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DEBUNKING MIGRATION MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS

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EMN Educational Seminar on Migration

21 August 2019



Outline

Myths and misconceptions around

- Who is a migrant?
- Migration trends
- The migration development nexus
- Effects of migration
- Migration policies

Changing the narrative



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Who is a migrant? Who is perceived as a migrant?



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Who is a migrant? Who is perceived as a migrant?

- People who are from developing countries
- People who are poor
- People who are unskilled
- People from Africa
- Refugees
- People coming across the Mediterranean in boats



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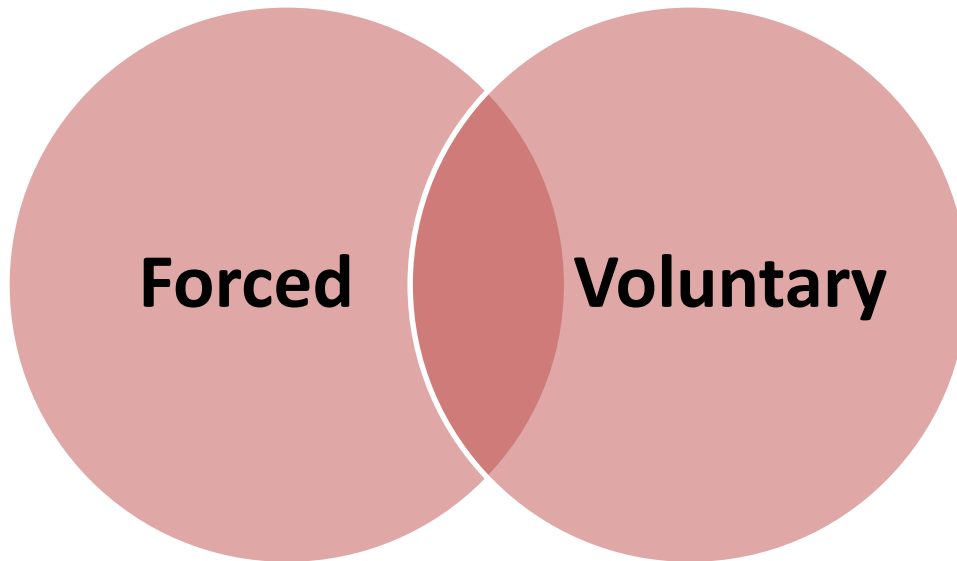


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Who is a migrant?



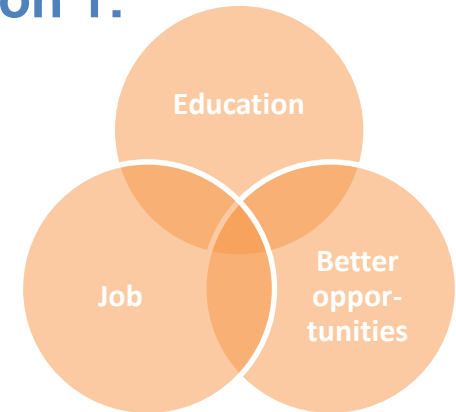
Reasons/motivations for migration



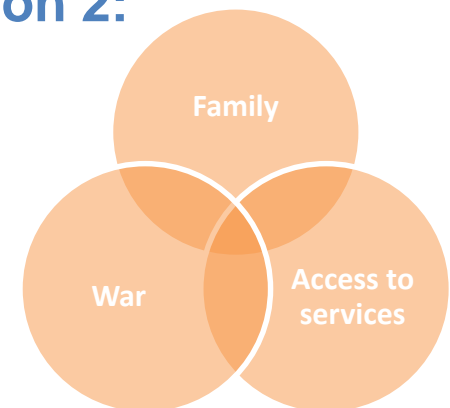
- Conflict
- Violence
- War
- Persecution
- Environment
- Access to services

- Family
- Education
- Retirement
- Job
- Life-style
- Better opportunities

Person 1:



Person 2:



Myths and Misconceptions around Migration Trends

- Migration is at an all time high and accelerating fast
- Most migration is from developing countries to developed countries
- Refugees are mainly hosted in Developed (European) countries
- Poverty is the main cause of migration, especially from developing countries to developed countries



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**Myth: Migration is at an all time high
and accelerating fast**



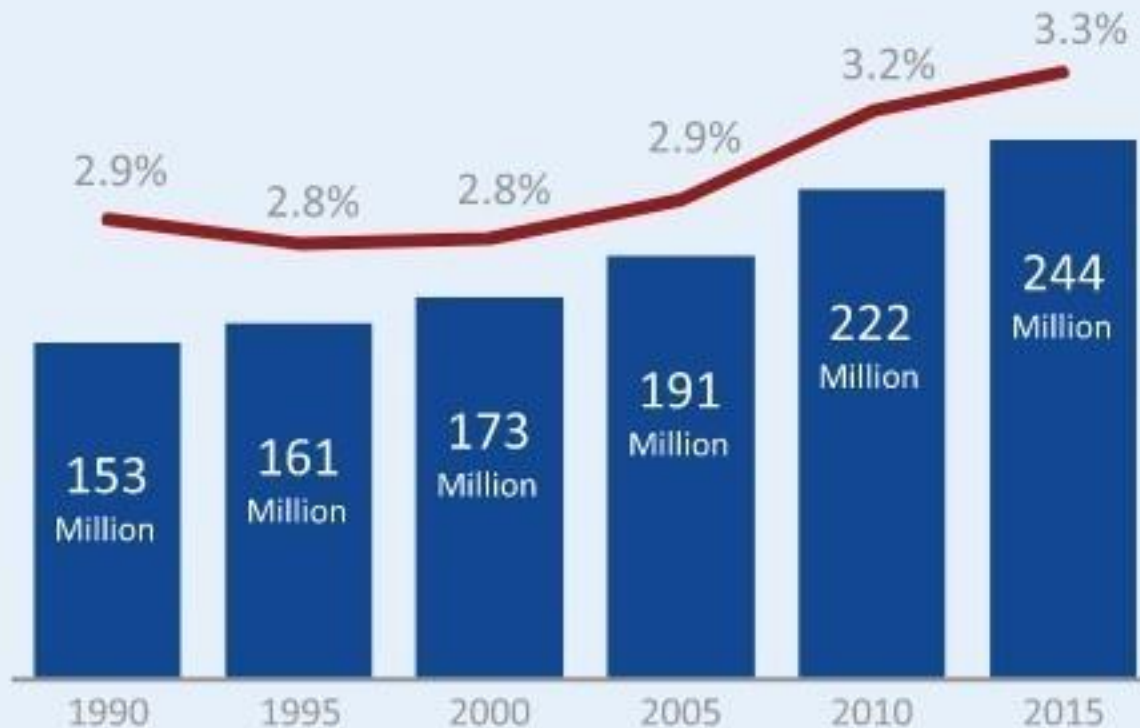
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The international migrant population globally has increased in size but remained relatively stable as a proportion of the world's population



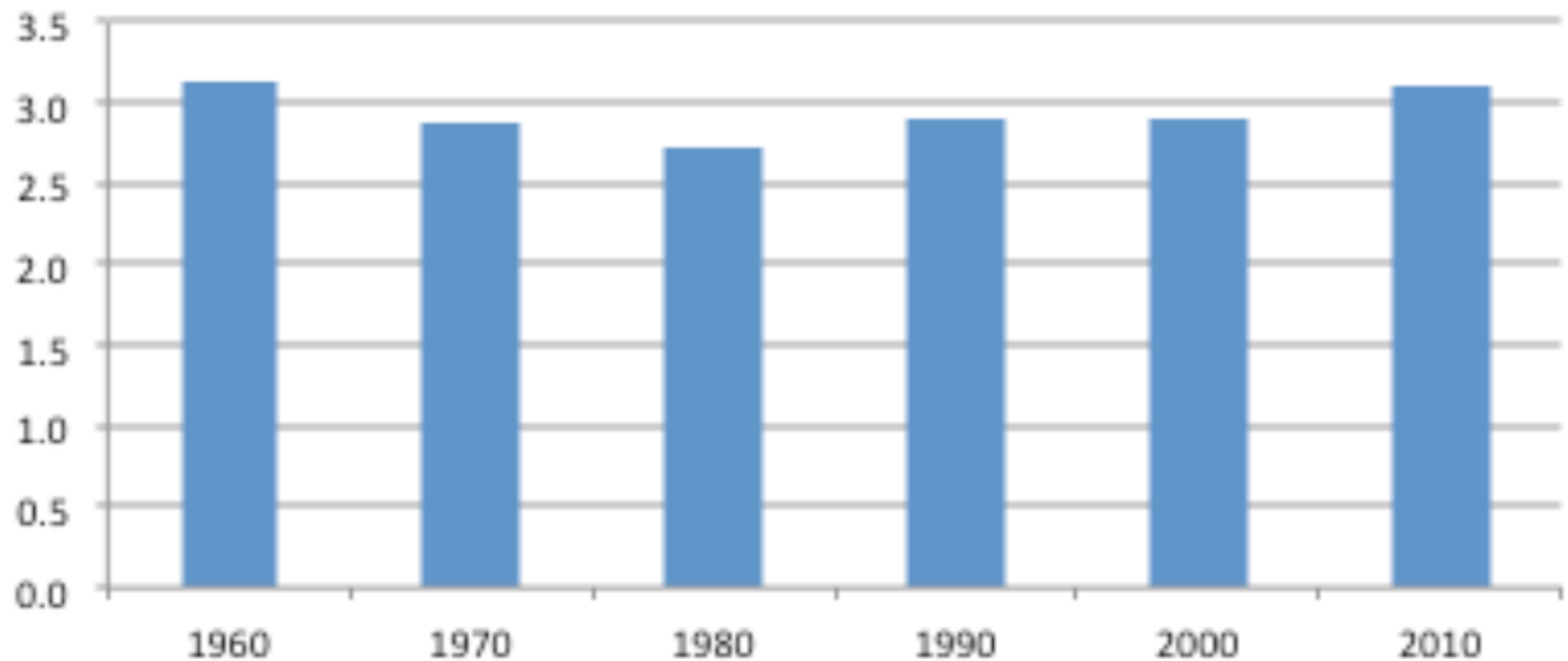
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International migrants as a percentage of world population



