



International Migration Institute
James Martin 21st Century School
University of Oxford

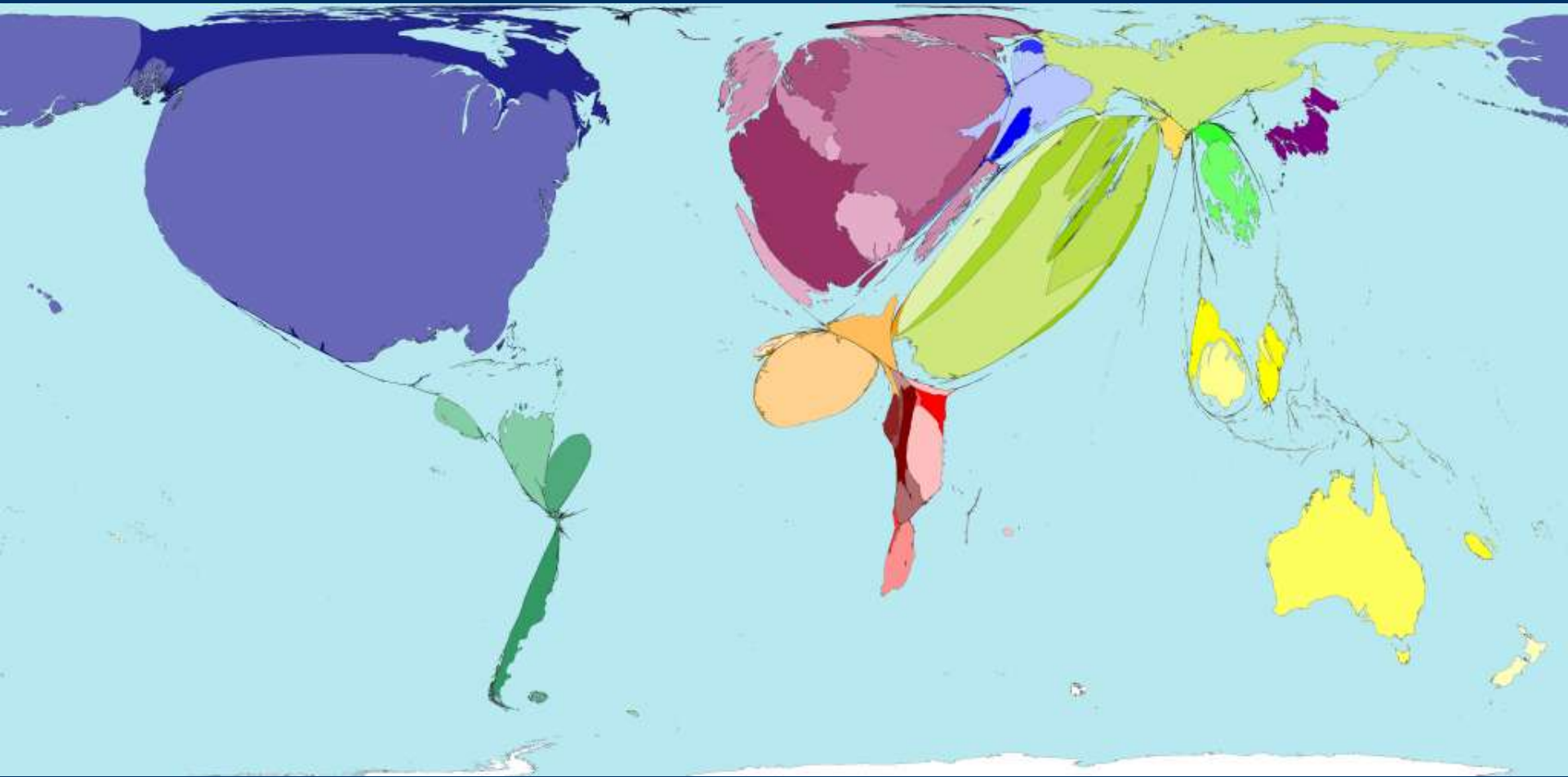


Migration transitions and the migration hump

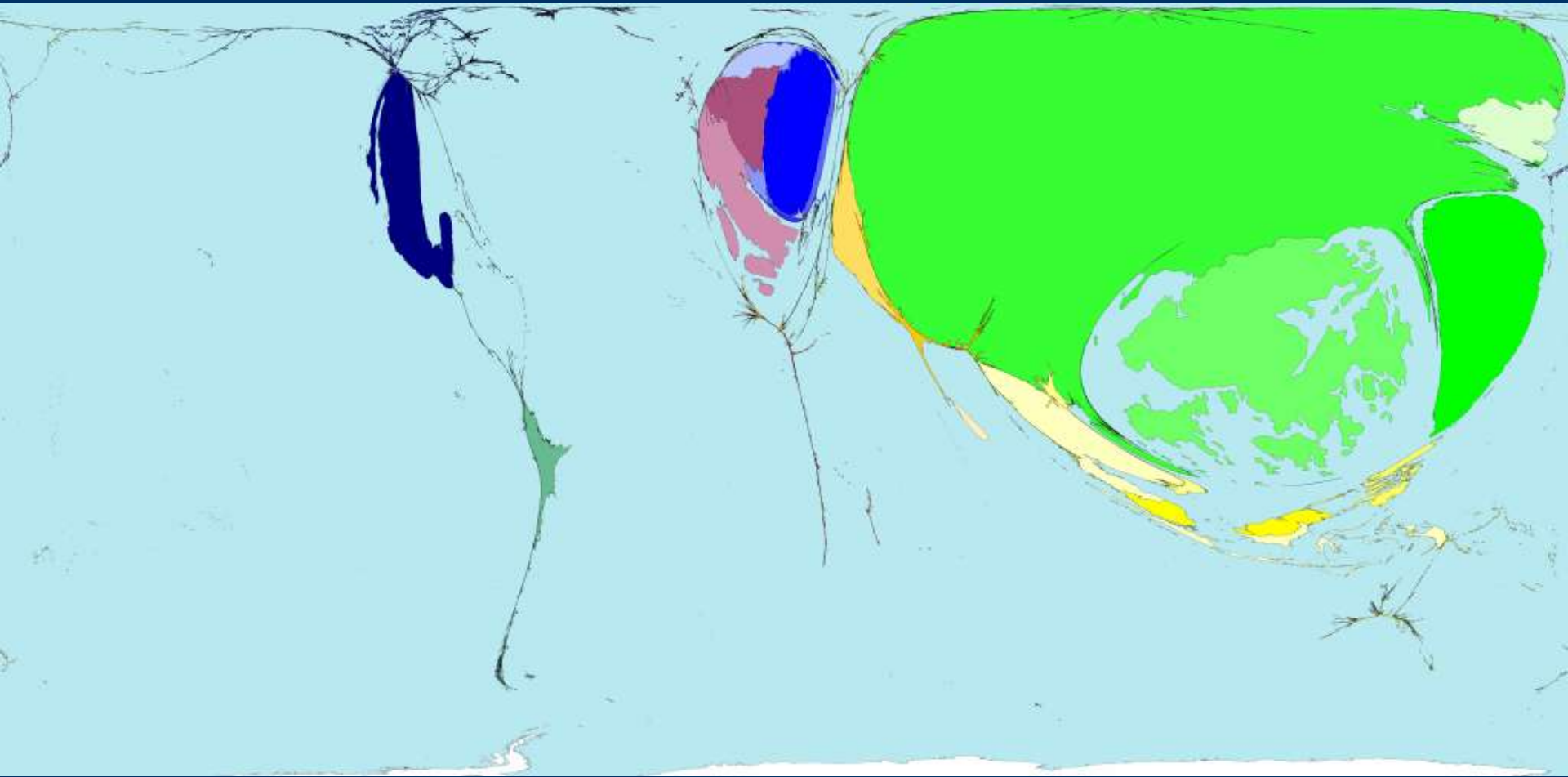
A theoretical inquiry and Empirical Test

