



Forced Displacement Literature Review¹

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¹ The JDC Literature Review provides summaries of recently published research to encourage the exchange of ideas on topics related to forced displacement. The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in the literature included in this review are entirely those of their authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Joint Data Center, UNHCR, the World Bank, the Executive Directors of the World Bank or the governments they represent. For convenience, the literature review contains links to websites operated by third parties. The Joint Data Center and its affiliate organizations do not represent or endorse these sites or the content, services and products they may offer, and do not guarantee the accuracy or reliability of any information, data, opinions, advice or statements provided on these sites.



Creating Coexistence: Intergroup Contact and Soccer in Post-ISIS Iraq

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Paper presented at the Research Conference on Forced Displacement 2020, co-organized by the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement, the World Bank's Research Department, the Population Studies and Training Center at Brown University and the Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) and Middle East Initiative (MEI) at Harvard University.


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The 'contact hypothesis' proposes that intergroup contact can reduce prejudice if it is positive, cooperative, endorsed by communal authorities, and places participants on equal footing (Allport et al, 1954). This paper **examines the causal impact of meaningful intergroup contact on attitudes and behaviors among Iraqis displaced by ISIS**. The analysis is based on a field experiment among Iraqi IDPs and returned IDPs in Qaraqosh (an Assyrian town in the Nineveh Governorate of northern Iraq) and Ankawa (a predominantly Assyrian suburb of Erbil in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq). The author randomly assigned amateur soccer players to an all-Christian team, or to a team mixed with Muslims, for a two-month league. The experiment meets the following conditions for the contact hypothesis: (a) a positive experience (if teams perform well); (b) a common goal (within mixed teams, but not necessarily the case for all-Christian teams encountering Muslim players as opponents in the league); (c) cooperation to achieve that goal; (d) equal power status within the intervention; and (e) endorsement of communal authorities, customs, or laws (the leagues were endorsed by an NGO operated by the Syriac Catholic church).

Key findings:

- **Intergroup contact improved tolerant behaviors toward Muslim peers.** Christians who had Muslim teammates were: 12 percentage points more likely to sign up for a mixed soccer team; 16 percentage points more likely to vote for a Muslim player (not on their team) to receive a sportsmanship award; and 34 percentage points more likely to train with Muslims six months after the end of the intervention.
- The endorsement of local leaders and coaches played an important role in bolstering new norms, which spilled over to the close-knit residents of Ankawa and Qaraqosh in the short term.
- A successful team performance was decisive in producing tolerant behaviors, with the top-performing teams being more likely to attend a mixed social event, and to patronize a



restaurant in Muslim-dominated Mosul, an especially high bar for comfort around Muslims.

- **These improvements did not come at the expense of ‘backlash effects’ among all-Christian teams** who encountered Muslims competitively as opponents in the league (as shown by match-level data on yellow and red cards).
- **However, prejudice toward Muslim strangers remained the same.** Christians who had Muslim teammates were more likely to believe in coexistence, but did not change their beliefs about Muslims more broadly.

The author concludes that **meaningful intergroup contact can build tolerant behaviors toward outgroup peers — even if underlying prejudice seems to persist.** The author posits that war entrenches latent prejudice and hardens group boundaries. Nevertheless, improving interactions with outgroup peers is a worthwhile and feasible goal, given that these secondary relationships are key to rebuilding social trust. She suggests that endorsement from communal authorities is needed, and that a positive experience is decisive in amplifying contact effects.

Refugee Mobility: Evidence from Phone Data in Turkey


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Paper presented at the Research Conference on Forced Displacement 2020, co-organized by the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement, the World Bank’s Research Department, the Population Studies and Training Center at Brown University and the Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) and Middle East Initiative (MEI) at Harvard University.

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This paper **examines the mobility of refugees across provinces in Turkey as a measure of their social integration.** The analysis is based on call detail records from the Data for Refugees Turkey (D4R) challenge, combined with socioeconomic data at the province level (nightlight density from satellite data as a measure of income) and indices for various types of news (leadership change, boycotts, violent protests, economic aid, humanitarian aid, and asylum grants). The authors employ a standard gravity model to empirically estimate determinants of refugee movements—compared to non-refugee movements—including: province characteristics; distances between provinces; income levels; network effects;



refugee-specific determinants such as the presence of refugee camps and the intensity of phone call interaction among refugees; and certain types of news events.

