

Forced migration and refugees

Ernesto F. L. Amaral

April 30, 2018
Migration (SOCL 647)



TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY.

Outline

- Syrian refugee crisis
- Data on refugees and natives
- Recommendations and economic aspects
- U.S. asylum system
- Response to the Syrian crisis (discussion)

Syrian refugee crisis

- Since the Syrian civil war began in March 2011 (UNOCHA 2018)
 - Over 6.1 million people have been internally displaced
 - 5.6 million Syrians have fled the country, as of February 2018
- By March 2018, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates the number of refugees and asylum seekers to be almost (UNHCR 2018b)
 - 3.6 million in Turkey
 - 1 million in Lebanon
 - 700,000 in Jordan
 - 250,000 in Iraq
 - 130,000 in Egypt
 - 35,000 in other North African countries.
- Out of this total group of Syrian refugees, close to 1 million have requested asylum in different countries within the European Union (EUI 2016)

Current response to the crisis

- The response to the refugee crisis has focused largely on providing humanitarian assistance for refugees
 - International aid response has failed to keep up with the rising need of Syrian refugees (MSF 2013; OXFAM 2016b)
- The Syrian conflict has already lasted for more than seven years
 - There is no short-term solution in sight
 - A strategy that addresses the evolving long-term issues of refugees in their host countries is needed

Severity of refugee situation

- UNHCR indicates that the severity of the refugee situation is defined by (UNHCR 2004)
 - Displacement duration
 - Daily life conditions
 - Socioeconomic integration of refugees in the host country
- Therefore, it is imperative that host countries establish a long-term strategy that helps integrate refugees into their economies and societies

European response

- Some improvements have been made, but the Europe's admission of Syrian refugees remains low
- Greece and Bulgaria are the closest and most accessible to refugees
 - Allegations of forced removal and mistreatment
- UK response has been to contain the crisis in Syria and to make minimal efforts to increase admission
- Containment of crisis to Syrian region is unviable
 - Neighboring countries are overwhelmed



EU-Turkey agreement

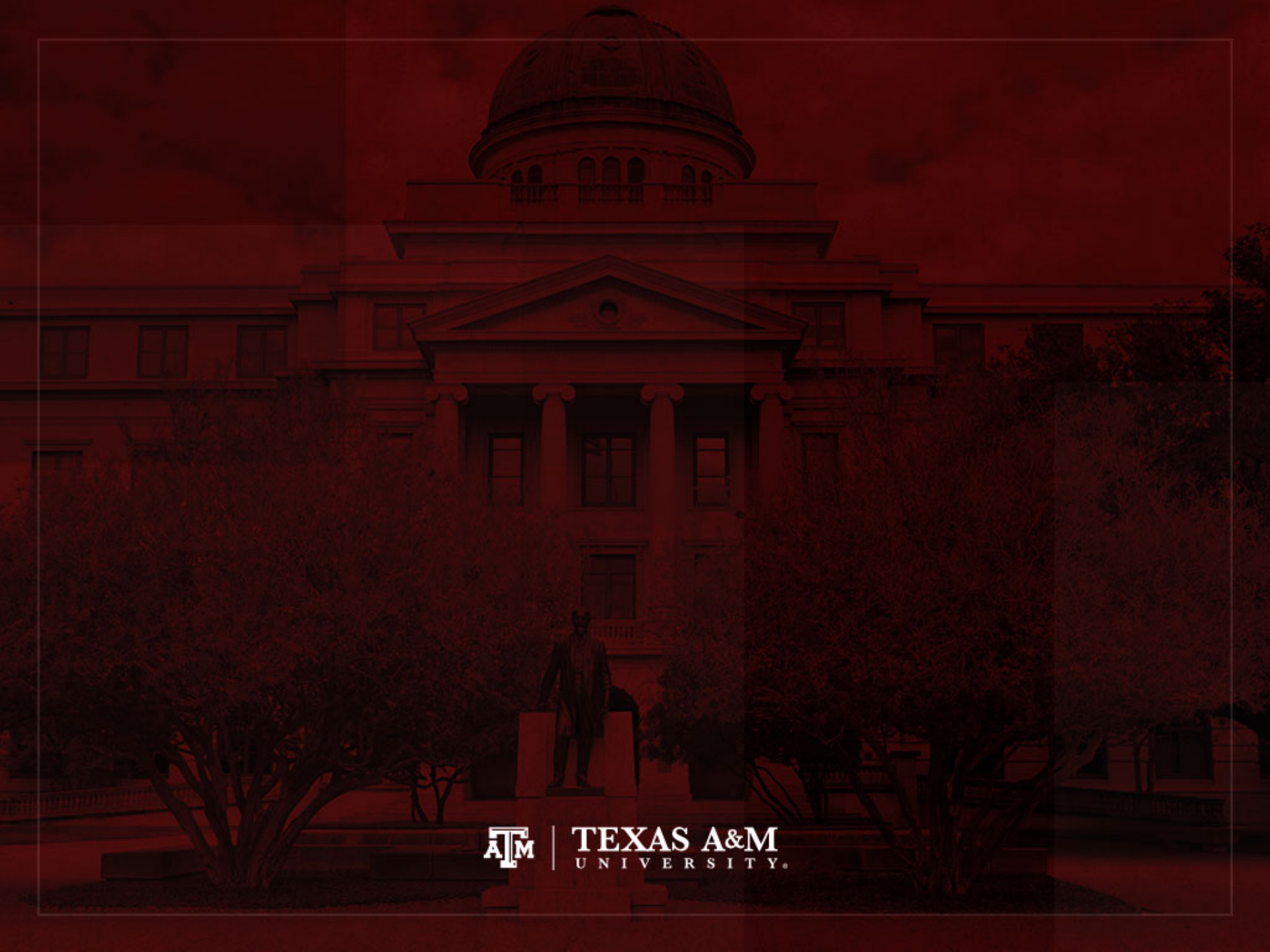
(March 18, 2016)

- New irregular migrants will be returned to Turkey
- For every Syrian returned to Turkey from Greece, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to EU
- Turkey will prevent new routes of irregular migration
- EU will increase resettlement of refugees residing in Turkey
- Accelerate visa liberalization for Turkish citizens to EU
- Financial support for Turkey's refugee population
- €3 billion in 2016 and another €3 billion by 2018
- Improve humanitarian conditions inside Syria



Criticism of EU-Turkey agreement

- Agreement violates long-standing international prohibitions on collective expulsion
- Leaders changed the discourse of large-scale mechanism to send back irregular migrants
- Current speech indicates the need to implement a process that respects individual asylum rights
- Governments hope that message about agreement will deter arrivals without having to test its legality



TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY.