Data sources: UN Population Division, Global Bilateral Migration Database
© Hein de Haas 2015



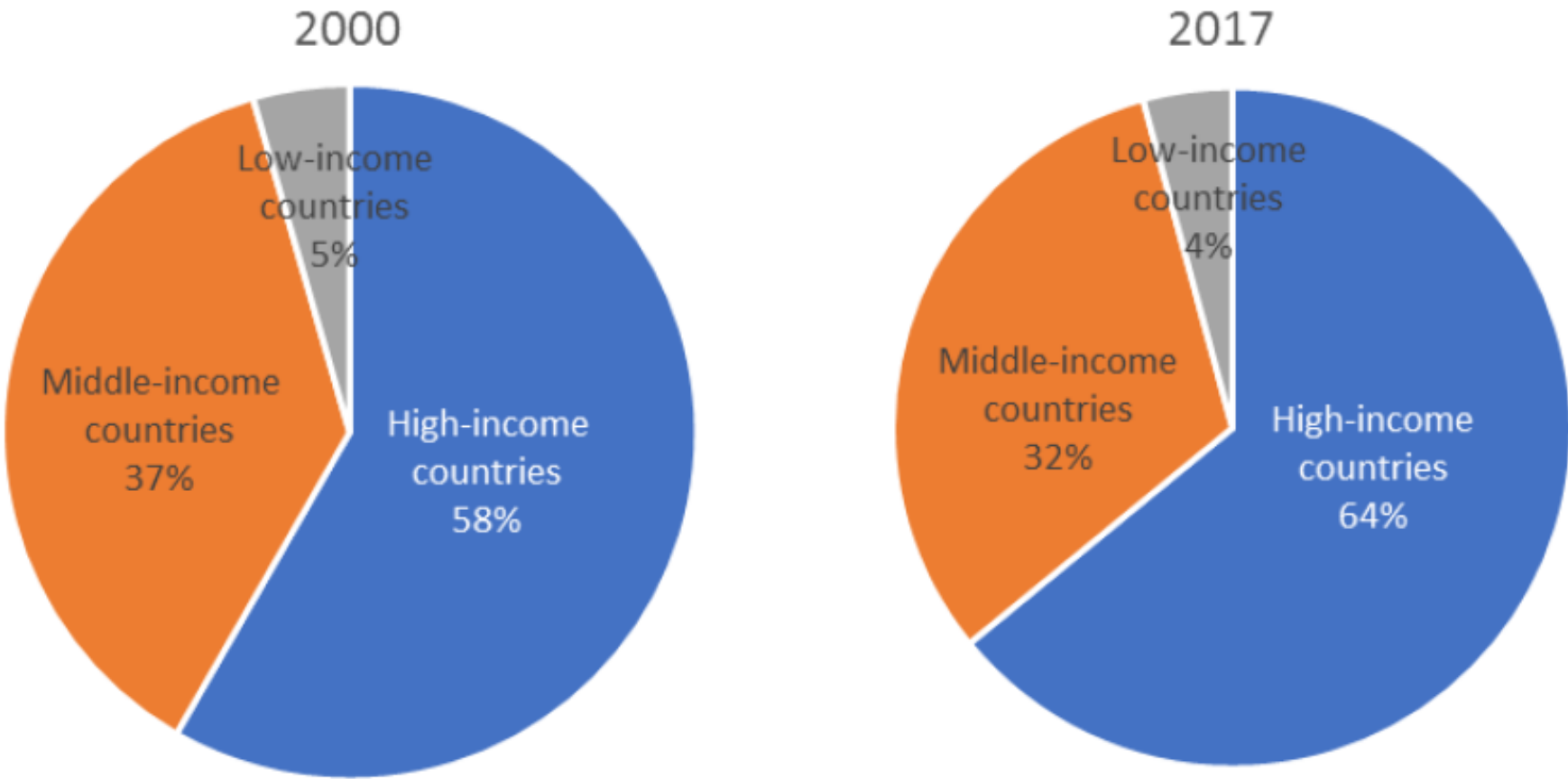
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Percentage of international migrants by income group, 2000 and 2017



Source: United Nations (2017a)

Myth: Most migration is from developing countries to developed countries



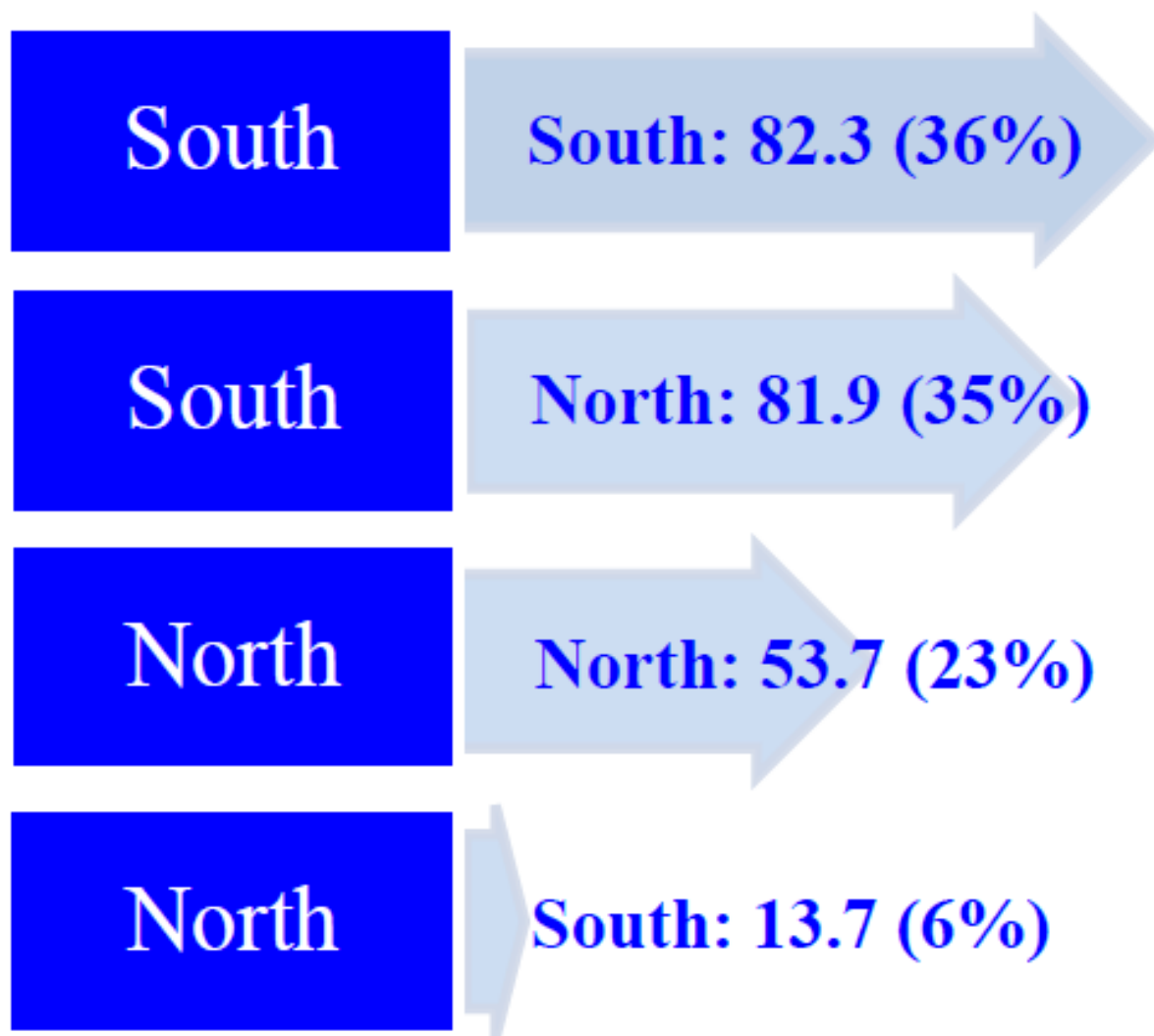
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**Figure 1: Distribution of international migrants
by origin and destination, 2013 (millions and percentage)**



Source: IOM, World Migration Report (2013)



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Myth: Refugees are mainly hosted in Developed (European) countries