Key findings:

- **Non-refugees move further and more frequently than refugees.** Given that refugees are mostly free to move within Turkey (in some provinces restrictions may apply but they are not strictly enforced), the authors posit that the imperfect integration of refugees is the main reason for reduced mobility.
- **Low income levels in the province are a push factor for refugees.** Refugees tend to leave poorer provinces but may not be able to reach wealthier provinces (possibly due to restrictions on refugees).
- **Distance between provinces has a negative impact on mobility.**
- **Number of refugee calls (a measure of network effects) has a positive impact on mobility.** Refugees tend to move to regions where other migrants have already settled.
- **Refugees tend to leave provinces with an ongoing rally for leadership change.** This may capture political instability and pre-election rhetoric that might be directed against refugees. However, this does not act as a pull factor.
- **Higher incidence of boycotts is associated with lower mobility.** Provinces with a higher incidence of boycott-related news could be more active in political and humanitarian spheres, which may encourage immigrants to settle. However, this does not act as a pull factor.
- **Refugees tend to move to provinces with more economic aid and leave as economic aid decreases.** Humanitarian aid, however, does not have any effect on mobility.
- **News of asylum grants acts as a pull factor for refugee movements.**
- The presence of a refugee camp in the origin or destination province does not have any effect on mobility.

Overall, the authors conclude that the **standard gravity determinants apply such as distance, income levels, as well as network effects.** Policy interventions associated with political stability, the granting of asylum, and economic aid also matter.



Blessing or Burden? The Impact of Refugees on Businesses and the Informal Economy

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Paper presented at the Research Conference on Forced Displacement 2020, co-organized by the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement, the World Bank's Research Department, the Population Studies and Training Center at Brown University and the Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) and Middle East Initiative (MEI) at Harvard University.

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The authors **examine the impact of the sudden arrival of more than three million Syrian refugees on businesses in Turkey**. This case is useful to investigate causal effects because: (a) the timing and scale of the refugee inflow were exogenous to economic conditions in Turkey; and (b) refugees clustered in regions with a higher share of Arabic speakers, leading to substantial geographic variation in exposure to refugee inflows. The vast majority of Syrian refugees work in the informal labor market, mostly in low-wage jobs in agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and service industries.

The analysis is based on data from multiple sources including annual censuses of firms, labor force surveys, business registrations and trade statistics, as well as official population and migration figures from 2006 to 2015. The authors employ an instrumented difference-in-differences approach that exploits province-year variation in refugee inflows, accounting for the endogeneity between firm outcomes and refugee inflows using 'predicted refugee inflows' as an instrumental variable (interaction of the number of Syrians who left their country each year and the share of Arabic speaking populations in Turkish provinces in 1965).

Key findings:

- No significant effect of refugee inflows on production figures reported by firms (reported sales and gross output for accounting purposes), but **strong evidence of a positive effect of refugee inflows on production proxies such as oil and electricity consumption, which correct for firms' underreporting and account for informal economic activity**. A one-percentage-point increase in the share of refugees to total population boosted firms' electricity and oil consumption by 4.3 percent. These effects are stronger for smaller firms and those in construction and hospitality.

- **Refugee inflows had a positive impact on firm creation.** A one percentage point increase in the share of refugees to total population led to a 1.5 percentage point increase in the number of firms and a 6.3 percentage point increase in the number of firms with foreign partnership. A significant proportion of new firms were established by Syrians partnering with Turkish citizens to overcome barriers to market entry.
- **Refugees are replacing native workers in the informal labor market and reducing labor costs for firms.** Among male native workers (who account for 75 percent of the employed labor force in the sample), a one percentage point increase in the ratio of refugees to overall population decreases wages by 3.8 percent. Native workers also see informal employment drop by 0.9 percentage points and their number of hours worked are reduced by 3.1 percent.
- No evidence of significant effects of refugee inflows on firm exit, or on Turkish exports/imports.

Overall, the findings suggest that **larger refugee inflows have a positive impact on local businesses and firm creation, which are largely concentrated in the informal economy, while reducing employment and wages of native workers in the informal sector.** The authors suggest several mechanisms for these results including:

- The likelihood of permanently leaving their original location might have induced refugees to bring most of their accumulated wealth to the host country and to invest it there.
- Fixed costs associated with initial resettlement, such as housing and setting up a new business, might be contributing to the positive shock, especially in the construction sector.
- Aid provided to refugee settlement locations by the Turkish government, international governments, and NGOs is mainly supplied by local firms, which might contribute to increased firm output.
- Reduced labor costs due to the informal hiring of refugees might contribute to the local production boom in refugee hosting areas.


The Effect of Refugees on Native Adolescents' Test Scores: Quasi-experimental Evidence from PISA

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Paper presented at the Research Conference on Forced Displacement 2020, co-organized by the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement, the World Bank's Research Department, the Population Studies and Training Center at Brown University and the Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) and Middle East Initiative (MEI) at Harvard University.

