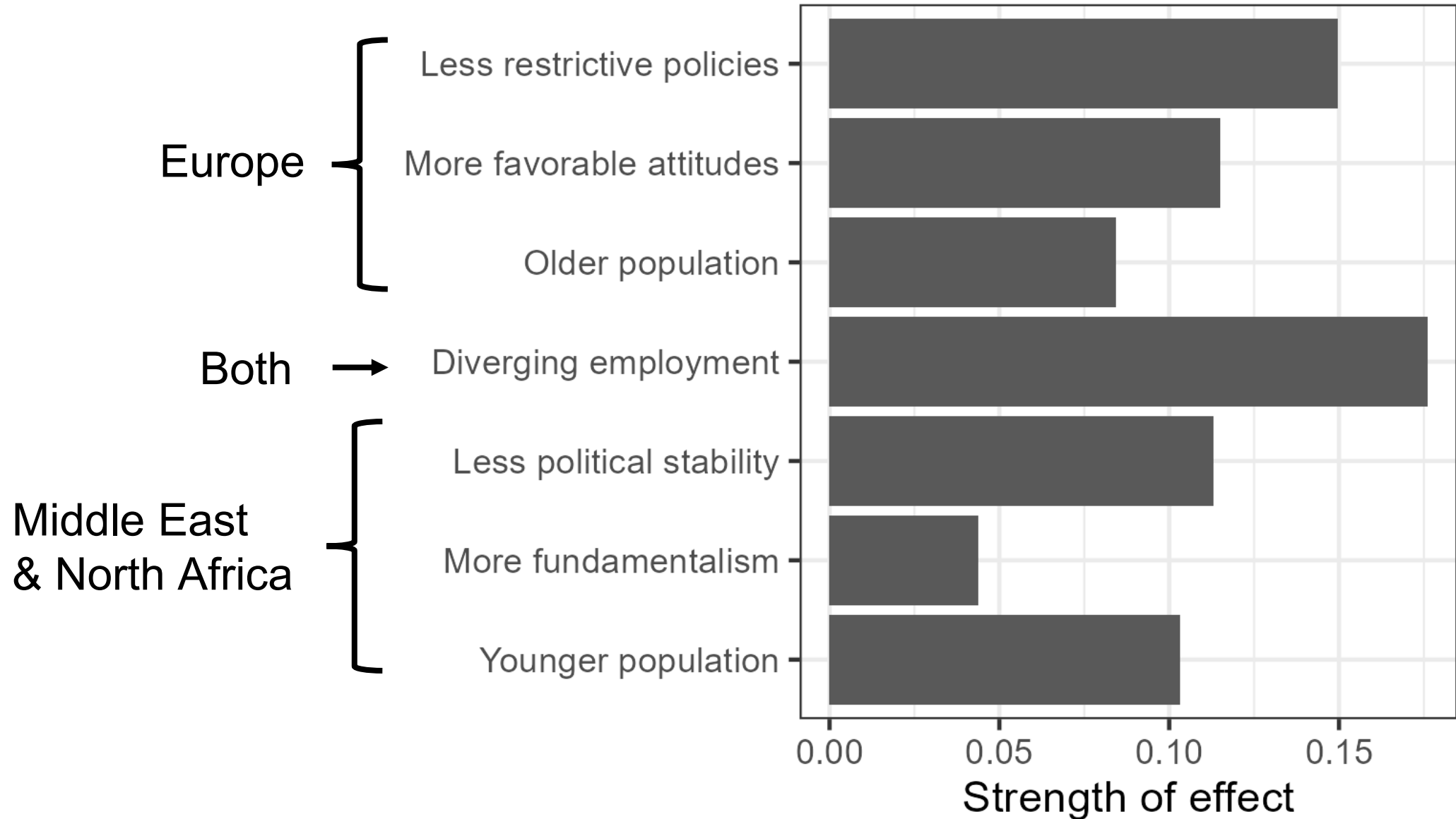
**In Europe,**

The increase in the proportion of older people has **accelerated** as lifespans have been **strongly increasing**.