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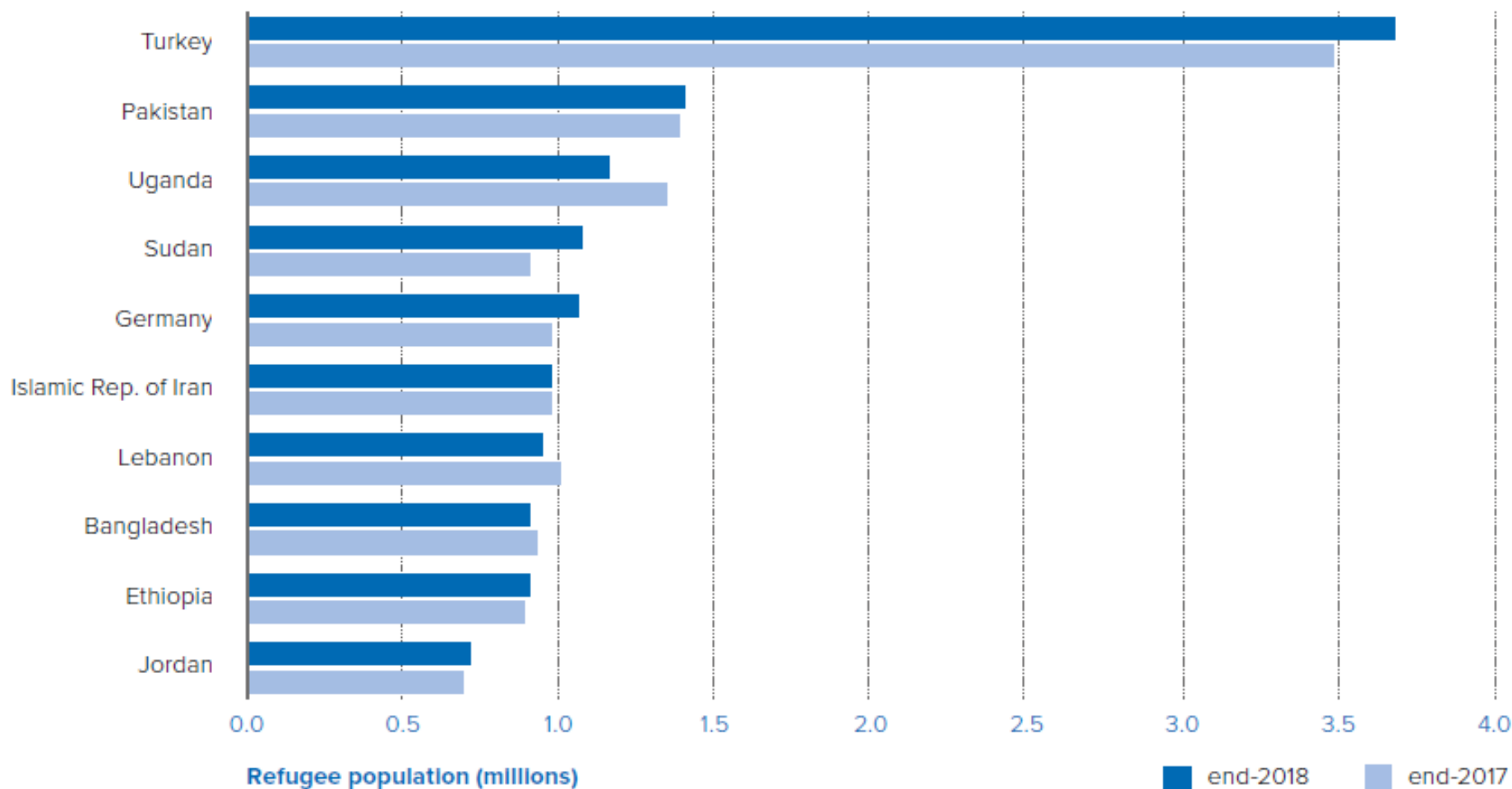
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Refugee hosting in absolute terms

Figure 6 | Major host countries of refugees | end-2017 to end-2018



Source: UNHCR 2019



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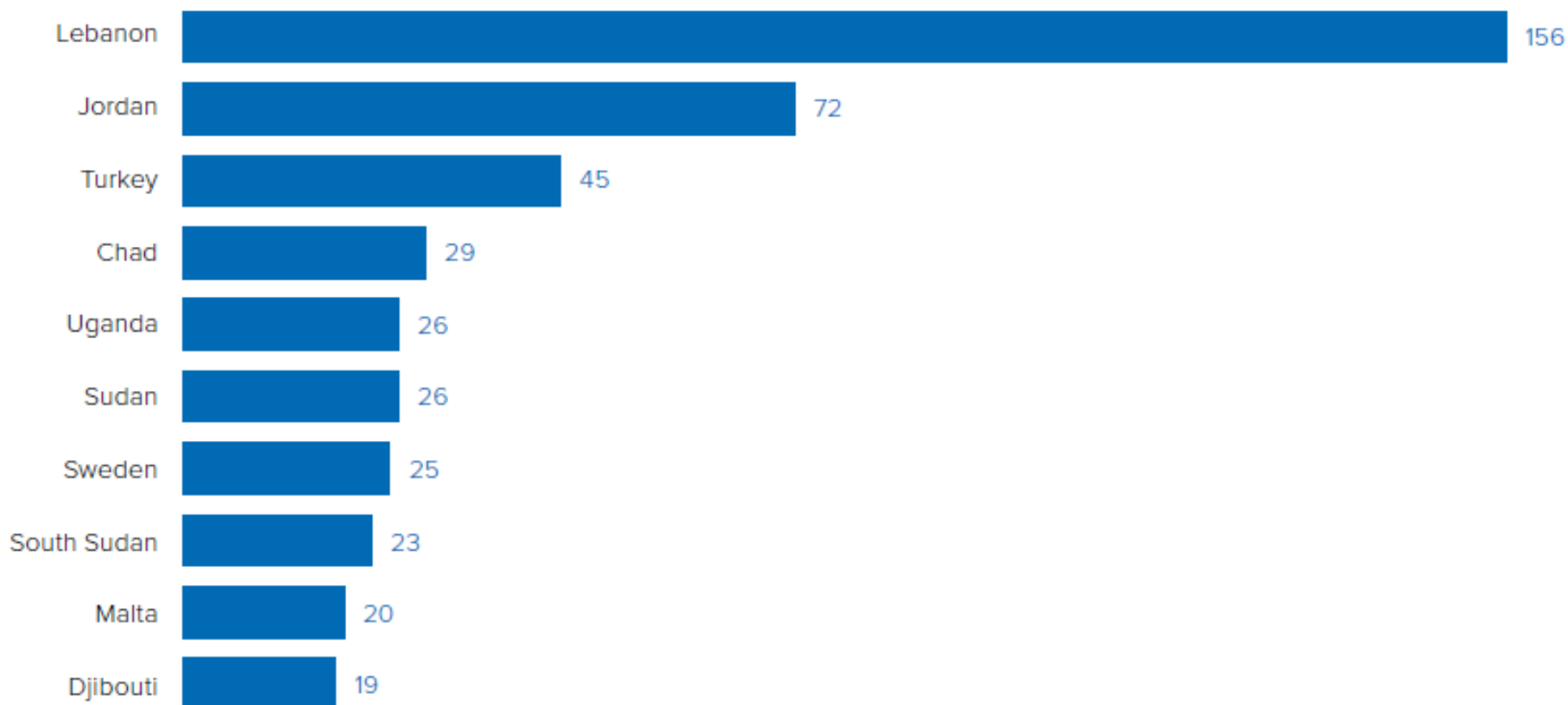
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Refugee hosting in relative terms

Figure 7 | Number of refugees per 1,000 inhabitants | end-2018



Source: UNHCR 2019



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Debunking Myths and Misconceptions

- 16% of refugees are hosted in the developed world
- 84% of refugees are hosted in the developing world
- 1/3 of the global refugee population hosted in least developed countries (UNHCR 2019)



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Myth: Poverty is the main cause of South-North migration