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<http://erf.org.eg/publications/the-effect-of-refugees-on-native-adolescents-test-scores-quasi-experimental-evidence-from-pisa/>

The recent literature has shown that: refugees in Turkey have, on average, lower skill levels than natives; since they do not have easy access to work permits, they tend to find manual jobs in the informal sector, displacing natives in these jobs; and refugees employed in manual tasks are complementary to formal native workers employed in more complex tasks. The author explores whether these labor market dynamics have any effect on human capital investment decisions and educational outcomes of natives (in a separate paper he shows that increased competition for low skilled jobs increased high school enrollment rates, especially for males with lower parental education). This paper **investigates the impact of Syrian refugees on the school performance of adolescent children in Turkey**. The analysis is based on the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) microdata for 2009 and 2012 (pre-influx) and 2015 (post-influx), and employs a difference-in-difference approach based on province-year variation in refugee intensity and an instrumental variable approach to address the potential endogeneity of refugees' location choices.

Key findings:

- **Math, science, and reading scores of Turkish native adolescents increased following the Syrian refugee influx**, conditional on parental education, which is used as a proxy for unobserved ability.
- The increase in PISA scores is more pronounced for males than females.
- The increase in test scores mostly comes from the lower half of the test score distribution, which suggests that the refugee influx has reduced test score inequality among natives.

The author argues that the **labor market forces that emerged in the aftermath of the Syrian refugee crisis have led native adolescents, who would normally perform worse in school, to take their high school education more seriously**. The main mechanism is the displacement of low-skilled natives in the labor market and the increased competition for jobs with low skill requirements, which provide incentives among Turkish adolescents for increased school achievement.



Mass Refugee Inflow and Long-run Prosperity: Lessons from the Greek Population Resettlement

Elie Murard and Seyhun Orcan Sakalli

Paper presented at the Research Conference on Forced Displacement 2020, co-organized by the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement, the World Bank's Research Department, the Population Studies and Training Center at Brown University and the Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) and Middle East Initiative (MEI) at Harvard University.

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Earlier version available at: <https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/11613/mass-refugee-inflow-and-long-run-prosperity-lessons-from-the-greek-population-resettlement>

This paper **examines the long-term impact of the 1923 forced resettlement of 1.2 million Greek-Orthodox citizens of Turkey to Greece in the aftermath of the Greco-Turkish war**. The mass resettlement of refugees increased the host population in Greece by more than 20 percent within a few months. Refugees resettled in rural areas were provided with arable land parcels, farm inputs and cattle, in addition to individual houses. The analysis is based on a geocoded dataset that combines historical data on refugee settlement with contemporary socio-economic outcomes at a disaggregated administrative level. The authors employ several empirical strategies that rely on different margin of spatial and temporal variation in the refugee inflow.

Key findings:

- **In places of resettlement, refugees contributed to higher industrialization and structural transformation away from agriculture.** Places of refugees' resettlement display higher level of prosperity in 1991 relative to other localities without refugees: conditional on geographical and pre-resettlement characteristics, the former have higher night light luminosity, dwelling with better amenities (e.g. electricity), a larger manufacturing sector and higher average earnings.
- **Resettlement produced smaller economic gains in places where the local population was predominantly refugees, as well as in municipalities where refugees were segregated into separate villages.** There is a hump-shaped relationship between the share of refugees and long-run prosperity, with prosperity first increasing and then declining when refugees make up more than 40 percent of the local population. The economic gains of the resettlement were also lower in places where refugees were clustered in separate enclaves and where their skills were less easily



transferable. This highlights the crucial role of social interactions and knowledge sharing, which were facilitated by the fact that refugees and natives often spoke the same language and shared the same religion.

- **No evidence of negative spillover effects in nearby localities**, suggesting that the results are not driven by the reallocation of economic activity into places of resettlement, but rather by the creation of new activity.
- **Long-run benefits in rural localities of northern Greece appear driven by the transfer of new specific knowledge in textiles and the provision of new agricultural know-how by mostly farmer refugees.** Resettlement led to the expansion of the textile sector and manufacturing especially in places with a greater suitability for the cultivation of textile crops (e.g. cotton), where refugees' knowledge could be more effectively transferred and employed. The resettlement produced smaller economic gains in localities where the interactions between refugees and natives were less likely, either because the local population was predominantly refugee and thus less diverse in terms of skills—hence the hump-shaped relationship between the refugees' share and long-run prosperity—or because of a higher segregation of refugees into separate villages within the same municipality. There was no empirical evidence for alternative mechanisms such as agglomeration economies, investments in public infrastructure or the economic integration of second-generation refugees.

The authors conclude that **by providing complementary (not necessarily superior) knowledge, refugees can generate significant benefits in the long run, even when they do not bring higher human capital, and provided that sufficient investments are made in their resettlement.** The author suggests that resettlement policies should avoid clustering refugees in separate enclaves while targeting locations where newcomers' skills are the most easily transferable.


