



Forced Displacement Literature Review

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Impact of Rohingya refugees on food prices in Bangladesh: Evidence from a natural experiment

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Between August and October 2017 close to 700,000 ethnic minority Rohingyas fled Myanmar and sought refuge in Bangladesh. The authors use this event as a natural experiment to **examine the impact of the influx of Rohingyas on food prices in Ukhia sub-district, the main host region in Bangladesh**. 80 percent of the refugees settled in Ukhia sub-district, where the population increased by 300 percent due to the arrival of the refugees. The Rohingya do not have freedom of movement or the formal right to work, although some refugees work informally.

The authors analyze 49 food items, looking at their prices 8-12 months before and after the arrival of refugees in the host region, and compare these price movements to those in other similar regions in Bangladesh. The analysis is based on price data collected from sub-district local government offices.

Main findings:

- **The arrival of Rohingya refugees led to an increase in food prices in host areas across several food groups such as protein and vegetables and the overall food price index.** Overall, food prices increased in Ukhia by 8 percent, and prices of protein and vegetables increased by 7 and 36 percent, respectively, relative to other similar sub-districts.
- **Food aid played a role in stemming the increase in food prices.** The prices of most food-aid items (low-quality rice, red lentils and packeted soybean oil) declined in Ukhia sub-district relative to other similar sub-districts. Prices of low-quality rice and red lentils in Ukhia fell by 16 percent and 14 percent respectively, while packeted soybean oil prices increased by just by one percent. With food aid items (low-quality rice) included, cereal prices declined by 3 percent.
- **No evidence is found for a mitigating effect on food prices through lower agricultural wages in the short-term.** The authors suggest that in the long run, wage reductions due to the presence of Rohingya refugees, which increases the supply of agricultural workers, will be reflected in food prices.

The authors conclude that **the sudden arrival of large numbers of refugees increased food prices in Ukhia sub-district**. Even though **food aid mitigated price increases for some food items** (low-quality rice and soybeans), there would have been a detrimental impact on the welfare of host communities, at least in the short run. The authors **anticipate that decreases in agricultural wages will be reflected in food prices in the long-run**.

Armed conflicts, forced displacement and food security in host communities

Justin George and Adesoji Adelaja

World Development, Volume 158 (2022)

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This article **examines the effect of inflows of internally displaced persons (IDPs) on food security in host communities in Nigeria**. It also examines the differential impacts of displacement due to conflicts, natural disasters and communal clashes on food security in host communities.

Food security outcomes are measured using the Food Consumption Score, which is a composite measure of dietary diversity, originally developed by the World Food Program. The analysis is based on the food consumption module of the General Household Survey (GHS) from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, together with survey data on IDPs from IOM.

Main results:

- Overall, **inflows of IDPs adversely affect food security outcomes for host communities**. The authors suggest several explanations for this result, including: (a) increased demand for food due to the inflows of IDPs, which is not offset in the short term by the increased supply of labor provided by IDPs; (b) structural rigidities in food production and distribution systems; and (c) a slow humanitarian response.
- **Displacement caused by natural disasters and communal clashes have no significant effect on food security outcomes of host communities**. The authors argue that natural disasters and community clashes are more likely to be within the domain of humanitarian response agencies and their budgets are often adequate to meet the needs of people affected by these types of emergencies.
- **Insurgency-driven displacement has a negative effect on food security of host communities**. The authors suggest that it is more difficult for humanitarian agencies

to respond to insurgency-driven displacement, compared to other types of forced displacement crises. In particular, security challenges create additional impediments to accessing communities.

The authors advocate for greater preparedness for insurgency-based displacement, including through anticipatory early warning systems, more rapid needs assessment, budgetary provisions for response agencies ahead of the displacements, and more understanding of the demographics of displaced populations.

Look who perpetrates violence and where: Explaining variation in forced migration

Oguzhan Turkoglu

Political Geography, Volume 94 (2022)

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102558>

This paper **examines the different determinants of internal and external displacement**. The author argues that people flee their homes when the expected utility of leaving exceeds the expected utility of staying, and that in general external displacement is costlier than internal displacement, due to additional risks to personal safety and increased financial hardships associated with crossing a border and adapting to life in a new country. However, when violence is perpetrated by government or there is widespread insurgent violence across the country, the risks of staying and the benefits of fleeing the country are high, and people are more likely to flee across borders.

The analysis is based on refugee and IDPs flows between 1989 and 2017 from UNHCR and data on conflict from the Armed Conflict Dataset from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program/Peace Research Institute in Oslo (UCDP/PRIO). The author also controls for political, economic and geographic factors, drawing on data from the World Bank (level of economic development), Polity IV dataset (regime type) and Transborder Ethnic Kin Dataset (ethnic relations between origin and destination country).