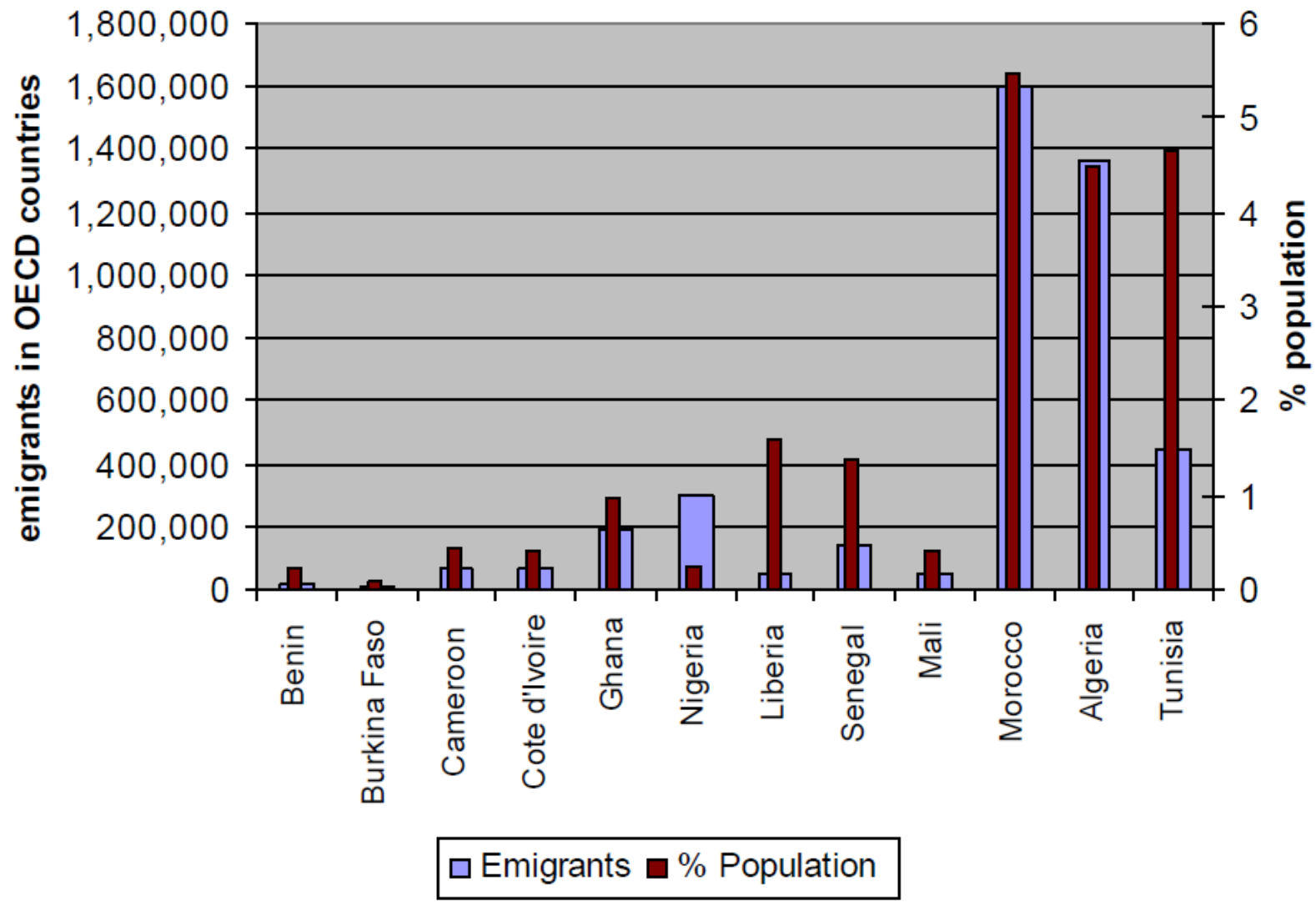


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Source: de Haas (2015)



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MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS: MIGRATION-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

- Development will reduce migration
- Development aid will reduce migration



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Myth: Development will reduce migration



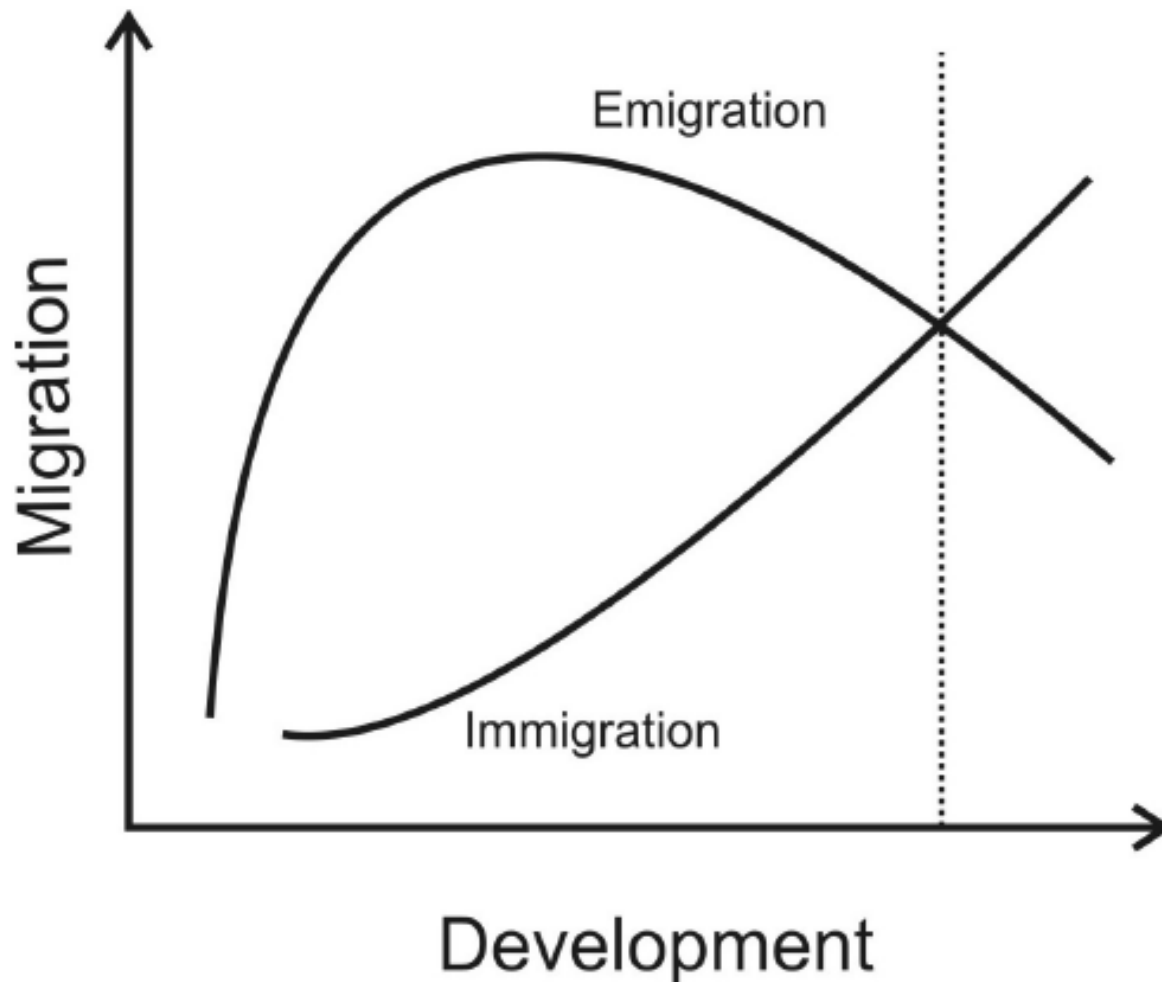
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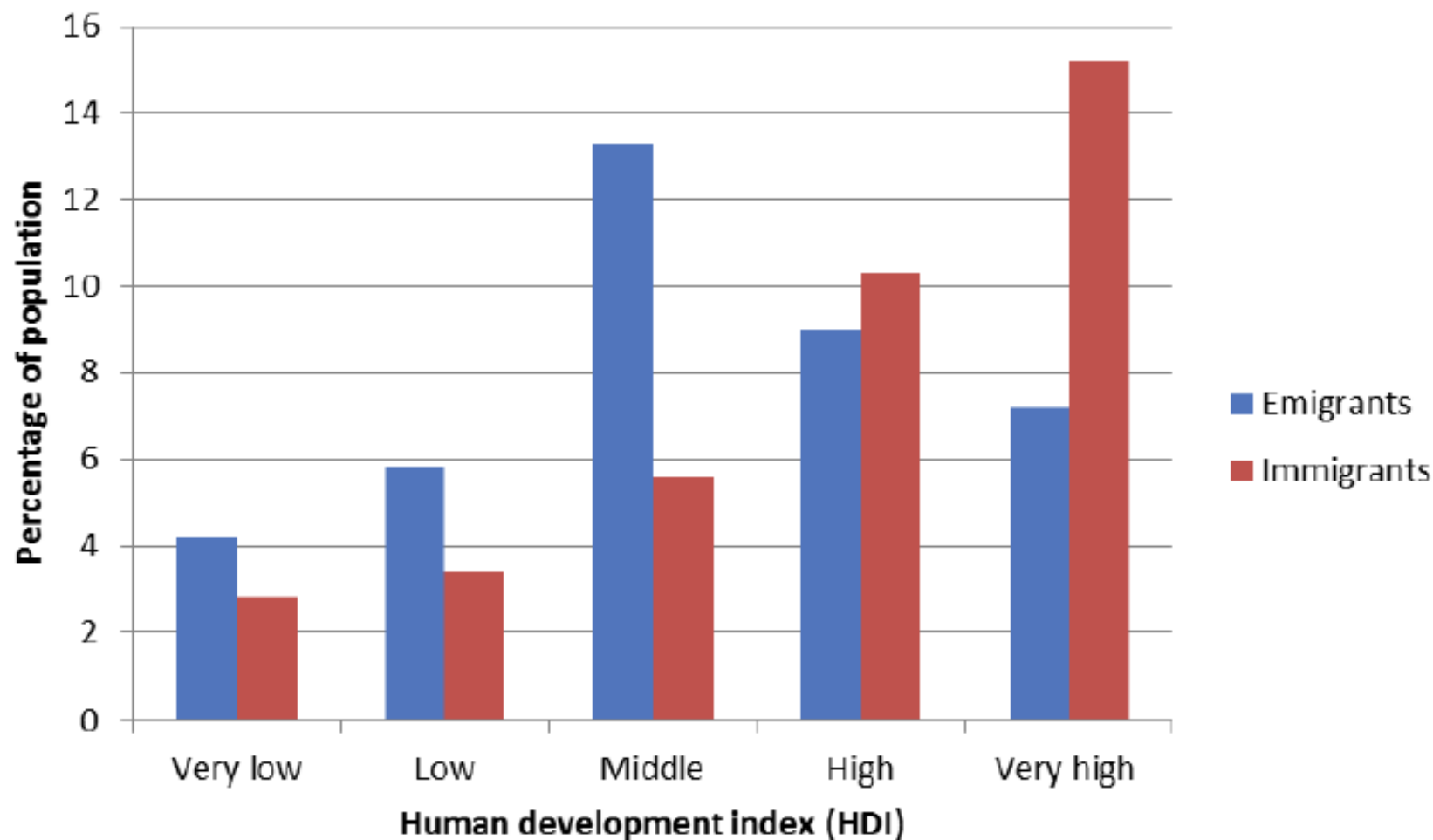
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Migration transition theory



Source: de Haas, H. (2010). *Migration transitions: a theoretical and empirical inquiry into the developmental drivers of international migration*. Oxford, Working Paper No 24, International Migration Institute, University of Oxford.