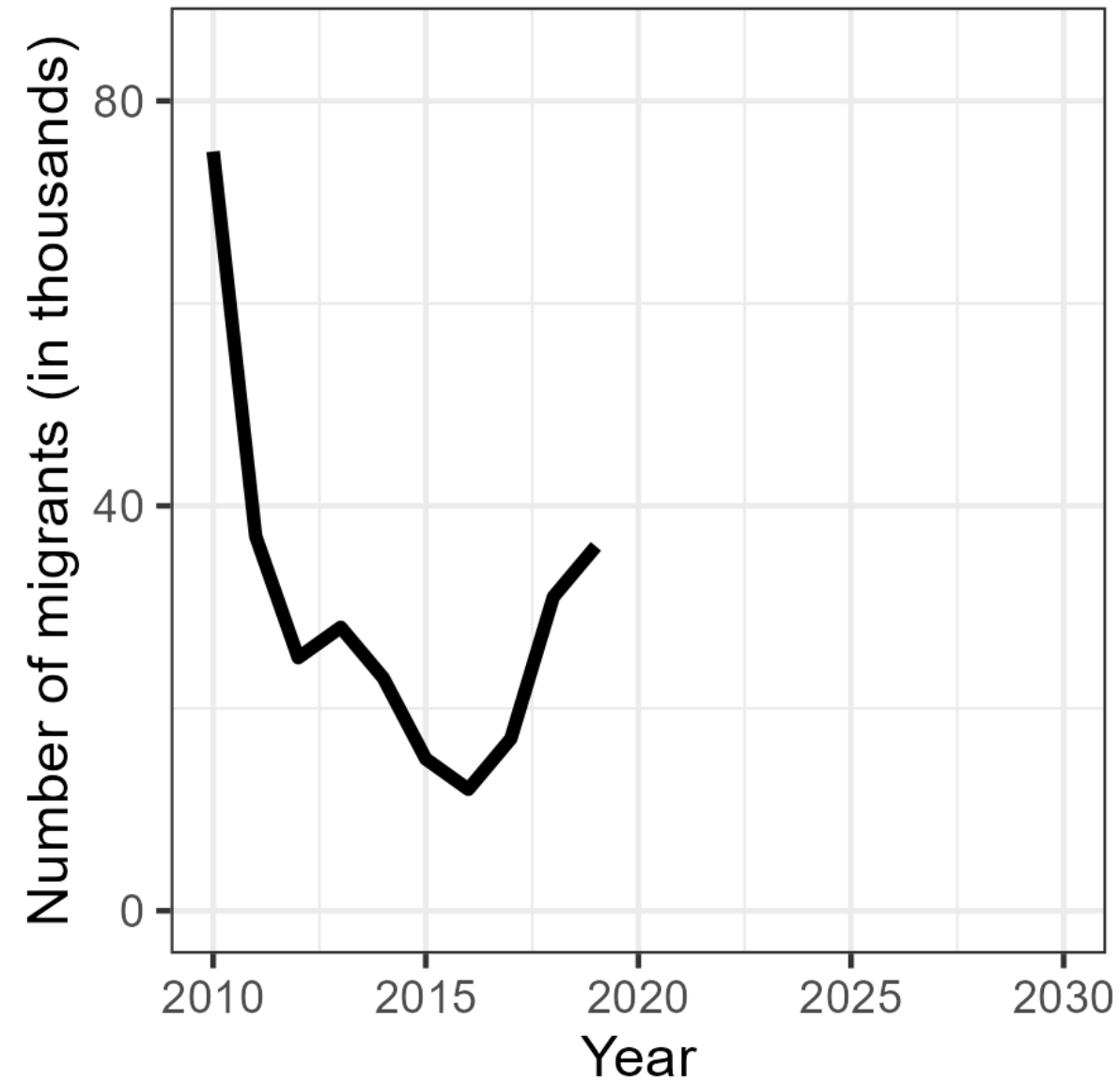
People have become **more** favourable to immigration.

Immigration policies have become **less** restrictive.