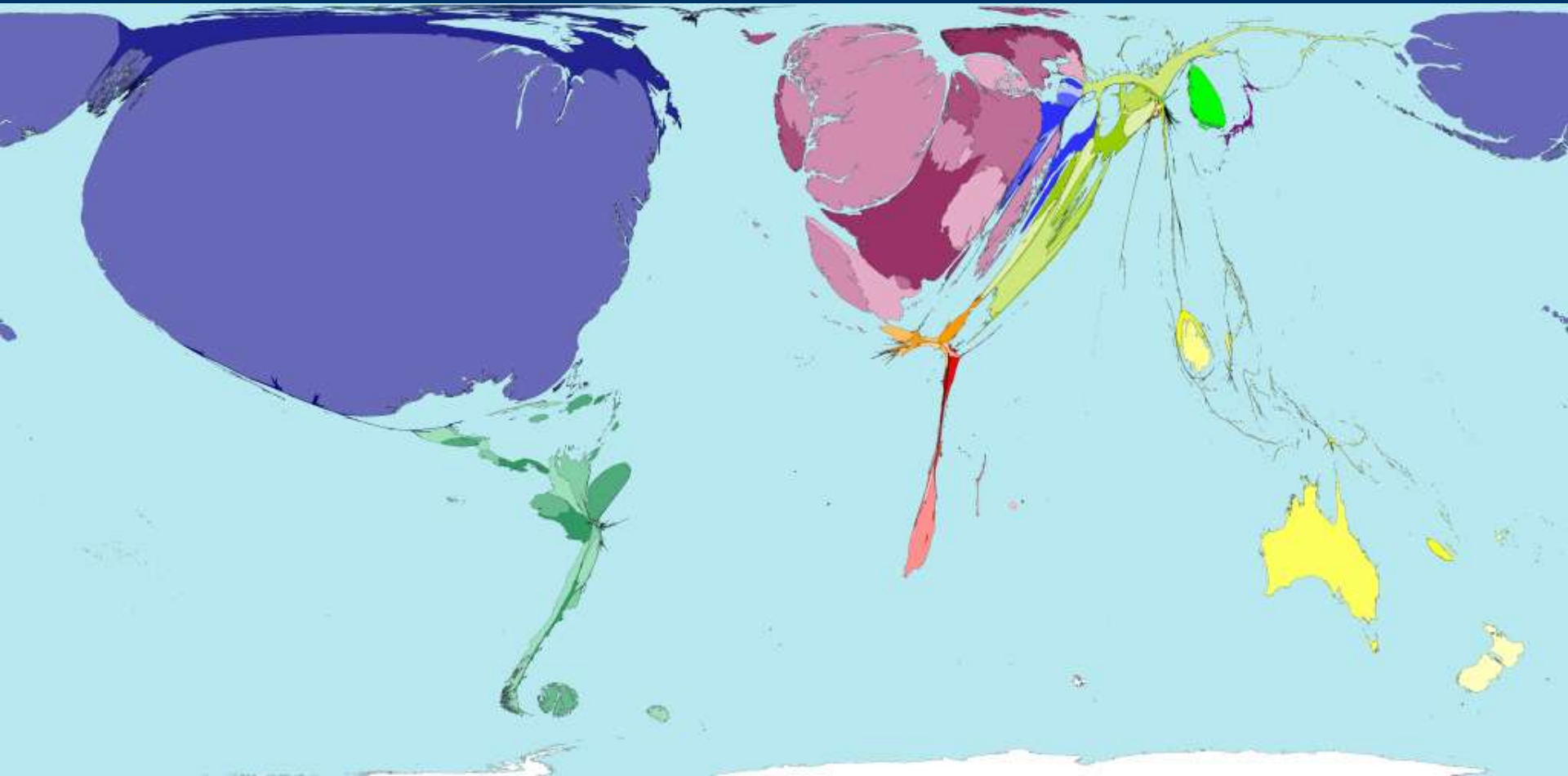
Hein de Haas

hein.dehaas@qeh.ox.ac.uk









www.worldmapper.org

Background

- Concerns on (regular and irregular) migration of (low) skilled migrants to Europe and North America
- Generally perceived as a *problem in need of control* (in contrast to high skilled migration).
- Policy response: Restrictive policies and increasing border controls
- However, migration has not stopped, but rather changed its face
 - Paradox: Increased tendency towards permanent settlement
 - Reliance of *de facto* labour migrants on other legal migration channels
 - Increasing irregular character of migration
 - Diversifying migration methods and migration routes

Overland and maritime migration routes to North Africa, the Middle East and Western Europe

Countries

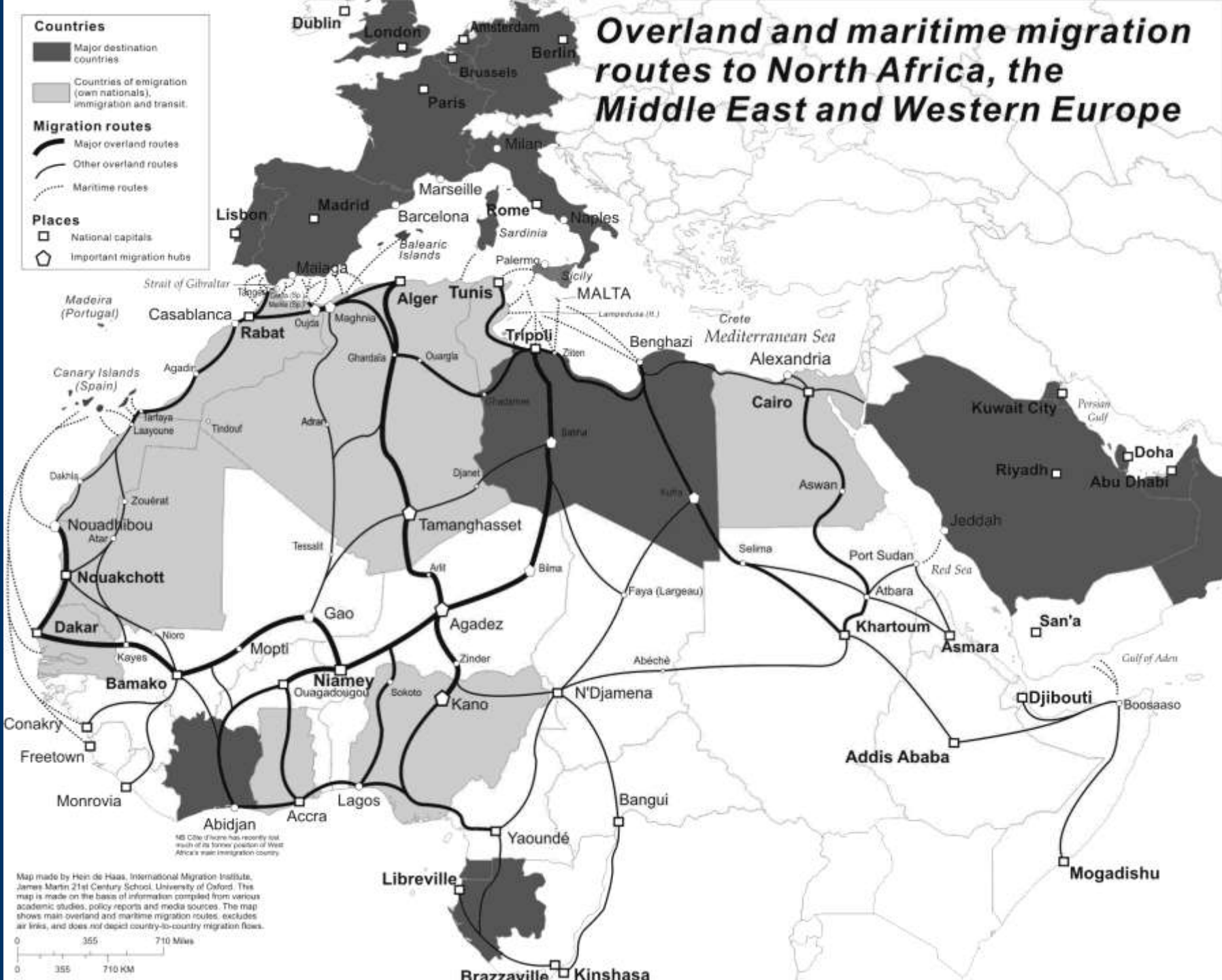
- Major destination countries
- Countries of emigration (own nationals), immigration and transit.

Migration routes

- Major overland routes
- Other overland routes
- Maritime routes

Places

- National capitals
- Important migration hubs



Map made by Hein de Haas, International Migration Institute, James Martin 21st Century School, University of Oxford. This map is made on the basis of information compiled from various academic studies, policy reports and media sources. The map shows main overland and maritime migration routes, excludes air links, and does not depict country-to-country migration flows.



Smart solutions?

The argument: The only way to reduce migration from poor countries is to address its “root causes” by promoting development.

“if you don’t help the third world . . . then you will have these poor people in our society” (Prime Minister Rasmussen of Denmark, 1995)

“Broad-based and rapid development will induce potential poverty migrants to stay at home” (IOM and UNCTAD, 1996).

“The problem of immigration, the dramatic consequences of which we are witnessing, can only be addressed effectively [. . .] through an ambitious and coordinated development [plan] to fight its root causes” (José Manuel Barroso, 2005)

Smart solutions?