Association between 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.

MYTH: DEVELOPMENT AID WILL REDUCE MIGRATION



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Important questions

- What are development interventions?
- Do they work?
- Do they deter migration?



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What are development interventions?

- “addressing the root causes of migration” popular in policy circles
 - Types of interventions:
 - Social protection, social transfers in cash or in kind, employment creation, insurance
 - Skills training
 - SME support
 - Agricultural development
 - Institutional capacity building
 - European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
 - Employment creation
 - Basic local level service provision
 - Migration management
 - Migration governance



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Does aid affect development?

- For this rational to work, aid must be targeted and effective (Gregl & Logoazar, 2017)



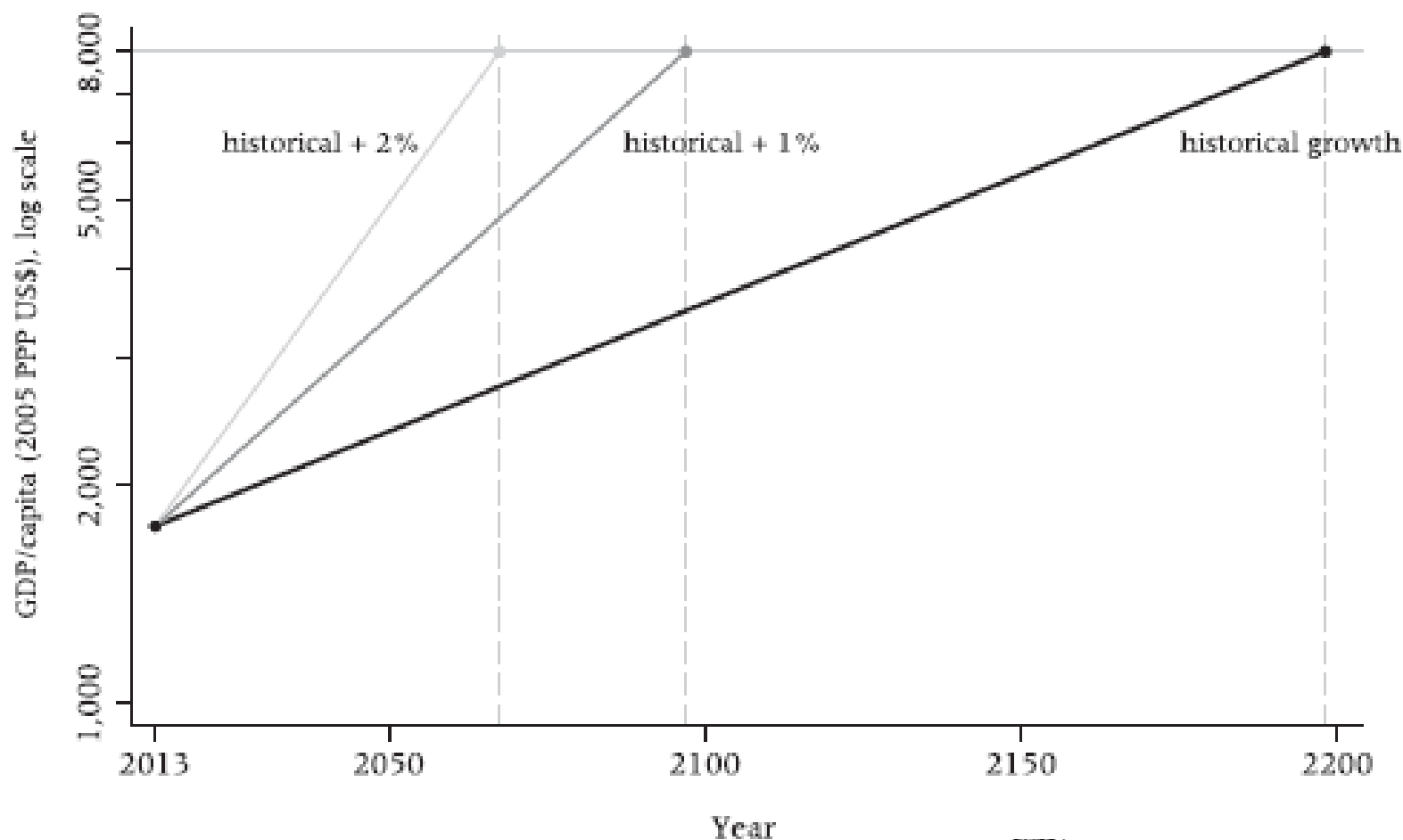
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FIGURE 2 Years for the poorest quintile of countries to reach PPP\$8,000/capita



Source:
Clemens &
Postel (2018)



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Does aid affect development?

- Skepticism about the ability of development aid to seriously contribute to sustained growth
- Skepticism about the ability of development aid to effect large changes in youth employment
- Little evidence that aid helps to mitigate conflict (Clemens, 2018)



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3. Do development interventions impact emigration? Does aid effect emigration?



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Evidence-general

- Berthélemy, Beuran, and Maurel (2009) Using World Bank bilateral data
 - Effect of total aid on migration-push affect/allowing migrants to afford the cost of migration-10% increase in aid in general increases migration by 1.5%-promotes unskilled migration
 - Bilateral aid-contact facilitation/attraction effect-scholarships-10% increase in bilateral aid increases migration by 3%-promoted skilled migration
- No systematic deterrent effect until \$8000-\$10000 PPP GDP per capita: Clemens (2014), Dao et al. (2018), OECD (2017)



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Evidence- by type of aid

- Aid supporting rural development had **very** small positive effects on the reduction of rural migration (Gamso & Yuldashev, 2018)
- Lanati & Theile (2018) find a negative relationship for both poor and more well off countries-aid related improvements in public service but the bilateral aid link is still there
- Effects can differ by type of aid Lanati and Thiele (2018) and Gamso and Yuldashev (2018) – aid to social sector or governance aid
- Differences in transferred and non-transferred aid (Lanati and Thiele, 2019)
- Specific channel of health aid showed a negative relationship (Moullan, 2013)



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Macro vs Micro studies

MACRO

- Sustained economic development tends to encourage emigration in poorer countries (Clemens, 2018)
- Highest rates of emigration in middle income countries
- Poorest countries could be most stimulated by aid interventions
- Type of aid matters
- Evidence is mixed (positive, negative, no affect)

MICRO

- Review of social protection interventions (Hagen-Zanker & Himmelstein, 2013): finds no consensus in the literature with interventions being associated with both positive and negative effects-context matters



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- Aid does not seem to be effective enough in its current form to make real underlying changes that effect migration decisions (magnitude)
- For poor countries, aid is expected to increase migration
- A deterrent effect of aid only seems to be the case when higher levels of income are achieved or with very specific types of aid in specific contexts
- What changes with development is how “we” perceive migration
- Need more systematic evidence, especially at the micro level, some is under way
- Do aid/development interventions deter irregular migration specifically? (disaggregation of types of migrants)
- We see a direct effect of migration on development spending in some cases:
 - Europe (Knoll, 2017), Spain Vazquez & Sobrao (2016, Some countries have a stronger “migration sensitive aid allocation” (Czaika & Mayer 2011) US, Austria, Norway



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MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS: EFFECTS OF MIGRATION

- Immigrants take jobs from natives
- Immigrants reduce the wages of natives
- Immigrants cause more crime



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Myth: Immigrants take jobs from natives