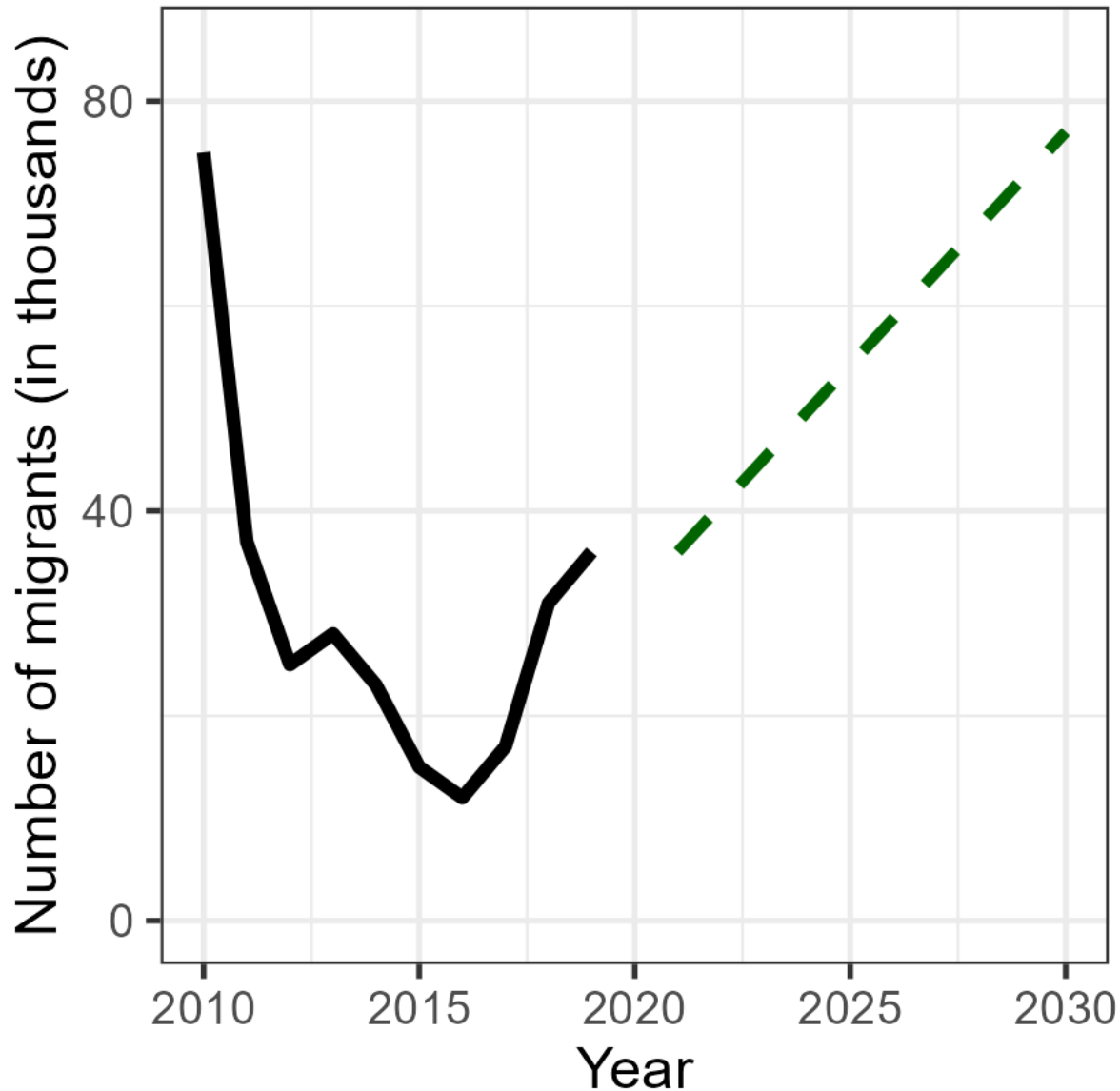
# Economic migration, MENA to EU (2022-2030)



