



Forced Displacement Literature Review

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Refugee Networks, Cooperation, and Resource Access

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This article **examines the role of social network structures in refugee community deliberations and problem solving in Lebanon and Jordan**. High-density networks can facilitate information flow and in-group sanctioning, thereby encouraging greater engagement toward addressing collective problems. However, less densely networked and more diverse groups can bring a wider range of skills, information, knowledge, and connections that may make them more effective in solving problems.

The analysis is based on a social experiment comprising 56 moderated community meetings with almost 500 Syrian refugees across 14 cities, towns, and refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan. The author created single-sex groups with different social network structures by varying the recruitment methods for community meetings. To enable an analysis of effects at both the group and individual level, groups were constructed using two levels of random assignment. First, community meetings were randomly assigned to be recruited through either referral sampling or random sampling. Referral sampling creates groups that are likely to have dense social networks, whereas random sampling creates groups with the potential for diverse connections and information. Second, a subset of refugee participants was randomly assigned to be placed in one group type or another.

The moderated community meetings elicited and observed dialogue around common community problems such as public safety, freedom of movement, resource distribution, and livelihoods. The author identified and coded instances of cooperative dialogue (such as comments that discussed solutions to community problems or that responded to or prompted comments from other participants) and comments relating to the existence of resources that Syrian refugees can draw on. Data on group network structure and participant characteristics were collected using a participant questionnaire.

Main findings:

- **Dense refugee networks increase group and individual engagement in response to collective problems.** Discussion in networked groups exhibited higher engagement in response to community problems compared to randomly sampled groups. This result is driven by both the structural characteristics of the groups (group composition) and individuals' incentives to contribute more when working with a networked group. Individuals assigned to a networked group engaged with each other in response at higher rates than those assigned to randomly sampled groups.
- **Networked refugee groups draw on fewer unique resources in their discussions.** The average number of unique resources discussed in a community meeting was lower in networked groups than in randomly sampled groups. Networked groups are consistently less likely to say that they could draw on a range of resources (such as Syrian leaders, brokers, community dispute resolution, and NGOs) in response to the

problem being discussed. Resource diversity disadvantage of networked groups is likely driven by structural features of the groups.

- **There aren't any significant group-level network effects on access to host communities, police, or government for refugees.** This suggests that network diversity facilitates access to other Syrians who may be helpful but not host community members (i.e., host community, government, and police).

The author concludes that **networked groups of refugees have a cooperative advantage that leads to higher engagement in collective problem solving, but they suffer from a resource diversity disadvantage.** In Jordan and Lebanon, the findings suggest that diverse groups have greater access to a broad network of Syrians and NGOs, but not Lebanese and Jordanian government actors or police. In communities where trust or reciprocity is the binding constraint for effective cooperation, building social ties and systems of accountability within the community can be helpful. **In communities where resource access is the main binding constraint, linking refugees to service providers, surrounding neighborhoods, and local authorities, may be an effective way to facilitate access to the resources necessary to address collective problems.**

The Unseen—An Investigative Analysis of Thematic and Spatial Coverage of News on the Ongoing Refugee Crisis in West Africa

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International Journal of Geo-Information, Volume 12, Issue 4 (2023)

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This paper **examines the thematic and spatial coverage of media on the refugee crisis in West Africa, and the factors that influence media coverage.**

The analysis is based on data from: (1) Global Data on Events, Location, and Tone (GDELT) dataset containing news articles categorized by theme, including “refugee”, and containing information about the location and date of the article; and (2) geographical data on the location of refugees from UNHCR’s Geographic Information System. More than 2,000 articles on West African countries published between March 12 and September 15 September 2021 were included in the analysis.

Articles were classified according to 42 topics. To identify the factors that influence media coverage, the total number of times a country is mentioned in the news in the 6-month period was regressed against 13 independent variables, including country population, geographic size, GDP, and GDP per capita, refugee population, Fulani ethnic population in the region, and various governance indicators).