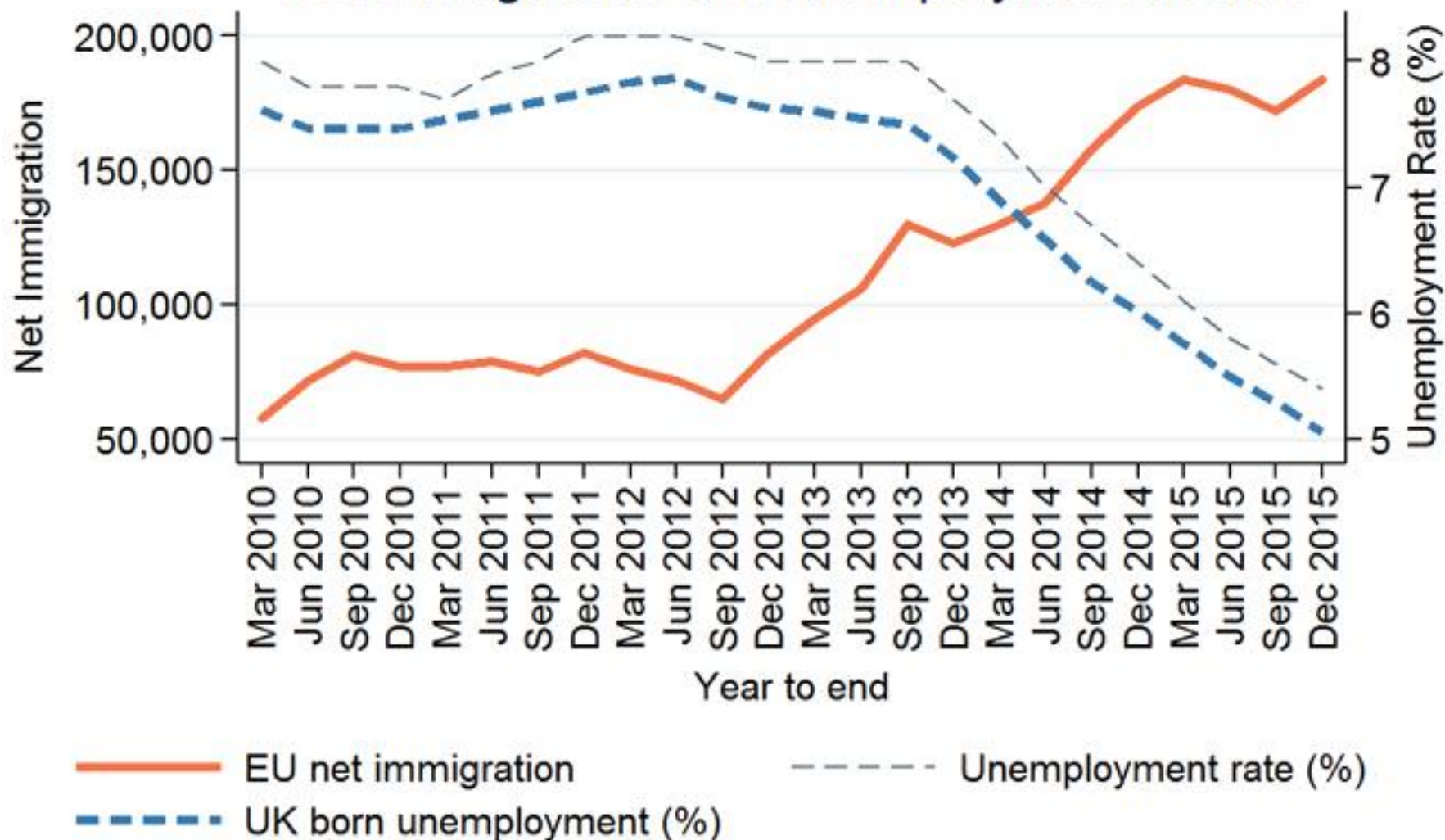
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Net immigration and unemployment trends



Note: UK-born unemployment data missing for year end March 2011 - September 2011

Source: Net immigration data - Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Source: Unemployment data - Annual Population Survey (APS)

Source: Institute for
Employment Studies 2016

Myth: Immigrants reduce native wages



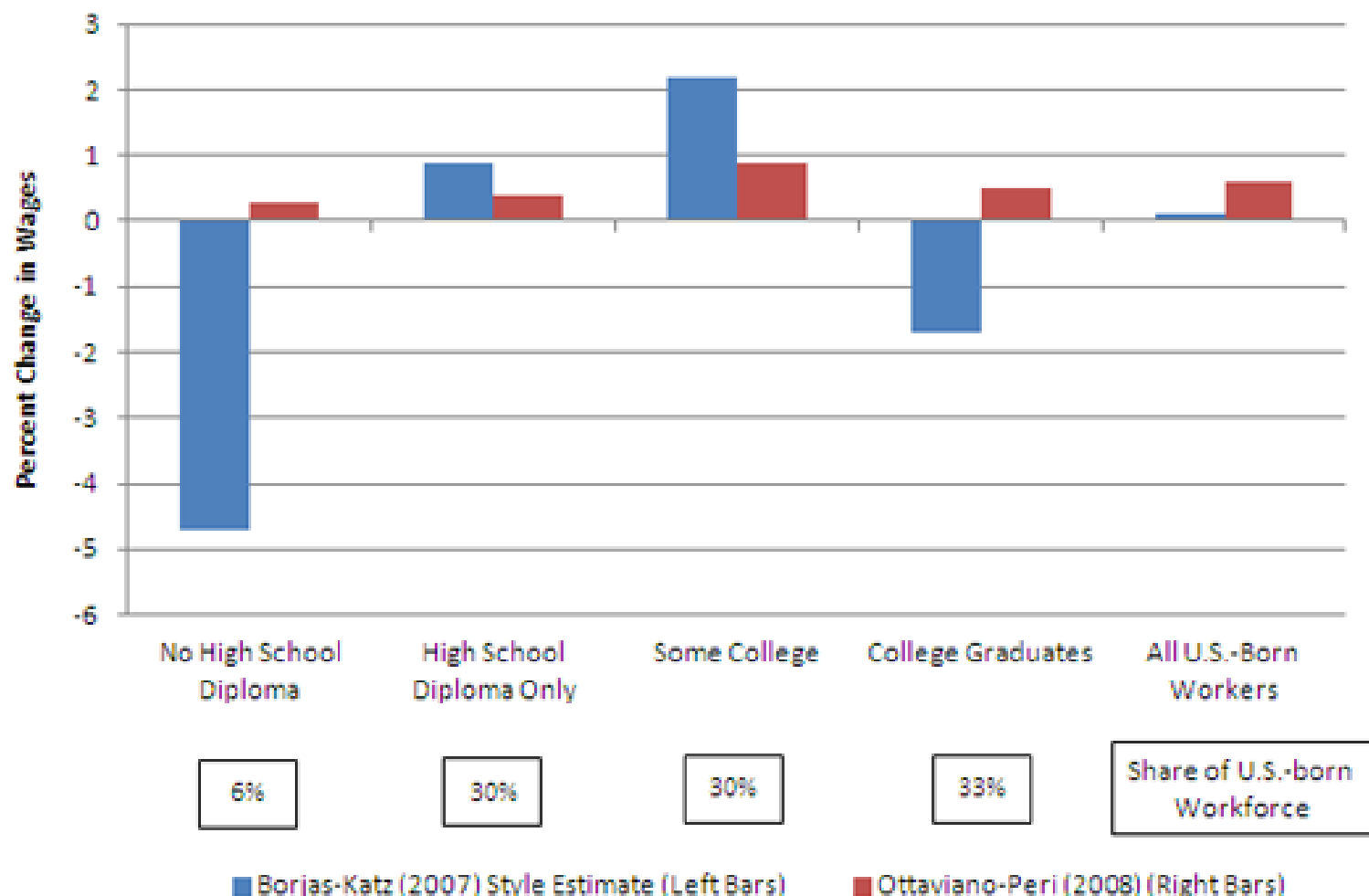
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Effect of Immigration on Wages of U.S.-Born Workers



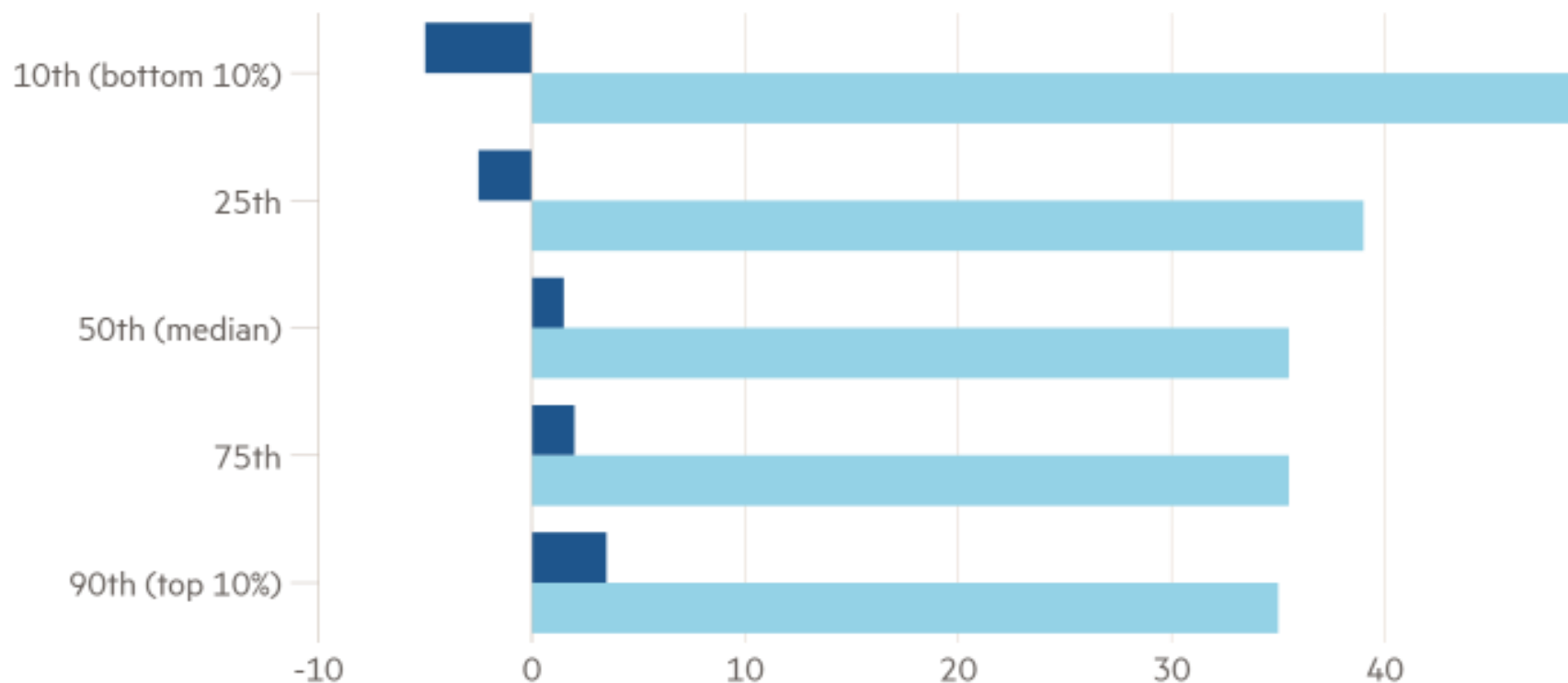
Source: Ottaviano and Peri (2008), Table 7; 2011 CPS.

