Forced Displacement Literature Review

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Social Cohesion and Forced Displacement: A Synthesis of New Research

World Bank (2022)

This report **synthesizes findings from 26 background studies on forced displacement and social cohesion**, prepared under the "Building the Evidence on Protracted Forced Displacement: A Multi-Stakeholder Partnership," established in 2016 by the UK Government, the World Bank, and UNHCR.

The studies are geographically and methodologically diverse, covering low-, middle-, and high-income countries across Africa, Asia, Central and South America, and Europe. They utilize various research designs, including qualitative case studies, natural experiments, survey experiments, and cross-national quantitative analyses.

Main findings:

- **Displacement directly affects social cohesion outcomes among the displaced**. Displacement negatively impacts the socioeconomic conditions of the displaced, leading to lower incomes, increased hunger risk, and reduced access to housing and property, which can create inequalities and social tension. Labor market integration varies by age and sex, with younger and male refugees integrating faster. Different displacement experiences, such as extortion, violence, and whether refuge is found domestically or internationally, affect income and education levels. However, displacement can also enhance social cohesion by empowering individuals socially and politically, and increasing civic engagement.

- **Displacement affects social cohesion by shaping the attitudes and behavior of host communities**. Host community attitudes toward refugees are influenced by socioeconomic class, ethno-linguistic and geographic proximity, urban versus camp settings, and economic versus humanitarian priorities. **Generally, the presence of displaced persons does not undermine social cohesion in host communities**. Refugee inflows can improve services in host communities, fostering neutral or positive attitudes. However, large refugee returns can reduce social cohesion, especially where land is scarce, though impacts vary across different aspects of social cohesion.

- **Pre-existing socioeconomic conditions and attitudes in host communities moderate how displacement affects social cohesion**. Negative economic conditions and support for exclusionary policies weaken social cohesion, while better economic conditions can reduce negative responses to refugee inflows. Easier access to land, pre-existing support for migrants, and greater ethnic diversity can help the integration of refugees and returnees. Host community members who are more worried about economic issues are more likely to support exclusionary policies that restrict migrants' access to labor markets, length of stay, location, access to public services, and right to reunification.

- **The presence of displaced populations in host communities drives socioeconomic conditions and behavior that affect social cohesion**. The arrival of displaced persons can improve long-term economic conditions in host communities, however evidence on the impact of displacement on income inequality in host communities is mixed. The short-term impact of IDPs on conflict depends on negative externalities (prices, services, housing, employment) and whether assistance mitigates these for host community members. Displacement affects social cohesion differently in urban and rural settings: in rural areas, economic contributions drive positive attitudes, while security concerns drive negative attitudes; in urban areas, economic competition drives negative perceptions. Refugee arrivals are unlikely to increase violence unless they heighten ethnic polarization.

- **Policy interventions designed to influence the economic and security conditions of refugees and host populations affect social cohesion**. Inclusionary policies (e.g., access to work, community integration) do not generate anti-immigrant attitudes and can foster long-term social cohesion. Vocational training programs improve pro-social behavior and attitudes among refugees but not among hosts. Communities near refugee settlements experience improvements in local development and no change (positive or negative) in attitudes toward migrants or migration policy. Forced migrants experience worse education outcomes than hosts, and financial aid does not reduce educational barriers. Cash transfers, such as pensions, do not impact attitudes toward migrants.

- **Humanitarian assistance and multi-sectoral development investments targeting refugees, IDPs, and host communities can enhance welfare, mitigate the negative effects of displacement, generate positive externalities for host communities, and promote social cohesion**. To prevent social tensions, governments and humanitarian and development agencies should provide both short- and long-term assistance to displaced and host communities, reducing real and perceived inequalities in service access and preventing negative attitudes toward new arrivals.

- **Providing social assistance, health care services, and economic opportunities to refugees and IDPs and vulnerable host community members immediately following the displacement event may mitigate some of the long-term impacts of displacement**. Displaced persons face short-term trauma and long-term disadvantages affecting their human, social, and physical capital. In the medium to long term, ongoing mental health services, social support, and legal assistance for property recovery and vital documents are essential to improve human capital and labor market participation.

- **Multi-sectoral investments paired with participatory decision-making involving both the displaced and host communities can help ensure that the investments address the highest priorities and promote social cohesion**. Approaches, like community-driven development (CDD), that involve displaced persons and hosts in identifying, implementing, and overseeing investments can deliver essential infrastructure and services while fostering positive interactions. The effectiveness of participatory approaches stems from everyday interactions that improve host perceptions of the displaced, the high levels of social capital among refugees and IDPs, and evidence that trained facilitators can promote empathy through perspective-sharing exercises.