Data on refugees

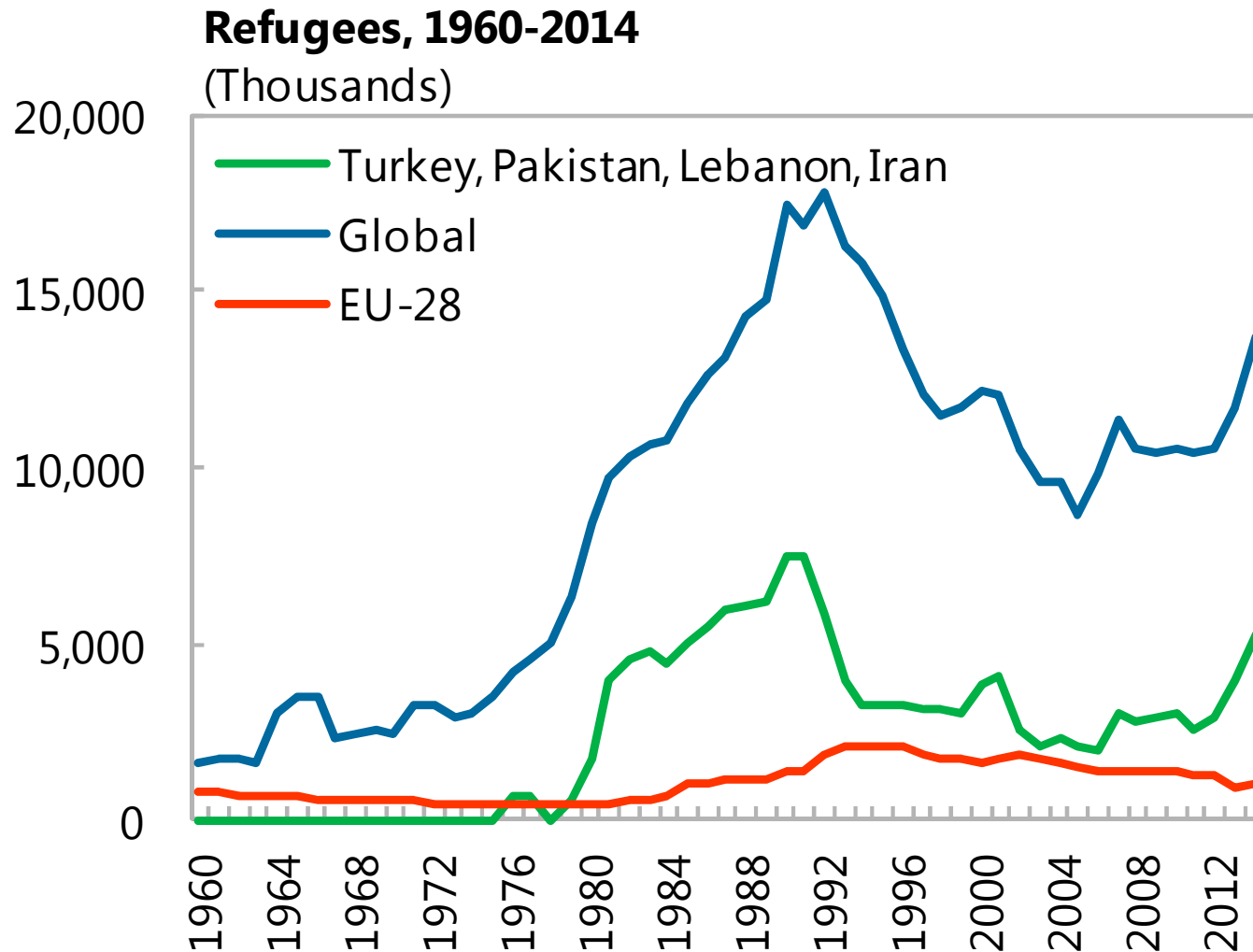
- UNHCR refugee registration database and household surveys
- UNHCR MENA Region
- UNHCR Data for Jordan
- UNICEF Jordan
- World Bank MENA Region team
- Oxfam: livelihoods of Syrian refugees in Lebanon
- Norwegian Refugee Council and Harvard Law School
- Syrian Refugee Health Access Survey in Jordan, Lebanon
- IMF, The Refugee Surge in Europe: Economic Challenges
- REACH - Informing more Effective Humanitarian Action
- United Nations Data



Data on natives and others

- Surveys from European Foundation (Eurofound)
 - 2004–2013 European Company Survey
 - 2003–2012 European Quality of Life Survey
 - 1990–2015 European Working Conditions Survey
- European Social Survey (since 2001, every 2 years)
- Eurostat of the European Commission
- 2015 Jordanian Population Census
- Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) Database
- OECD Migration Database
- World Bank Migration and remittances data
- Global Attitudes Surveys

Of about 14 million refugees worldwide, only 1 million live in the EU



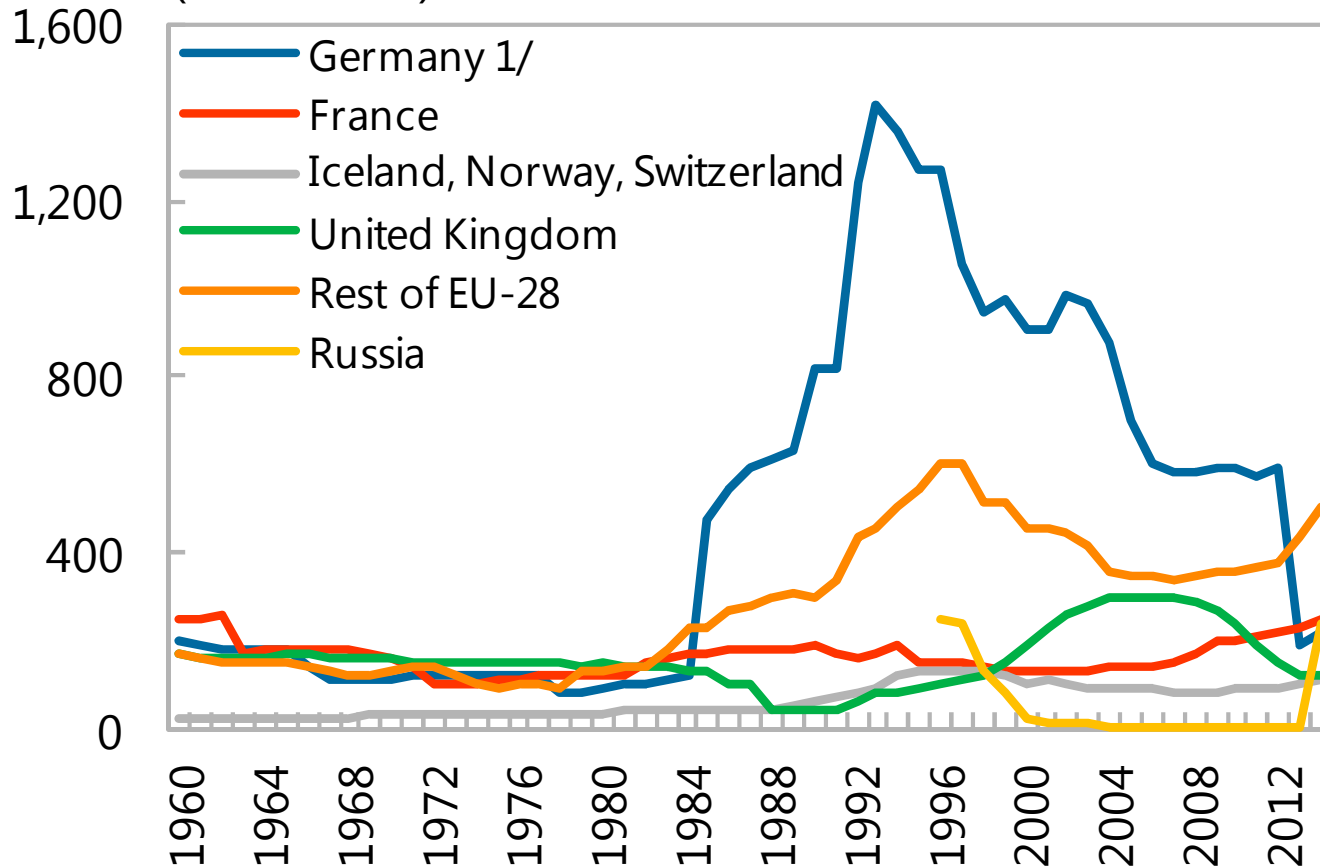
Source: Aiyar et al. 2016.



The number of refugees living in European countries now is still low compared to the 1990s

