Assisted Return:
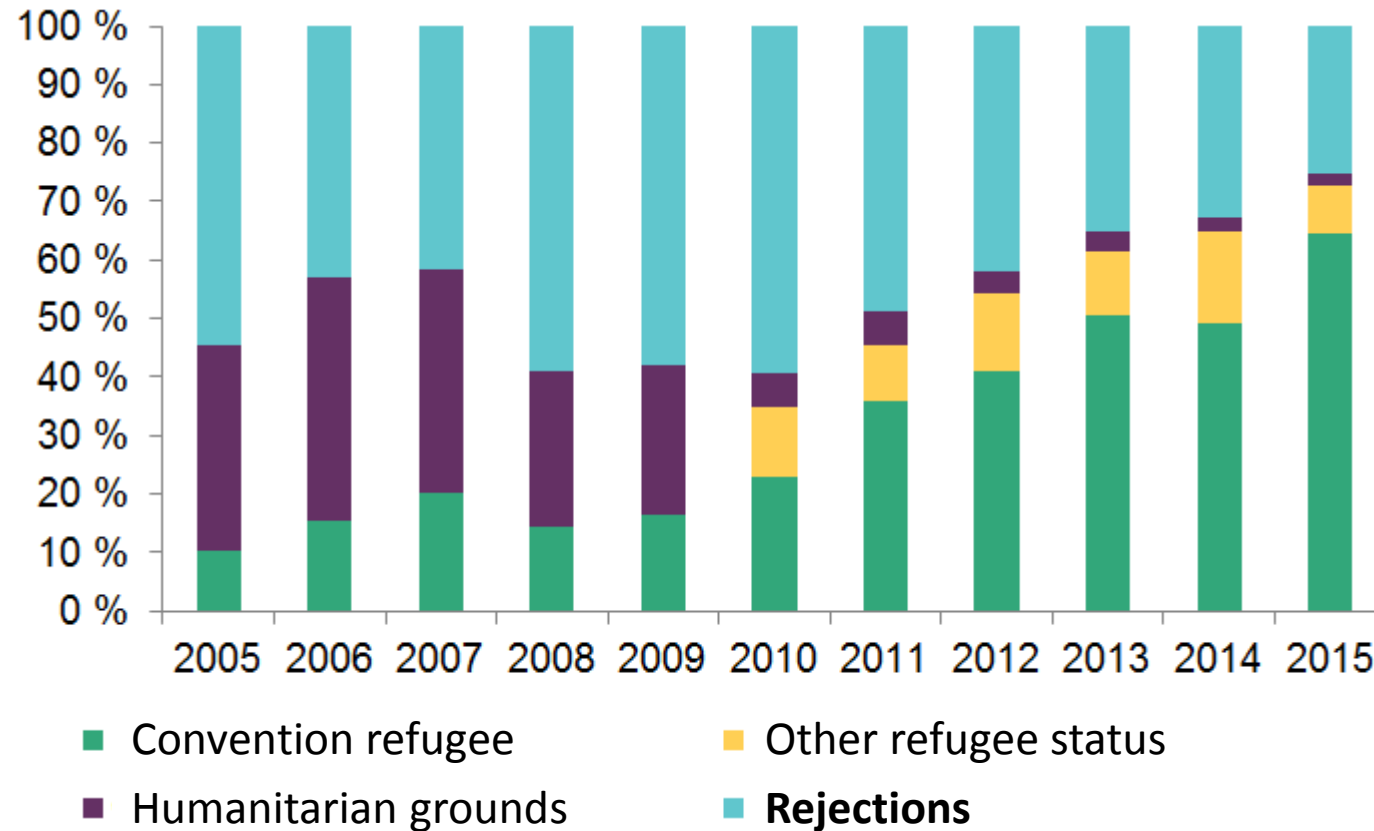# Why Not Trust A Host State?

Erlend Paasche

Asylum decisions, 2005-15

25-60 prosent

REJECTED

Assisted return as a 'win-win'?

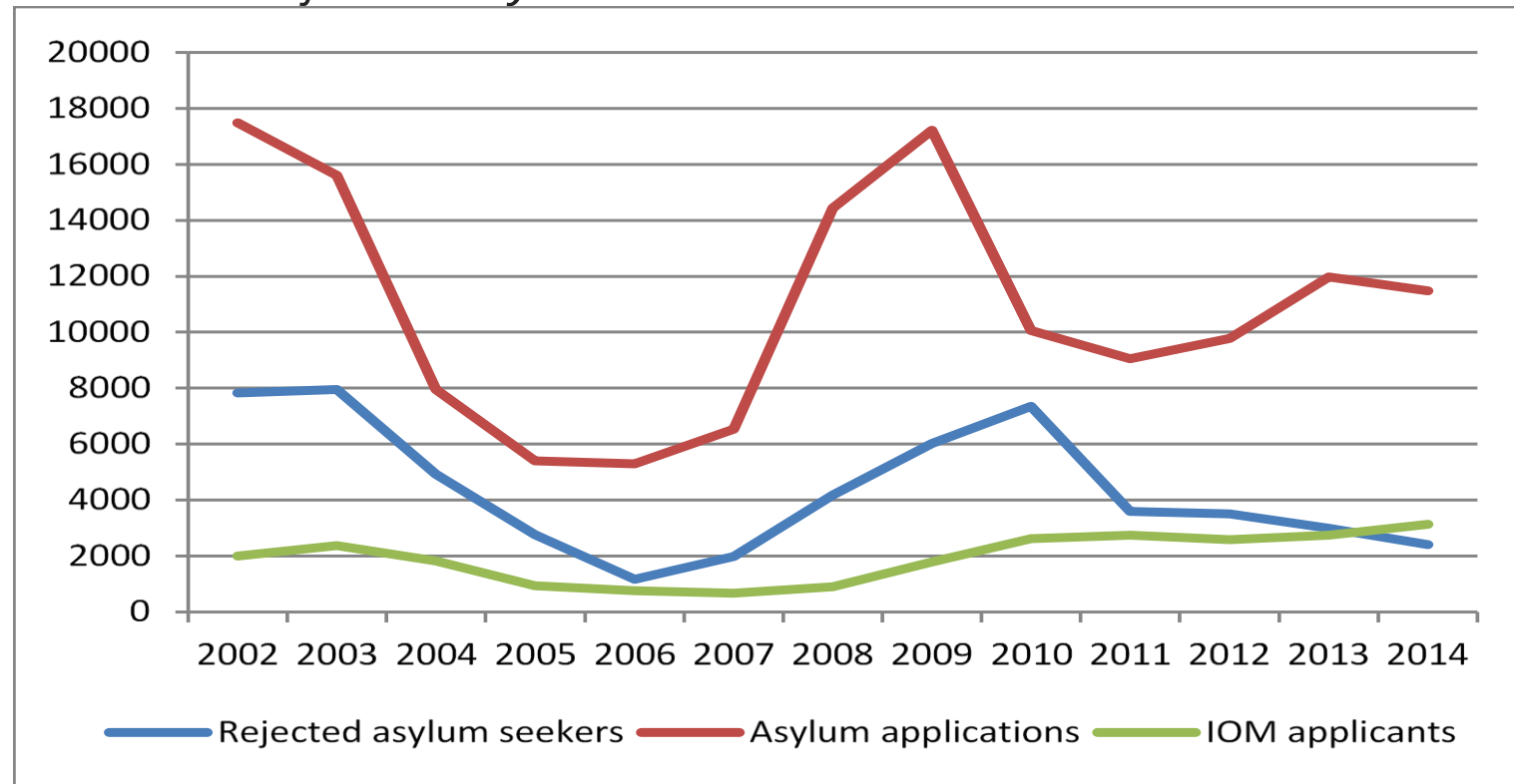| For the host state	For migrants
• More humane	• Allows for return with dignity
• Less controversial	• Allows for planning
• More cost effective	• Offers incentives
• Legitimises forced return	• Allows for re-migration

The 'paradox' of low programme uptake

Figure 1. Number of asylum applications to Norway per year and the number of rejected asylum seekers.

* Rejections 1st instance (UDI) not including Dublin cases. Source UDI. 2014 number for IOM applicants is estimated based on data for 1st trimester (multiplied by 3).

Locating trust in the stages of assisted return

1. Sign-up for return

2. Pre-departure assistance

3. Flight

4. Post-return assistance

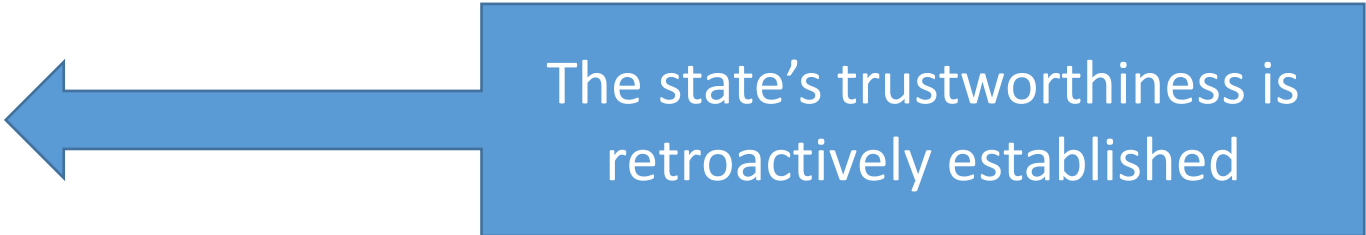# Locating trust in the stages of assisted return

1. Sign-up for return ⟵ The state is trusted

2. Pre-departure assistance

3. Flight

4. Post-return assistance ⟵ The state's trustworthiness is retroactively established

Locating trust: The paradox dissolves

1. Sign-up for return

2. Pre-departure assistance

3. Flight

4. Post-return assistance

The state is trusted

Buying a pig in a poke

The state's trustworthiness is retroactively established
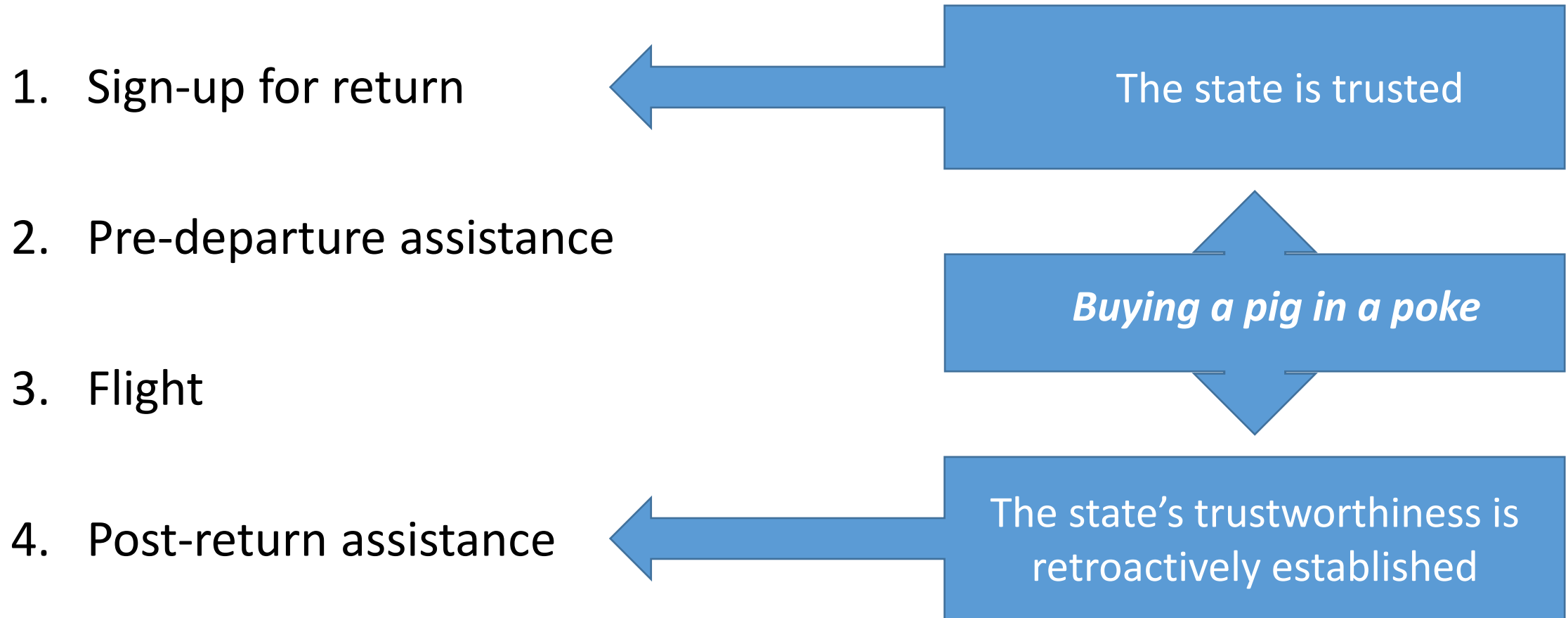
Buying a pig in a poke requires trust

The often existential decision to return is made by rejected asylum seekers largely on the basis of **trust** in the state's assurances…

- Asylum will not be granted – though how can one know for sure?

- Deportation to origin is a credible threat – yet it happens rarely

- Post-return assistance will be delivered – but what if it won't?

Migrants' reasons to distrust the host state

From the perspective of a rejected asylum seeker, he

- is to **trust a state that distrusts him**, and **seeks to return him**

- typically comes from a low-trust state

- would return to a high-corruption state and outsourced assistance

- is largely unable to sanction an eventual violation of trust

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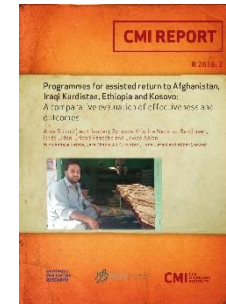
Empirical findings

Assisted return to Iraq (Strand et al. 2011)

- Returnees reported that IOM did not deliver assistance.
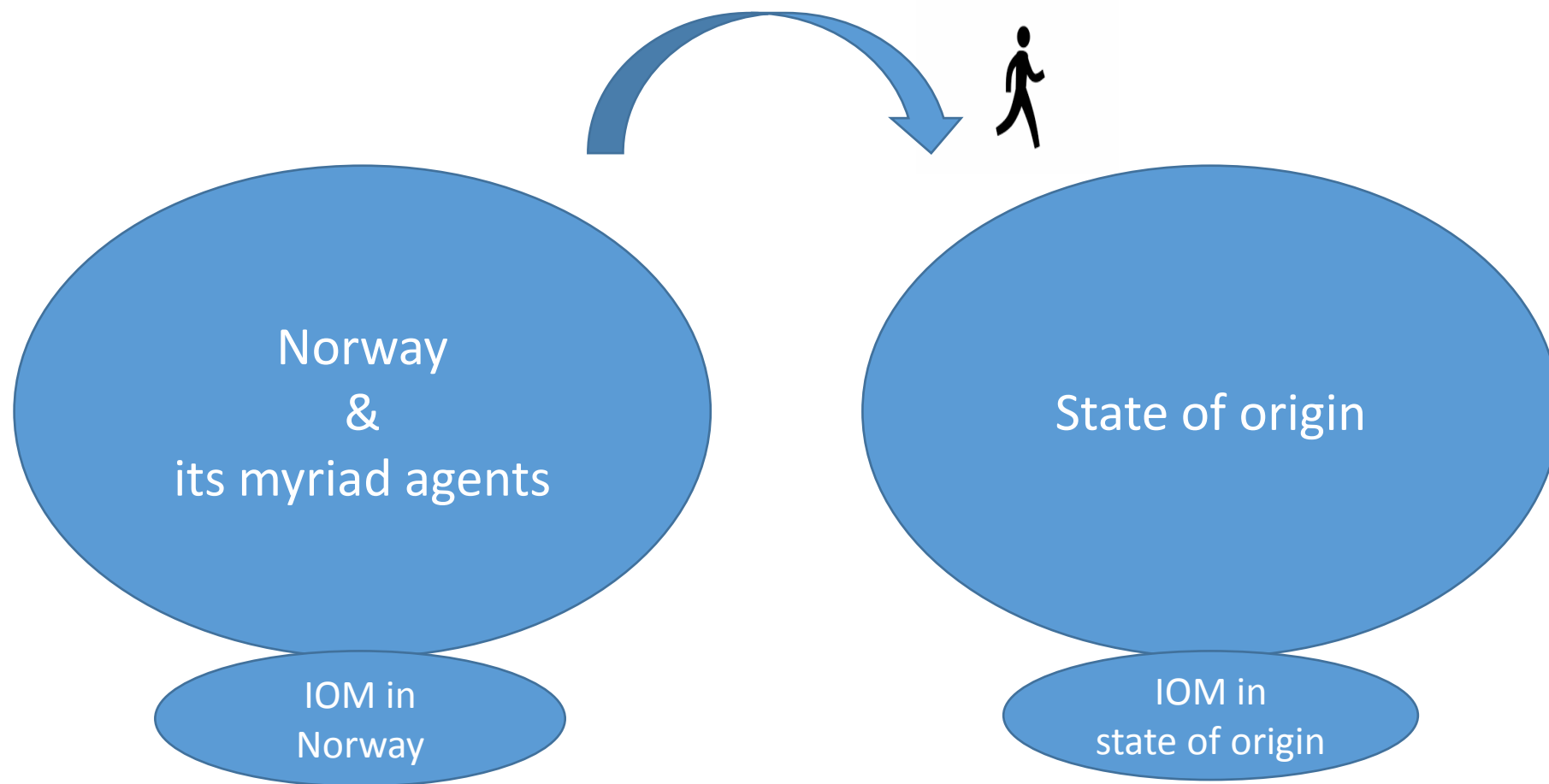- Transnational rumours of corruption.

Assisted return to Afghanistan (Strand et al. 2016, Deloitte 2016)

- Strong suspicions of corruption in IOM Kabul
- UDI halts the assisted return programme and revises its auditing routines.

Who's responsible if trust is violated?

Norway
&
its myriad agents

State of origin

IOM in
Norway

IOM in
state of origin

Empirical findings

- Paasche, 2016.

  Return Migration and Corruption: Experiences of Iraqi Kurds