The author finds that the pattern of displacement depends on: (1) the perpetrator; and (2) the geographical spread of the violence. Specific findings are as follows:

- **Government violence increases the number of refugees but does not have a significant impact on internal displacement.** The author argues that to escape

government violence, people must flee to another country because the government is generally effective everywhere within its borders.

- **Insurgent violence has a significant effect on internal displacement**, with internal displacement rising to a peak as violence spreads and then decreasing as violence becomes widespread across the country. The author argues that if rebel violence is limited to a small area, people can escape it by leaving the conflict zone, but when violence is widespread, people may not have many opportunities to flee within the country and may have to cross an international border to escape violence.
- **Insurgent violence can also affect refugee flows**. Some people who can afford to migrate abroad (for example, individuals who have networks in the destination country, can speak a foreign language or have financial means) might opt to flee abroad rather than within the country, even when violence is not widespread.

The author concludes that **even though violent conflict affects both internal and external displacement, the pattern of displacement depends on the perpetrator and its spread**. While government violence increases the number of refugees, rebel violence results in more internal displacement.

Should I stay or should I go? The decision to flee or stay home during civil war

Alex Braithwaite, Joseph M. Cox and Faten Ghosn

International Interactions, Volume 47, Issue 2 (2021), Pages 221-236

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This paper **examines whether different forms of violence affected decisions to flee within the country or abroad during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990)**, differentiating between: (a) indirect violence (such as shelling or shooting), which is less likely to target specific individuals but occurs due to proximity to a battlefield; and (b) direct violence (including physical assaults, torture, sexual violence, abductions, forced labor, and wage theft), which specifically targets individuals. Following Schewel (2019), the authors frame the analysis in terms of an individual's motivation to migrate (aspiration) that may be impeded by their capacity to migrate (capability).

The analysis is based on a survey of 2,400 Lebanese residents who lived through the civil war. The sample only includes refugees who eventually returned to Lebanon and does not include refugees who remained overseas in 2017, when the survey data was collected.

Main findings:

- **Individuals exposed to violence were more likely to become internally displaced** compared to individuals who were not exposed to violence; however, this effect was not homogenous across types of violence or survey respondents.
- **Indirect violence, such as shelling, increased the likelihood that survey respondents became internally displaced in Lebanon** rather than remaining at home throughout the war or leaving the country.
- **Direct forms of violence, such as torture and sexual violence, motivated individuals to flee Lebanon.**

The author concludes that **different forms of violence—direct or indirect—influence decisions taken by individuals to remain in conflict-affected areas, move to secure areas within the country, or to flee abroad.**

Trends and Patterns of Global Refugee Migration

Sonja Fransen and Hein de Haas

Population and Development Review, Volume 48, Issue 1 (2022)

<https://doi.org/10.1111/padr.12456>

This paper **examines long-term trends and patterns in global refugee migration between 1951 and 2018**, in terms of the intensity, geographic reach, and regional orientation of refugee migration. The author notes that large-scale refugee movements are not a new phenomenon, and that in the aftermath of World War II, the global displaced population had risen to 175 million, approximately 8 percent of the world population at the time and much higher than current levels.

The authors construct and analyze indices that capture the intensity (refugees as a percentage of the world population), emigration intensity (refugees as a percentage of origin-country populations), immigration intensity (refugees as a percentage of destination-country populations), spread (global spread of migrants across all possible bilateral migration

corridors), and distance of refugee migration, drawing on data from UNHCR's Population Statistics Database.

Main findings:

- **Estimates of global displacement have increased dramatically over the past five decades**, from 1.8 million in 1951 to 44 million in the early 1990s to 62 million by 2018. Most of the increase since the early 2000s is **driven by a sharp increase in IDP numbers**, reflecting improved statistical coverage of IDPs and the inclusion of people in IDP-like situations.
- **Refugee migration has fluctuated between 0.1 and 0.3 percent of the world population, depending on levels of conflict**. This suggests that there has not been a long-term increase in global levels of refugee migration.
- **Increases in the numbers of globally displaced are largely driven by the inclusion of populations and countries that were previously excluded from the dataset**. The total number of displaced as a share of the world population increased from 0.10 to 0.27 percent since the early 2000s, due to the inclusion of IDP data (between the early 2000s and 2018, the number of IDPs as a percentage of the world population increased from 0.07 to 0.5 percent).
- **Earlier UNHCR data may have underrepresented true refugee numbers, due to poor geographical coverage**. Since WWII, the intensity of violent conflicts and government oppression seems to have shown a decreasing rather than an increasing trend. In the early 1950s, the number of battle-related deaths in state-based conflicts was at an all-time high, while reported refugee stocks were relatively low.
- **The trend in refugee intensity (refugees as a percentage of either origin or host country population) fluctuates over time, and does not reflect an increasing trend in refugee migration post 1980**. The authors consider a fixed set of countries for which there are data for each year since 1980, and find that the intensity fluctuates rather than increases. The authors conclude, therefore, that what appears to be an increase in refugee migration reflects the growing number of countries included in UNHCR data rather than a real increase in refugee migration.
- **Refugees have tended to come from a shrinking number of origin countries and move to an increasing variety of destination countries over recent decades**. The bulk of the global refugee population comes from a relatively small number of countries. Refugees also concentrate in a relatively small number of destinations, but there is some evidence that the number of destination countries has been increasing

and diversifying. The percentage of global refugees living in the top 15 refugee-hosting countries decreased from 84 percent in 1980 to 75 percent in 2018.

- **Although most refugees remain near their origin countries, the average distance between origin and destination countries has increased over time.** Regions with high refugee outmigration (particularly West Asia and East and Central Africa) also host relatively large refugee populations. The percentage of refugees remaining in their own region declined from 98 percent in 1980 to 83 percent in 2018, suggesting diversification of destinations and further travels of refugees over time. While most refugees in Africa, Asia and the Americas also originate from these regions, the majority of refugees in Europe and Oceania came from other continents. The average geographic distance between origin and destination country has increased over time. Between 1980 and 2018, the average distance that refugees traveled increased by 40 percent. On average, refugees travel shorter distances than voluntary migrants.
- **Most refugees originate from low-income countries and these numbers have increased over time. The majority of the world's refugees are also hosted by low-income countries.**

The authors conclude that **recent surges in refugee numbers as well as asylum applications in Western countries do not reflect a structural change in the trends and patterns of global refugee migration but, rather, reflect a “normal” and therefore temporary response to recent increases in conflict levels in particular countries**, with refugee numbers usually going down again after the conflicts subside.

When do refugees return home? Evidence from Syrian displacement in Mashreq

Lori Beaman, Harun Onder, and Stefanie Onder

Journal of Development Economics, Volume 155 (2022)

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This paper **analyzes the factors that influenced the early, voluntary, and unassisted return of Syrian refugees from Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq during a period of active conflict in Syria, between January 2011 and March 2018.**

The analysis is based on a novel dataset that includes: (a) demographic data, arrival and return dates (if applicable) for two million Syrian refugees from UNHCR's Profile Global Registration System (ProGres) database; (b) data on living conditions in Jordan and Lebanon from vulnerability surveys conducted by UN agencies; and (c) conditions in Syria from a conflict-events database and nightlights data for Syria

Main results:

- Returnee household tend to be smaller than non-returnee households, and the returnee population has a lower proportion of children (under age 15) and a higher proportion of seniors (over 55) compared to the non-returnee population. **Returnees also tend to have lower educational attainment compared to non-returnees.**
- **In some refugee households, return decisions are staggered with an individual member returning, while others remain in exile.** 63 percent of households returned together at one time, while 37 percent of households returned in stages (one or more individuals returned first, who were then followed by some or all remaining household members).
- **Better security in a refugee's home district in Syria increases the likelihood of return.** A one standard deviation improvement in security (measured by the change in the Conflict Events Index between the previous two quarters) increases refugee returns by 6 percent.
- **Improved access to utilities in a refugee's home sub-district in Syria, proxied by nightlight luminosity, increases the likelihood of return.** A one standard deviation improvement in luminosity increases returns by 2 percent. This result suggests that quality of life is a factor in refugees' decisions to return home even in the presence of ongoing conflict in the country of origin.
- **Refugees with better food security and housing conditions in host countries are more likely to return.** The authors suggest that as their incomes rise, more refugees are better able to afford the logistical costs associated with returning to Syria.

Overall, these results suggest that **an increase in risk-adjusted payoffs from return (delivered by better security and living conditions in locations of origin) tends to increase returns. However, improvements in payoffs (such as food security) in host countries appear to increase returns.** The authors posit that an increase in income in exile can trigger return for those with low incomes in the presence of mobility costs.

The effect of 3.6 million refugees on crime

Murat G. Kırdar, Ivan López Cruz, and Betül Türküm

Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, Volume 194 (2022), Pages 568-582

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2021.11.014>

This paper **estimates the causal effect of inflow Syrian refugees on crime rates in Turkey**. By the end of 2020, the number of Syrian refugees in Turkey had reached 3.6 million, almost all of whom live outside of refugee camps in host communities.