Perceived policy instruments

- Aid (“Marshall plan for Africa”)
- Trade
- Circular migration as a “win-win-win” strategy (remittances, *co-développement*)
- Return migration and “Diaspora involvement”

Practical concerns

Aid

- Limited scope and effectiveness of aid.
- Limited credibility of ‘aid instead of migration’ policies

Circular migration

- Enforcing return? (“Safeguards which prevent overstaying and ensure return are key elements” – EC Council Nov 07).
- Temporary migration as a “win-win-win” strategy ?
- Old wine in new bottles?

Trade

- Protectionist policies are often inconsistent with development aims.

Fundamental problems with “development instead of migration”

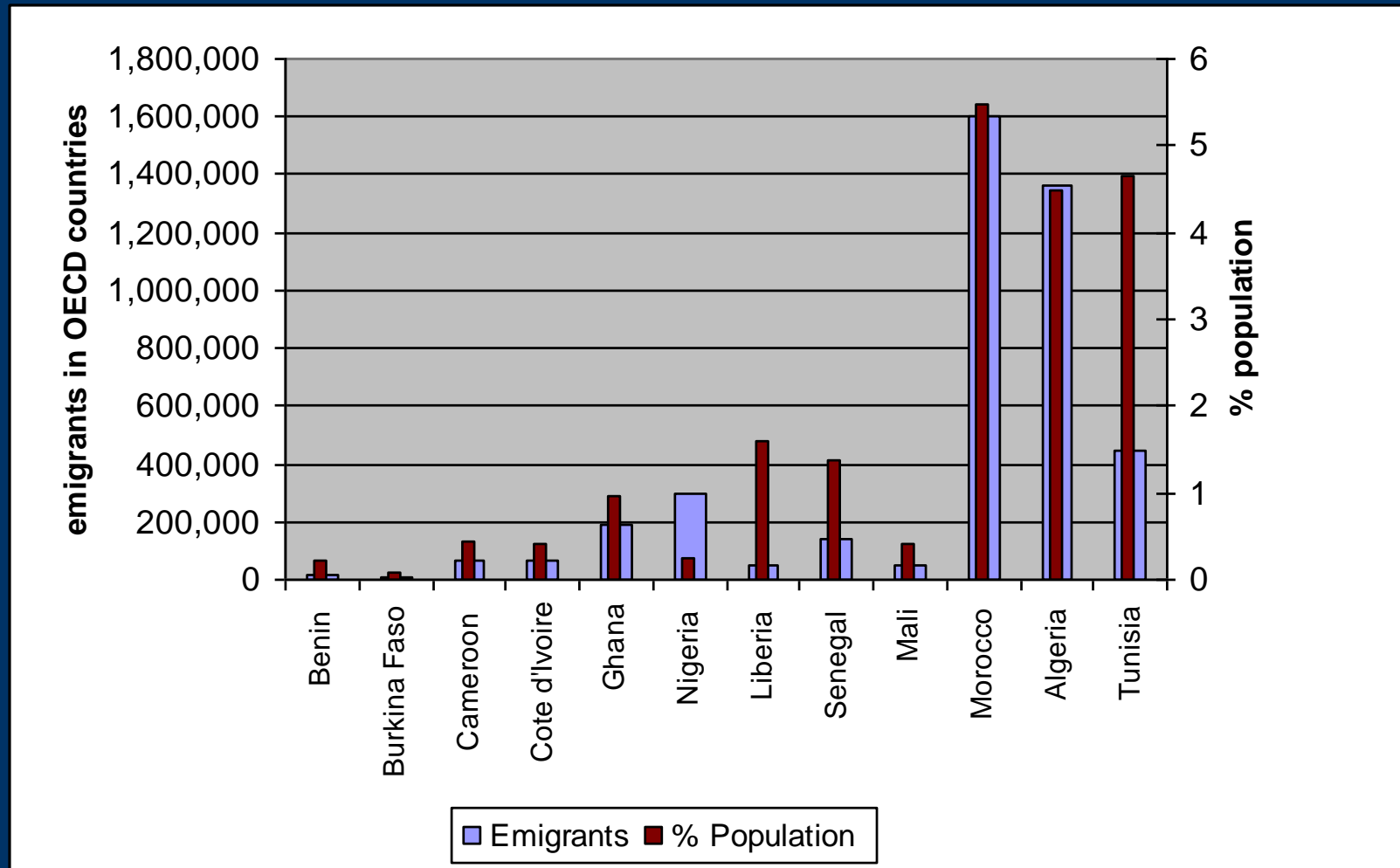
Underlying assumptions

- Primary cause of migration is (absolute) poverty and human misery
- Migration is primarily a function of income gaps
- Migration as development failure
- Development and economic growth (through aid, trade, remittances, or otherwise) is a substitute to migration
- Theoretical foundations: place utility and gravity models: “push-pull” and orthodox neo-classical migration theory

Fundamental problems

- The “push bias” - ignores the sustained demand for cheap migrant labour
- Sedentary assumptions are fundamentally flawed (immobility as natural state; mobility as an anomaly).
- Failure to see migration as integral part of “development” rather than as a problem to be solved.
- Erroneous understanding of the relation between socio-economic development and migration
- Simple observations:
 - most migrants are not amongst the poorest
 - most non-OECD migrants in OECD countries from middle income countries

Origins of African migrants in OECD countries

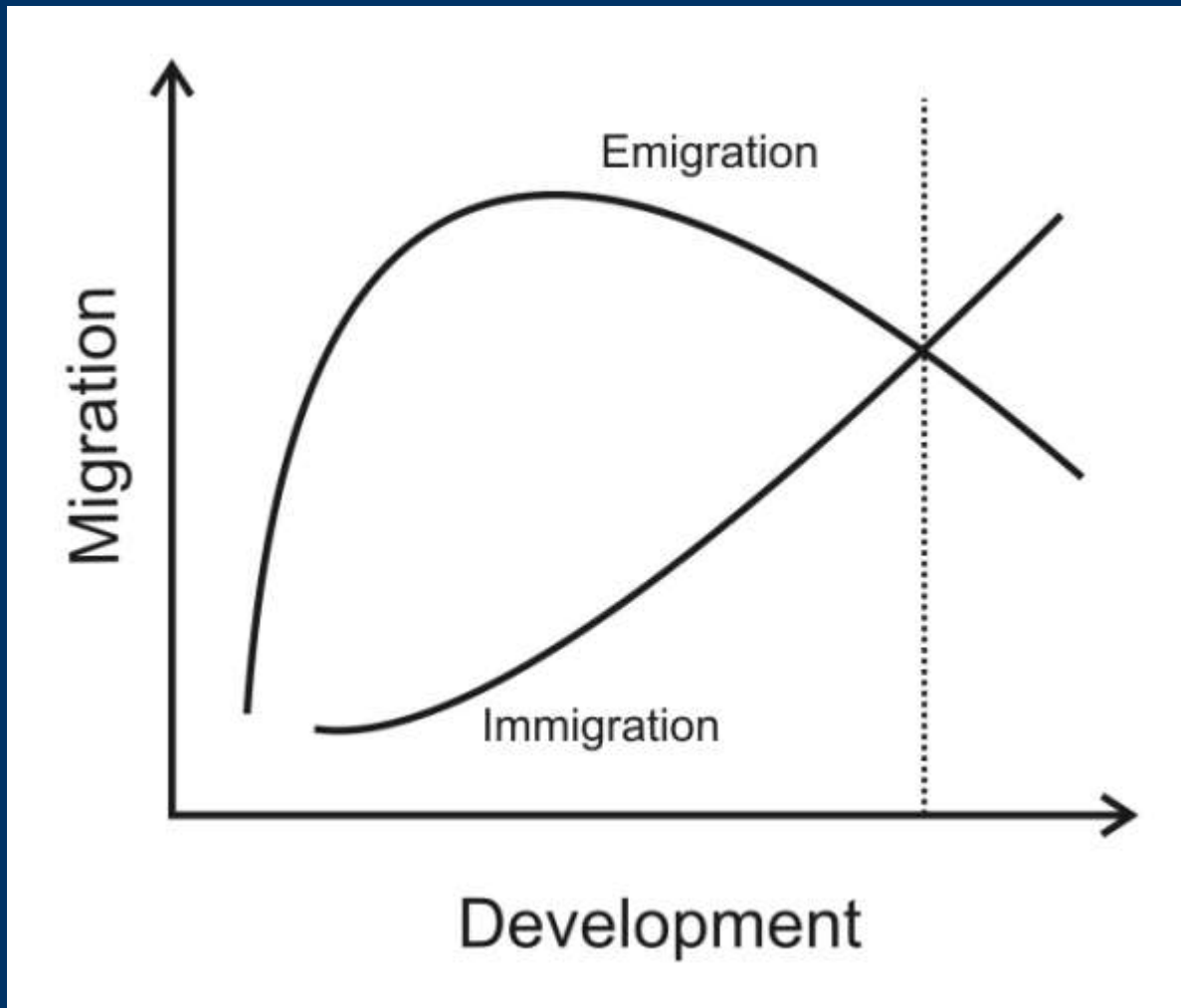


“Non-linear” migration theories

- **Non-linear migration theories** aim to conceptualise migration as constituent part of more broader processes of economic and demographic change and restructuring
- **Migration hump** (short term) (Martin and Taylor 1996)
- **Spatio-temporal models (long term)**: Migration systems theory (Mabogunje) mobility transition (Zelinsky 1971), further elaborated by Skeldon (1997); Hatton and Williamson;

Draw links / observe correlations between (parallel) demographic and economic transitions on the one hand and migration trends

Migration transitions



More development, less migration?