Refugees, 1960-2014

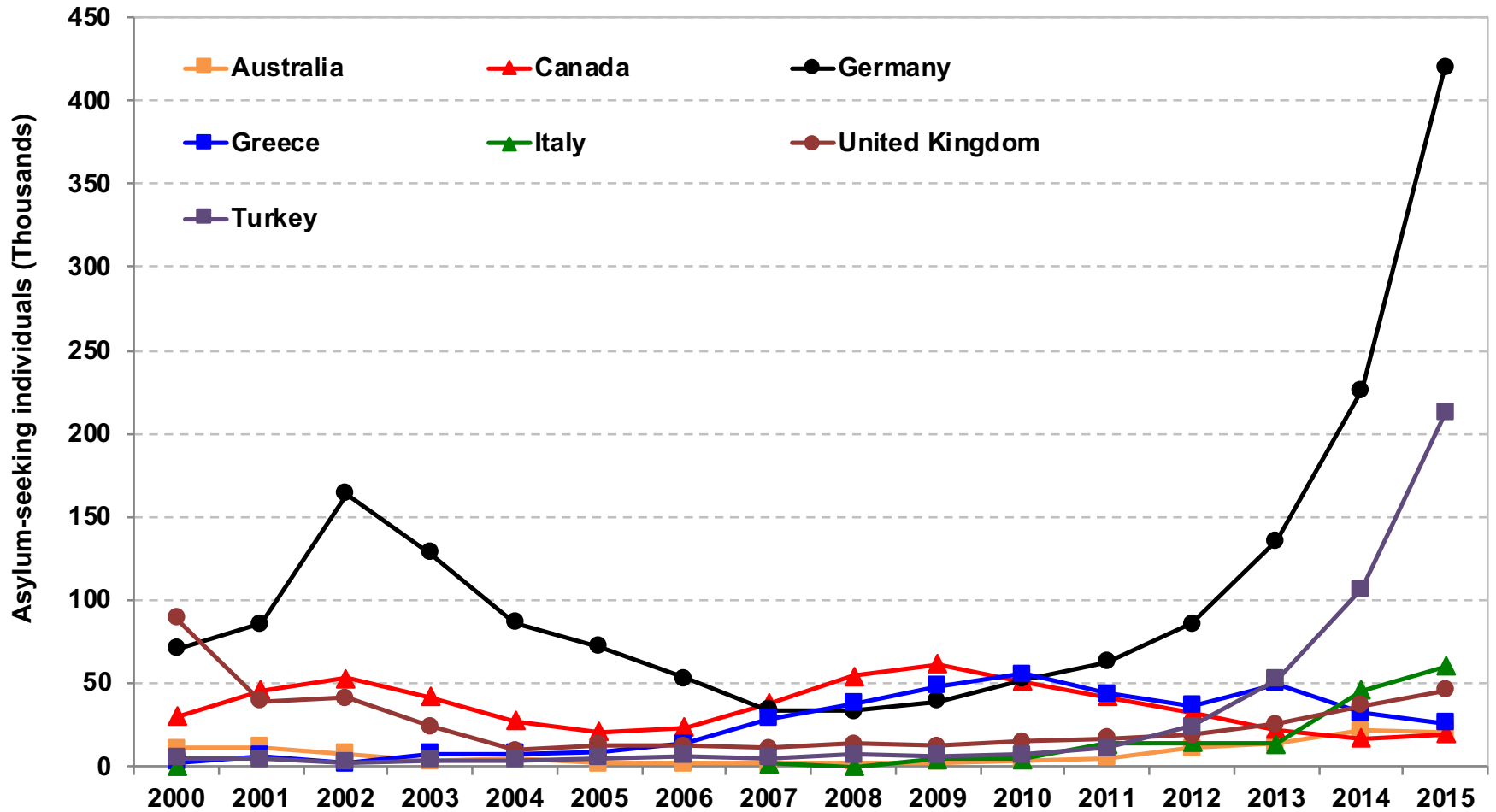
(Thousands)



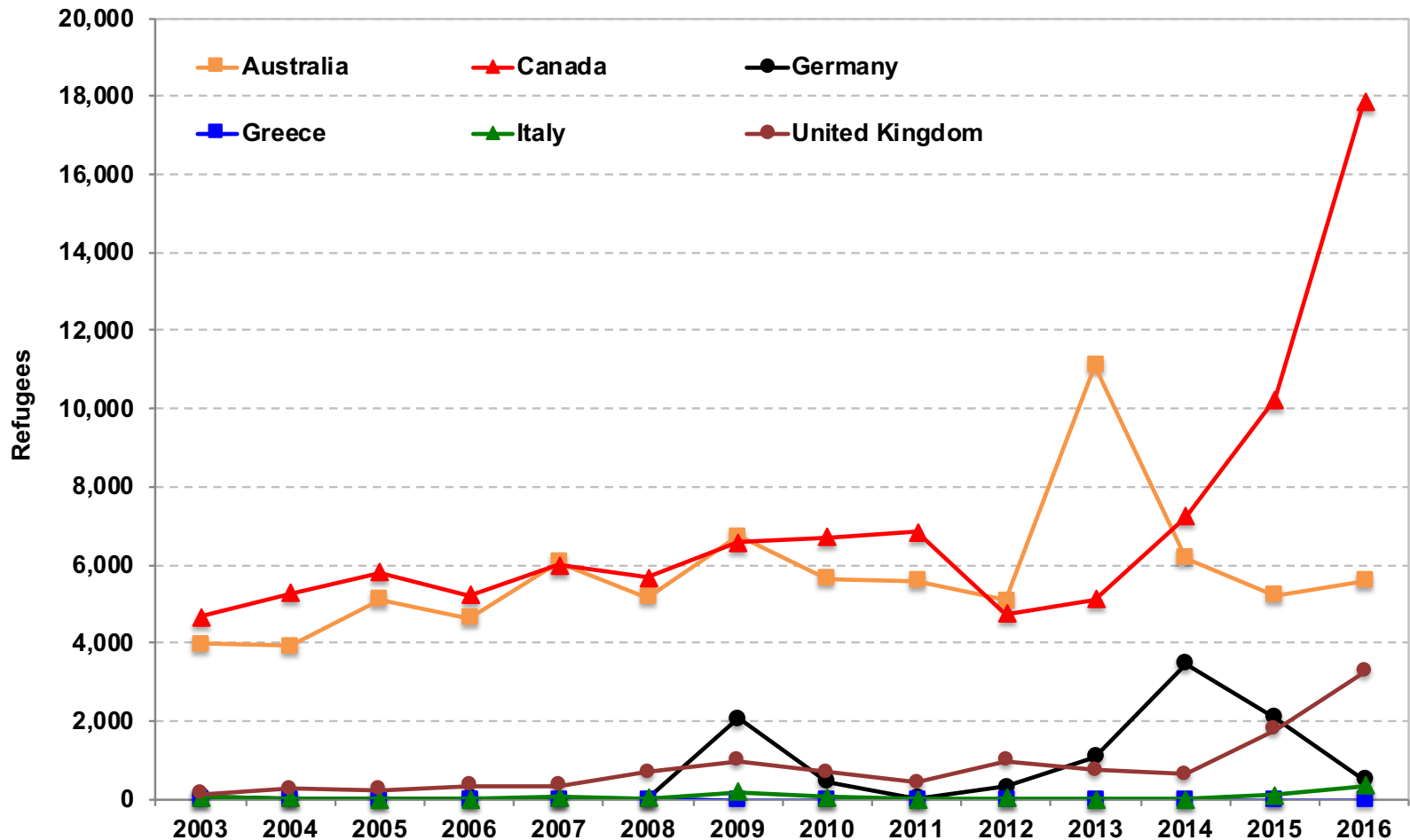
1/ Due to a national change in definition, the number of refugees in Germany was reduced in 2013.