# Economic migration, MENA to EU (2010-2030)

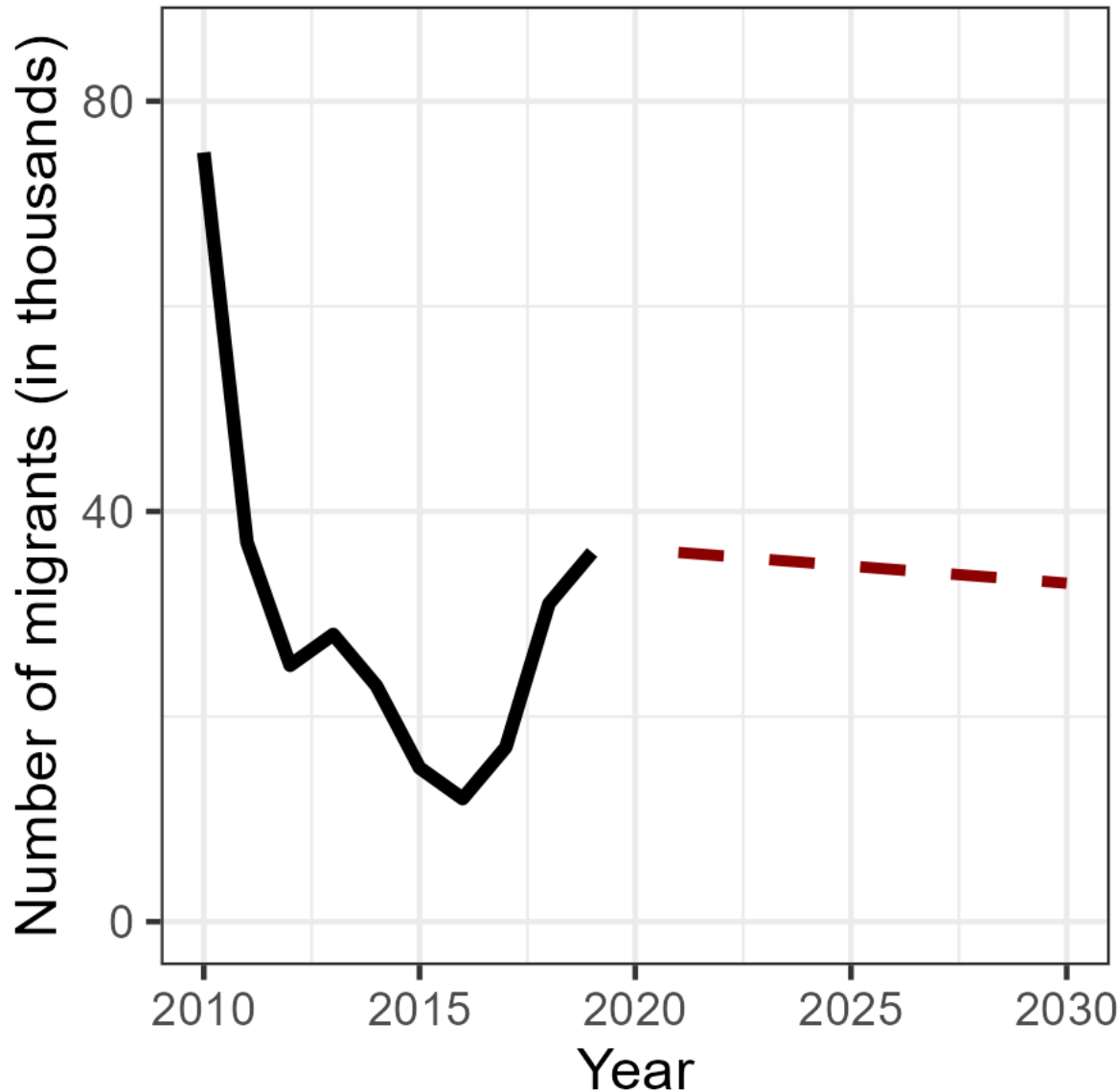


# Economic migration, MENA to EU (2010-2030)



- **Less restrictive policies**
- **More favorable attitudes**
- **Faster population aging**
- **Economic divergence**
- **More fundamentalism**
- **Less political stability**
- **Young populations**

# Economic migration, MENA to EU (2010-2030)



- **More restrictive policies**
- **Less favorable attitudes**
- **Slower population aging**
- **Economic convergence**
- **Less fundamentalism**
- **More political stability**
- **Less young populations**

# What would a scenario for Canada look like?

- Vignettes: promising for quantifying storylines
- Expert bias and representation
- Richness of output vs. response burden