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Refugee Emergencies and Attitudes Towards Refugees: Some Insights from the Academic Literature

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PART I

Refugee Emergencies and Attitudes Towards Refugees: Some Insights from the Academic Literature

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ABSTRACT

The conflict in Ukraine has generated a large inflow of refugees into European countries, with more than five million people having fled to neighboring countries. So far, the public response has been generally positive, with large shares of the European population being in favor of the policies implemented to host and support the Ukrainian refugees. In this note we look at the academic literature with the aim to: a) discuss which socioeconomic characteristics of the refugees are typically associated with positive or negative attitudes towards them; and, b) reflect on which policy measures can promote more inclusive and tolerant preferences. The evidence from the literature suggests that negative attitudes towards refugees can be widespread, but less so for those groups that are perceived to be in need of humanitarian help, are culturally closer to host communities, and more likely to contribute to the economies of the host country. Three policy measures to sustain a welcoming climate towards refugees emerge from the relevant literature: facilitate the interactions between host communities and those forcibly displaced; integrate the refugees into the society, including in the labor market and the education system; and provide simple, factual information about the refugees and their socioeconomic background.

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Introduction

The magnitude of the refugee emergency generated by the conflict in Ukraine is likely to dwarf any previous inflows of refugees experienced by European countries since the end of WWII. According to [UNHCR figures](#), by 24 April 2022, more than five million Ukrainians have left their country in their quest for safety. Another seven million are estimated to be displaced within Ukraine. Among those who have left the country, at least initially two and a half million have reached Poland; almost 800,000 entered Romania; while Moldova, Hungary, the Russian Federation and Slovakia witnessed the influx of 300,000 to 600,000 refugees each. These are population movements of considerable magnitude: for example, of the 430,000 individuals who entered Moldova from Ukraine, around 100,000 remained in the country.¹ This corresponds to a 4 percent increase in the total population of Moldova.

So far, both the public and political responses to this emergency have been very different from what has been observed in the recent past. On March 4, 2022, the European Council unanimously decided to activate, for the first time ever, the *Temporary Protection Directive*. This defines the decision-making procedure needed to trigger, extend, or end temporary protection and it also lists the rights for the beneficiaries, such as: access to employment, access to medical care, access to education, a valid residence permit for up to three years, etc. Moreover, polls indicate that European citizens are largely in favor of hosting Ukrainian refugees.²

Thinking back to previous refugee emergencies, however, one might wonder how long these generalized positive attitudes will last: a question that might be applied to several refugee situations, and not just to the one we are currently observing around Ukraine. The academic literature shows that attitudes and preferences towards refugees and asylum seekers can change over time, often in a negative way. The aim of this document is to look at the evidence that emerges from this literature with two objectives:

¹ See data from UNHCR Refugee Coordination Forum: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiaM2UyYWRhYmMtNGEwOC00NWQxLWEyZjctNjgxYTk2ZGQ0ZmUzIiwidCI6ImU1YzYzM3OTgxLTY2NjQtNDZlNC04YTBlLTY1NDNkMmFmODBiZSIsImMiOj9&pageName=ReportSection3a075953f464903fc875> (last visited on 25 April 2022).

² For a summary of poll responses, see <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/support-for-ukrainian-refugees-is-high-in-europe-that-may-not-last/> (last visited on 25 April 2022).

- First, to discuss which socioeconomic characteristics of the refugees are typically associated with positive or negative attitudes towards them, and which elements appear to influence the formation and stability of such attitudes.
- Second, to reflect on which policy measures can promote more inclusive and tolerant preferences. Such policies might become relevant tools for improving social cohesion, especially when governments are confronted with protracted refugee situations.

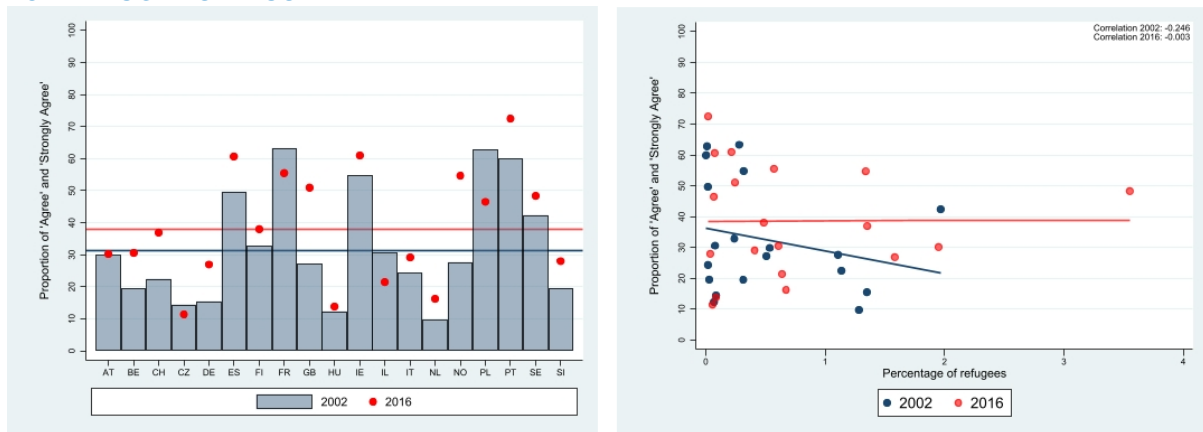
The papers discussed in this note were selected taking into consideration the peculiarities of the Ukrainian emergency. In this respect, we favored articles analyzing attitudes in middle- to high-income countries, or that look at situations which can present some similarities with the current inflow of refugees in Eastern European countries.