Asylum-seeking individuals

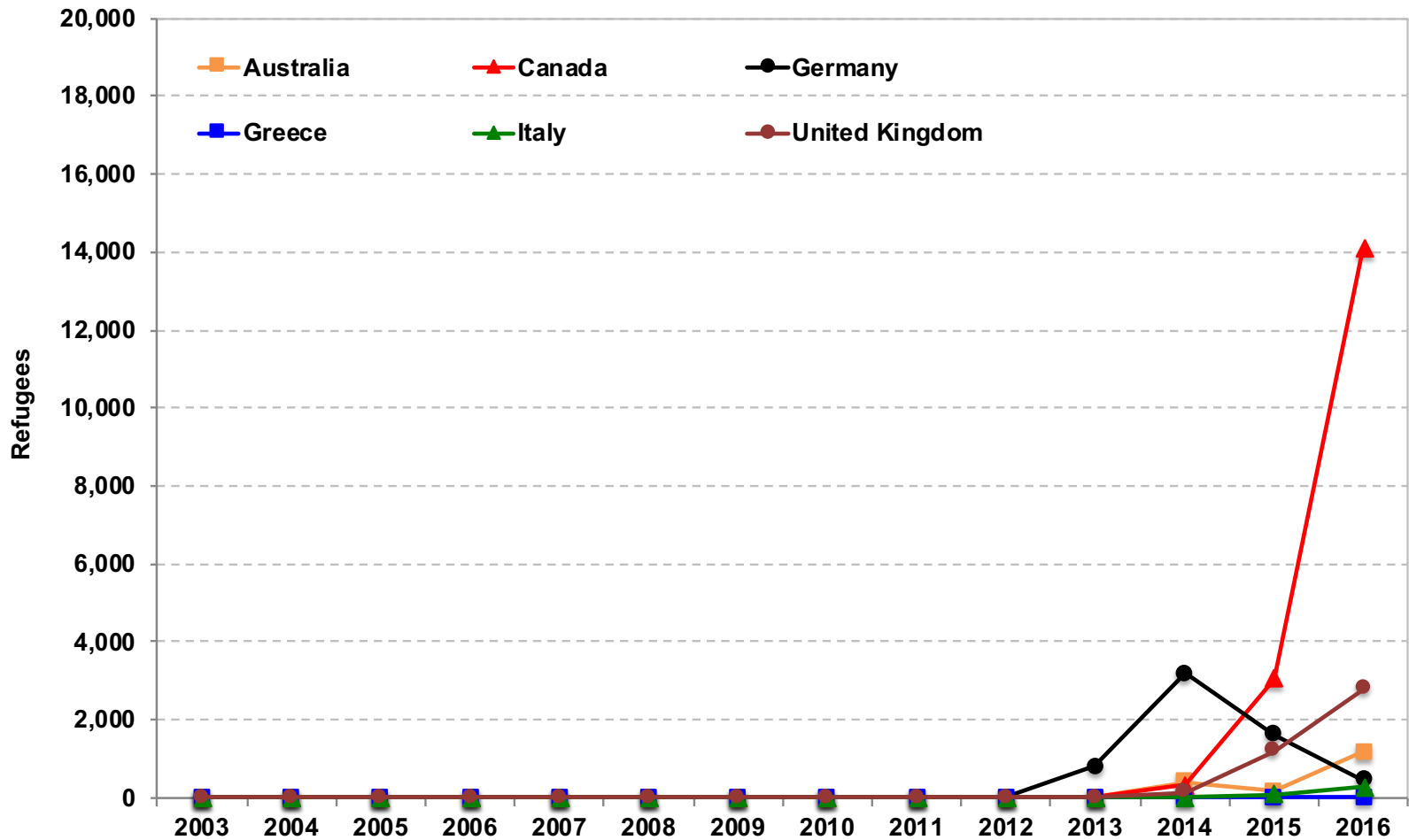


Refugees departed for resettlement

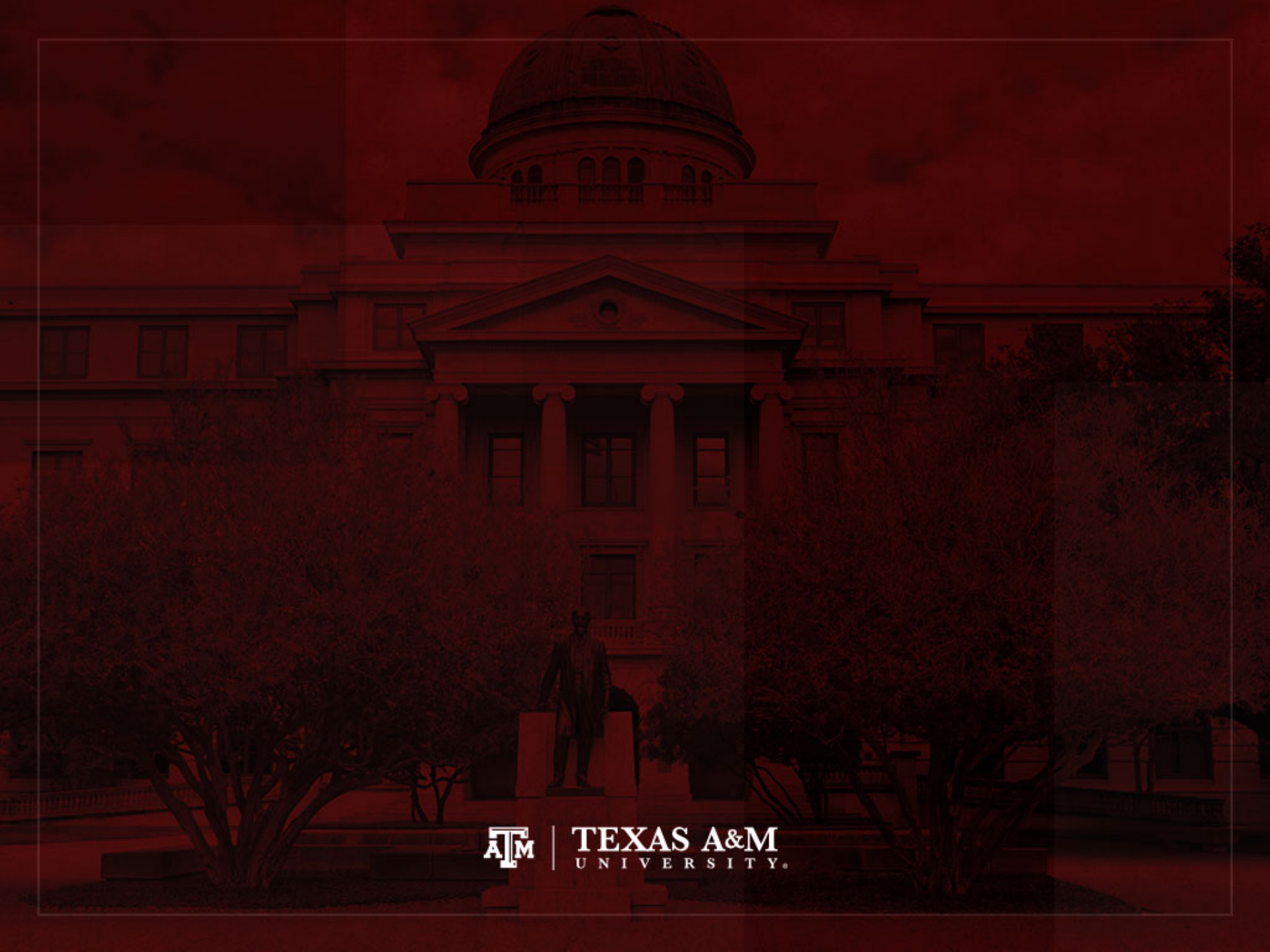


Resettlement can be an important option for refugees, since they can be transferred from an asylum country to another country that approves to host them, and where they might get settled permanently (UNHCR, 2018a)

Syrian refugees departed for resettlement



Number of Syrian refugees resettled to countries above is smaller than refugees living in the region (e.g., Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt) and those who fled but do not have a formal refugee status (Ostrand, 2015)