Main findings:

- **Most locations hosting refugees (97 percent) do not appear in media reports.** News coverage is concentrated in Nigeria which accounts for 60 percent of news articles and has the largest number of displaced people in the West Africa region (3.2 million). Other countries with large displaced populations are underrepresented in the news, for example, Cote d'Ivoire has 1.7 million displaced people but only accounts for 0.6 percent of news coverage. Most locations mentioned in the media (80 percent) are not in proximity to locations hosting refugees.
- **News coverage about refugees is most commonly on the topics of development assistance, politics, and relocation.** Development aid, political statements, and relocation, covering 11 percent of news articles, are the topics most frequently covered by news articles, followed by terrorism (10 percent), crime (7 percent), and recently published reports (5 percent). Other topics such as famine, drought, water shortages, gender-based violence, and trafficking are infrequently covered in the news, accounting for between 0.4 and 2 percent of news articles.
- **Economic and political stability of a country are significant determinants of news coverage.** News coverage is correlated with countries' GDP per capita, regulatory quality, political stability, annual GDP, control of corruption, population, Fulani population, and refugee population. These variables are consistent with the literature on news coverage of crisis situations in other regions of the world.

The authors conclude that **the refugee crisis in West Africa is largely neglected in the media, with limited coverage that focuses primarily on Nigeria and neglects other countries in the region.** The authors emphasize the need for more comprehensive and inclusive reporting of the refugee crisis in West Africa.

Refugee inflows, surplus farm labor, and crop marketization in rural Africa

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This article **investigates the long-term effects of refugee inflows on host farmers in Tanzania, focusing on effects in labor and crop markets.** The Kagera region in the northwest of Tanzania received large-scale inflows of refugee from Burundi and Rwanda in the early 1990s. The Kagera region is remote and impoverished, and most local households engage in subsistence agriculture.

Refugee inflows can potentially affect host farmers through: (1) the labor market, as refugees expand labor supply; (2) the crop market, as refugee inflows increase local demand for foods that are not included in externally-sourced food assistance; and (3) market transaction costs, which may decrease (due to infrastructure development around refugee camps) or increase (due to a mix of different ethnicities in the labor market and security concerns).

The author uses a difference-in-difference empirical method to estimate the effect of refugee flows on labor market outcomes, crop supply to markets, and agricultural labor productivity. The author estimates agricultural labor productivity (shadow wages) for family farm labor. In a perfectly efficient labor market, market and shadow wages should be equal. So, disparities between market and shadow wages indicate the degree of labor market inefficiencies. Labor market inefficiencies can arise from a proportional transaction cost (such as a commuting cost) and/or an off-farm labor market participation constraint (a restriction on how much a household member can work outside their household). The analysis of effects in the crop market focuses on two food aid crops (maize and beans) and two non-food aid crops (cooking bananas and cassava).

The analysis draws on longitudinal household data from the Kagera Health and Development Survey (KHDS) from 1993 (prior to the refugee inflows) and 2004 (after the refugee inflows). Descriptive statistics reveal that:

- **Most households engage in subsistence agriculture using family labor.** It is rare for households to have both off-farm wage employment and hired farm labor, implying the skills of family workers and hired workers are similar.
- **Off-farm labor market participation is low.** Women have lower off-farm labor market participation than men.
- **Off-farm market wages are substantially higher than the shadow wages of family farms.** Men have higher market wages compared to women in 2004.
- **Women are more likely to engage in cultivation compared to men.** The female agricultural labor productivity is on average higher than the male one in both 1993 and 2004.
- **Market transaction rates are low for the main food crops** (maize, beans, cooking bananas, and cassava).