Local and international differences in attitudes: some explanations

When looking at attitudes towards refugees in Europe, it is important to first highlight how such attitudes are far from homogeneous within the continent. Figure 1 shows data from the European Social Survey.³ The left panel of the figure displays the percentage of respondents in each surveyed country who either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: “The government should be generous in judging people’s applications for refugee status”. The bars report the percentages from the 2002 survey and clearly show variation across countries, spanning from 9.7 percent in the Netherlands to 63.3 percent in France (the average value, shown by the blue line in the figure, stands at 32 percent).

³ The microdata employed for the figures presented in these notes come from the European Social Survey, and specifically: ESS Round 1: European Social Survey Round 1 Data (2002). Data file edition 6.6. NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC. [doi:10.21338/NSD-ESS1-2002](https://doi.org/10.21338/NSD-ESS1-2002); and ESS Round 8: European Social Survey Round 8 Data (2016). Data file edition 2.2. NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC. [doi:10.21338/NSD-ESS8-2016](https://doi.org/10.21338/NSD-ESS8-2016). All figures are obtained by weighted tabulations making use of the weight variable “pspwght”. The graphs only report values for countries surveyed in both waves. The percentages of the refugees on the countries’ population are estimated by the author by combining populations data from the UN 2019 Revision of World Population Prospects (<https://population.un.org/wpp/>) and refugee data from the UNHCR Refugee Data Finder (<https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=3HMho5>). In these figures, the category “refugees” includes refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless people.

FIGURE 1: THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE GENEROUS IN JUDGING PEOPLE'S APPLICATIONS FOR REFUGEE STATUS.

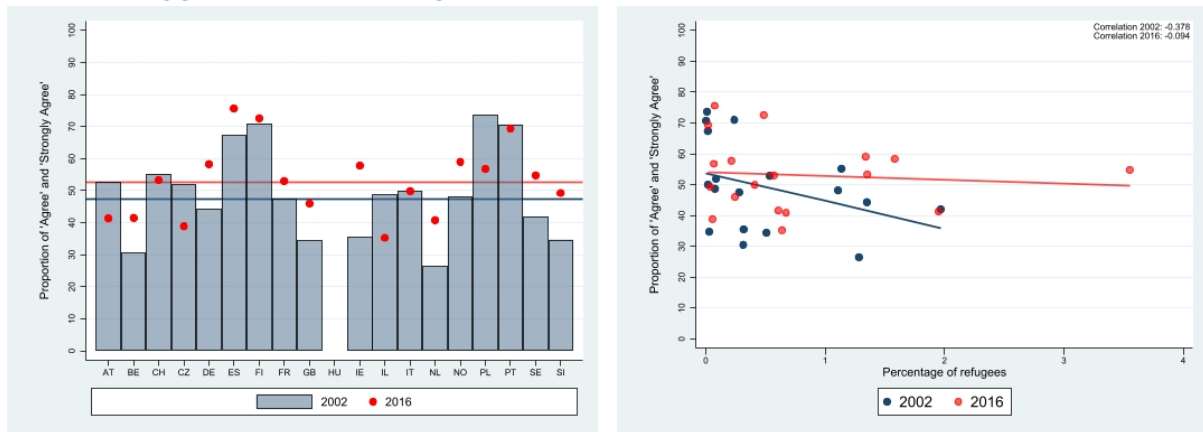


The red dots on the left panel report the same percentage of respondent in 2016. Two observations can be made: first, the percentage of those agreeing with the statement has gone up in 15 out of the 19 surveyed countries (with an average value of 38 percent); and second, the variation across countries is still present and substantially unchanged.

A third fact can be observed on the graph on the right-hand side panel of Figure 1: in 2002 the percentage of respondents agreeing with the statement was negatively correlated with the percentage of refugees in the country in 2002. This is shown by the blue dots and indicates that in 2002, in countries with higher proportions of refugees, fewer people tended to agree with the statement. The red dots in the same panel show how such correlation completely vanished by 2016: the proportion of those agreeing with the statement does not seem to be related to the percentage of refugees within each country.

Answers tend to be more positive in relation to a second attitude statement: “Refugees whose applications are granted should be entitled to bring in their close family members.” In this case the average percentage of those agreeing with the statement in 2002 stands at 49 percent, and moves up to 53 percent by 2016, as shown in Figure 2. The intercountry variability is also less pronounced than in the previous case (in both years), but it is still clearly detectable. Again, one can observe a (weak) negative correlation between the percentage of the refugee in a country and the percentage of respondents with more positive views towards refugee’s claims in 2002.