Note: Share of U.S.-born population ages 25-64, numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Migration may have hit wages for the poorest paid - but the change is small compared with overall wage growth

Change in real pay of UK-born workers, 1992-2017 (%)

■ Estimated effect of EU immigration
■ Actual increase over period



Source: Migration Advisory Committee
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Myth: Immigrants cause more crime



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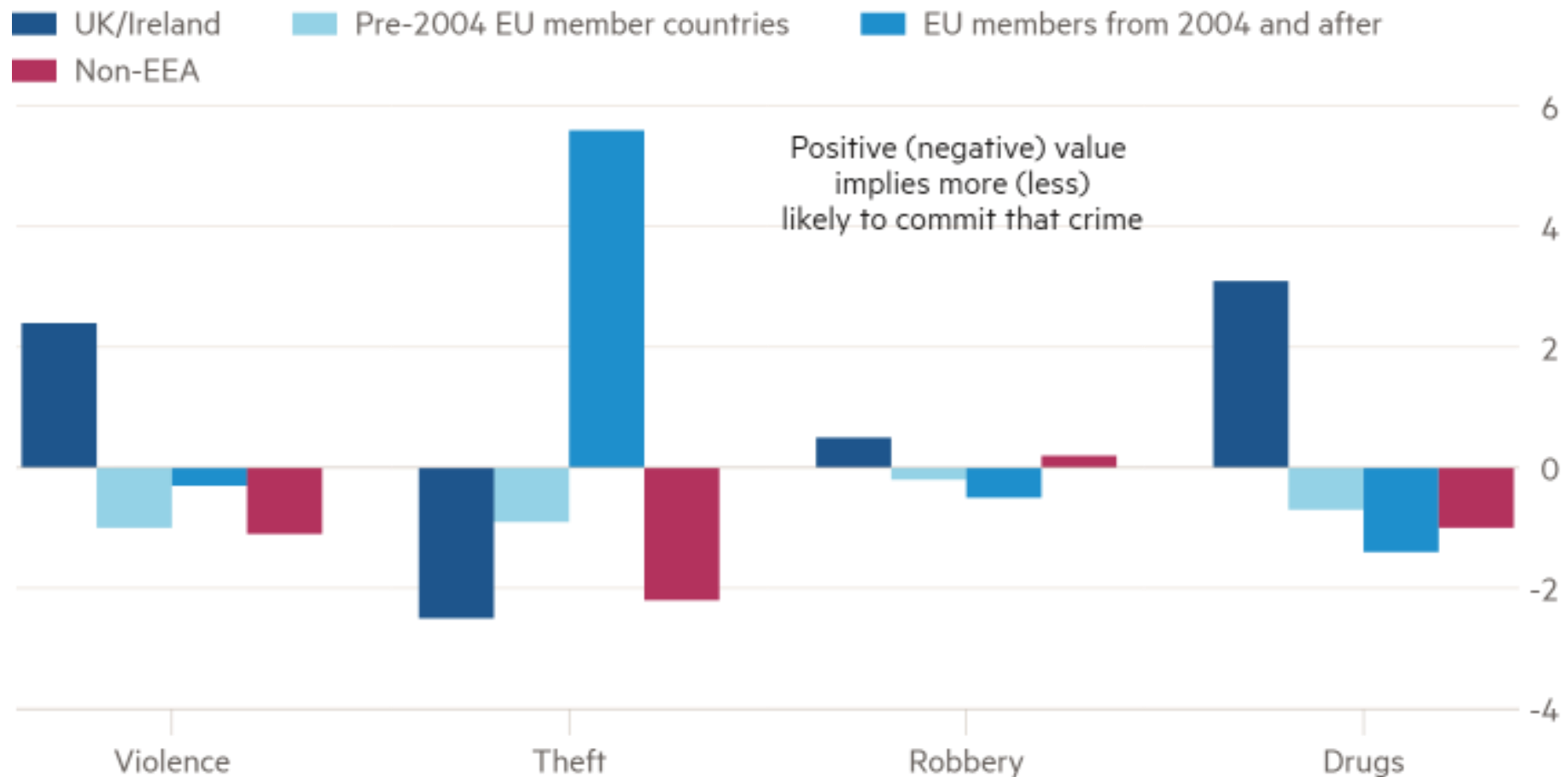
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Evidence on crime is mixed

Share of cautions/convictions for each crime category (2012-16) less share of male population aged 16-29, by nationality (% points)



Source: MAC, from PNC database
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Evidence: Bernat (2017)

- Quantitative research has consistently shown that being foreign born is negatively associated with crime overall and is not significantly associated with committing either violent or property crime.
- If an undocumented immigrant is arrested for a criminal offense, it tends to be for a misdemeanor. Researchers suggest that undocumented immigrants may be less likely to engage in serious criminal offending behavior because they seek to earn money and not to draw attention to themselves.
- Additionally, immigrants who have access to social services are less likely to engage in crime than those who live in communities where such access is not available.
- In regard to victimization, immigrants are more likely to be victims of crime. Foreign-born victims of crime may not report their victimization because of fears that they will experience negative consequences if they contact the police.
- Recently, concern about immigration and victimization has turned to refugees who are at risk of harm from traffickers, who warehouse them, threaten them, and physically abuse them with impunity.



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MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS: MIGRATION POLICIES

- Migration Policies have become more restrictive
- Migration restrictions reduce migration



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Myth: Migration Policies have become more restrictive