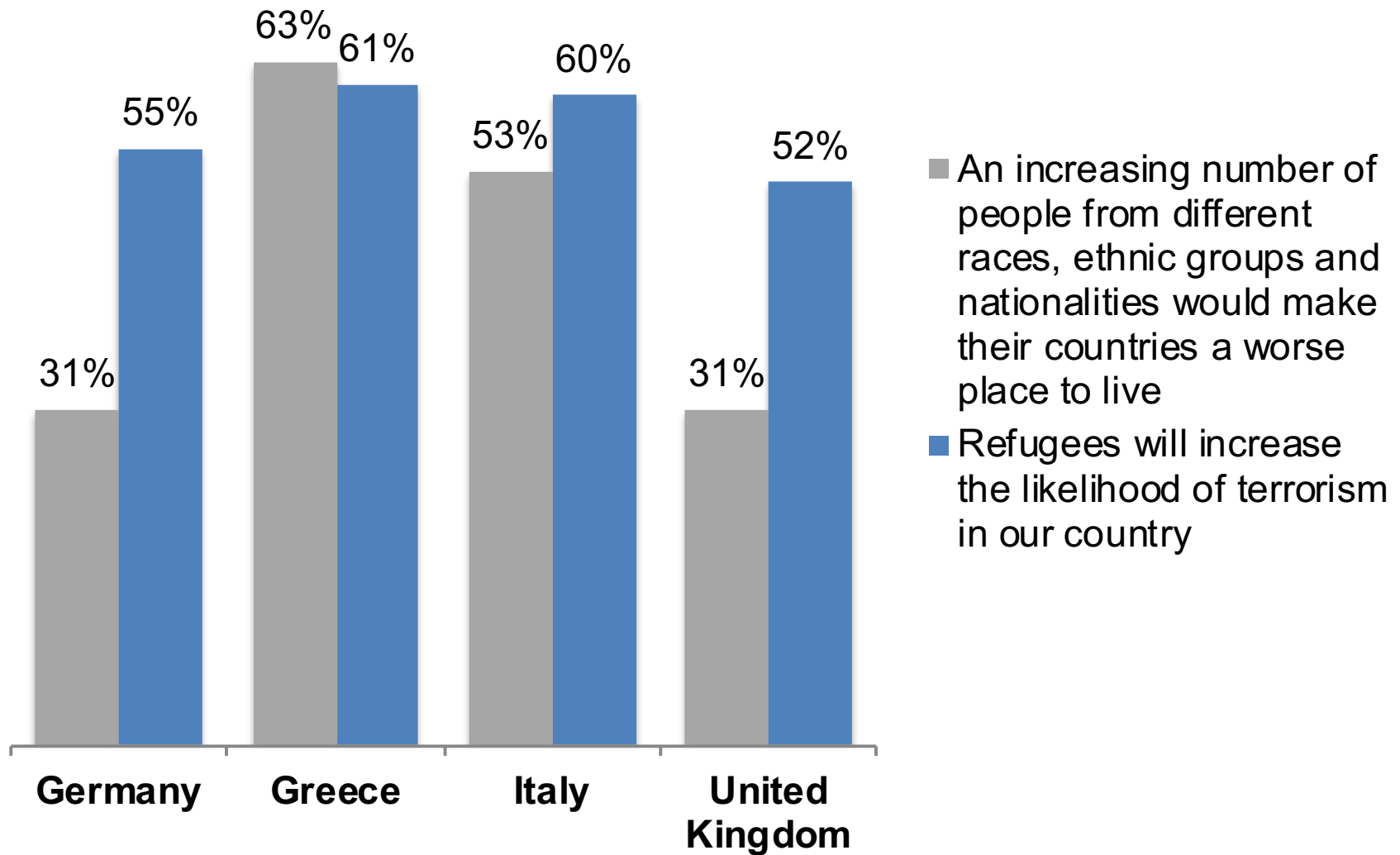


TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY.

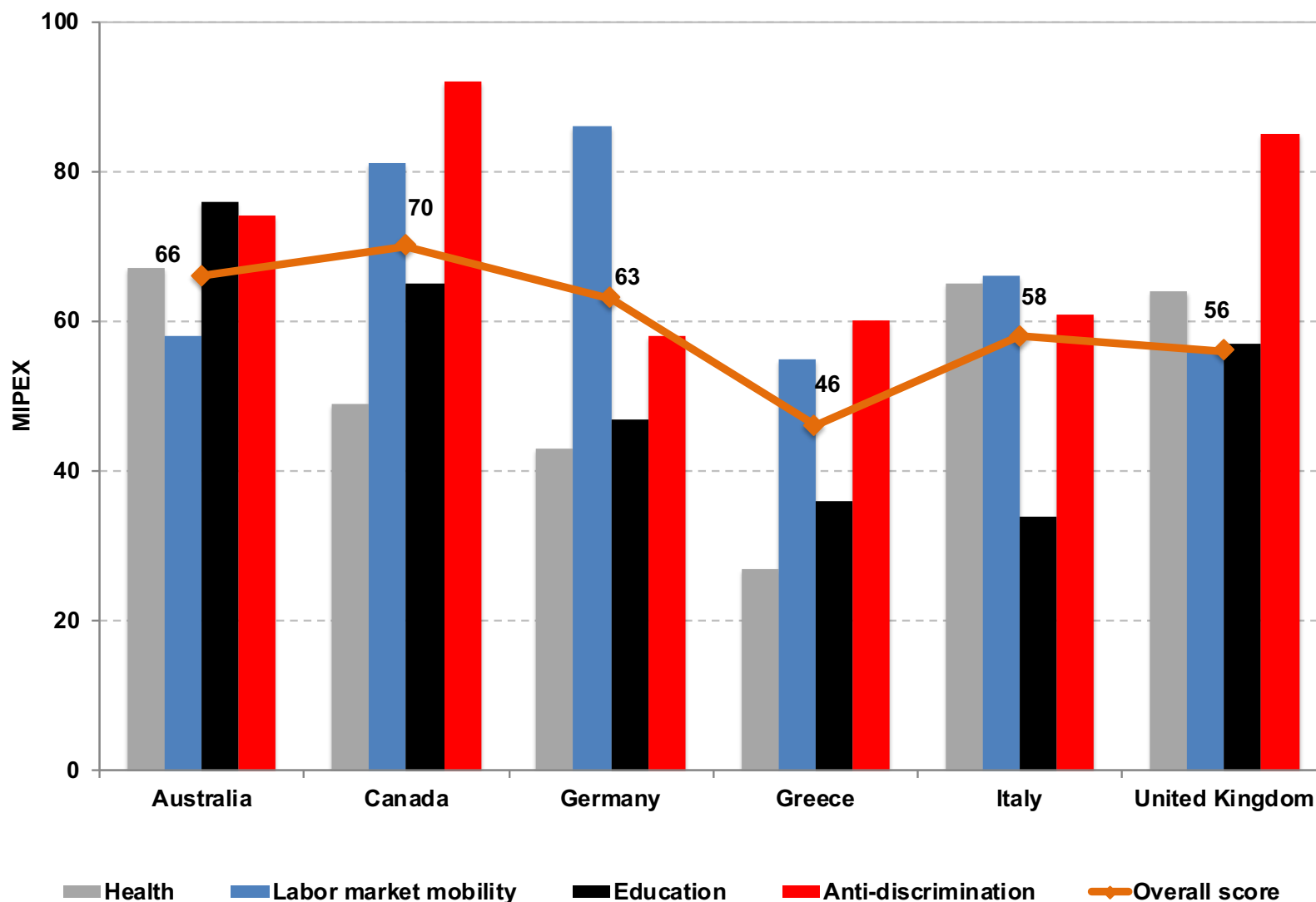
Previous recommendations

- Europe should implement a comprehensive plan of action built on existing laws and policies (Orchard et al. 2014)
 - Activate a regional humanitarian admission and temporary protection regime
 - Expand resettlement programs
 - Develop alternative legal routes for refugees
 - Combat anti-immigrant sentiment...