More is Better: Evaluating the Impact of a Variation in Cash Assistance on the Reintegration Outcomes of Returning Afghan Refugees

Hisham Esper, Nandini Krishnan, and Christina Wieser

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This paper **examines the impact of cash assistance provided to Afghan refugees returning from Pakistan on household outcomes post-return**. Specifically, the authors examine whether Afghan refugees who returned between July 2016 and March 2017 and received a larger reintegration allowance of US\$400 per returnee are better off compared to those who received a reintegration allowance of US\$200 per returnee. The analysis is based on three different post-return surveys (on average data was collected 16 months after return) combined with administrative data from UNHCR's voluntary repatriation forms.

Key findings:

- **Households receiving US\$400 per returning household member were more likely to use reintegration assistance for purchasing long-term assets, while those who received US\$200 per returning household member were more likely to purchase immediate consumption goods.** Almost half of returnees who received US\$200 per capita spent more than half of their reintegration assistance on food, compared to only 17 percent of those who received US\$400. Returnees who received US\$400 per capita were more likely to invest in purchasing land (21 percent) compared to those who received US\$200 (7 percent). Returnees who received more cash were also more likely to invest in transportation and rental payments.
- **The likelihood of owning a dwelling for Afghan refugees is highly correlated with both the total payment received by the household, and the household size.** Households reporting owning their residence approximately 16 months post-return received US\$2,253 in reintegration assistance on average, compared to US\$1,655 for households not owning a house post-return.
- **There was no long-term impact of reintegration assistance on reservation wages or employment.** Households receiving US\$200 per capita were as likely as those receiving US\$400 per capita to have an employed household member.
- **No significant impact of the variation in cash assistance on the likelihood of enrolling all household children in school.** School education in Afghanistan is free, and an unconditional cash transfer to returnees might not affect school enrollment. Additionally, the data only permitted the authors to measure whether households enroll all their children in schools.
- **Households receiving US\$400 per returning household member were more likely to have legal documentation (tazkiras) for all household members** compared to those receiving US\$200 per returning household member. More than three quarters (76 percent) of households receiving US\$400 per capita received tazkiras, compared to only 60 percent of returnees receiving US\$200 per capita.

Overall, the impact of cash assistance has been significant, and large, especially on the likelihood of home ownership, legal documentation, and the difference in



consumption patterns. Households who received US\$400 per capita in cash assistance were 17 percentage points more likely to own a house, 30 percentage points more likely to have issued legal documentation for their household, and 40 percentage points less likely to have spent more than half of their reintegration assistance on food.

The Impacts of Refugee Repatriation on Receiving Communities

Isabel Ruiz and Carlos Vargas-Silva, 2019


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Between 2000 and 2016 around 600,000 Burundian refugees returned from Tanzania, the majority before 2010, and most settling in communities of origin. This paper **examines the consequences of refugee repatriation for communities of return in Burundi**, in a context in which refugees faced tight restrictions on economic activities and mobility while residing in refugee camps abroad. The authors analyze the impact of repatriation on 'stayees' (in terms of livestock levels, land access, subjective wellbeing, food security, health and crime) and adjustments they make in response to returning refugees (e.g. out migration, and redistribution of workers across economic activities). The analysis is based on longitudinal data collected between 2011 and 2015. The authors use an instrumental variable approach (based on geographical features of communities, such as altitude and proximity to the border) to address the potential source of endogeneity due to wealthier communities being more likely to seek asylum abroad.

Key results:

- **A greater share of returnees in a community is associated with less livestock ownership for stayees; the negative effect becomes stronger over time.** A one percentage point increase in the share of the population accounted for by returnees leads to a reduction in the livestock of stayee households which is equivalent to one fowl per adult member or about 5 percent with respect to the mean.
- **Refugee repatriation has a negative impact on land access; the negative effect becomes stronger over time.** A one percentage point increase in the share of returnees in the population leads on average to a 0.05 hectare reduction in the land



holding of stayee households, which is close to a 4 percent reduction with respect to the mean land holding.

- **Repatriation has a negative impact on subjective wellbeing for stayees, at least in the short term.** This impact disappears across rounds of the survey.
- **Repatriation has a negative impact on food security for stayees, at least in the short term.** A one percentage point increase in the share of returnees in the community leads to a one percentage point increase in the likelihood of experiencing food difficulties on a daily basis. This impact disappears across rounds of the survey.
- The presence of returnees has no statistically significant effect on health outcomes or the likelihood of being a victim of theft.
- **Households adjust to the presence of returnees by changing income generating activities and relying less on land harvesting to produce food for household consumption.**
- The presence of returnees had no impact on out-migration of stayees.

The results suggest that refugee return can lead to hardship for communities experiencing return. The authors conclude that “promoting (or forcing) large-scale repatriation at times may not provide a sustainable solution to the ‘problem’, but may simply relocate it.”