FIGURE 2: REFUGEES WHOSE APPLICATIONS ARE GRANTED SHOULD BE ENTITLED TO BRING IN THEIR CLOSE FAMILY MEMBERS.



This correlation is no longer apparent in 2016. In short, the figures show that across European countries, attitudes towards refugees are mixed, but they generally improved over time, and they are not necessarily connected with the proportion of refugees hosted in each country.

Besides this national-level attitudinal evidence, differences in attitudes are also present within countries. Hangartner et al. (2019) show how the inhabitants of Greek islands that were more exposed to the transit of refugees in the period 2015-2016 displayed a more hostile attitude towards refugees (and migrants) and supported calls for tougher asylum rules in 2017. The differences in attitudes are even identifiable within the islands, with stronger negative feeling becoming more apparent the closer the respondents were located to ‘refugee hotspots’, i.e., refugee camps or harbors from which refugees continued their journeys.⁴

Clearly, geographical location is not the only factor that plays a role in shaping attitudes towards refugees. Liebe et al. (2018) show some evidence coming from a German panel survey conducted between 2015 and 2016. Based on the answers to the 2015 survey, they first categorized the respondents as “rather approving” or “rather disapproving” of “refugee and migrant homes in their vicinity”; the survey was then re-administered to the same individuals one year later. Respondents belonging to the

⁴ At an international level, attitudes towards ‘in-transit’ refugees are the subject of a study by Ajzenman, Aksoy and Guriev (2020), which looks at 18 European countries during the 2015 refugee crisis. The authors document a decrease in entrepreneurial activities in those localities that are more exposed to mass transit migration. They attribute this result to a decrease in the willingness to take risks as well as in the confidence in institutions. They also indicate that in the same localities anti-migrant sentiments increased while attitudes towards other minorities remained unchanged.

“rather disapproving” class represented 80 percent of the sample in 2015, and their preferences were very stable; only 10 percent of them switched to the “rather approving” class by 2016. Conversely, 44 percent of those respondents originally classified as “rather approving”, were likely to move towards a rather disapproving position by 2016. In attempting to explain these movements, the authors indicated that “... Individuals who have been in contact with refugees, who already have a refugee or migrant home in their vicinity, who are better educated and have stronger general pro-immigration attitudes are more likely to shift to (or stay in) the rather approving class, and less likely to stay in (or shift to) the rather disapproving class.” Some of the elements that define a more positive attitude towards refugees (and migrants) emerge consistently across the literature and will be further discussed in this note.

Several researchers have focused their attention on the way sociodemographic characteristics of the refugees may influence the perceptions of host communities. In a frequently cited study, Bansak, Hainmueller and Hangartner (2016) asked 18,000 eligible voters from 15 European countries to evaluate 180,000 profiles of asylum-seekers. The results of their analysis indicated that those asylum seekers “who have higher employability, have more consistent asylum testimonies and severe vulnerabilities, and are Christian rather than Muslim” saw the greatest public support.

These findings are not unique to the European context. Adida, Lo and Platas (2019) conducted a similar exercise with a sample of 1,800 American respondents, in relation to preferences towards Syrian refugees. Their findings indicate that “Americans prefer Syrian refugees who are female, high-skilled, English-speaking, and Christian”. The authors suggest the results for female refugees indicate that the respondents see women as more vulnerable, and this leads to a preference towards them.

The relevance of aspects such as the need for humanitarian help or the vulnerability of the asylum seekers also emerges in a short article by Gerhards, Hans and Schupp (2016). They looked at German survey data collected in 2016 and noted that on the one hand, more than half of all respondents associated the influx of refugees that Germany experienced in 2015 with more risks than opportunities. On the other hand, 81 percent of respondents were in favor of admitting refugees and those fleeing political persecution. Von Hermanni and Neumann (2019), also focus on a German sample and conclude that political persecution and war represent the two causes of flight that generate the highest acceptance for refugees. Moreover, their results also

show that respondents display higher approval rates for women and refugees with children. Perhaps surprisingly, acceptance rate in this case is lower for Eastern European refugees than for those from Africa or the Middle East. The authors explain this finding referring to the fact that the respondents are sampled in the area of Dresden, which hosts an already high percentage of immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