Europeans who agreed with specific statements, 2016



Migration Integration Policy Index, 2014

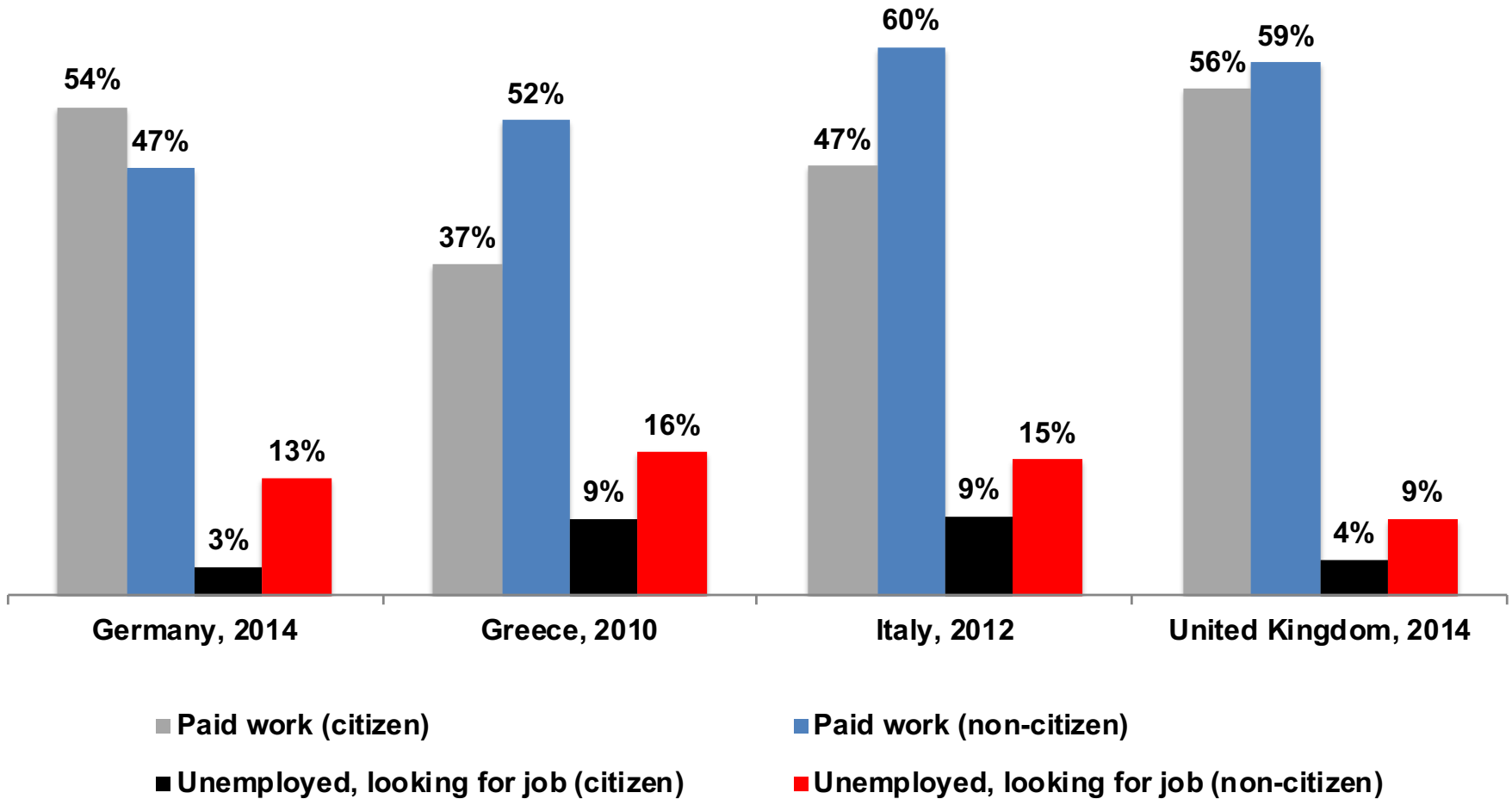


Economic aspects of refugees

- Short-term macroeconomic effects
 - Modest increase in GDP growth
 - Expansion in labor supply
 - Concentrated in Germany, Sweden, Austria
- Medium and long-term growth
 - Lower employment rate and wages than natives, but effects diminish over time
 - Depends on refugee integration into labor market
 - Language
 - Transferable job qualifications
 - Barriers to job search
 - Legal work constraints during asylum application



Activity performed during the last 7 days



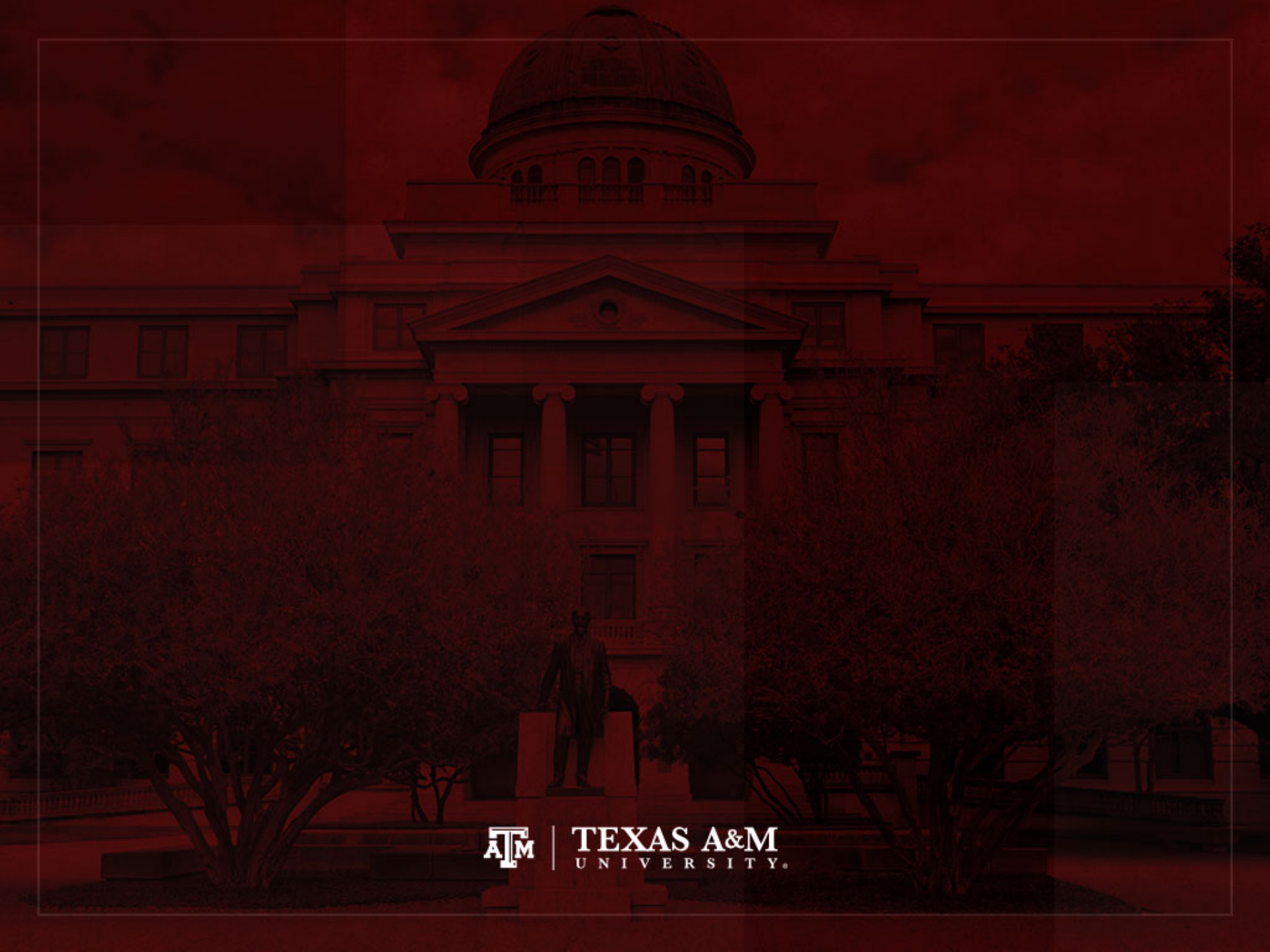
EU Regional Trust Fund

- EU is the leading donor in the international response to the Syrian crisis with over €6.1 billion (by 2016)
- Trust Fund addresses longer term resilience needs of Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraq
- Provide education, training, health care, water, sanitation, hygiene, infrastructure, economic recovery
- Incentivize work permits in neighboring countries
- Implementation of a trade initiative to apply lower taxes for manufactured products exported to EU
- World Bank is also providing interest-free loans



Significance of policies

- Minimize restrictions on working
- Wage subsidies to private employers
- Temporary exceptions to minimum wages
- Ease self-employment (access to credit)
- Facilitate skill recognition
- Reduce restrictions on geographical mobility
- Adverse effects on wages and employment of natives are limited and temporary
- If refugees work, they pay taxes and contribute to social security, offsetting effects of population aging



TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY.