- **Both short- and long-term investments are crucial, and multi-sectoral operations must be tailored to urban and rural contexts, as well as camp and non-camp settings**. In many contexts, refugees and hosts face multi-dimensional poverty,

necessitating multi-sectoral development investments across basic services, economic opportunities, environmental management, and shelter. Tailoring these projects to specific contexts ensures they address unique needs effectively.

The report highlights that, **under certain conditions, refugee and IDP inflows and returns can create negative externalities that undermine social cohesion, especially if host communities are already struggling to access basic services and economic opportunities. However, these effects are not inevitable; they are influenced by policies, humanitarian and development responses, and the broader socioeconomic context**.

The report concludes with several policy recommendations, as follows:

- In line with the United Nations Global Compact on Refugees, provide refugees the right to work, freedom of movement, access to social services, civil and birth registration, and right to accommodation.

- Ensure that humanitarian assistance and development investments target both displaced persons and host communities.

- Invest in infrastructure and services to meet the increased demand due to population shocks and use these investments to also address existing vulnerabilities in host communities.

- Near-term relief and assistance should be provided to both host communities and displaced persons following displacement to offset negative externalities on prices and jobs.

- Provide relevant support such as mental health services for the trauma endured during displacement, ongoing social assistance to address hardships, and legal assistance to recover property and obtain documents to address displaced persons' longer-term wellbeing and self-reliance.

- Tailor investments to the unique needs of urban and rural areas hosting the displaced, which may include labor market integration and housing support in urban areas and access to land, income-generating opportunities, infrastructure, and services in rural areas.

- Employ participatory approaches, trained facilitators, and public messaging to promote positive interactions and empathy between host residents and displaced persons.

- Pair multisectoral investments with participatory approaches to ensure investments address the needs of displaced persons and host communities.

Forced displacement, social cohesion, and the state: Evidence from eight new studies

Emily Myers, Audrey Sacks, Juan F. Tellez, and Erik Wibbels

This article **synthesizes new evidence on the relationship between forced displacement and social cohesion**. The authors define social cohesion as "a sense of shared purpose, trust and willingness to cooperate among members of a given group, between members of different groups, and between people and the state."

The authors review eight papers featured in a special issue of *World Development*, covering research in over 30 countries, and employing a variety of methodological approaches. The findings from these papers provide insights into three critical dimensions of the relationship between displacement and social cohesion: the impact of displacement on host communities, the influence of pre-existing conditions in those communities, and the role of state policies in shaping social cohesion.

Main findings:

- **The presence of refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) in a community does not necessarily undermine social cohesion**. Host communities do not consistently become hostile towards displaced people upon their arrival.

- **The social and economic condition of host communities are crucial determinants of relations between hosts and displaced populations**. Specifically, poor economic conditions and anti-refugee rhetoric from elites exacerbate social tensions, while improved service delivery and economic conditions enhance, or at the very least, do not harm social cohesion.

- **Integrative policies towards the displaced can enhance social cohesion**. State policies that promote the integration of refugees and IDPs can reduce tensions between host communities and the displaced and promote social cohesion. Investments in public goods and other forms of integration contribute to improvements in the wellbeing of both displaced persons and host communities, thereby mitigating tensions.

The authors conclude that **the impact of displacement on social cohesion is not predetermined**. In localities with healthy economies and welcoming attitudes, the arrival of refugees and IDPs does not necessarily diminish social cohesion. Even in less favorable conditions, **policies aimed at meaningfully integrating displaced individuals into host communities can significantly enhance social cohesion**.

Social Cohesion, Economic Security, and Forced displacement in the Long-run: Evidence From Rural Colombia

Juan F. Tellez and Laia Balcells

This paper **investigates the long-term impacts of displacement on the welfare, risk attitudes, social cohesion, and trust in state institutions among internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Colombia**. The study seeks to address a gap in the existing literature by concentrating on the distinct challenges encountered by IDPs, as opposed to other forms of wartime victimization. Colombia, with approximately 5 million IDPs in a population of 50 million, has one of the largest internally displaced populations globally.