- Development and migration are complements rather than substitutes
- Social and economic development is generally associated with *higher* levels of mobility and migration due to its effects on people's (1) ability and (2) aspirations to migrate
- Due to internal processes, beyond a critical threshold level, migration tends to gain its own momentum and accelerate (e.g., networks, remittances)
- Hence, the relationship between development and net emigration is neither linear nor inversely proportional.

Critique on prior theories

1. Based on rather narrow definitions of development
2. Focus on income and demographic variables, and non-inclusion of theoretically relevant variables like literacy and political freedoms
3. Teleological and unilinear character (reversibility, *relative* poverty and opportunity gaps)
4. Questionable causality assumptions (e.g. inaccurate portrayal of demographic factors as “cause”)
5. Lack of formal empirical tests

An empirical test

- Lack of empirical tests, partly due to lack of appropriate data.
- Recent advances
 - OECD database on immigrants and expatriates
 - Bilateral migration matrix created by the University of Sussex and the World Bank.
- Aim: To provide a multivariate test for migration transition theory by assessing the effect of the levels of economic and human development on emigration and immigration patterns.
- Data: Bilateral migration matrix (N=226), World Bank, UNDP, Freedom House

Variables

Dependent

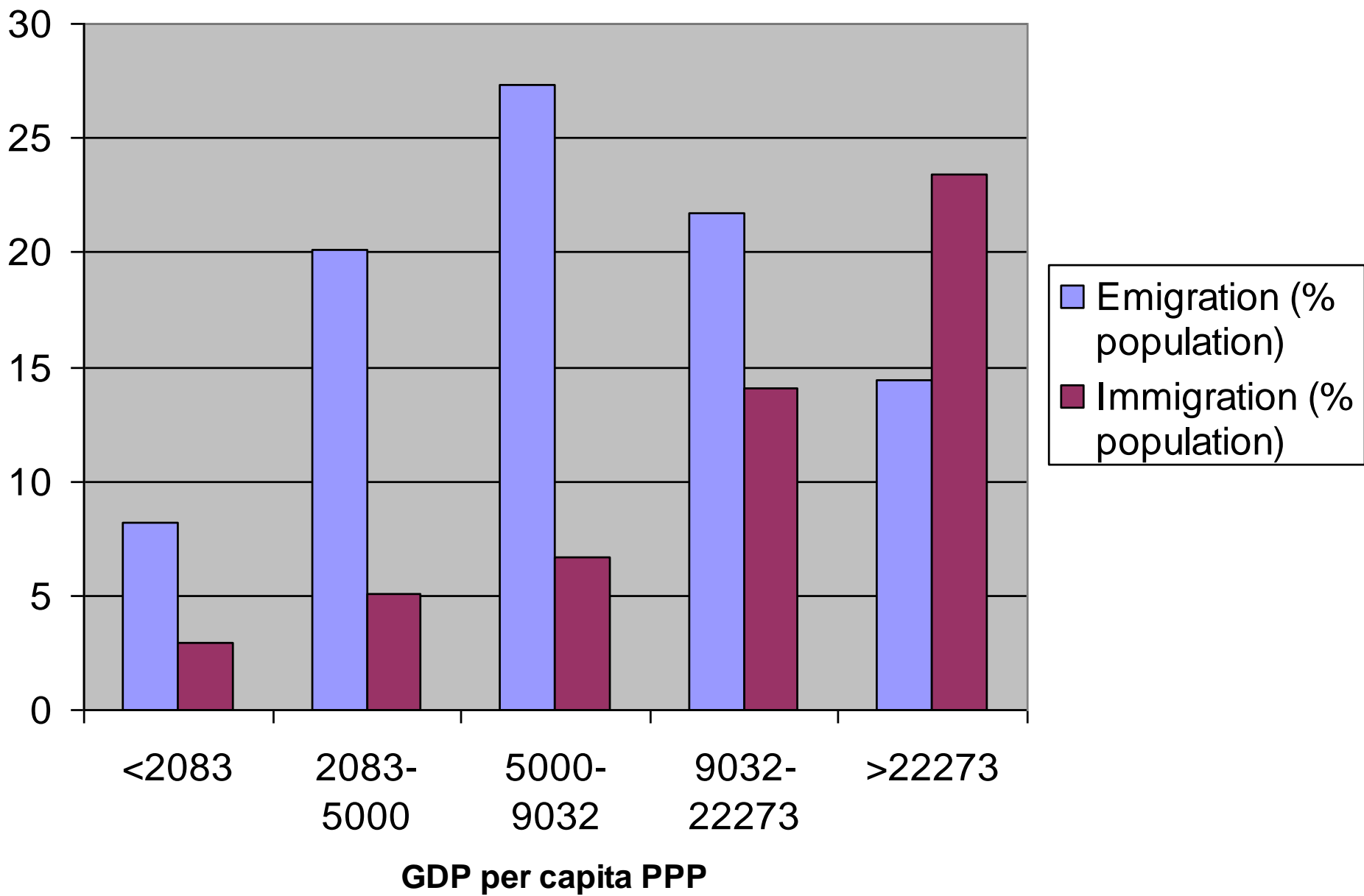
- Emigration, Immigration, net migration, migration to OECD countries (proxy values based on bilateral stock data – Sussex/WorldBank database)

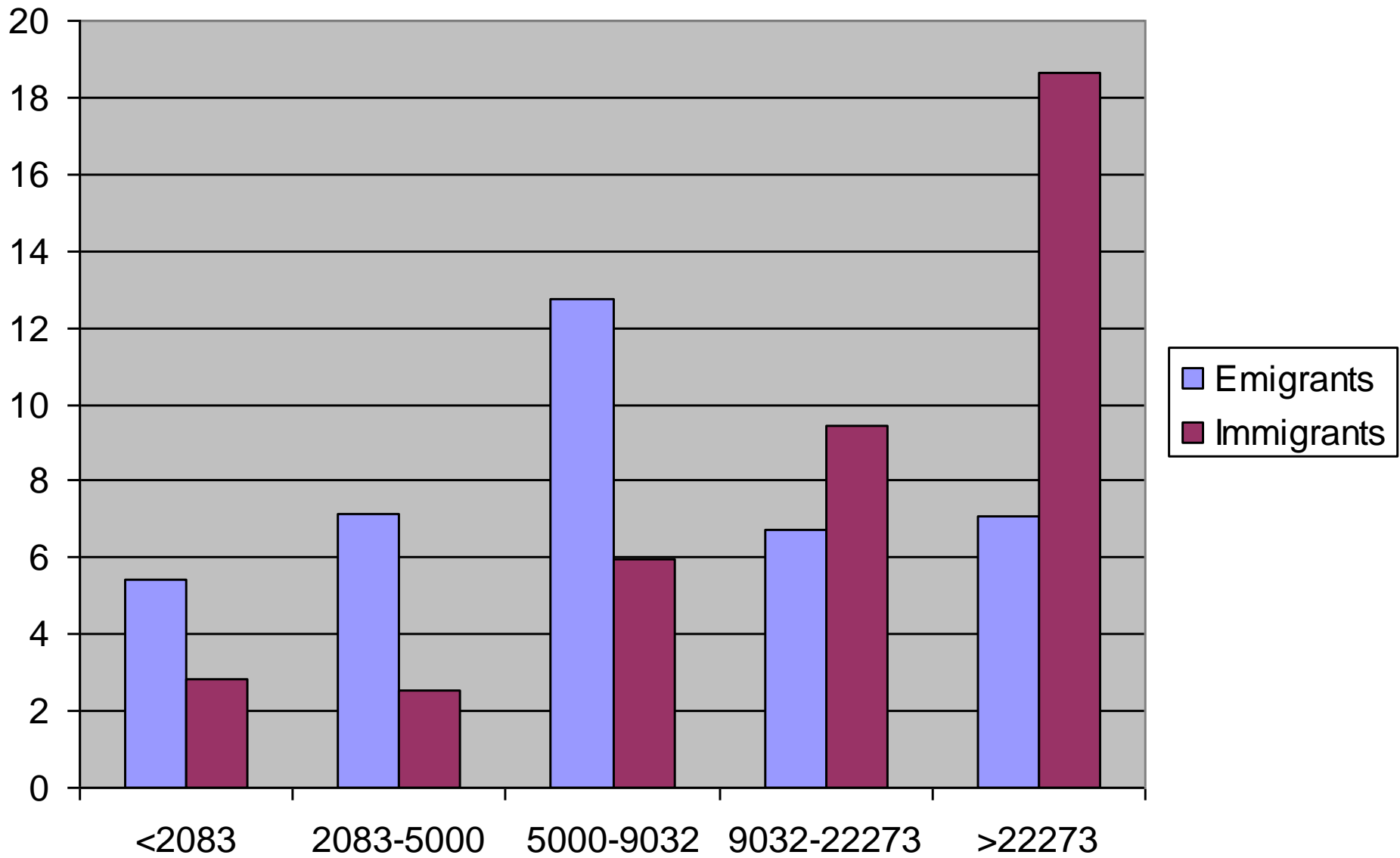
Main independent variables

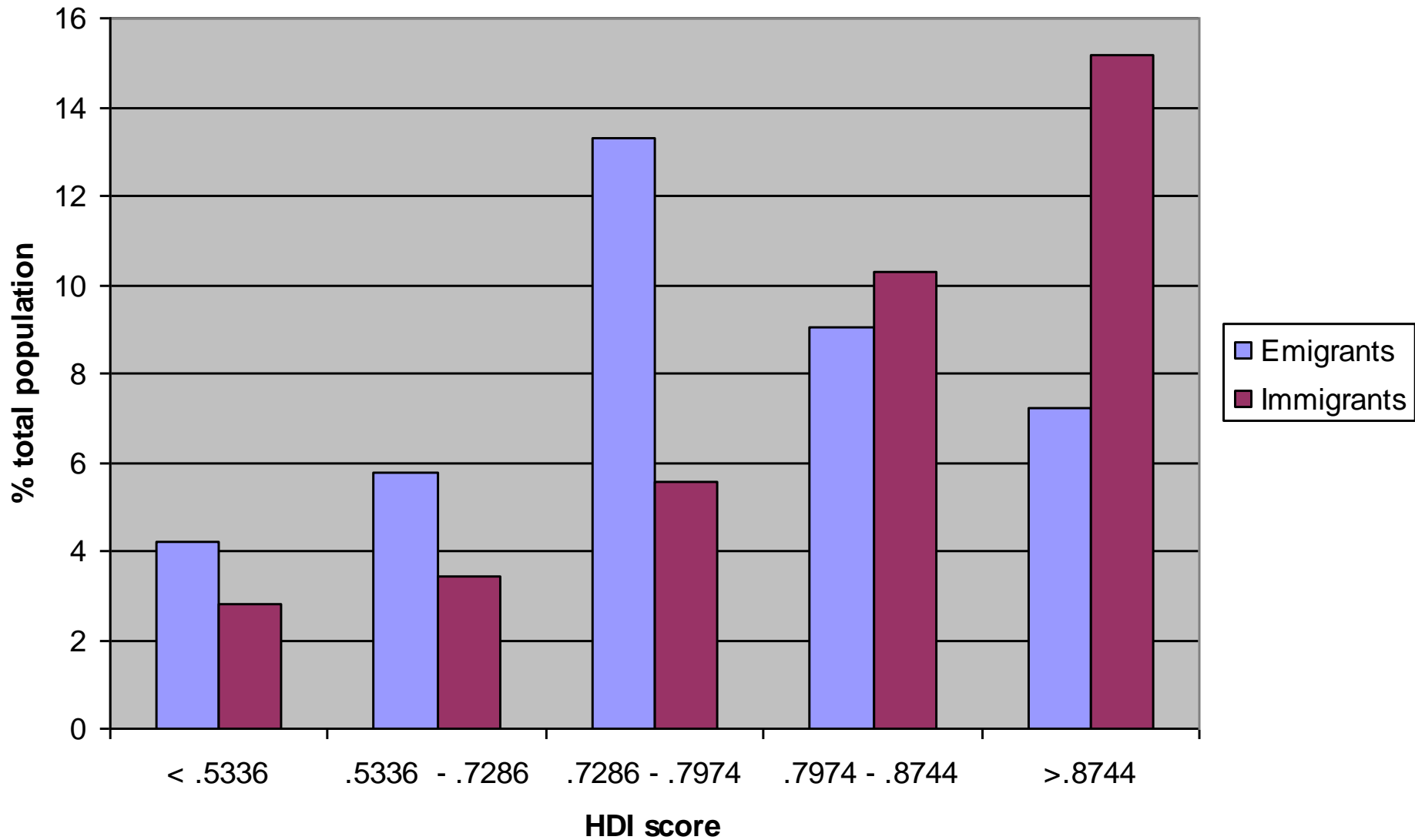
- Log GDP per capita PPP
- Fertility (average 20-40 years ago)
- GDP per capita Growth over the last 20 years
- Literacy (and squared value)
- Island state (dummy)
- Border OECD country (dummy)
- Political rights (Freedom House)
- Human Development Index (UNDP)

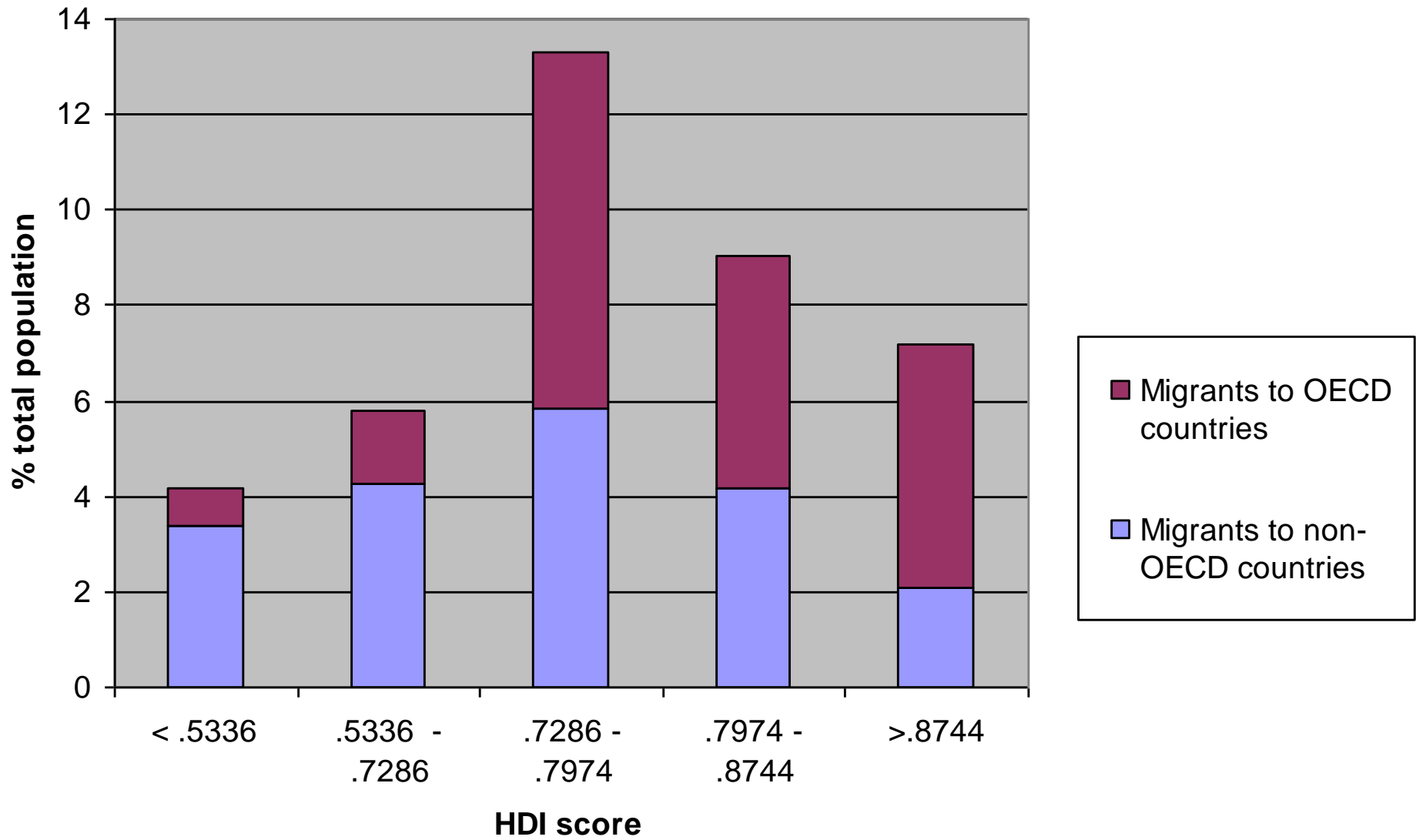
Considered, but excluded (due to multicollinearity)

- Life expectancy
- School enrolment

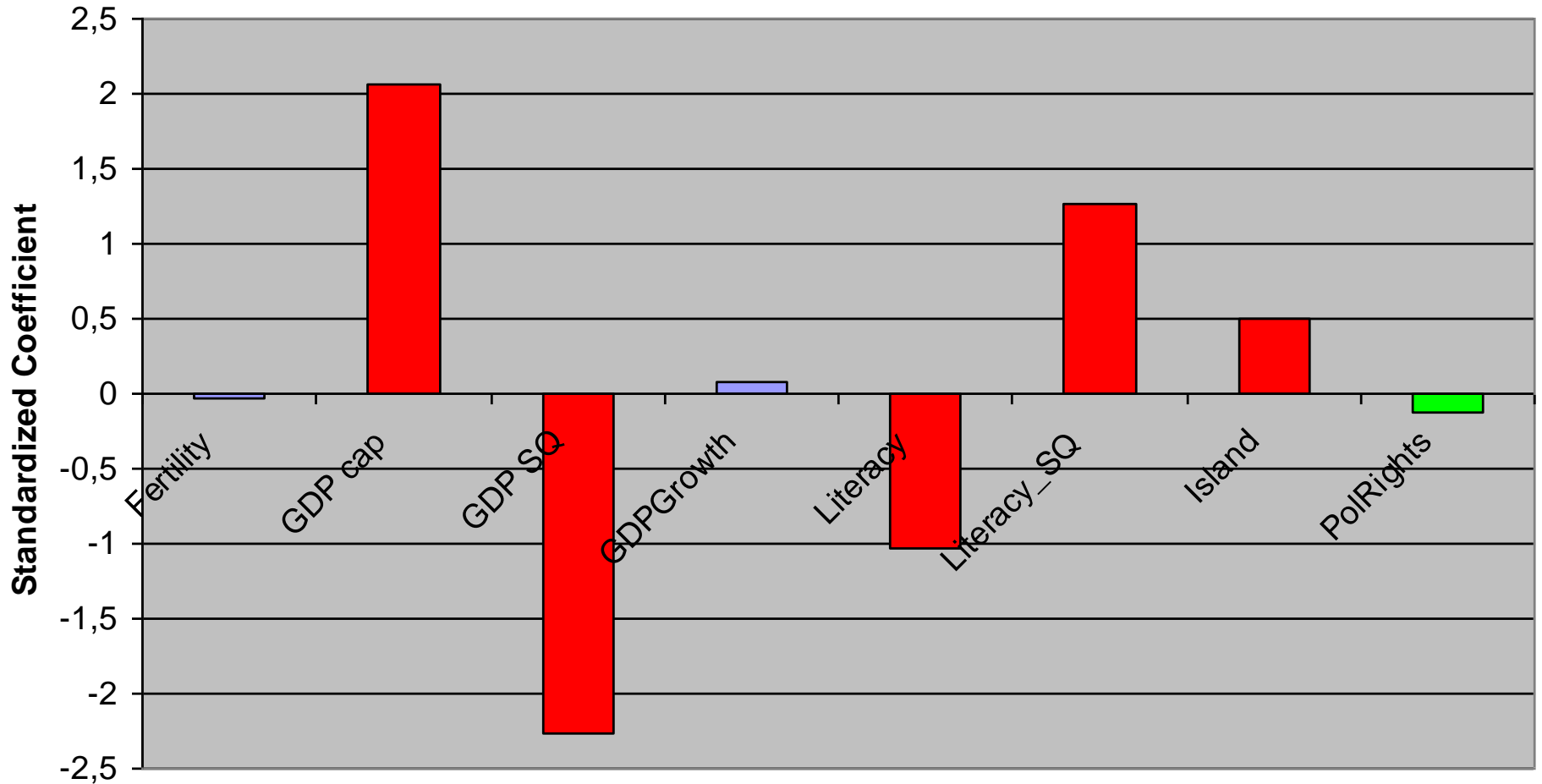




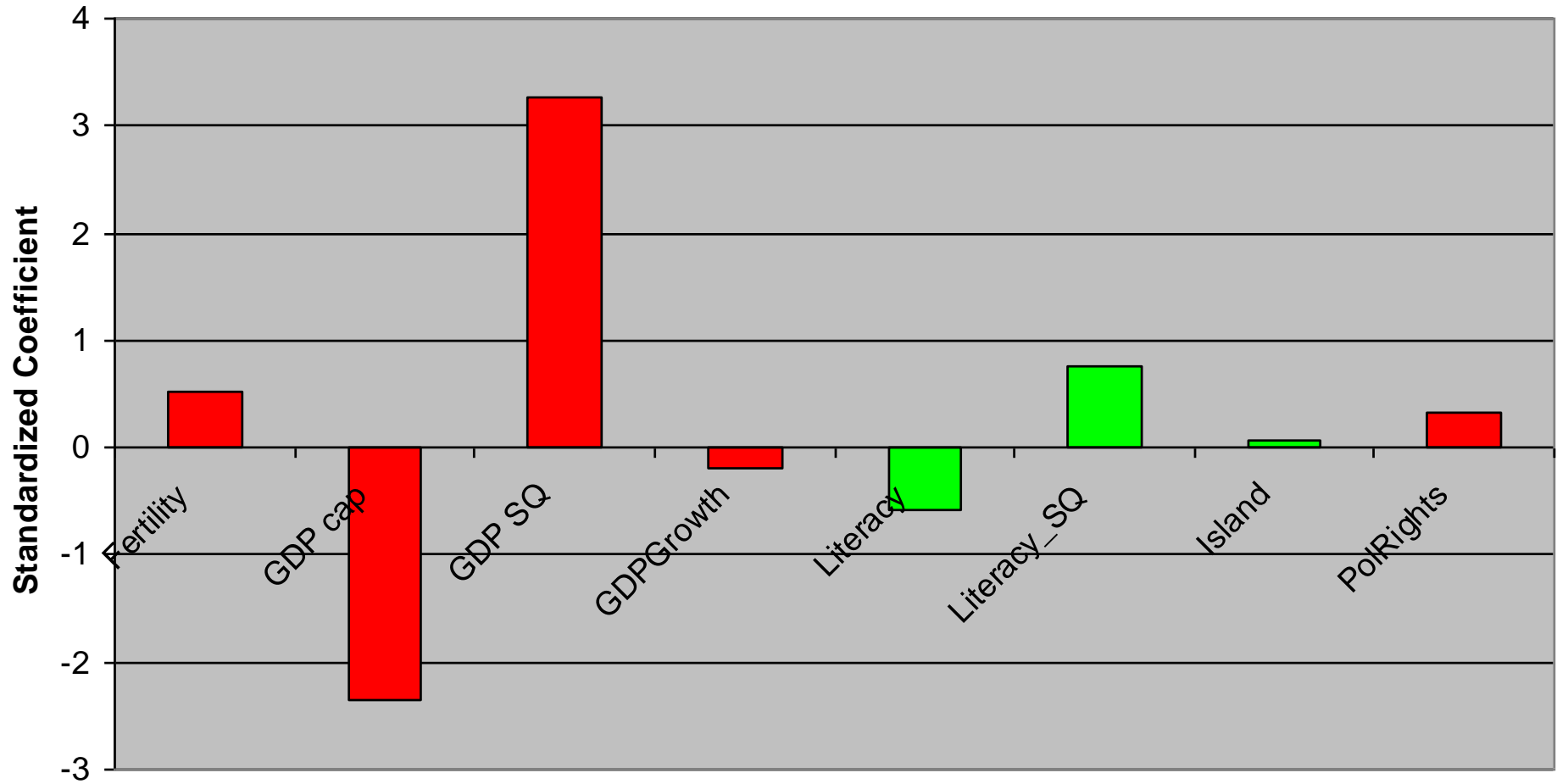




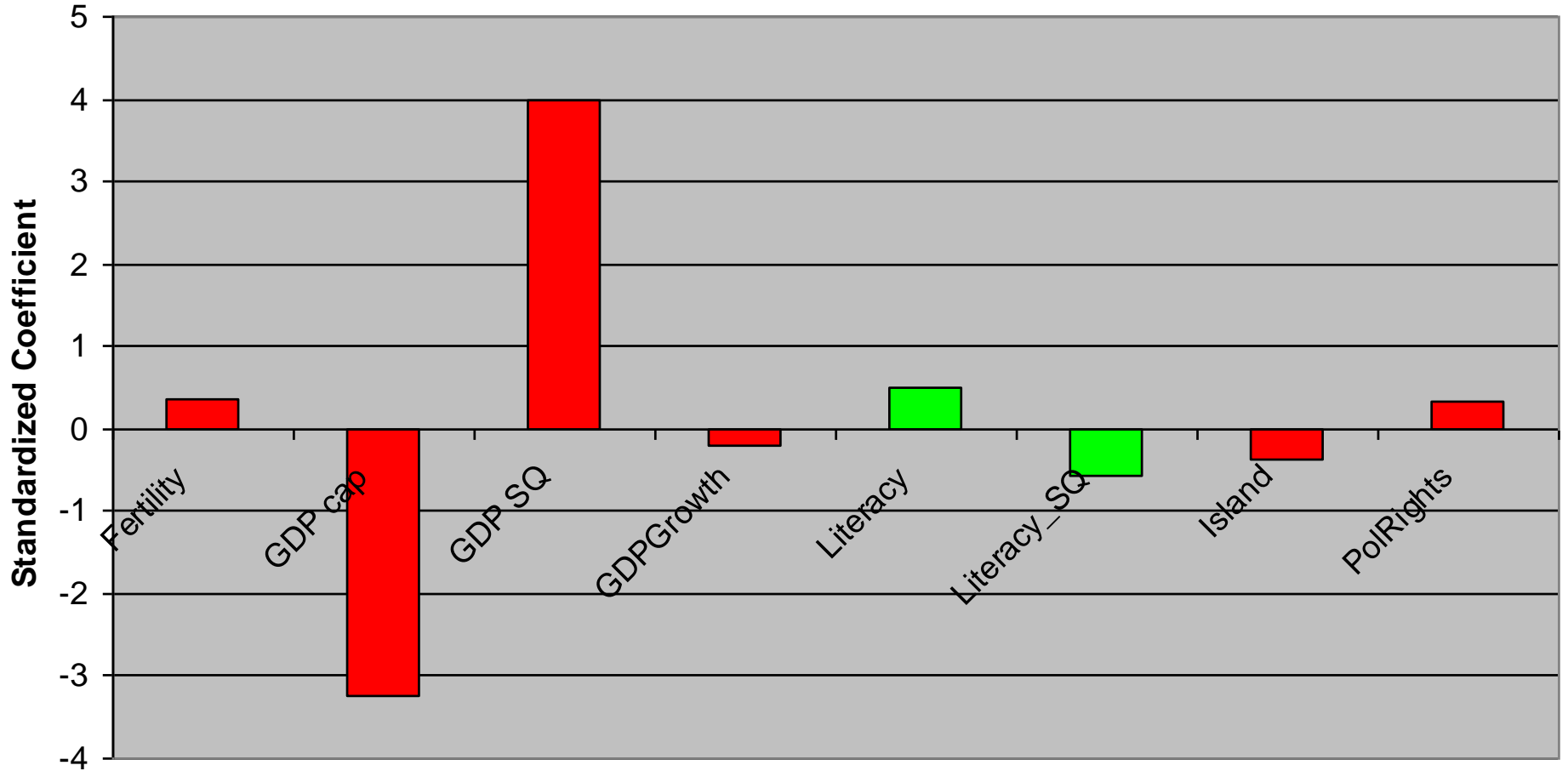
Emigration (% population)



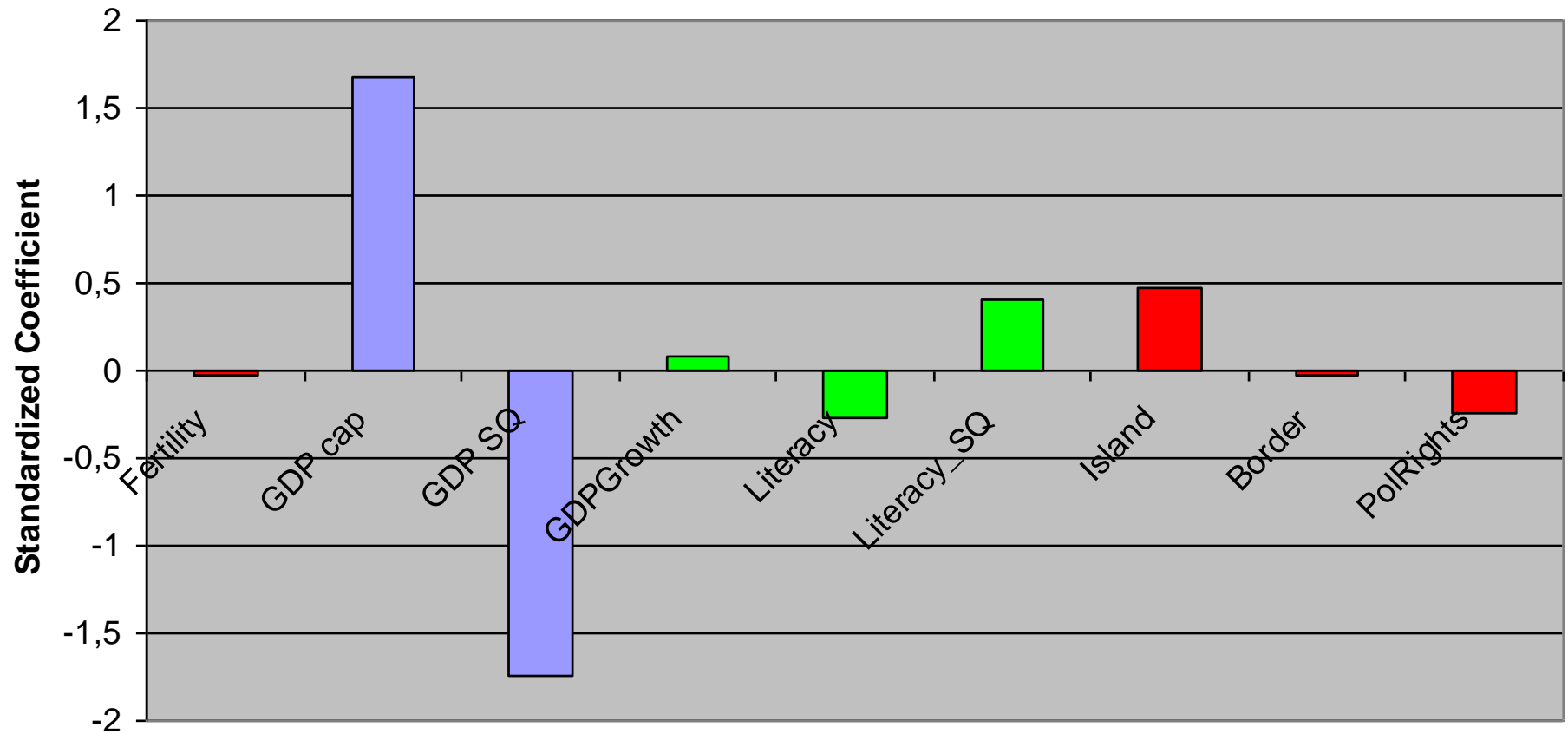
Immigration (% population)



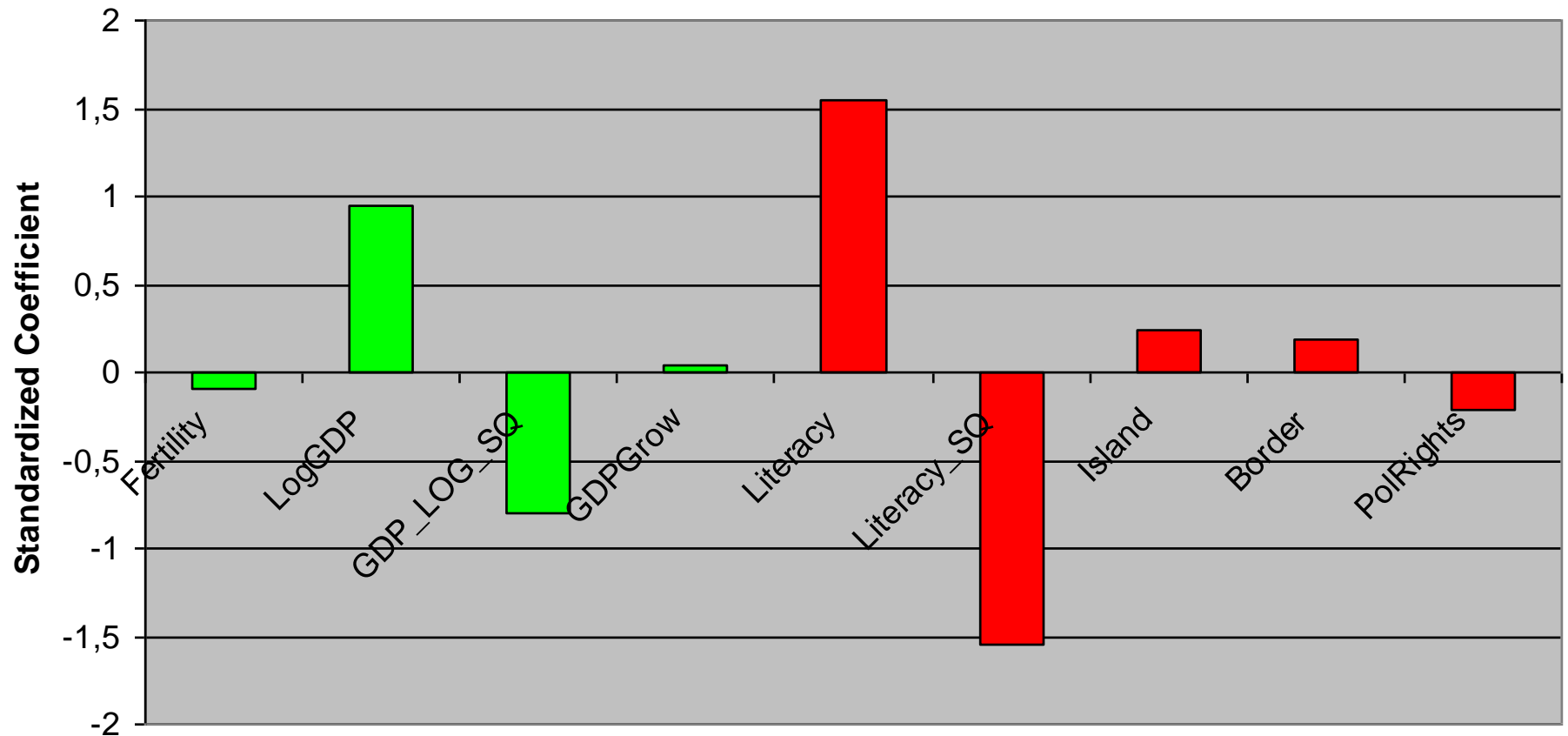
Net migration (% population)



Migration to OECD countries (% population)



% of all migrants in OECD countries (from non-OECD countries, including Turkey and Mexico)



Improvement and limitations

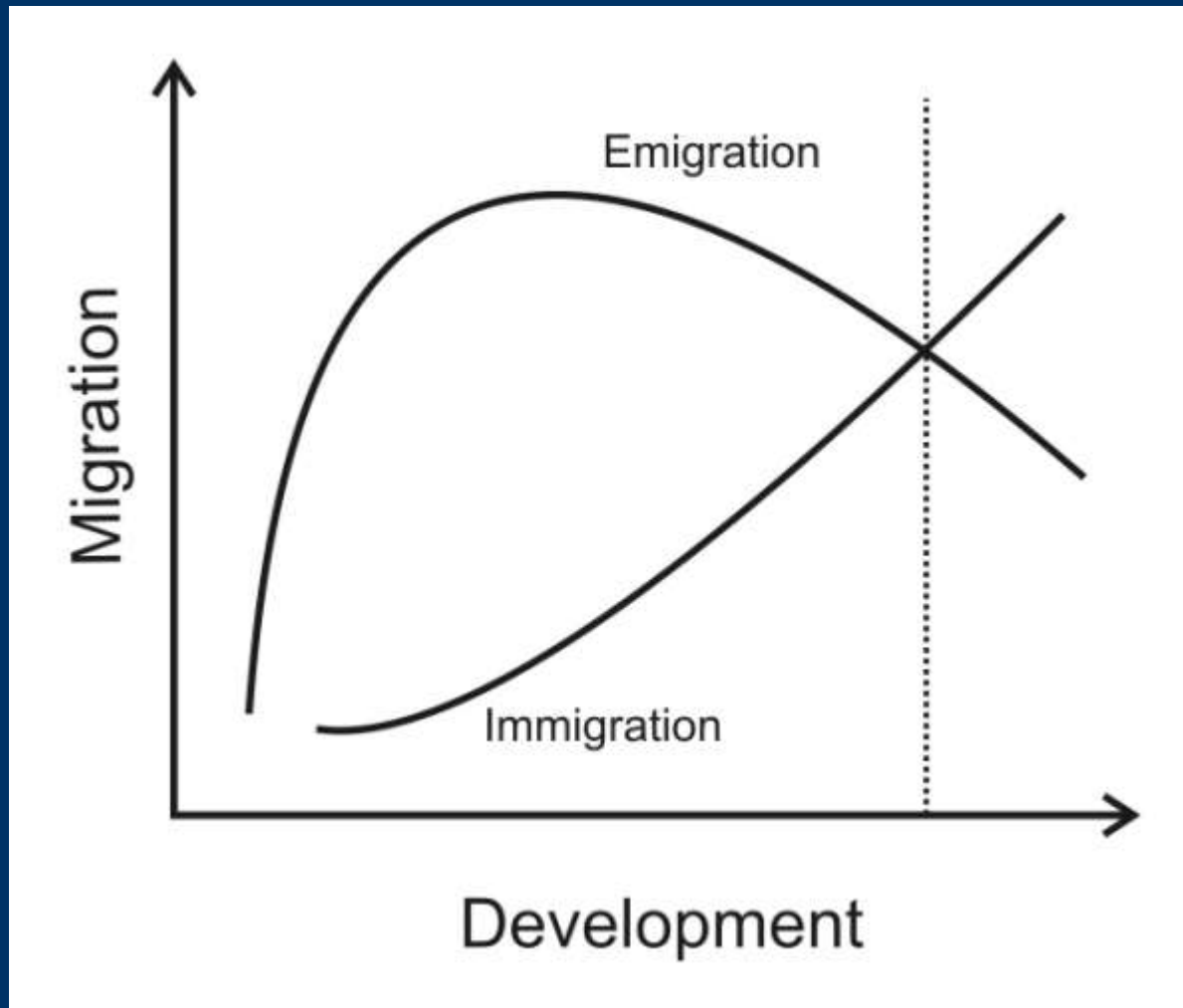
Further improvement of this model

- Inclusion of other theoretically relevant variables such as degree of openness of national economies (trade) and a bilateral distance variable
- Improved measurement of factors determining spatial focusing of migration flows (improved insight into how spatial development inequalities affect the structure of global migration systems)

Main limitations

- Caution is warranted in making claims on causality based on limited, cross-sectional data
- Danger of “ecological fallacy”: Clear correlations on macro-level do not necessarily provide a behavioral explanation at the micro-level (e.g., how to measure aspirations?).
- Difficulty of disentangling the effects of different components of human development (e.g., unclear role of education and aspirations)

Migration transitions revisited



Next steps of this project

Aim: Improved empirical assessment of migration determinants and formal test of migration transition theory

- Compile scattered data to study bilateral migration *flows* (time series)
- Simultaneous assessment of sending and receiving country variables
- Improved operationalisation and inclusion of political and policy variables
- Multi-level assessment of macro and meso (group or country-to-country) determinants of migration
- Testing for migration hump (in wake of trade and other structural political economic reforms)

Conclusions

- Results seem to confirm hypotheses of transitional migration theory
- Inclusion of HDI improves correlations and statistical significance
- Apparent dominance of economic factors
- Significant, but complex role of literacy and schooling (disentangling problem)

Policy implications

- Development instead of migration policies are likely to have the opposite effect
- Take-off development in poor countries is likely to lead to take-off emigration.
- Rather than a sign of development failure, migration is integral part of broader development processes and integration into global political and economic systems
- Redefining “solutions”: Learn to see migration as an integral part of development processes rather than as problem to be “solved”
- The limited effects of migration policies compared to more general policies affecting human development (macro-economic, trade, education, labour market, health),



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hein.dehaas@geh.ox.ac.uk

www.imi.ox.ac.uk