The authors examine variations in refugee numbers and crime rates per 100,000 inhabitants (including natives and refugees) across Turkish provinces and over time for the period 2008-2019. The analysis is disaggregated by category of crime, including: assault, crimes involving firearms and knives, homicide, robbery, smuggling, theft, sexual crimes, kidnapping, defamation, use and purchase of drugs, and production and commerce of drugs. The analysis is based on provincial crime data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) together with several additional province-level datasets.

Main findings:

- **Inflows of refugees led to a reduction in aggregate crime rates in host provinces.** A ten-point increase in the percentage of refugees in the provinces' population led to an 8 percent decrease in crime rates.
- **The reduction in crime rates with the arrival of refugees does not result from an increased presence of armed forces (civilian and military personnel) in refugee-hosting provinces.** Rather, there is suggestive evidence of a decrease in the per capita number of armed forces in refugee-hosting provinces.
- **The decrease in crime rates is observed across all categories of crime, except for smuggling.** The authors suggest that the increase in the rate of smuggling crimes could reflect the prevalence of use of human smugglers to facilitate the entry of refugees from Syria into Turkey, or from Turkey to the EU.

The authors **conclude that there is a negative immigration-crime relationship in this context**. The authors note that this finding is surprising given that inflows of refugees could be expected to increase crime rates due to several criminogenic factors such as: (a) Syrian refugees are on average less educated and younger than Turkish natives; (b) refugees in Turkey face impediments to accessing the formal labor market and are subject to movement restrictions, leading to a potential skills mismatch; and (c) many Syrian refugees work in the

informal sector, displacing low-skilled Turkish workers who may consequently resort to illegal activities. The authors offer several possible explanations for this counter-intuitive result: (i) the threat of detention or refoulement may deter refugees from crime; (ii) employment of refugees in the informal sector and cash assistance programs may provide adequate income, eliminating the necessity to resort to illegal activities; and (iii) many Turkish natives displaced from the formal labor market found employment and increased wages in the expanding formal labor market.

Effects of including refugees in local government schools on pupils' learning achievement: Evidence from West Nile, Uganda

Katsuki Sakaue and James Wokadala

International Journal of Educational Development, Volume 90 (2022)

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2021.102543>

This article **examines the impact of including refugee children in government schools on learning achievement of both refugee and native pupils in the West Nile region of Uganda**. Between June 2016 and December 2017, the refugee population in Uganda increased from 0.2 million to 1.4 million, largely due to the arrival of large numbers of refugees from South Sudan. As of October 2017, when data for this study was collected, there were more than 1 million South Sudanese refugees in Uganda, the majority hosted in the West Nile region.

Humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations established donor-funded schools in the refugee settlements when there weren't any nearby government schools. Government schools also received donor assistance proportionate to the number of refugees they enrolled.

The analysis draws on household survey data collected from South Sudanese refugees and host communities, including learning assessments. During the survey, a questionnaire was administered to household heads (or their representatives) to collect information on the households and children aged 16 and younger. English and mathematics tests were administered to all children aged 6 to 16, regardless of their school attendance.

Main results:

- Descriptive statistics show that **refugee pupils perform better in both English and math compared to Ugandan pupils in the West Nile region attending government schools**, even though refugee pupils are from households with less educated heads and continue their learning in a poorer school environment with higher pupil–teacher ratios (PTR). Additionally, government schools have a relatively better learning environment (lower pupil-teacher ratio) than non-government schools.
- **Refugee pupils attending government schools do not perform differently in English but score lower in mathematics than those in non-government schools.** The authors suggest that this result shows that inclusion in local government schools has no significant negative effect on refugee pupils' English scores in a context where the national language of refugees and that of natives are the same.
- Learning achievement of refugees is determined by several factors including: a positive effect of household head's education on the mathematics test score; a positive effect of having a source of income other than UNHCR stipends on the English test score; a positive effect of a longer stay in Uganda on the English test score; and a positive effect of hiring (untrained) refugee teaching assistants on the English test score. There is no association between PTR and refugee pupils' learning achievement.
- **Ugandan pupils attending government schools with higher refugee concentrations score lower in both English and mathematics, in the context of an ongoing influx of refugees.**
- There are few major predictors of learning achievement among Ugandan pupils in government schools, except: a positive effect of having a female household head on the English test score; and a negative effect of the pupil-teacher ratio on the English test score.

The authors conclude that **the inclusion of refugees in government schools in Uganda has not had a demonstrable positive effect on refugee or native pupils' learning achievement in the context of an ongoing, large-scale refugee influx.** The authors note that the finding that inclusion in government schools has no significant adverse effect on refugee pupils' English scores, might only be relevant in contexts where the national language of refugees and that of natives are the same.

Refugees and foreign direct investment: Quasi-experimental evidence from US resettlements

Anna-Maria Mayda, Christopher Parsons, Han Phamb, and Pierre-Louis Vézinaç

Journal of Development Economics, Volume 156 (2022)

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2022.102818>

This article examines **the causal effect of refugees resettled in the United State (US) on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows** from the US to refugees' countries of origin, and studies the case of Vietnamese 'boat people' who arrived in the US in 1975.

Specifically, the authors examine the effect of refugees who entered the US between 1990 and 2000 on FDI to their countries of origin between 2005 and 2015. For the case of Vietnamese boat people, the authors examine the effect of country policies and refugees' human capital in influencing FDI from the US to Vietnam. The analysis is based on confidential data on the universe of refugees resettled in the US between 1990 and 2015 from the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) of the US Department of State, together with project-level FDI data from fDiMarkets, a research arm of the Financial Times Group (FT).

Refugees may facilitate FDI in three ways: (1) refugees might be positively selected and relatively well endowed with human capital and therefore more likely to succeed and facilitate FDI flows; (2) refugees facilitate FDI through their ethnic networks or social capital; and (3) cross-cultural experiences increase individuals' capabilities to identify promising business ideas.

Main findings:

- **Refugee inflows significantly increase FDI to refugees' countries of origin 15 years later, across all measures of FDI (flows, projects, and jobs).** A 10 percent increase in refugees increases outward FDI flows to their countries of origin by 0.54 percent, FDI projects by 0.24 percent and FDI jobs by 0.72 percent. These increases exceed corresponding estimates in the related literature on the impact of economic migrants on outward FDI flows.
- There is substantial heterogeneity across countries of origin, with the largest impact on FDI for former Soviet Union countries, the former Yugoslavia, and Vietnam.

- The positive impact of refugees and FDI flows are greater in countries of origin with greater political stability and an absence of conflict and are smaller in countries of origin which are politically unstable.
- The Vietnamese case study provides causal evidence that **Vietnamese refugees fostered FDI to their home region, while national domestic reforms in Vietnam amplified the positive FDI-creating effects of the overseas Vietnamese diaspora.** More highly skilled (white collar workers) exert greater effects on bilateral FDI than blue collar workers and these effects are larger in more skill-intensive FDI sectors.

The authors conclude that **refugees foster FDI to their origin countries approximately a generation after they were first resettled, and this effect is larger when peace and political stability prevail in origin countries.** These findings demonstrate the strong ties that refugees maintain with their origin countries years or even decades after their displacement.

Self-harming behaviours of asylum seekers and refugees in Europe: A systematic review

Anna Gargiulo, Francesca Tessitore, Fabiana Le Grottaglie, Giorgia Margherita
International Journal of Psychology, Volume 56, Issue 2 (2021), Pages 189-198
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12697>

This article **provides a systematic review of 12 studies published between 2008 and 2018 on self-harming behavior among refugees and asylum-seekers in Europe.** Self-harming behavior is defined as the deliberate and self-inflicted damage of body tissue (such as cutting, burning, scratching the skin or hitting) without suicidal intent and for purposes not socially or culturally sanctioned.

Most of the articles included in the review investigated refugees' mental health broadly, including some self-harm episodes. The lack of specific research on self-harming behavior among refugees and asylum-seekers might be due to difficulties accessing this population, or because the scientific community is reluctant to recognize self-harm as an independent clinical condition, and tend to associate it with other syndromes.

Main findings:

- Several articles document the **high prevalence of self-harm practices in detention sites, which emerged as a particularly “at risk” setting**. Several factors, connected to the application for asylum (e.g., uncertainty regarding the outcome, slowness of the procedures etc.) and to social isolation, can increase distress, anxiety and depression, which can be trigger factors for self-harm in these contexts.
- **Unaccompanied minors emerged as a particularly vulnerable group for self-harming behaviors.**
- Several articles document **higher prevalence of self-harming behavior among asylum seekers relative to the native population.**

The author advocates for increased research on self-harm in asylum seekers and refugees to investigate its prevalence, characteristics, and typologies, and considering it an independent clinical condition. In particular, the author calls for more qualitative or mixed-methods research into the dynamics of self-harm across cultures, integrating western scientific and clinical paradigms with those of other cultures.