Migrant caravan, April 29, 2018

More than 150 migrants, part of a caravan that once numbered about 1,200 and headed north in March from Mexico's border with Guatemala, were prepared to seek asylum from U.S. immigration officials



Initiating asylum procedure

- People who request protection at a U.S. entry point must be referred to an asylum officer for a screening interview
 - More than 75% of applicants pass this “credible-fear interview”
 - Migrant families are likely to be placed on buses to Texas, where they will remain in detention centers for mothers and children
 - Adult men are likely to be detained in any number of facilities across the country that hold undocumented immigrants

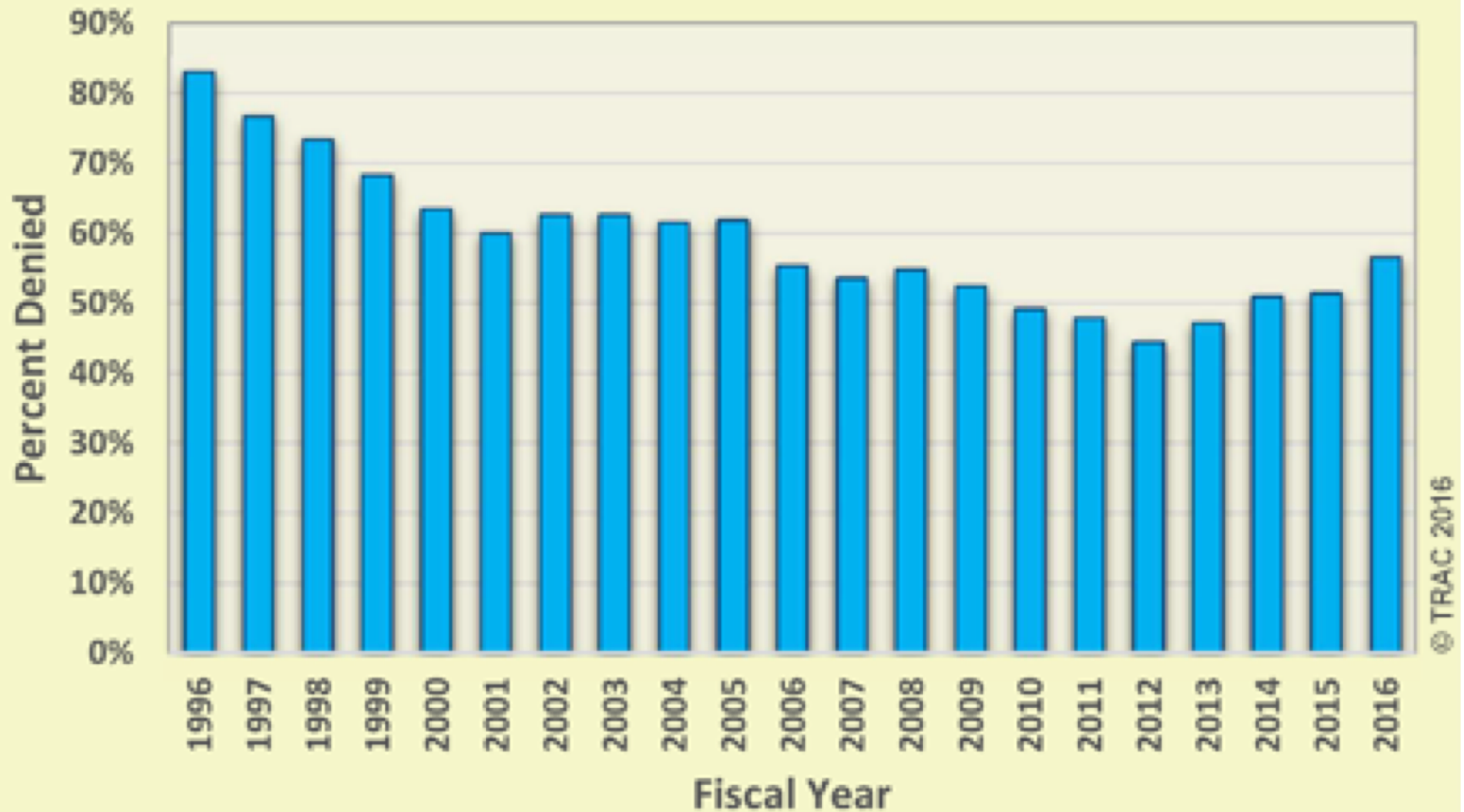


Immigration judge phase

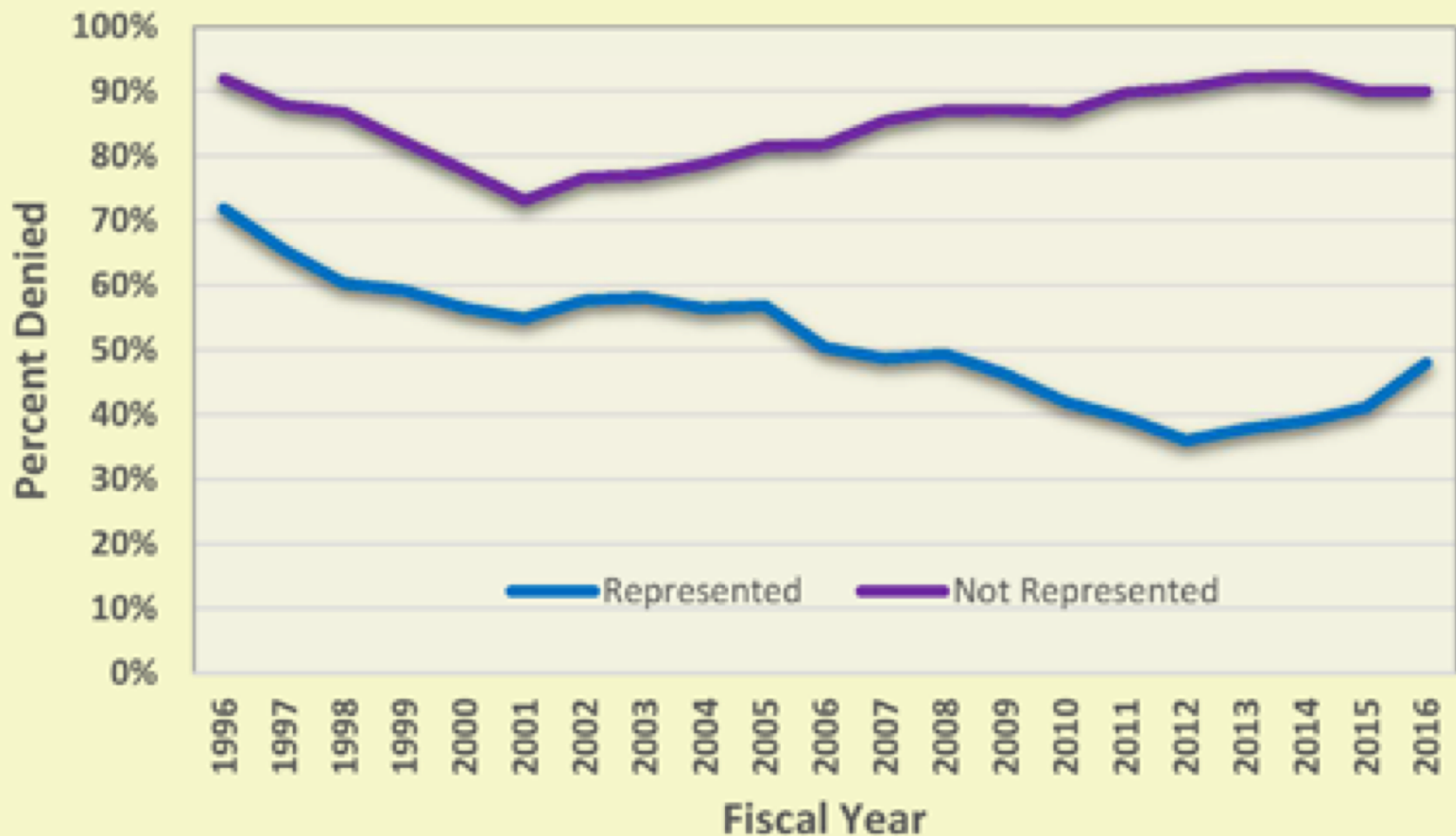
- If applicant passes the interview, the person must then present his or her case before an immigration judge
 - This process can take several months or longer
 - Migrants often are allowed to travel to the interior of the country
 - They stay with relatives or friends while their cases run their course
 - They are typically fitted with ankle monitors
 - In recent months, migrant advocates say, the federal administration has kept many migrants seeking asylum in detention



Asylum denial rates in the U.S.