Empirical results:

- **Refugee inflows increased surplus farm labor implying an efficiency loss in the labor market.** This effect is demonstrated by: (1) a weak correlation between market and shadow wages for both men and women (significant only for female wages), indicating labor market inefficiencies, which is not significantly altered by refugee inflows; (2) a widening gap between market and shadow wages for both male and female workers due to refugee inflows; and (3) a decrease in male off-farm labor market participation due to refugee inflows.
- **Refugee inflows positively affected the transition from subsistence farming to sellers of maize and beans.** This is due to a decrease in fixed market transaction costs (due to improved infrastructure) and not due to a consumption demand shift by refugees, as demonstrated by the following results: (1) crop marketization is concentrated around Rwandan refugee camps after most refugees had already left; (2) crop marketization is only observed for food aid crops for which refugee demand would be low; (3) the crop supply response around Rwandan refugee camps is detected only for initial subsistence households and not initial sellers, suggesting fixed transaction costs play a more important role than costs proportional to farm-gate prices; (4) marketization of coffee, a major export crop that would not be responsive to local demand, becomes concentrated around Rwandan refugee camps; (5) there isn't any evidence that marketization is

explained by alternative mechanisms, such as a price effect, technological change, or proximity to neighboring countries; and (6) there is an increase in supply of crops that were not included in food aid (cooking bananas and cassava) only around Burundian refugee camps where many refugees remained in 2004. These results suggest that **investment in infrastructure around refugee camps also creates new opportunities for host populations and its impact lasts long after refugees have left camps.**

- **Overall, refugee inflows have a negative impact on agricultural labor productivity.** The “surplus farm labor effect” and the “crop marketization effect” act in opposite directions. Refugee inflows caused losses in the labor market and gains in the crop market for host agricultural households.

The author concludes that **refugee inflows cause market-specific gains and losses for agricultural households.** The results imply that, **in the long run, refugee inflows increased labor market transaction costs and decreased crop market transaction costs.** In both markets, fixed transaction costs play a dominant role. The author claims that the paper demonstrates that looking only at consumption or wage levels is insufficient to uncover important underlying mechanisms behind **the impact of refugee inflows in rural developing areas where factor and output market imperfections are prevalent.**

Impact of refugees on wages and economic growth in a model with inflation

Ana Rita Gomes, Oscar Afonso, and Paulo B. Vasconcelos

Applied Economics (2023)

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This article **examines the effect of inflows of Ukrainian refugees on the labor market in Poland.** The Ukrainian refugee influx increased the supply of unskilled labor in the Polish labor market.

The authors develop a model that takes into account the skills heterogeneity between natives and refugees, the degree of substitutability between natives and refugees with the same skill level, the impact of technological knowledge on demand and productivity of different types of labor, the impact of fiscal policy (subsidies) on the direction and progress of technological knowledge, and the effects of monetary policy (reduction in interest rates) on the production of intermediate goods and research and development (R&D) activities.

Main results:

- **An increase in unskilled labor shrinks the technological-knowledge-absorption effect, that is, the ability of skilled workers to assimilate and utilize advanced technological knowledge more effectively than unskilled workers.** This in turn decreases R&D activities that improve the quality of intermediate goods used together with skilled labor. As a result, the relative productivity of intermediate goods produced with unskilled labor increases, decreasing the relative prices of final goods produced with

low technology, and **increasing the share of final goods produced with low technology**.

- Changes in the relative prices of final goods produced with different technologies causes an increase in the technological-knowledge-bias, that is the extent to which technological knowledge is biased towards skilled or unskilled workers (represented in the model as the ratio of the technological knowledge stocks of skilled workers to unskilled workers). The increase in the supply of unskilled labor causes a decrease in its relative wage, leading to a slight increase in the skills premium. Together, **these mechanisms lead to a slight decrease in the economic growth rate**.
- **Fiscal policies in the form of subsidies to encourage R&D activities, can strengthen production**, levels of technological knowledge, and wage levels associated with subsidized workers. Fiscal policies have a stronger effect on growth when applied to unskilled workers.
- Monetary policy, introduced by the central bank through a reduction in the nominal interest rate, influences R&D activity through liquidity constraints. In this way, monetary policy can encourage R&D activities by facilitating credit to firms.

The authors conclude that the influx of refugees tends to create greater inequality, in terms of worker's competitiveness and technological-knowledge-bias. Consequently, wage inequality between skilled and unskilled workers increases. To mitigate these effects, the authors propose fiscal policies that subsidize unskilled workers to promote competitiveness and growth.

Refugee return and social cohesion

Isabel Ruiz, Carlos Vargas-Silva

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This article examines the impact of refugee returns on social cohesion in Burundi.

Burundi experienced a major conflict, with mass displacement of refugees, and their mass return after more than a decade abroad. Burundi also has a scarcity of fertile land, which could contribute to competition and affect social cohesion when refugees return in large numbers.

Returning refugees may amplify divisions that contributed to conflict (for example, clan, ethnic, regional, or class differences), introduce new sources of tension between those who fled and those who remained during the conflict, or exacerbate tensions due to increased competition for scarce resources such as land.

The analysis is based on data collected in 2015 covering households in 100 communities across Burundi, including detailed information on violence and reconciliation, trust, and participation in community groups. Social cohesion is measured by: (a) measures of support across households; (b) feelings towards conflict and reconciliation; (c) trust in others and in specific groups; and (d) participation in different community organizations. The analysis

considers differences between communities with more or less ethnic diversity, more or less pre-war land scarcity, and more or less negative attitudes towards migrant return.

Main findings:

- **Refugee return has a negative impact on the perception that community members help each other.** A 10-percentage point increase in the population share of returnees in a community leads to a 10-percentage point reduction in the likelihood of stating that community members mostly help each other. The effect is larger in communities with more negative attitudes towards return, which are less ethnically diverse and with less pre-war land availability.
- **Refugee return has a negative impact on the feeling that community members could borrow money for emergencies from non-household members.** A 10-percentage point increase in the population share of returnees decreases the possibility of borrowing money this way by 8 percentage points. The effect is larger for more ethnically diverse communities, for communities with more positive attitudes towards return, and for communities with less pre-war land availability.
- **Refugee return has a negative impact on the feeling that the community is peaceful.** A 10-percentage point increase in the population share of refugees leads to a 6-percentage point reduction in the likelihood of perceiving the community as peaceful. The effect is similar across more and less diverse communities. The effect is stronger in communities with more negative attitudes towards return.
- **The estimated impacts of refugee return on measures of trust and participation in community groups are mostly statistically insignificant.**

Overall, the results suggest that **the process of refugee out-migration and return could lead to new divisions in society based on the location of individuals during the conflict.** The authors highlight the need for a nuanced and context-specific approach to promoting social cohesion in communities experiencing high levels of refugee repatriation.

Context Matters: The Implications of the Mode of Service Provision for Structural and Relational Integration of Refugees in Ghana and Ethiopia

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Journal of Refugee Studies (2023)

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This article examines **how variations in the form of service provision to refugees and host communities in Ethiopia and Ghana affects access and quality of services, the integration outcomes of refugees, and social cohesion.**

Ethiopia hosts more than 890,000 refugees and asylum seekers living in camps situated in five of its nine regions as well as in the capital, Addis Ababa. Ghana hosts almost 14,000 refugees and asylum seekers, 60 percent of whom live in one of five camps in the country. Both countries have encampment policies, and the remote rural location of refugee camps in less developed regions means refugees (and hosts) have limited economic opportunities. There are also an increasing number of refugees who have self-settled in urban areas in both countries.

In both countries the quality of services is poor and poverty levels are high. In Ghana, social services for refugees and host communities are integrated, with the national government responsible for the delivery of services to both groups in both camps and urban areas. In Ethiopia, services for refugees are coordinated by the Refugee and Returnee Services (RRS) and delivered by UNHCR and NGOs in camps and urban areas, while government at federal, regional, and local levels are responsible for services for host communities. In Ethiopia, services provided to refugees are open to host communities and vice versa, even though they are not integrated.

The comparative analysis is based on qualitative data collected in Ghana in 2020, and qualitative and quantitative data collected in Ethiopia in 2020. In Ghana this included unstructured interviews with key informants in the administration of refugee services and refugee leaders in each of the five camps in the country. In Ethiopia, data collection included semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and experts, focus group discussions with the Refugee Central Committee and host community representatives of Awbare and Sheder camps in the Somali regional state of Ethiopia, and a quantitative survey in the Awbare and Sheder refugee camps and adjacent host communities. More than 2,000 individuals (almost 950 households) were surveyed, 40 percent of whom were from the host communities and 60 percent were refugees.