The analysis is based on data from an original survey of 1,500 rural households across fifty municipalities in Colombia, conducted between March and June 2017. The sample is largely homogeneous in terms of poverty, rurality, and conflict exposure but varies significantly in displacement incidence. The survey includes modules on post-displacement experiences, such as the duration of displacement, reasons for return, and progress in seeking reparations. Additionally, the authors conducted qualitative interviews with key stakeholders, including NGOs and government agencies involved in land restitution in Colombia, as well as victims of displacement. These interviews aimed to explore two critical post-displacement questions: (1) who returns home after being displaced, and why? (2) why do some victims pursue reparations for lost property from the state while others do not?

Descriptive insights reveal that more than half of the IDPs eventually return to their place of origin, primarily for economic and social reasons, with minimal state assistance. The median return time is five years, although many take much longer. Among those who never return, security concerns and the inability to recover property—either due to destruction or legal issues—are the predominant obstacles. Only a quarter of IDPs in the sample formally seek restitution of property from the state. The restitution process is also lengthy: among those who achieve restitution, the average respondent spent 2.25 years in the process, while others at different stages of restitution spend much longer. The process itself is opaque, costly, and difficult for victims to navigate.

Main empirical findings:

- **Displaced individuals are significantly worse off economically compared to their non-displaced counterparts**. They report lower income levels, higher food insecurity, greater risk of eviction, and anticipate more difficulties in transferring property to inheritors or family members. These economic hardships persist even many years after displacement.

- **Displacement does not significantly alter risk-seeking behavior**, contrary to a large body of literature linking poverty to increased risk tolerance.

- **Despite facing economic challenges, displaced individuals exhibit higher levels of social cohesion and mobilization.** They are more likely to participate in solving local problems, support collective action, be willing to pay taxes if used to help the needy, and attend various local meetings.

- **Displacement does not seem to generate changes in trust levels**, which are generally low across the board, or land tenure security.

- **Sex and ethnicity are significant predictors of the likelihood of return**. Male IDPs are more likely to return than female IDPs, while non-white IDPs are more likely to return than white IDPs.

- **The likelihood of seeking restitution is influenced by sex, participation in local meetings, and the characteristics of the origin municipality**. Male IDPs are more likely than female IDPs to formally seek restitution of lost property. IDPs who have attended local meetings for victims of the conflict are more likely to seek restitution. The probability of seeking restitution decreases with increased rural character of the origin municipality. Despite the legalistic nature of restitution processes, income and education levels have little predictive power in determining who seeks restitution.

The study concludes that **displacement has long-lasting negative economic effects but can also foster social cohesion and community mobilization**. Additionally, continuing insecurity and difficulties in recovering property are major impediments to return. In terms of policy, this suggests the need for interventions that address the disproportionate economic burden faced by IDPs and leverage their higher capacity for collective action in 'bottom-up' peacebuilding efforts. Moreover, addressing ongoing security concerns and enhancing state capacity for post-conflict reparations are crucial for facilitating the return of IDPs to their homes. Policymakers should also focus on improving the restitution process for victims seeking restitution and explore how differential uptake of restitution may exacerbate inequities in post-conflict societies. Interventions to streamline the restitution process and formalize land ownership can help reduce local conflicts between IDPs and secondary occupants, ensuring the rights of all parties involved.

Under Pressure: When Refugees Feel Pressured to Leave Their Host Countries

Alex Braithwaite, Faten Ghosn, Tuqa Hameed

This paper **examines whether refugees' interactions with authorities and regular citizens in Lebanon affect whether they feel pressured to either return to their home country or relocate to a third country**. Lebanon hosts the highest per capita number of refugees of any country globally, the majority from neighboring Syria. In May 2015, UNHCR recorded over 1.1 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon. By June 2019, this number had decreased to over 900,000, indicating that around 200,000 refugees had left the country.

The analysis is based on a survey of about 1,700 Syrian refugees across Lebanon in June and July 2018. Refugees were asked if they had recently felt pressure from either Lebanese citizens or the Lebanese government to leave the country. The survey also solicited information from respondents about their registration with the United Nations (UN) and/or the Lebanese government, whether they had experienced either verbal or physical assaults, the estimated proportion of Syrians in their neighborhood, and their current living arrangements, whether in informal camps or host communities.

Main findings:

- **Only 6 percent of refugees reported feeling pressured to leave Lebanon**, indicating that the majority do not feel such pressure.