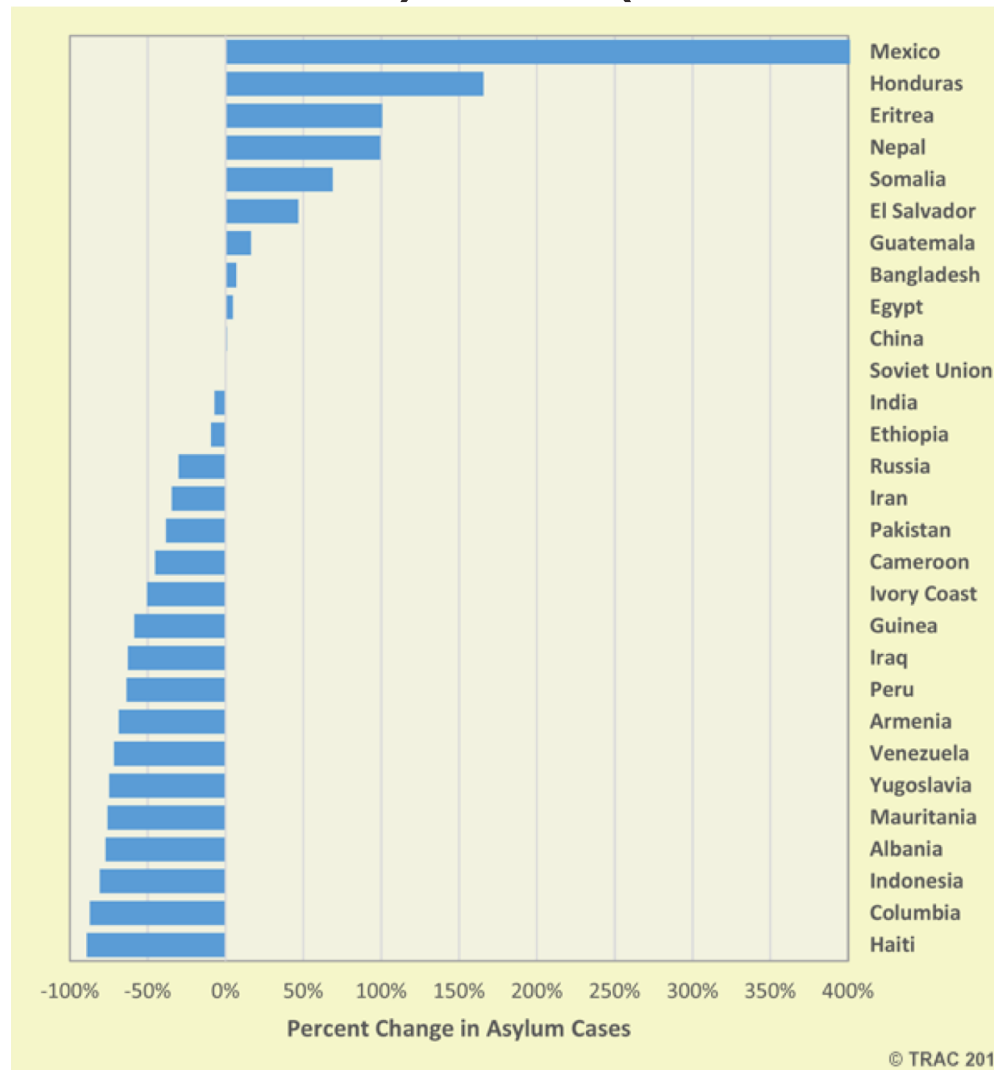
Asylum denial rates by representation



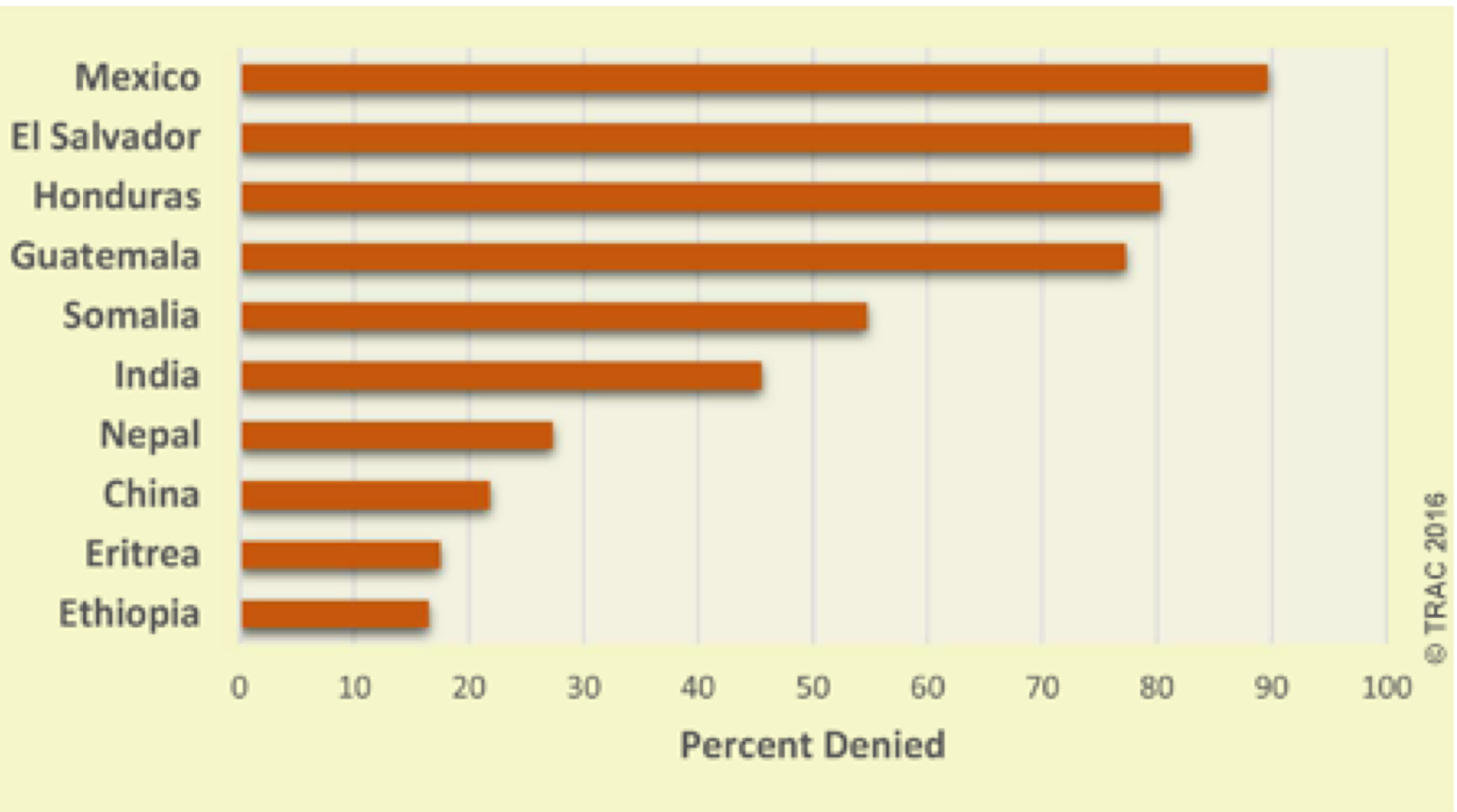
© TRAC 2016

- Having an attorney continued to be almost a necessity for winning asylum in Immigration Court

Changes in asylum seekers (FY2005–FY2010) vs. (FY2011–FY2016)



Asylum denial rates for top ten nationalities, 2011–2016



References

- Aiyar S, Barkbu BB, Batini N, Berger H, Detragiache E, Dizioli A, Ebeke CH, Lin HH, Kaltani L, Sosa S, Spilimbergo A, Topalova P. 2016. The Refugee Surge in Europe: Economic Challenges. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- Culbertson S, Olikar O, Baruch B, Blum I. 2016. Rethinking Coordination of Services to Refugees in Urban Areas: Managing the Crisis in Jordan and Lebanon.” Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.
- Kerwin DM. 2011. “The faltering US refugee protection system: Legal and policy responses to refugees, asylum seekers, and others in need of protection.” Migration Policy Institute Report, May 2011. (<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/faltering-us-refugee-protection-system>)
- UNHCR-UNDP. 2018. Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP) 2018–2019: In Response to the Syrian Crisis. Regional Strategic Overview. New York: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) & United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (<http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/3RP-Regional-Strategic-Overview-2018-19.pdf>)
- UNHCR. 2012. The State of the World’s Refugees: In Search for Solidarity. New York: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (<http://www.unhcr.org/publications/sowr/4fc5ceca9/state-worlds-refugees-2012-search-solidarity.html>)





TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY.