

# Urban Food Security Among Refugees and Other Migrants in the Global South

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# Outline

- Introduction
- Migration in the Global South
  - Migrants
  - Refugees
- Refugees, other Migrants and Food Security

# Introduction

- Urban food security, a relatively new area of research
  - Early focus on food production
  - Food security in urban areas could be improved by increasing food production
- Need to investigate urban food security in the context of South-South migration

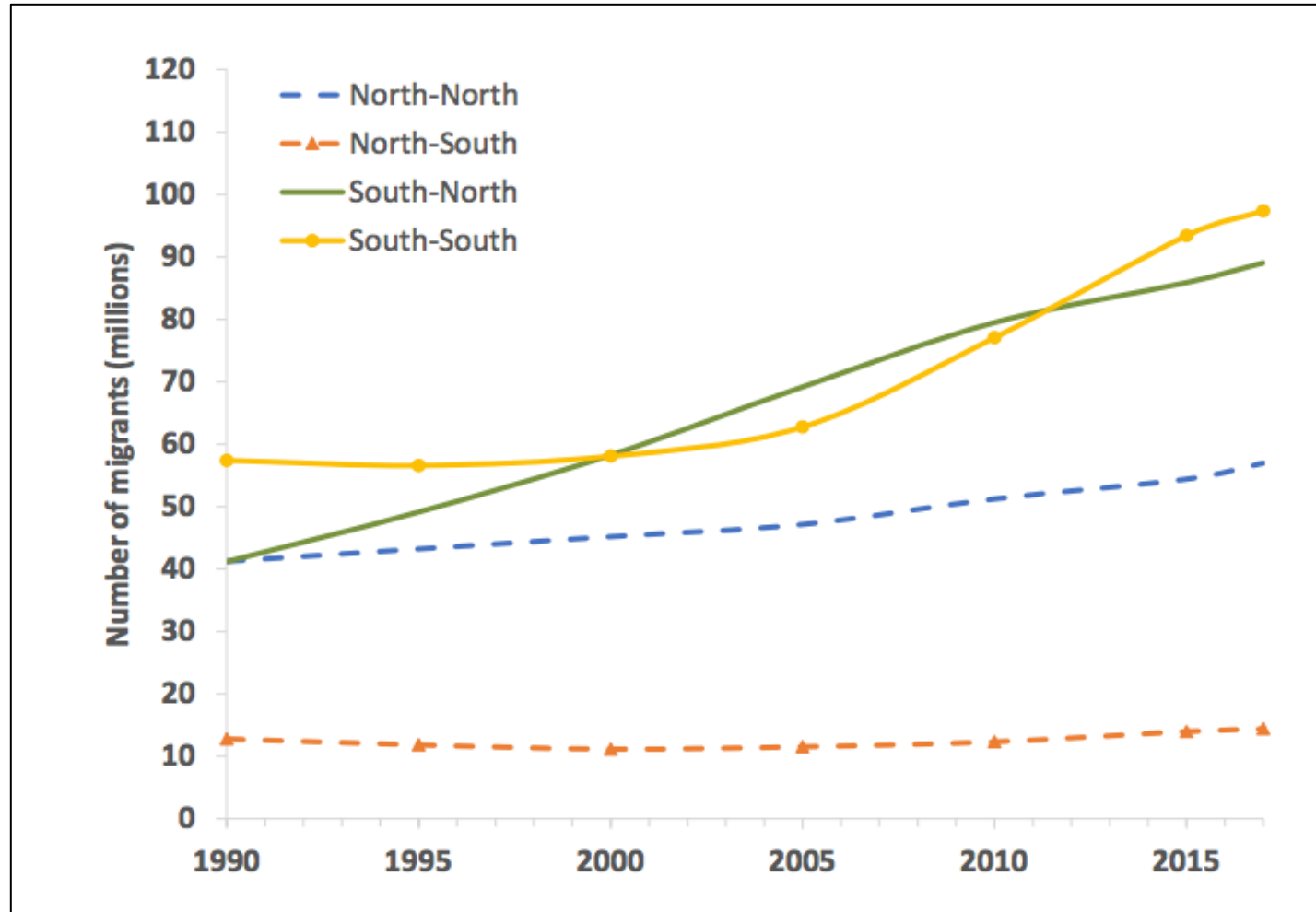
# South-South Migration and Urban Food Security

- The Arguments:
  - The dominance of South-South migration in the movement of refugees and other migrants
  - Most of these movements terminate in major urban centres
  - Food security status of the refugees and other migrants largely unknown
- Case Studies
  - Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa
  - Syrian refugees in Lebanon
  - Method: Analysis of secondary data

# Dimensions of South-South Migration

- According to a report by UNDESA (2017):
  - There are 258 million migrants globally
  - 57 per cent lived in the Global North
  - 43 per cent in the Global South
  - South-South migration the dominant form of movement

# Origin and destination of international migrants by development group, 1990-2017 (millions)



Source: United Nations (2017). Trends in International Migrant Stock

# Location of Refugees in Top 10 Refugee-Hosting Countries, 2016

Country	Number of Refugees	% Urban	% Rural	% Other / unknown
Turkey	2,869,421	92.3	7.7	0.0
Pakistan	1,352,560	67.8	32.2	0.0
Lebanon	1,012,969	100.0	0.0	0.0
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	979,435	97.2	2.8	0.0
Uganda	940,835	6.4	93.6	0.0
Ethiopia	791,631	2.5	87.3	10.2
Jordan	685,197	80.0	20.0	0.0
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	451,956	2.1	46.6	51.4
Kenya	451,099	9.6	90.4	0.0
Sudan	421,466	33.8	66.2	0.0

**Source: UNHCR (2017)**

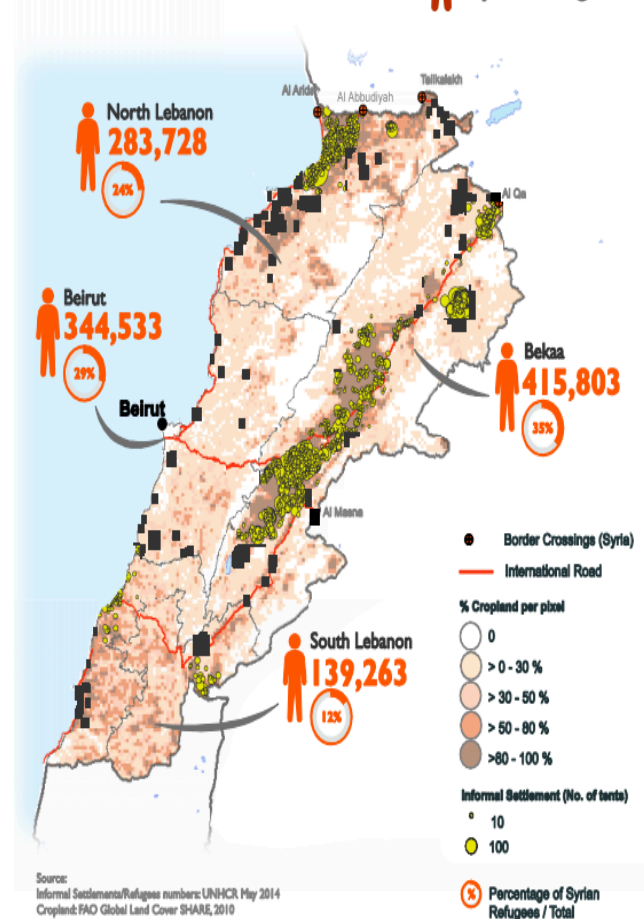
# Syrian Refugees in Lebanon



The sun sets in Al Fares, on the outskirts of Bar Elias, one of the informal refugee settlements in the Bekaa Valley. Across Lebanon, Syrian refugees live in tented settlements and among host communities. There are an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, who make up about 25 percent of the population **Source: Al Jazeera News**

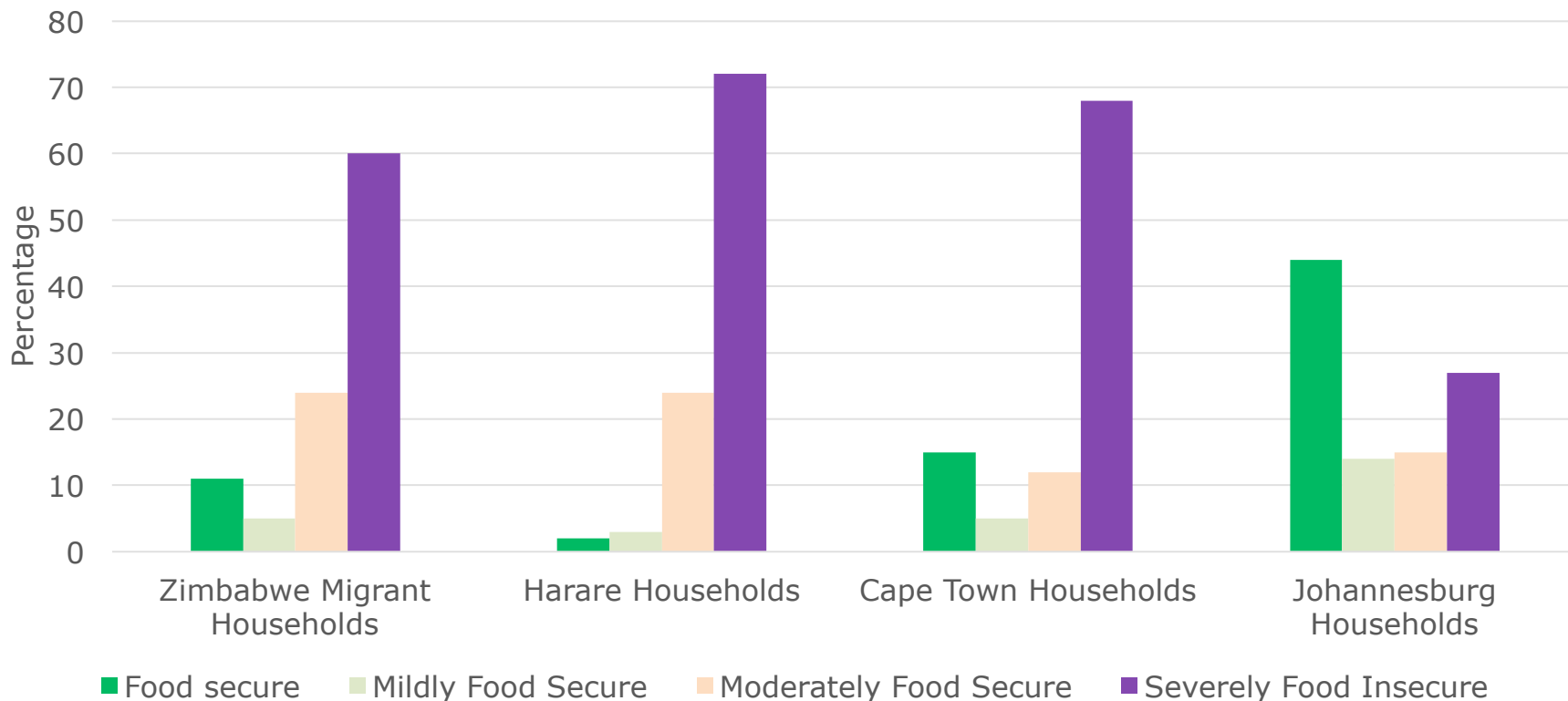
Informal Tented Settlements  
in Lebanon

1.18 million  
Syrian Refugees





# Does Migration Improve Food Security of Migrants?

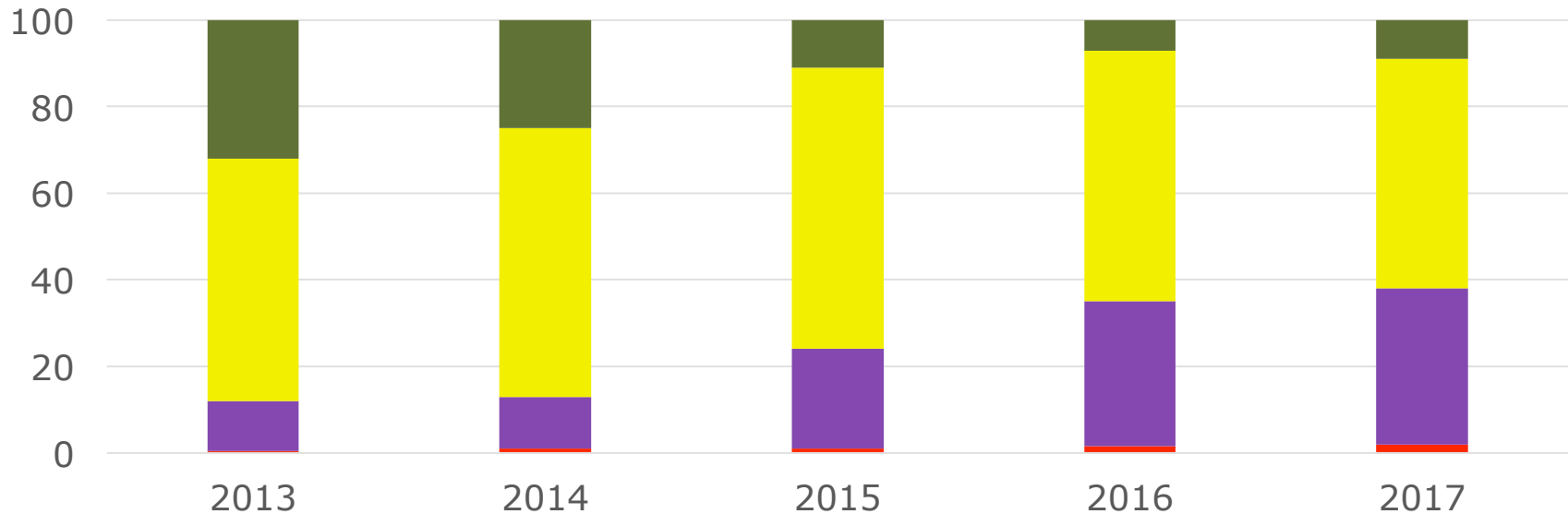


**Source: Crush and Tawodzera (2016)**

- Migration improves food security of migrants
- Meeting needs of family left in country of origin may affect food security of migrants

# Food Security Among Refugees

## Food security trends among Syrian refugee households, 2013-2017



■ Severe food insecurity ■ Moderately food insecurity ■ Mild food insecurity ■ Food secure

**Source: UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP (2017)**

- ❑ Worsening food security among Syrian refugees
- ❑ Related to work status of refugees in Lebanon (competition for jobs, inadequate support from UNHCR)

# Support from UNHCR

- Syrian refugees receive less than US\$30/ person/ month (i.e. less than \$1/day)
  - Support declining due to limited resources
  - Impacts greatest among women.
  - One woman told Amnesty International (2016) that:

“At the beginning I got US\$30 from UNHCR, then it decreased to US\$20 and now it’s US\$13. I buy bread and a bit of cheese. Every couple of months we would maybe eat meat. The amount is not enough, especially for people with children. The UNHCR have appointed places where we can spend the vouchers. The designated shops are far away from where I live. I need transport and have to pay about LBP 10,000 [US\$6.60] to get to the shop and back.”

“Rana”, Saadnyal, Bekaa Valley

# Food Security Among Refugees

## Work status of Syrian refugee before and after displacement

<b>ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO DISPLACEMENT</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Unskilled worker	65
Skilled worker	15
Shopkeeper / trader	10
High-skilled jobs	10
<b>CURRENT ACTIVITIES</b>	
Unemployed	68
Working part-time	15
Working on a daily basis	17

# Migration and Diet

- Healthy immigrant hypothesis:
  - Argues that immigrants are generally healthier than populations in receiving societies
  - Attributed to positive self-selection of migrants on health
  - Over time, dietary diversity and quality among immigrants declines leading to increased incidence of obesity and over-nutrition

# Migration and Diet

- Hunter-Adams (2017) conducted research among Somali, Congolese and Zimbabwean women in Cape Town
  - Viewed food and diet in South Africa as inferior as compared to home

In Zimbabwe they nurture their things. They have to grow with their own time. Until they are ready to be used. Or to be eaten or whatever they don't inject their food and stuff like that. It's more healthier.

31-year-old Zimbabwean mother of three

When I was there in Zim we didn't buy chicken. We were keeping free-range chicken. So there is not too many chemicals in the chicken and we were eating fresh. So I think I couldn't have blood pressure and sugar (diabetes).

40-year-old Zimbabwean mother of four

(quotes from Hunter-Adams, 2017:82)

# Migration and Diet

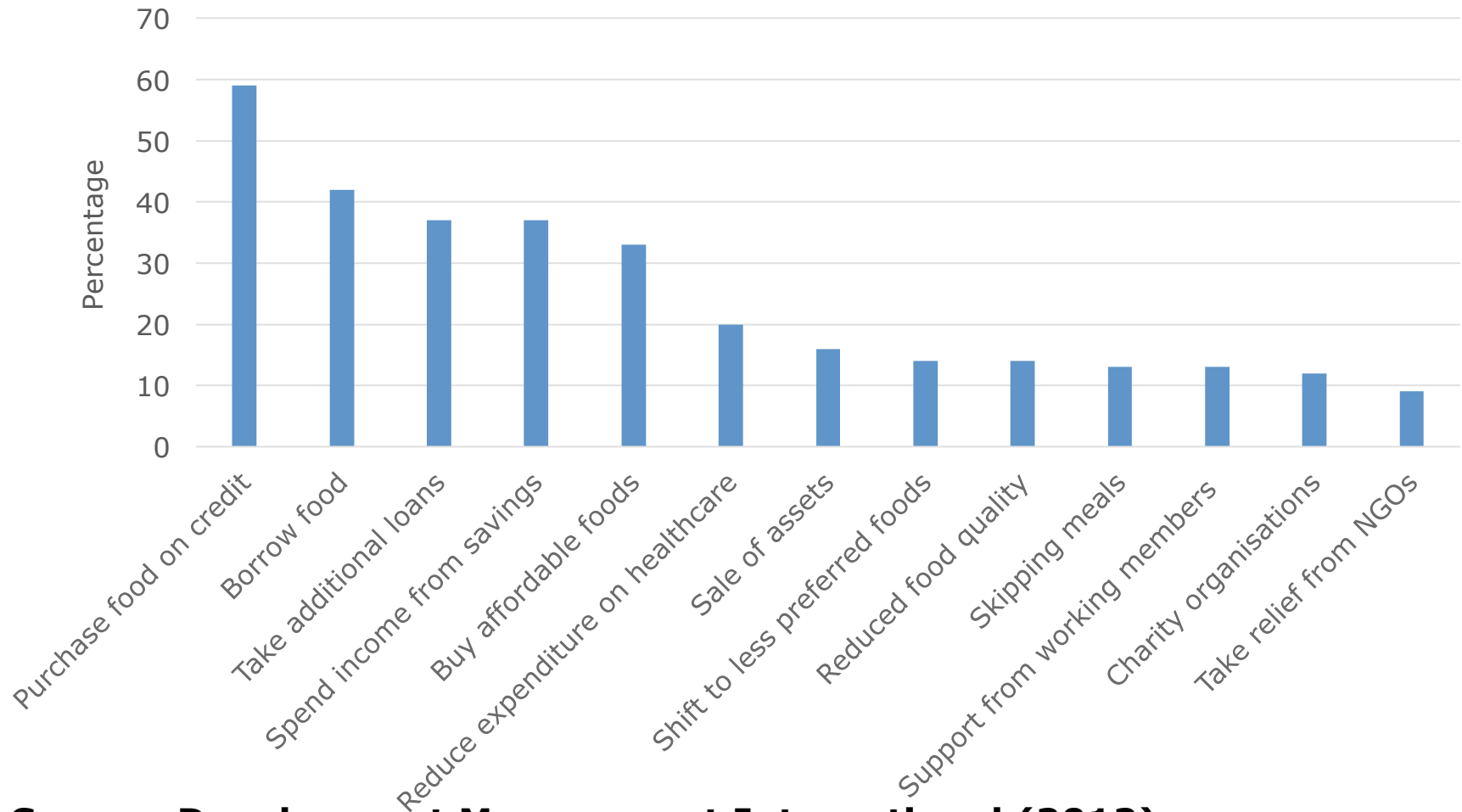
- Crush and Tawodzera (2017) also made similar observations in their research among Zimbabwean migrants in Cape Town:
  - We know a lot about food quality and the desirability for us to have such good food. That we know. Our only problem as a household is that we do not have the money to buy such foods.

(Crush and Tawodzera, 2016: 96)

- It is difficult to afford the food we want. We eat the same kind of food day in and day out. ..I do not know when I last ate beef...maybe over a year ago. It's the same food over and over again. There is no variety, but there is nothing that we can do. I guess we have to be grateful that at least we can get a meal here and there (Crush and Tawodzera, 2017: 96)