Main findings:

- **Overall, access to social services—irrespective of how and where they are provided—is possible for both hosts and refugees.** Basic social services including education, health, and water are accessible to refugees in both countries. In Ethiopia the majority of host and refugee members are satisfied with their access to education. In both countries, access to schools and health facilities inside and outside the camps is generally open to both refugee and host communities, and both communities feel comfortable accessing the services provided to the other group. However, in some cases there are obstacles to access, for example due to language barriers (for French speaking refugees in Ghana). Financial constraints affect access to services mainly for the host community, as refugees can access some services free of charge. Access to services for refugees is easier in terms of distance to reach the service and amounts and capacities available.
- **Overall, the quality of services differs between Ghana and Ethiopia, and this is directly related to the form of service provision.** In Ethiopia, service quality in refugee

camps is better than local services provided to host communities due to higher capacity, better funding, and continuous monitoring of refugee service providers. For example, health facilities in camps are better equipped, schools in the camps pay higher salaries and attract better teachers, and schools in camps are more likely to meet government standards for teacher-student ratios. In Ghana, where services are integrated, both refugees and hosts receive the same quality of services, and quality is usually lower compared to services provided to refugees in Ethiopia. Additionally, UNHCR continues to provide additional teaching and learning materials to camp schools in Ghana, which results in better quality schooling in camps.

- **Perceptions of unfairness arise when refugees receive better quality services than hosts.** In Ethiopia, differences in the quality of services provided to refugees and hosts is perceived by host communities as unfair, whereas variations in access (e.g., distance to services) were less important for perceptions of unfairness. In Ghana there were less perceptions of inequality and little mention of experienced unfairness.

Regardless of whether services are already integrated within one agency (Ghana) or still provided by separate actors (Ethiopian), both refugees and hosts can access services. However, there are obstacles to access (mainly for hosts) due to financial constraints and distance to services. When services are provided to refugees by humanitarian organizations in parallel to national systems, this leads to a divergence in the quality of services due to higher level of capacity of non-governmental service providers. This is likely to lead to perceptions by host communities of unfairness, increasing the potential for social tensions over resources. Integrating services reduces imbalances in service quality and offers more opportunities for interaction, more likely fostering positive relations between refugees and hosts. However, integrating services is likely to result in poorer service quality overall due to the lower capacity of national actors. Additionally, any supplementary financial support provided to refugee facilities would perpetuate imbalances in the quality of services and perceptions of unfairness. The authors also note that the full integration of services is challenging, takes time, and is highly context specific.

Planning sustainable electricity solutions for refugee settlements in sub-Saharan Africa

Duccio Baldi, Magda Moner-Girona, Elena Fumagalli, and Fernando Fahl

Nature Energy, Volume 7 (2022), Pages 369–379

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41560-022-01006-9>

This paper examines the electricity needs, potential technical solutions and associated costs for almost 300 refugee settlements in sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that around 80 percent of refugees in camps burn biomass such as firewood for cooking and around 90 percent have limited or no access to electricity.

Detailed data collected for this study were compiled in the publicly available Refugee Settlements Electricity Access Database (RSEA DB) including: environmental data for each settlement (such as variability of solar radiation and avoided greenhouse gas emissions), technical factors (electrification status, distance to grid), social context and energy needs (population, electricity demand, social infrastructure), and economic factors (PV mini-grid component prices, discount factors, operation and maintenance costs). Data was collected from national statistical offices, government agencies, international organizations, satellite imagery, crowdsourced data, and interviews with relevant experts. Estimates of electricity demand and daily load profiles for various end-users (households, businesses, institutions) were based on primary data collection in Kalobeyei refugee settlement in Kenya.

Estimates cover 288 refugee settlements (203 refugee sites, 18 of which include more than one settlement) in 23 countries. The solar photovoltaic (PV) and battery sizes were optimized per settlement based on site conditions and requirements in each settlement.