- **Refugees registered by the UN or the Lebanese government are more likely to feel pressured to leave**. Those registered with the UN are over five times more likely to feel pressured by the government to leave compared to those not registered. Additionally, the quarter of refugees registered directly with the government are more than three times as likely to feel pressured by the government to leave as those not registered.

- **Refugees subjected to ill treatment are more likely to feel pressured to leave**. Those who have experienced a verbal assault are more than 1.2 times more likely to feel pressured to leave than are those not subjected to verbal assault. Refugees who have been physically assaulted are nearly 1.2 times more likely to feel pressured to leave in general and more than four times more likely to feel pressure from the government than those who have not experienced physical assault.

- **Refugees living in predominantly Syrian neighborhoods are almost twice as likely to feel pressured to leave compared to those in more mixed neighborhoods.** Conversely, individuals living in camps are less likely to feel pressured to leave the country.

The authors conclude that **the extent to which refugees feel pressured to leave their host countries is significantly influenced by the nature of their daily interactions with**

authorities and regular citizens. These interactions encompass the degree of monitoring by authorities, the treatment received from local residents, and the level of social connection with the host community.

The Legacies of Armed Conflict: Insights From Stayees and Returning Forced Migrants

Isabel Ruiz and Carlos Vargas-Silva

This paper **investigates differences in indicators of trust, reconciliation, and community engagement between individuals who stayed in their communities during conflict (stayees) and those who were IDPs or refugees and returned home (returnees)**. The authors also examine how exposure to violence impacts these indicators for each group. The study focuses on Burundi, a country with a history of significant internal and international displacement due to conflict.

The analysis is based on data collected from a nationwide survey conducted between January and March 2015, covering 100 communities across Burundi's 17 provinces. The data reveals significant differences in experiences during conflict. Stayees reported more land disputes, likely due to their prolonged presence in their communities of origin, while internal returnees experienced higher rates of deaths or disabling injuries among household members during the conflict.

Main findings:

- **Returnees exhibit significantly lower levels of trust, reconciliation, and community engagement compared to stayees**.

- **This effect is particularly pronounced among internal returnees**. After controlling for community effects and socio-demographic factors, internal returnees are 11 percentage points less likely to trust community leaders, 10 percentage points less likely to agree that justice has been served for wartime crimes, and 5 percentage points less likely to have a household member involved in a fishing association compared to stayees. The differences between international returnees and stayees are generally not statistically significant.

- **Greater exposure to violence correlates with lower levels of reconciliation and community engagement among returnees compared to stayees. The impact on trust varies depending on the specific trust indicator.** For instance, international returnees exposed to more violence are more likely to trust ex-combatants, whereas internal returnees with higher exposure to violence are less likely to trust community leaders.

Overall, **returnees exhibit significantly lower levels of trust, reconciliation, and community engagement compared to stayees. This suggests that stayees maintain or even strengthen their community bonds in the face of adversity, whereas returnees have less opportunity to do so**. Notably, this result is driven by internal returnees, likely because IDPs face worse material conditions and have less access to international assistance than both international refugees and stayees. The authors speculate that the adversity faced by IDPs does not foster the same preservation or formation of social capital as it does for those who remain in their communities or flee abroad. The authors recommend several policy responses, including tailoring support for returnees and the communities they return to, based on their views on trust and reconciliation. Additionally, they call for further efforts to examine the specific challenges faced by internal returnees and the reasons behind their lower levels of trust compared to other groups.

How do refugees affect social life in host communities? The case of Congolese refugees in Rwanda

Veronika Fajth, Özge Bilgili, Craig Loschmann, and Melissa Siegel

This paper investigates the impact of the long-term presence of Congolese refugees on the social life of host communities in Rwanda. By the end of 2017, Rwanda hosted over 80,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Notably, Congolese refugees and their Rwandan host communities share several cultural similarities.

The study examines three dimensions of social cohesion: (1) perceptions of safety within the community; (2) presence of formal and informal social networks; and (3) levels of trust in various groups, including the community itself, refugees, international organizations (IOs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The authors compare these outcomes for host communities at varying distances from refugee camps.

The analysis utilizes data from a household survey conducted in 2016 in host communities surrounding the three largest refugee camps: Gihembe, Kigeme and Kiziba. Additionally, focus group discussions with host community members were conducted to provide qualitative insights that complement the empirical results.

Main findings:

- **There is no significant overall association between proximity to a refugee camp and perceptions of safety within a community**. However, respondents living within 10 km of the Kigeme camp feel their community is slightly less safe compared to those living beyond 20 km, although this relationship is only marginally statistically significant.

- **Proximity to a refugee camp does not significantly affect overall membership in local organizations**. Host communities within 10 km of the Kigeme camp are more likely to belong to a local organization compared to those living further away. Conversely,

those within 10 km of the Gihembe camp are less likely to belong to a local organization. No significant association is found for the Kiziba camp.

- **There is a slightly higher prevalence of informal social networks in communities closer to the camps.** Living within 10 km of a camp increases the likelihood of having an informal social network compared to living further away. This result is primarily driven by households near the Kigeme camp, where access to informal social networks is relatively low.

- **Living close to a camp is associated with lower levels of trust within one's own community.** This result is evident in host communities surrounding the Kigeme camp, with no significant association found for the Gihembe or Kiziba camps.

- **There is no overall association between proximity to a refugee camp and trust in international organizations (IOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or the refugee population itself.** However, respondents living within 10 km of the Kiziba camp exhibit higher levels of trust towards refugees compared to those living further away.

- Focus group discussions revealed that cultural proximity, increased social and economic interactions over time, and support from international organizations and NGOs contribute to positive relations between refugees and host communities.

Overall, **the study finds no significant adverse associations between proximity to refugee camps and social cohesion in host communities, apart from trust within one's own community**. This negative association is primarily driven by a single refugee camp, highlighting the importance of local context, and challenging the notion of a general adverse effect. The study also reveals a **positive association between proximity to refugee camps and membership in informal social networks**. The varying results across different camps for both formal and informal networks underscore the critical role of local context in shaping these outcomes. The authors suggest that cultural proximity between refugees and host communities, along with increased economic and social interactions, may contribute positively to social cohesion in host communities.

South African attitudes towards refugee settlement: Examining the importance of threat perceptions

Steven Lawrence Gordon

This paper **investigates policy preferences and attitudes to refugees in South Africa**. South Africa hosted more than 240,000 refugees and asylum seekers in mid-2022. The vast majority (84 per cent) originated from other African countries, mainly Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia.

The study utilizes data from the 2020 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), which is nationally representative and includes responses from 3,133 individuals. Respondents

were asked a series of questions to gauge their preferences regarding refugee policies and their perceptions of the threats posed by refugees in various domains, including safety, labor market, health, and resources. Additionally, the survey assessed the level of deprivation respondents felt in areas such as housing, transport, healthcare, clothing, and food, how often they attended religious services, and how knowledgeable they felt about the refugee situation in South Africa. The survey also collected a variety of socio-demographic variables that were used as controls in the analysis.

The data reveals a significant diversity of opinion on refugee settlement policy, with no single policy position emerging as dominant. More than a third (36 percent) selected the most exclusionary option, advocating for refugees to be sent back to their countries of origin. A quarter (25 percent) believed that refugees should be confined to camps on the border. About a tenth (11 percent) thought that refugees could reside inside the country but should not be allowed to work. Less than a fifth (19 percent) supported the most inclusionary option, which aligns with the current official policy. Only a small minority (9 percent) were unsure of how to answer the question.

Main empirical findings:

- **Immigrant threat perceptions were found to be a robust correlate of exclusionary policy preferences.** The more threatened an individual felt by international migrants, the more likely they were to support excluding refugees from South Africa. Among the various types of threats, resource threat had the strongest correlation with exclusionary attitudes, while health threat had the weakest.

- **Economic anxiety emerged as one of the strongest correlates in the analysis**. However, objective economic status was a poor predictor of attitudes towards refugees. Higher levels of economic anxiety correlated with stronger support for exclusionary policies. The relationship was non-linear, with the strongest effects observed for the most exclusionary options.

- **Knowledge about refugees increased the likelihood of supporting liberal policies**. However, it was a weaker predictor compared to threat perceptions and economic anxiety.

- **Religious attendance was correlated with more progressive policy preferences.** Individuals who attended religious services or meetings were more likely to adopt a progressive stance on refugee settlement policies.

The study concludes that threat perceptions are the most significant driver of public attitudes towards refugee settlement in South Africa. Economic anxiety and religiosity also play important roles, while subjective knowledge has a weaker effect. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and advocates seeking to reduce anti-refugee sentiment and promote more inclusive policies.