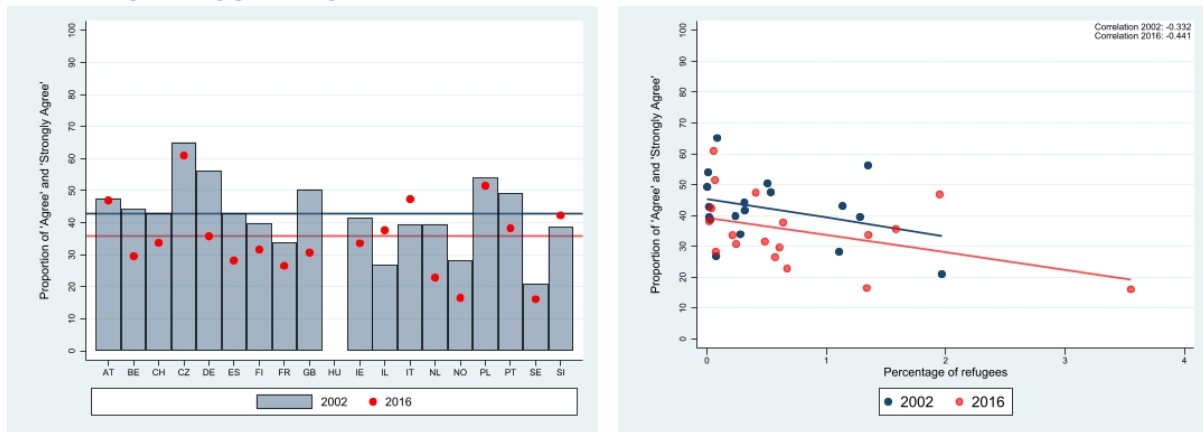
Looking at a different context, the humanitarian aspect is also highlighted in the work of Alrababa'h et al. (2021). They focus on preferences of Jordanian respondents in relation to Syrian refugees and their findings share some commonalities with those identified in Bansak, Hainmueller and Hangartner (2016) and Adida, Lo and Platas (2019). Specifically, Jordanians also seem to prioritize hosting the most vulnerable refugees (women and children), while showing some hostility for non-Sunni refugees.

The evidence from these articles can be complemented with what we observe in Figure 3, which reports the percentage of those agreeing with the statement: "Most applicants for refugee status aren't in real fear of persecution in their own countries." In this case it can be noted that: (a) consistently with what we observed in the previous figures, the average percentage of positive answers declines over time (from 42 percent to 35 percent); and (b) there is a negative correlation between the percentage of positive answers and the percentage of refugees in the country.

In this case this correlation persists over time, and it is stronger in 2016 than in 2002. This suggests that respondents in countries with more refugees could be more aware of refugees' humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities, and therefore be less prone to agree with the notion that most refugees are not really in fear of persecution.

Overall, the results from this literature indicate that negative attitudes towards refugees can be widespread, but less so for those groups that are perceived as in need of humanitarian help (women, children), are culturally closer to host communities (Christians in Westerns Europe and US, Sunnis in Jordan), and more likely to contribute to the economies of the host country (high-skilled workers).

FIGURE 3: MOST APPLICANTS FOR REFUGEE STATUS AREN'T IN REAL FEAR OF PERSECUTION IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES.



Policy measures and interventions

Some contributions to the literature have suggested policy measures or have identified interventions, by policymakers or other actors, which can facilitate a more welcoming climate towards refugees. Here we group these measures in two main categories: Information-based and interactions-based. The provision of correct information on the characteristics of the refugees, and an increase in the contacts between refugees and host communities, in fact, appear to be important drivers towards a better understanding of the needs and motives behind forced displacement, as already observed in the article by Liebe et al., (2018).⁵ A third element that emerges in relevant policies is closely connected with interactions, and consists in facilitating the socioeconomic integration of refugees in the host communities.

Starting with interactions, Ghosn, Braithwaite and Chu (2019) looked at the experience of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The results from their analysis indicate that attitudes are associated with whether individual respondents have had contact with Syrians in Lebanon, with those interacting being significantly more likely to support hosting refugees, consider hiring a refugee, or allow one of their children to marry a refugee. They also assess whether previous exposure to violence, or experience of displacement influence attitudes towards refugees. The findings do not support the hypothesis that these personal experiences might have an impact on individual

⁵ This is of course not always true. For example, Hangartner et al. (2019), in the paper discussed above, argue against the importance of contacts between refugees and hosts as a way reduce hostility towards those forcibly displaced.

attitudes toward hosting refugees: exposure to violence by itself does not correlate to positive sentiments toward refugees, especially over time.⁶

The arrival of refugees can also influence the attitudes of the host communities towards not just the refugees themselves, but also aspects of daily life that are affected by the presence of those forcibly displaced. In a recent paper published by the World Bank, Groeger, León-Ciliotta and Stillman (2022) look at the effects of the arrival of Venezuelans migrants in Peru, a wave of immigration which has increased the population of Peru by around 2 percent. Their results, among others, indicate that Peruvians living in areas with a higher share of Venezuelan migrants report that the quality of local services and community life quality are higher, and that they have a greater trust in their neighbors. The authors also point out that these results might be connected to an improvement in the labor market conditions observed in the same areas after the arrival of the Venezuelans.⁷ Based on these results, their policy recommendation is to develop policies that favor the arrival of the Venezuelans, while focusing on reducing perceptions around potential negative impacts from the inflow of migrants.

The remark by Groeger et al. about the connection between attitudes and labor market outcomes gives an indication for research questions to be explored in the future: to what extent do favorable economic outcomes arising from a refugee influx translate into better attitudes? And could this relationship work in the opposite way, with more welcoming societies being better at facilitating the economic integration of those forcibly displaced?