Main findings:

- The total annual electricity demand (total annual demand of all settlements) is estimated to be 154 GWh.
- The total solar PV mini-grid capacity to be installed is estimated to be 247 MWp (including 699 MWh of battery storage).
- The total avoided greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are 2.86 MtCO₂e over a lifetime of 20 years (0.14 MtCO₂e avoided per year).
- The total estimated up-front cost required to provide electricity to the 288 settlements is US\$1.34 billion.

The authors conclude that decentralized energy systems can potentially offer a fast, reliable, and sustainable way to increase access to electricity in refugee settlements in Sub-Saharan Africa. The RSEA DB and the associated web [tool](#) can support humanitarian and development organizations to deliver sustainable energy solutions on a large scale.

Unknown risk: assessing refugee camp flood risk in Ethiopia

Mark V Bernhofen, Faye Blenkin, and Mark A Trigg

Environmental Research Letters, Volume 18, Number 6 (2023)

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/acd8d0>

This article **explores different approaches for using global data to assess refugee flood risk in refugee camps in Ethiopia**. Ethiopia hosts over 870 000 refugees from Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia, most of whom (90 percent) live in refugee camps. Refugee camps in Ethiopia have a history of flooding, and flood risk is expected to increase with climate change.

The authors test various approaches to assessing flood risk exposure that combine estimates of camp population with data on camp area, building footprints, and population density. The authors map 24 refugee camps in Ethiopia using a combination of country-level information from UNHCR, remote sensing data, OpenStreetMap data, and building footprint data.

The authors also assess the accuracy of global population datasets at capturing refugee camp populations in Ethiopia, by comparing population estimates for the geographical cells within the camp boundaries to UNHCR population data. The global population datasets used were the Global Human Settlement Population 2019 and 2022 revisions (GHS-POP R2019 and GHS-POP R2022), Facebook High Resolution Settlement Layer (HRSL), LandScan, WorldPop unconstrained and constrained.

Main findings:

- **Global population datasets, typically used in national flood risk assessments, chronically underestimate refugee camp populations in Ethiopia.** In the 24 camps examined, global population datasets estimated, on average, only 27 percent of the refugee camp population reported by UNHCR. Global population datasets rely on census data which typically do not include refugees and are not updated frequently enough to capture dynamic refugee flows. The two most accurate global population maps were GHS-POP R2022 and HRSL, which captured only 44 percent and 36 percent of the UNHCR reported camp populations, respectively.
- **The approach used to calculate flood exposure has a significant impact on flood exposure estimates.** Even the most accurate global population maps underpredict between three-fifths and two-thirds of flood exposed refugees, relative to approaches which incorporate UNHCR camp population data.
- **Almost all refugee camps are exposed to flooding.** Augmenting global data with local data on refugee camp populations, it is estimated that 23 out of 24 refugee camps are exposed to flooding of some degree, and between 143,208 (20 percent) and 182,125 (25 percent) refugees are exposed to a 1 percent annual exceedance probability flood (100-year return period flood). Four of the five most exposed camps are in the Gambela region, which is one of the most flood-prone regions in the country. The camps in Gambela are home to South Sudanese refugees, who are disproportionately more exposed to flooding than other refugees in Ethiopia. Most refugees in Ethiopia are

exposed to pluvial (rainfall) flooding, and the majority of this (80 to 85 percent) exposure is a low risk to life. Eritrean refugees are the nationality most exposed to flooding with a high risk to life.

- **Camp planners appear to be making rational decisions about the internal organization of camps with respect to potential flood exposure.** Incorporating information on the spatial distribution of camp residents into flood exposure analysis, led to substantially lower estimates of average annual exposure, suggesting that camp planners are making rational decisions about the internal organization of camps with respect to potential flood exposure.

The authors conclude that global population datasets do a poor job at estimating refugee camp populations and should not be used in studies of refugee flood risk. The analysis demonstrates the benefits of combining local and global data for assessing refugee camp flood risk in Ethiopia. This kind of analysis can be useful for understanding the degree of risk faced by refugees in a country and for prioritizing further detailed risk analyses.