Violence, Empathy and Altruism: Evidence from the Ivorian Refugee Crisis in Liberia

Alexandra C. Hartman and Benjamin S. Morse

This paper **investigates whether empathy, stemming from past exposure to violence, can motivate altruistic behavior towards refugees.** The study focuses on the case of Ivorian refugees Liberia. During the 2010–11 Ivorian refugee crisis, over 150,000 Ivorians fled to eastern Liberia, a region that had itself experienced civil war from 1990 to 2003. Ivorian refugees found refuge in Liberian towns and villages. Some refugees shared ethnic and religious ties with the local population, others lacked cultural ties, and some came from groups that had a history of conflict with local communities.

The analysis is based on a survey of about 1,500 Liberians conducted in July 2013 and June 2014, covering 64 Liberian villages in the Liberia-Cote d'Ivoire border region. The survey collected data on background characteristics, experiences with hosting refugees, displacement, and violence during the Liberian civil war. The survey also included a conjoint experiment to elicit respondents' preferences over attributes of refugees. Additionally, semi-structured field interviews were conducted to explore how Liberians reflected on their experiences hosting refugees.

Main findings:

- **Individuals who directly or indirectly experienced violence during the Liberian civil war tend to host more refugees overall, including a higher proportion of non-coethnic and non-coreligious (Muslim) refugees.** Exposure to one additional act of violence is associated with 5.6 additional refugee-months of hosting, a 2 percentage point increase in the likelihood of hosting non-coethnic refugees, and a 1 percentage point increase in the likelihood of hosting non-coreligious refugees.

- **Past experiences with violence are linked to a greater likelihood of hosting refugee families experiencing health problems or food insecurity upon arrival, as well as those fleeing direct violence**. Specifically, one additional act of violence correlates with a 5 percentage point increase in the likelihood of hosting a family with health problems, a 4 percentage point increase in the likelihood of hosting a family that were "hungry" or "starving" on arrival, and a 4 percentage point increase in the likelihood of hosting a family that had direct violence.

- **Individuals affected by violence host a higher proportion of distressed and outgroup refugees.** Violence-affected individuals host a higher proportion of refugees with health problems or those fleeing direct violence, although they do not host a higher proportion of food-insecure refugees. Additionally, exposure to violence is associated with a 1 percentage point increase in the proportion of non-coethnic families hosted and a 1 percentage point increase in the proportion of Muslim refugee families hosted.

- **The conjoint experiment reveals that while biases against outgroup refugees are generally strong, individuals who experienced violence exhibit less bias and show stronger preferences for distressed refugees**. Discrimination against non-coreligious (Muslim) refugees is severe, with non-coreligious refugees 15 per cent less likely to be hosted than coreligious refugees. To a lesser degree, respondents prefer to host distressed (hungry) refugees, female-headed households, and refugees with farming skills. Preferences for distressed (hungry) and vulnerable (female) refugees increases with prior exposure to violence, though these results are not statistically significant.

- **Preferences for the distressed are greater and outgroup biases are lower when individuals are primed to think about their own experiences of violence and displacement**. Discrimination against non-coreligious refugees is the single strongest predictor of whether a refugee is hosted. However, when individuals consider their own experiences with violence and displacement prior to deciding who to host, they become significantly more responsive to signs of refugee distress, while bias against religious outgroups becomes significantly less severe.

- Qualitative findings from structured interviews suggest that individuals' past experiences with hardship during flight, exile and violence triggered an empathetic response to the refugee crisis.

Overall, the study demonstrates that **individuals who have directly or indirectly experienced violence host more refugees overall, exhibit stronger preferences for distressed refugees, and show less bias against outgroup refugees, and host a higher proportion of non-coethnic, non-coreligious and distressed refugees**. The findings challenge the common assumption that violence necessarily leads to greater antagonism toward outgroups. Instead, the study suggests that, under certain circumstances, past exposure to violence can motivate altruistic behavior across group boundaries.

Welcoming the Unwelcome: Refugee Flows, Refugee Rights, and Political Violence

Burcu Savun

This article investigates the impact of de jure refugee rights on the risk of civil conflict and violent attacks against refugees by the local population. The de jure rights examined include the right to work, freedom of movement, the right to own property and land, and the right to education.

The analysis utilizes an original global dataset on refugees' rights, data on civilian violence against refugees from the Political and Societal Violence by and against Refugees (POSVAR) dataset, and data on the onset of civil conflict from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset. The analysis covers annual data for all countries between 1996 and 2015,

focusing on two main dependent variables: civil conflict and civilian violence against refugees.