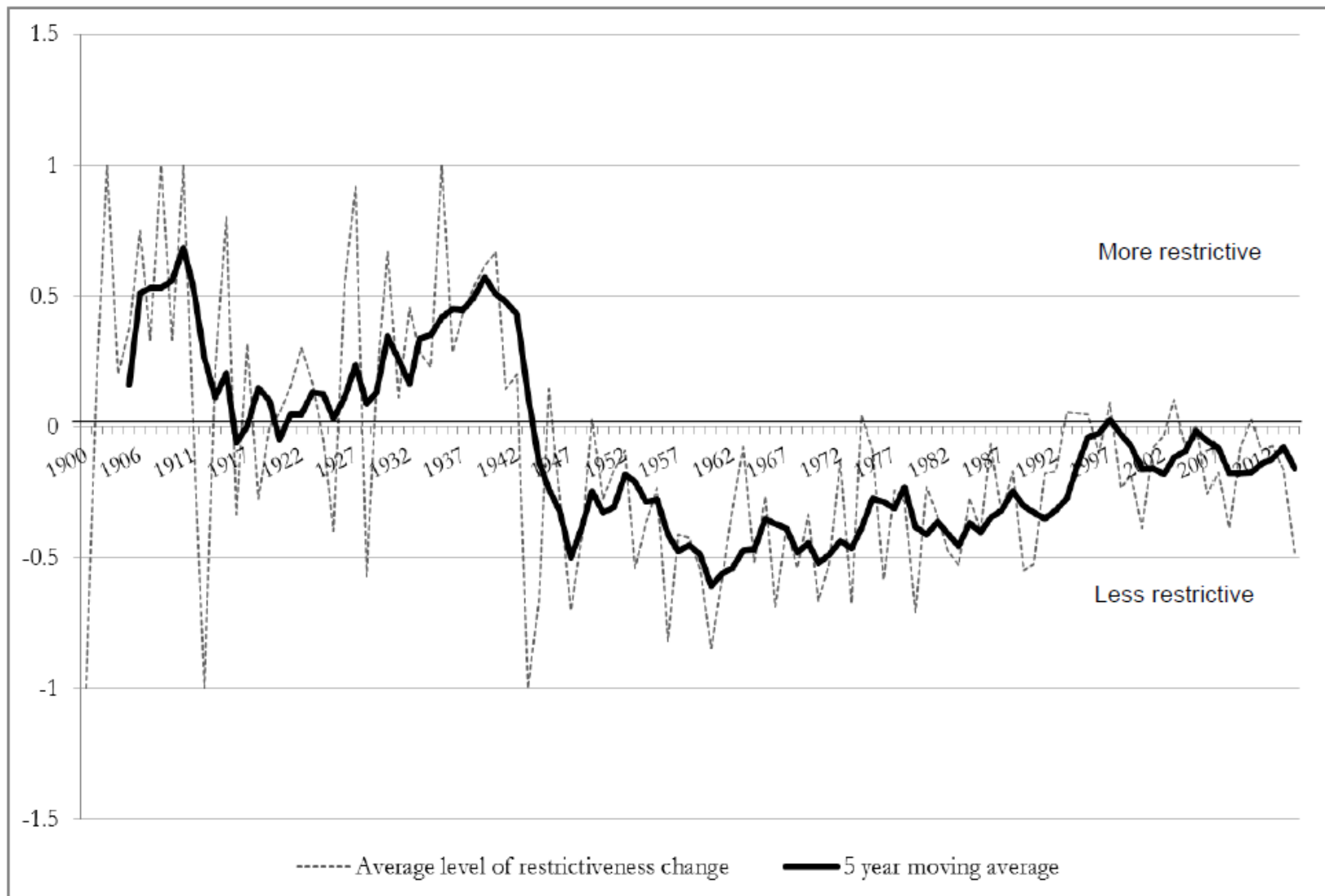
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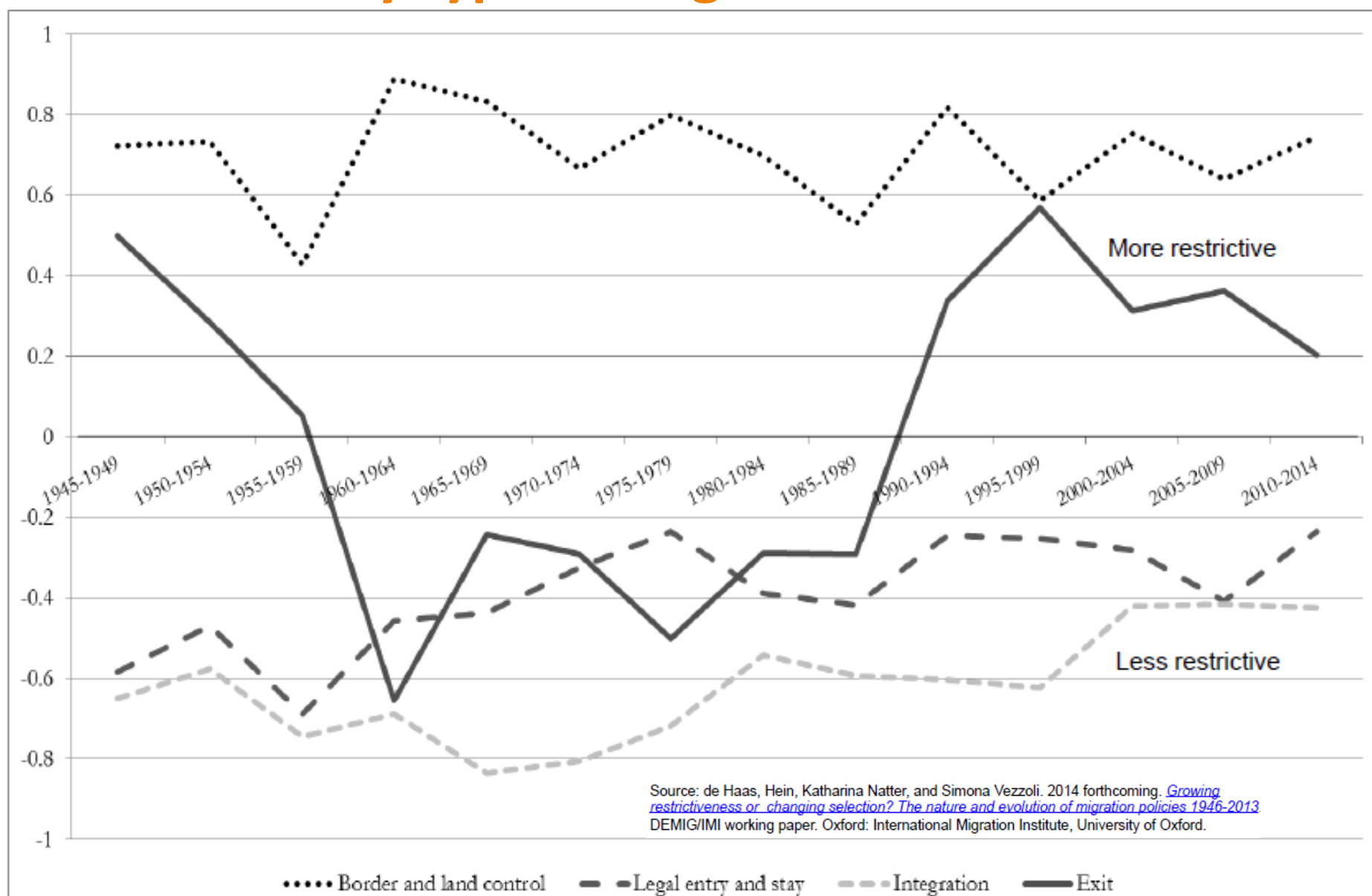
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Average yearly change in migration policy restrictiveness, 1900-2014



Source: de Haas, Hein, Katharina Natter, and Simona Vezzoli. 2014 forthcoming. [Growing restrictiveness or changing selection? The nature and evolution of migration policies 1946-2013](#). DEMIG/IMI working paper. Oxford: International Migration Institute, University of Oxford.

Differences by type of Migration Policies



Myth: Migration restrictions reduce migration



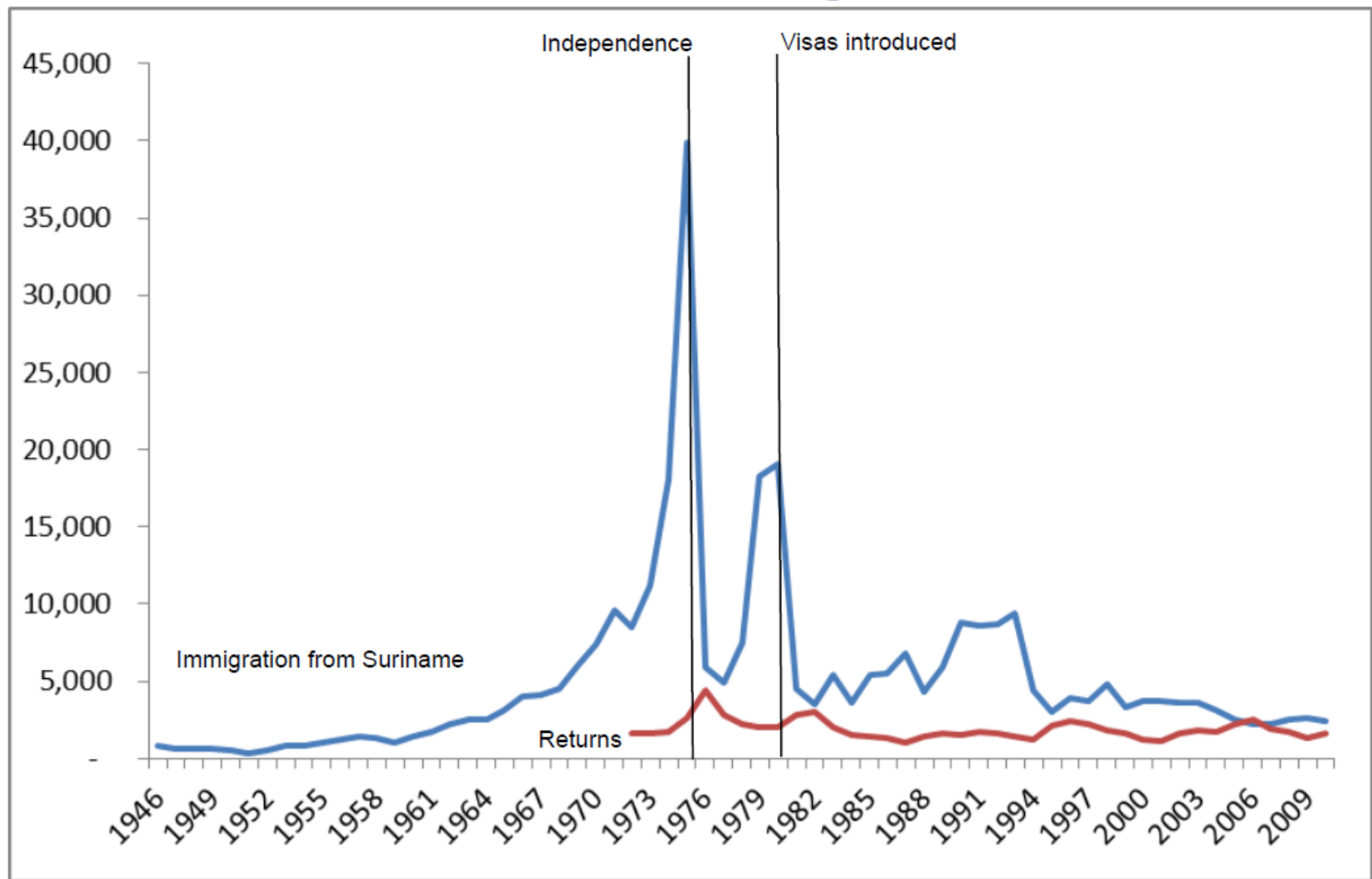
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How the Dutch government stimulated unwanted migration from Suriname



Source: DEMIG C2C database - www.imi.ox.ac.uk
van Amersfoort, Hans. 2011. *How the Dutch Government stimulated the unwanted immigration from Suriname*. IMI/DEMIG Working Paper 47. Oxford: International Migration Institute.

Migration restrictions do not necessarily reduce migration

- They change the nature of the movement
- They mainly change the way in which people move
- They affect who migrates (selection)
- They do not change the process driving migration, like development, social transformation, labor markets



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Changing the narrative

- Get correct information out in an accessible way
- Trust in information is a big problem and often very polarized
- One way to build trust is to acknowledge that there may be some legitimate issues with migration and have a more nuanced discussion



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DANKSCHEEN
 SPASSIBO
 NUHUN
 SNACHALHUYA
 CHALTU
 YAQHANYELAY
 TASHAKKUR ATU
 WABEEJA
 MAITEKA
 HUI
 YUSPAGARATAM
 UNALCHEESH
 TINGKI
 BIYAN
 SHUKRIA
 GRACIAS
 SUKSAMA
 EKHMET
 ARIGATO
 SHUKURIA
 MERASTAWHY
 GAEJTTHO
 GOZAIMASHITA
 EFCHARISTO
 AGUYJE
 FAKAAUE
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