# Coping Strategies: Refugees

## Most Common Coping Strategies by Refugee Households in Bekaa Valley, Lebanon

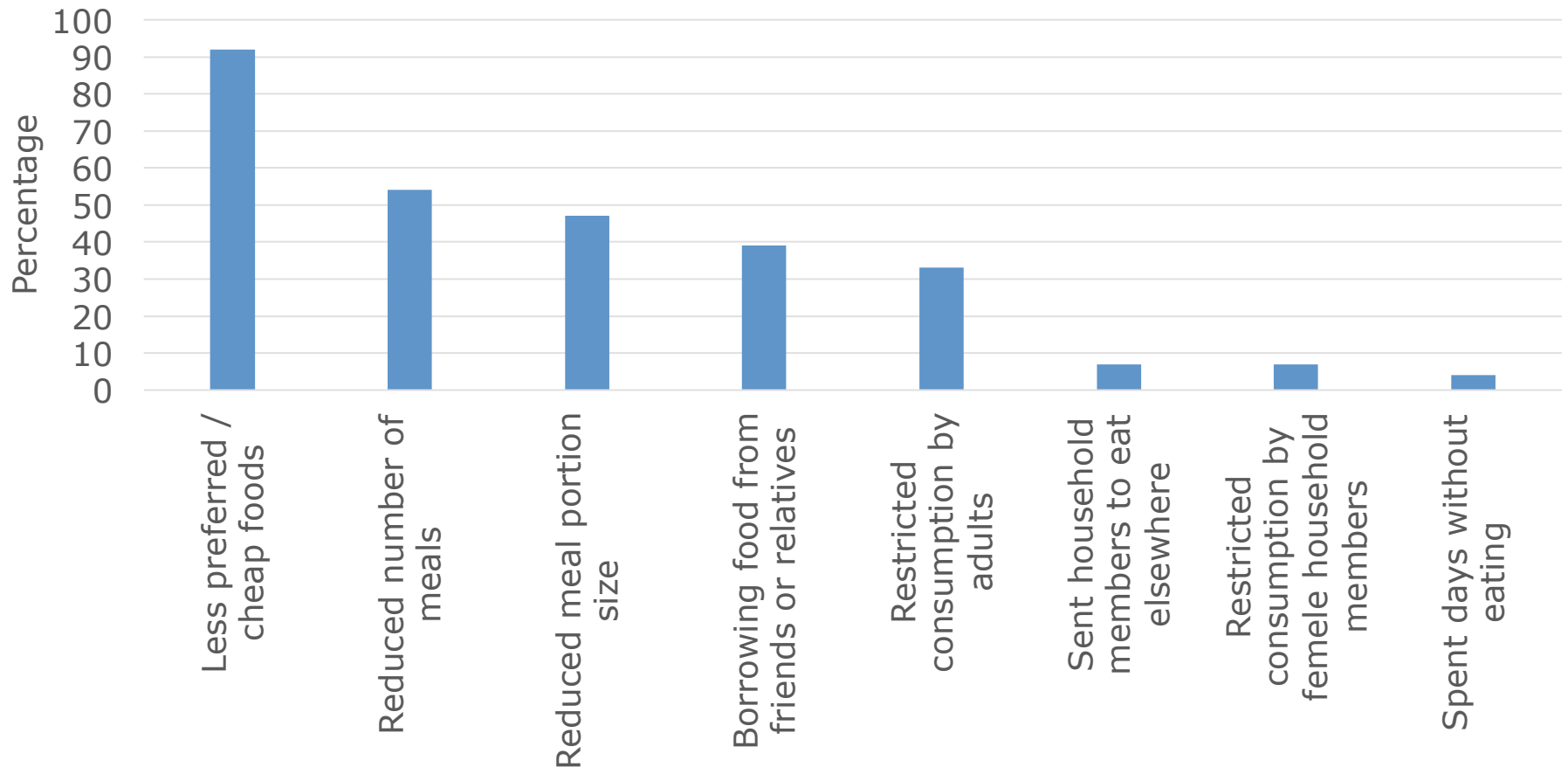


**Source: Development Management International (2012)**



# Coping Strategies: Refugees

## Refugee households' reporting food-related coping strategies, 2017



Source: UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP (2017)

# Migrants and Food Security of the Host Population

- Do migrants have a negative impact on food security of non-migrants in urban areas?
  - More research needed on this topic
  - In Lebanon, the influx of more than 1m refugees has led to a 60% reduction in daily wages
  - Syrian refugees are prepared to work for less money than locals
  - Increase in refugee population has led to a rise in food prices
  - Refugee population can also diffuse innovative urban farming practices

# Balcony gardening by Syrian refugees in Lebanon



# Conclusion

- An overwhelming number of international migrants and refugees in the Global South move to urban areas
  - Migrants generally tend to be less food secure than non-migrants
  - Discrimination and xenophobia play an important part
  - Migration exposes migrants to less healthier food choices
  - Nonetheless, migration has demonstrable positive impacts for migrants and refugees, as well as the family members they support in the country of origin

**ROCK CHALK JAYHAWK**

**THANK YOU!!!!**