Main findings:

- **Granting more rights to refugees reduces the risk of civil conflict onset**. The effects are particularly pronounced for the rights to freedom of movement, the right to work, and the right to own property. The right to education and the right to own land also show a negative association with civil conflict, but the results are not statistically significant.

- **Countries that extend more rights to their refugee populations are less likely to experience civilian violence against refugees**. Preliminary evidence indicates a negative association between the provision of refugee rights and the occurrence of violence against refugees.

- The size of the refugee population, ethnic fractionalization, GDP per capita, level of unemployment, and democracy are positively associated with an increase in civilian anti-refugee violence, while the rule of law seems to decrease the risk of violence. However, changes in the percentage of the refugee population and economic recessions do not show a discernible effect on the incidence of civilian violence against refugees.

The author concludes that l**iberal refugee policies are significantly associated with a reduction in the risk of civil conflict and anti-refugee violence in host countries**. This finding suggests that host governments and international organizations should give greater priority to guaranteeing refugee rights and promoting income-generating activities among forcibly displaced populations to minimize potential security risks associated with refugees.

Reducing Prejudice toward Refugees: Evidence That Social Networks Influence Attitude Change in Uganda

Jennifer M. Larson and Janet I. Lewis

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This paper details the results of a field experiment to **assess the effectiveness of an intervention aimed at shifting the attitudes of host populations towards South Sudanese refugees in four villages in the West Nile region of Uganda**. The experiment also measures the village social networks and the social processing that occurs within them after the intervention. Uganda hosts approximately 900,000 South Sudanese refugees, with the majority residing in the West Nile region.

From February to August 2021, a baseline survey was conducted across all households in each of the four villages. This survey assessed attitudes towards refugees, household characteristics, and the interactions that form the village social networks. In a randomly selected half of the households, a perspective-taking treatment was administered. This treatment involved sharing a narrative about a South Sudanese refugee's life and

perspective, designed to foster a nonjudgmental context for discussion and encourage active information processing. Approximately two weeks later, an endline survey was conducted in all households, reassessing attitudes, and exploring experiences with social processing. Additionally, a qualitative follow-up was carried out about a year after the study concluded.

The survey data show that the selected villages were similar in size (about 100–150 households each) and the average age of respondents was similar, though they varied considerably in other demographics such as levels of education, primary occupation, and religious affiliation. Baseline data indicate that a substantial minority of Ugandans in the West Nile study villages hold exclusionary attitudes towards refugees.

Main findings:

- **The perspective-taking intervention led to warmer attitudes towards refugees on average in all four villages.** However, some of this positive shift in attitudes diminished over the three weeks between the baseline and endline surveys.

- **Individuals' views were significantly shaped by their social networks.** Respondents finished the study with views on refugees that were substantially more similar to their network neighbors' views than when they began. (Network neighbors are the set of households to which they are directly linked through sharing of meals, visiting, borrowing money, and chatting about rumors). Proximity to key reference households—those with extreme baseline attitudes or strong responses to the treatment—affected endline attitudes. Closer network proximity to households with initially warm attitudes or those positively influenced by the treatment resulted in warmer endline attitudes.

- **Social processing was prevalent**. After the intervention, respondents spoke with their peers in the village social networks. Both treated and control villagers talked about refugees more frequently than usual. In this way, the intervention spilled over into control households and further shaped the reactions of the treated. In all four villages, individuals who discussed refugees became more similar in their attitudes.

- **Spillovers from treated respondents do not occur uniformly; some treated respondents generate positive spillovers, while some generate negative ones**. Spillovers from treated respondents were not uniform; some generated positive spillovers, while others generated negative ones. Those who were particularly persuaded by the treatment produced positive spillovers, whereas the few who reacted most negatively to the treatment generated negative spillovers through the social network.

The authors conclude that **perspective-taking interventions are effective at reducing prejudice among Ugandan individuals toward South Sudanese refugees**. Another key finding is that the intervention sparked a social process, increasing conversations about refugees in the two weeks following the intervention. This coincided with improved average attitudes towards refugees not only among treated households but also among control households in the four villages. The results suggest that those most persuaded by the treatment created positive spillovers, while those most negatively influenced generated negative spillovers. These findings strongly suggest that designing interventions for enduring improvements in attitudes towards refugees in rural, developing country contexts requires understanding the social processes that can reinforce or undermine individual-level attitude change.

More than the Sum of Its Parts: Donor-Sponsored Cash-for-Work Programmes and Social Cohesion in Jordanian Communities Hosting Syrian Refugees

Tina Zintl and Markus Loewe

This paper **examines the impact of donor-funded Cash for Work (CfW) programs in Jordan on social cohesion in refugee-hosting communities in Jordan**. At the time of the study, there were between 0.6 and 0.7 million registered Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Social cohesion is defined as "both the vertical and the horizontal relations among members of society and the state as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, an inclusive identity and cooperation for the common good". This paper considers four attributes of social cohesion: (1) horizontal trust, defined as outgroup trust between different societal groups; (2) vertical trust, defined as trust between society and the state; (3) sense of belonging to a community (specified from inclusive identity in the above definition); and (4) cooperation for the common good, as the preparedness to engage for the society at large.

The analysis is based on a mixed-method approach, incorporating: (i) semi-structured interviews with 281 CfW participants and non-participants at nine CfW sites across Jordan; (ii) qualitative interviews with 99 neutral observers at the local and national levels; (iii) group discussions conducted in Amman in 2019; and (iv) quantitative analysis of a census of all 1847 participants of one specific CfW program in 2019 and 2020 (the GIZ Post-Employment Survey).

Main findings:

- **CfW programs enhanced a sense of belonging to local communities, particularly among Syrian participants, especially women, as well as Jordanian participants and other community members of both nationalities and genders.** This was primarily achieved through shared work experiences, which fostered an inclusive identity. The creation of public infrastructure alone did not significantly impact the sense of belonging, underscoring the importance of active participation in CfW programs.

- **CfW programs increased horizontal trust among community members, including both participants and non-participants, and across different nationalities and genders.** This trust was further bolstered by the economic benefits and skills acquired through CfW programs.

- **Community members' vertical trust in the state and state capabilities developed in a more ambiguous way** as people realized that the CfW programs are exclusively financed, and often managed by, international agencies.

- CfW programs contributed positively to local economic development by injecting cash into the community, which was spent and re-spent, creating a multiplier effect. However,

the tight labor market in Jordan limited the programs' impact on overall employment rates.

CfW programs in Jordan have proven effective in enhancing social cohesion, particularly by fostering a sense of belonging and increasing horizontal trust among community members. While the economic benefits are evident, the programs' impact on vertical trust remains ambiguous. The findings underscore the importance of active participation in CfW programs to achieve social cohesion, rather than relying solely on the creation of public infrastructure.

The crime effect of refugees

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This paper **investigates the impact of Syrian refugees on crime rates in Türkiye** between 2006 and 2016. By 2016, approximately 3 million Syrian refugees had settled in Türkiye, resulting in a 4 percent increase in the country's population. Syrian refugees in Türkiye generally have lower educational attainment compared to citizens, and most employed refugees work in the informal sector.

The analysis utilizes data on Syrian refugees in each of the 81 provinces of the country from the Presidency of Migration Management, and new criminal cases received by prosecutors each year from annual reports produced by the Ministry of Justice. The years 2017 and 2018 are excluded from the analysis due to significant increases in new criminal cases during these years, which were influenced by a state of emergency declared by the government following an unsuccessful coup attempt in 2016. Consequently, the analysis focuses on the period from 2006 to 2016.

To isolate the impact of refugees on criminal activity, the authors exploit the variation in the number of refugees across provinces over time. An instrumental variable approach is employed to address the potential endogeneity of refugee location, which may arise if the intensity of the refugee inflow to a destination province is related to some unobserved province attributes. The authors use a weighted metric for the distance between the source governorates in Syria and the destination provinces in Türkiye as the source of exogenous variation in refugees' location preferences.

Main results:

- **The presence of Syrian refugees has a positive effect on local criminal activity in Türkiye.** Specifically, an increase of 1,000 refugees is associated with an additional 240 crimes reported to prosecutors' offices in a typical province. It is important to note that

this increase in criminal activity is not solely attributable to refugees, as both refugees and natives contribute to the rise in crime.

- **An increase in the number of low-skilled native residents also leads to a rise in crime**. However, the impact on crime is more pronounced for an equivalent increase in the refugee population compared to the native population.

The authors conclude that **the increase in the refugee population has a positive impact on crime rates**. However, they note that **part or all of this increase may be driven by the native population**, possibly in response to changes in labor market conditions triggered by the refugee inflow. The authors emphasize the need to strengthen social safety nets, implement measures to counteract adverse labor market impacts, and provide additional support to the criminal justice system to mitigate the repercussions of a massive influx of refugees into the country.