The role of interactions and integration is highlighted by Alan et al. (2021), who evaluated an educational program in Turkey that aimed to develop social skills and build social cohesion in schools hosting by developing perspective-taking ability in children. The program, which involved 6,500 children, 16% percent of which were refugees, was highly effective in lowering high-intensity peer violence and victimization

⁶ These findings are partly in line with those proposed by Hong, Mo and Paik in an unpublished [paper](#) presented at the [Second Research Conference on Forced Displacement](#) (January 2022). This paper refers to a completely different context, as it looks at attitudes of South Koreans towards refugees from Yemen.

⁷ Looking at social cohesion more in general, Albarosa and Elsner (2022) indicate that in Germany, the inflow of refugees in 2015 had no effects on social attitudes and perceptions such as trust, perceived fairness, attitudes towards foreigners, or economic concerns. It did, however, lead to an increase in anti-immigrant violence.

in school grounds. It also reduced social exclusion and ethnic segregation in the classroom, while increasing trust, reciprocity, and cooperation among students, as well as their altruism toward one another. The research highlights how inclusive public education can play an effective role in building social capital and shaping attitudes, even in socio-politically difficult contexts.

With respect to the role of information, some results are provided by Lergetporer, Piopiunik and Simon (2021), who focus on Germany. In the paper, the authors use survey experiments on both adults and university students to assess how attitudes towards refugees vary with the provision of simple information about the refugee populations. Specifically, they informed a random portion of the respondents about the average education level of refugees in Germany. The results indicate that receiving simple information about refugees' education levels positively affects general attitudes toward refugees. Moreover, the information also decreases concerns about the fiscal burden associated with hosting refugees, while at the same time increasing concerns about labor market competition.⁸

Overall, the policy implication of the result is quite straightforward: providing the public with simple, factual information about the refugees and their socioeconomic background, may be an effective tool for improving the public's attitudes towards those forcibly displaced. In turn, this can increase public's confidence in refugees' ability to integrate in the host community and, more broadly, contribute to improve the local living conditions. The dissemination of evidence-based information on those forcibly displaced is an area of work that the Joint Data Center is planning to explore more, and we would welcome suggestions and inputs on how to make sure the information can effectively reach the general public.

⁸ Adida, Lo and Platas (2018), conducted a survey experiment in the US, in which they also provide one group of participants with information about the US commitment to resettling Syrian refugees relative to that of other industrialized democracies. They found that this type of information did not increase participants' inclusionary behavior towards refugees, measured by their willingness to write a letter to the White House in support of admitting Syrian refugees.

PART II

Summaries of Select Academic Articles and Research Reports*

How economic, humanitarian, and religious concerns shape European attitudes toward asylum seekers

Kirk Bansak, Jens Hainmueller, and Dominik Hangartner

Science, Volume 354, Issue 6309 (2016), pages 217-222

<https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aag2147>

This article **examines the impact of different asylum seeker attributes on public support for granting asylum in Europe**. The analysis is based on an online survey of 18,000 eligible voters in 15 European countries. The respondents were asked to evaluate different profiles of asylum seekers that varied randomly across nine attributes, including: (1) consistency of asylum testimony; (2) gender; (3) country of origin; (4) age; (5) previous occupation; (6) vulnerability; (7) reason for migrating; (8) religion; and (9) language skills.

Main findings:

- **Respondents favored asylum seekers with higher employability.** Asylum seekers who worked in higher-skill occupations in their country of origin were more likely to be accepted compared to asylum seekers who had been unemployed.

*The JDC Quarterly Digest provides summaries of 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 Digest 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.

- **Respondents attached importance to language skills.** Asylum seekers were less likely to be accepted if they did not speak the host country language or had limited host language proficiency compared to those who were fluent in the host country language.
- **Age of the asylum seekers mattered to respondents.** Asylum seekers who were close to retirement age (62 years) were less likely to be accepted than younger applicants (21 years).
- **Asylum seekers were more likely to be accepted if they were deserving, had more consistent asylum testimonies, or were highly vulnerable.** Asylum seekers who applied because of fear of political, religious, or ethnic persecution were more likely to be accepted compared to persons who migrated to seek better economic opportunities. Asylum seekers were also less likely to be accepted when they had major inconsistencies in their asylum testimony, compared to those who did not have any inconsistencies. Moreover, those who had been the victim of torture were more likely to be accepted than are those with no special vulnerabilities.
- **Religion of asylum seekers affects preferences.** Muslim asylum seekers were significantly less likely to be accepted than otherwise similar Christian asylum seekers, however Christian asylum seekers were only slightly preferred over agnostic asylum seekers, indicating a strong anti-Muslim bias rather than a pro-Christian bias.
- Country of origin plays only a minor role in shaping attitudes.
- **Attitudes did not differ according to respondents' political ideology, age, education and income,** with a few exceptions. Respondents on the ideological left had stronger humanitarian concerns and weaker anti-Muslim bias than respondents on the right. The premium for asylum seekers with special vulnerabilities and penalty for asylum seekers who migrated in search of economic opportunities were larger among respondents on the left than among those on the right.
- **Preferences were largely consistent across the 15 surveyed countries.** However, the magnitude of the anti-Muslim bias varied somewhat, and the penalty against asylum seekers who migrated for economic reasons was smaller in poorer countries than in richer countries.

Overall, **asylum seekers have a higher probability of being accepted when they are more employable and skilled, have special vulnerabilities, have more consistent asylum claims, and are Christian rather than Muslim.** Moreover, **these effects are similar across sociodemographic subgroups of respondents and across countries.**

The authors conclude that; (1) evaluations of the expected economic contribution or potential economic burden of asylum seekers (sociotropic concerns) play an important role in structuring asylum preferences; (2) public preferences are also highly sensitive to humanitarian concerns about the deservingness and legitimacy of the asylum request, as well as the severity of the claimants' vulnerabilities; (3) anti-Muslim sentiment is an important factor that structures asylum preferences; (4) respondents are concerned about the economic impact on the host country as a whole (sociotropic concerns) rather than the impact on the respondents' personal economic situation (egocentric economic concerns); and (5) although humanitarian concerns are shared among the left and the right, those concerns play a somewhat stronger role in structuring attitudes toward asylum seekers for the left.

German public opinion on admitting refugees

Jürgen Gerhards, Silke Hans, and Jürgen Schupp

DIW Economic Bulletin, No. 21 (2016)

https://www.diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw_01.c.534664.de/diw_econ_bull_2016-21-1.pdf

This paper discusses German public attitudes to admitting refugees. The paper presents descriptive statistics from the Barometer of Public Opinion on Refugees in Germany, which is a representative survey of around 2,000 German residents in March 2016.

Main findings:

- **Approximately three-quarters of respondents think refugees bring more risks than opportunities for Germany,** at least in the short term. Around half

of all respondents think that refugees pose a threat to German cultural life and core values.

- **Nevertheless, a majority of respondents favor temporarily admitting refugees and persecuted peoples in accordance with international law.** Over 80 percent of respondents agree that people who seek refuge in Germany due to armed conflict in their country of origin should receive subsidiary protection. Over 60 percent of respondents think that persons who are protected under the 1951 Refugee Convention (i.e., all reasons for seeking asylum) should be admitted into Germany.
- **Some respondents do not deem all reasons for seeking asylum set out in the Convention as equally legitimate.** For example, 74 percent of respondents agree that people persecuted for their involvement in human rights activities should be admitted to Germany, but only 49 percent think that people persecuted for labor union activity should be given asylum. Respondents are more likely to think that persecuted Christians should be granted asylum, compared with persecuted ethnic minorities, homosexuals, and Muslims.
- **Most respondents think that the obligation to assist refugees no longer applies if the reason for fleeing ceases to exist.** Over half of respondents think that refugees should be repatriated to their country of origin if the situation there has sufficiently improved, and less than a third think individuals should be allowed to remain in Germany.

Overall, **the German public's willingness to accept asylum seekers is high across all groups of the population, despite concerns about the disadvantages and risks for Germany associated with a refugee presence.** The authors conclude that "willingness to admit refugees is based less on self-interest and considerations of the benefits than on a normative imperative to provide protection for those in need."

From welcome culture to welcome limits? Uncovering preference changes over time for sheltering refugees in Germany

Ulf Liebe, Jürgen Meyerhoff, Maarten Kroesen, Caspar Chorus, Klaus Glenk

PLOS One, Volume 13, Issue 8 (2018), Article Number e0199923

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0199923>

This paper **explores the acceptance of refugee and migrant homes in citizens' neighborhoods in Germany and how attitudes change over time.**

The analysis is based on responses to a 'stated choice experiment', where respondents were asked to consider different attributes of refugee and migrant homes, including: (1) main country of origin and religion of the refugees/migrants; (2) number of people; (3) type of housing; (4) distance to respondent's home; and (5) whether mainly single people or families would live in the homes. There were 861 respondents in the November 2015 survey, of whom 573 took part in a repeated survey in November 2016. Respondents were close to representative of the German population with respect to sex and age, but not educational attainment.

Main findings:

- **Most respondents were 'rather disapproving' of refugees' and migrants' homes in their neighborhood**, and a decreasing minority were 'rather approving' of refugees and migrant homes in their neighborhood.
- Individuals who were 'rather approving' were indifferent between refugee and migrant homes, indifferent between Muslim and non-Muslim refugees/migrants, and indifferent to the number of refugees/migrants in the homes, and preferred shorter distances between refugee/migrant homes and their own homes.
- Individuals who were 'rather disapproving' preferred refugee homes over migrant homes, non-Muslim refugees/migrants, maximizing the physical distance to refugees or migrants, and minimizing the number of refugees or migrants.
- Both categories of respondents preferred: better housing conditions; refugees and migrants from Syria compared to other origin countries considered (India, Nigeria, Serbia); and families over single persons. Decent housing conditions

and family migration were more important drivers of preferences for refugee or migrant homes than country of origin and religion.

- **Overall, there were stable preferences for refugee and migrant homes over time across the whole sample.** However, one fifth of the sample population, who were initially ‘rather approving’ of refugee and migrant homes being established in their neighborhood, were more likely to change their preferences to ‘rather disapproving’ in 2016.
- **Experience of contact with refugees and migrants, higher education, and general pro-immigration attitudes explain acceptance of refugee and migrant homes as well as preference stability over time.**

Overall, the results highlight the importance of humanitarian aspects of sheltering and integration of refugees and other migrants into society.

Americans preferred Syrian refugees who are female, English-speaking, and Christian on the eve of Donald Trump’s election

Claire L. Adida, Adeline Lo, Melina R. Platas

PLoS ONE, Volume 14, Issue 10 (2019), Article Number e0222504

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0222504>

This paper **examines Americans stated preferences for the types of refugees that should be admitted into the United States (US)**. The analysis focuses on Syrian refugees, since Syrians account for a large proportion of registered refugees globally, and include both Muslims and Christians, enabling the authors to examine whether Americans have an anti-Muslim bias.

The analysis draws on a nationally representative sample of 1,800 American citizens administered in October-November 2016, just prior to the 2016 US elections. Respondents were presented with three pairs of refugee profiles, with characteristics selected randomly across several dimensions including sex, religion, job before leaving Syria, English fluency, and age. Respondents were asked to rate each refugee on a scale from 1 (the US should absolutely not admit the refugee) to 7 (the US should

definitely admit the refugee), and then to choose one refugee from each pair for admission into the US.

Main findings:

- **Respondents preferred Syrian refugees who were female, high-skilled, English speakers, and Christian.**
- **The effects were strongest for language-fluency and religion.** The most consistent and strongest determinant of preferences was religion; on average Muslim profiles rated lower than Christian profiles.
- **Respondents prefer female refugees over male refugees, but there is no evidence that respondents wish to exclude male Muslim refugees (who may be perceived by some respondents as a higher security threat), indicating that respondents were not motivated by security concerns in their preference for female refugees.**
- **The anti-Muslim bias in Syrian refugee preferences was apparent across all subgroups of respondents (party, race and respondent religion), but was significantly lower for Democrats, non-whites, and non-Christians, and more pronounced for self-identified Republican, white, and Christian respondents.**
- **The results did not differ by respondent's educational attainment.** All respondents preferred high-skilled refugees, regardless of their own skill level (proxied by educational attainment).
- Respondents who were immigrants themselves, or were children of at least one immigrant parent, were more likely to give higher ratings compared to respondents whose immigration experience was more distant.

Consistent with previous research on American preferences for immigrant characteristics, these results suggest that **American preferences for refugees are driven by sociotropic concerns (i.e., the economic burden of hosting refugees) and perceived cultural threat.** However, the findings that Americans prefer female refugees, and that this preference is not driven by a rejection of Muslim male refugees, suggests that **vulnerability concerns might matter in shaping American preferences for Syrian refugees, while security concerns may matter less.**

Violence, displacement, contact, and attitudes toward hosting refugees

Faten Ghosn, Alex Braithwaite, and Tiffany S Chu

Journal of Peace Research, Volume 56, Issue 1 (2019)

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318804581>

This article **examines whether an individual's personal exposure to violence, personal experience of being displaced, and recent contact with refugees influence their attitudes towards hosting refugees.**

The authors draw on a 2017 survey of 2,400 Lebanese residents, which identified individuals who experienced violence during the Lebanese Civil War (1975–90), those forced to flee their homes during that conflict, and those who had recent contact with Syrian immigrant and/or displaced populations.

Main findings:

- **An individual's exposure to violence and experience of displacement had no discernible impact on individual attitudes toward hosting refugees.** This may be because of the protracted nature of the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon, i.e., over time positive sentiments begin to wane.
- **Attitudes towards refugees were associated with whether individual respondents had contact with Syrians in Lebanon.** Individuals who had contact with Syrian refugees were more likely to support hosting refugees, to consider hiring a refugee, or to allow one of their children to marry a refugee. Findings do not confirm a causal relationship between these factors, but they do suggest contact and positive sentiments go together.
- Men were significantly more likely than women to be supportive of hosting refugees, hiring refugees, and allowing their child to marry a refugee.
- Shia Lebanese were consistently less likely than Sunni Lebanese to relay positive attitudes regarding Syrian refugees. These findings reflect that most refugees are Sunni.
- Respondents with lower levels of education were more likely to support hosting refugees and those with medium and high levels of income were more likely to be willing to hire refugees.

The authors conclude that **exposure to violence by itself does not correlate to positive sentiments toward refugees**, especially over time. Finding ways to create **positive contact between refugees and native populations may be associated with improving attitudes and relations between the two populations**.

Does Exposure to the Refugee Crisis Make Natives More Hostile?

Dominik Hangartner, Elias Dinas, Moritz Marbach, Konstantinos Matakos, and Dimitrios Xefteris

American Political Science Review, Volume 113, Issue 2 (2019), Pages 442-455

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055418000813>

This paper **examines the impact of the 2015/16 refugee crisis on residents' attitudes, policy preferences, and political engagement in Greece**.

The authors exploit a natural experiment in which: (a) distance to the Turkish coast causes dramatic variation in the number of refugee arrivals on Greek islands; (b) islands with and without arrivals are identical across many observable and unobservable characteristics; and (c) among those islands with refugee arrivals, refugees were concentrated in particular 'hotspots'. The analysis is based on a survey of 2,070 residents covering: attitudes toward refugees, immigrants, and Muslim minorities; preferences regarding asylum, immigration, and integration policies; and political engagement to enact policies affecting refugees. The authors use distance to the Turkish coast as an instrument for refugee arrivals to resolve the selection bias associated with refugees choosing their arrival island based on preexisting levels of hostility toward outgroups.

Key findings:

- **Residents of Greek islands that experienced large and sudden arrivals of refugees became more hostile toward refugees, immigrants, and Muslim minorities, and were more likely to support and lobby for more restrictive asylum policies than residents in similar islands that received fewer or no refugees.** Respondents directly exposed to the refugee crisis were more likely

to develop stronger anti-asylum seeker, anti-immigrant, and anti-Muslim attitudes. Compared to respondents on unexposed islands, they were more likely to oppose hosting additional asylum seekers, more likely to support the ban of refugee children from schools, less likely to donate to UNHCR, and less likely to sign a petition that lobbies the government to provide better housing for refugees. Exposure to large numbers of refugees caused residents to become more hostile not only towards refugees, but also towards economic migrants and Muslims, including resident Muslims who had been living in Greece for centuries.

- Across all these outcomes, **direct exposure to the refugee crisis had a long-term impact on natives' hostility** (almost twelve months elapsed between the passing of the last refugee in March 2016 and the survey in 2017).
- **Respondents who received their income primarily from tourism did not necessarily react more strongly to refugee arrivals.** This finding supports the argument that rather than egocentric economic concerns, the chaotic management of the refugee crisis triggered hostility among the local population.
- **Proximity to refugee hotspots significantly and substantially increased respondents' hostility towards asylum seekers and economic immigrants and increased their support for exclusionary policies.** This pattern is consistent with the idea that the highly localized and spatially concentrated chaos surrounding the hotspots created a feeling of threat and triggered exclusionary reactions among residents.
- **Exposure effects are spread quite uniformly across the ideological spectrum.** Those with less exclusionary attitudes reacted similarly negatively to the refugee crisis as those with already strong exclusionary attitudes. The effects were similar between right-wing/extreme-right and centrist/leftist voters.

Since refugees only passed through the Greek islands, the findings challenge both standard economic and cultural explanations of anti-immigrant sentiment and demonstrate that mere exposure suffices in generating lasting increases in hostility. Even if the transient refugee arrivals did not threaten the economic, political, or cultural prerogatives of the local population, the lack of adequate medical, sanitary and waste collection services for refugees caused chaotic scenes and disruptions at

hotspots and sparked concerns about the spread of disease. The uniform effect of exposure to the refugee crisis across the sample suggest that this threat triggered exclusionary reactions not only among those already predisposed against immigration, but also among respondents who otherwise would exhibit inclusionary attitudes.

Attitudes toward Migrants in a Highly Impacted Economy: Evidence from the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Jordan

Ala' Alrababa'h, Andrea Dillon, Scott Williamson, Jens Hainmueller, Dominik Hangartner, and Jeremy Weinstein

Comparative Political Studies, Volume 54, Issue 1 (2020)

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414020919910>

Most of the evidence on factors influencing attitudes toward migrants has emerged from research in developed countries (mainly Europe and the United States), which finds: (1) little evidence that egocentric economic concerns about labor market competition drive attitudes towards migrants in developed countries, where unemployment is low, welfare states are expansive, and migrants typically don't speak the same language and are lower-skilled than natives; (2) sociotropic concerns about the negative impact on the host country's economy, welfare system, and public services shape attitudes toward migrants; (3) attitudes toward migrants are substantially shaped by perceived cultural threat and concerns that migration will change the host country's dominant culture and identity; and (4) humanitarianism may also influence attitudes.

The authors posit that in developing countries, which host the majority of refugees, egocentric economic concerns about labor market competition and sociotropic concerns about the host country economy are likely to be stronger (due to weaker economies, welfare systems and public service delivery), cultural concerns are likely to be weaker (due to the increased likelihood of shared cultural and religious identities), and humanitarianism is likely to be weaker (since developing countries have a much larger refugee burden).

To address this geographical limitation, the authors **conduct a large-scale representative survey of public attitudes toward migration in Jordan**, one of the countries most affected by the Syrian refugee crisis. The survey covered 1,500 Jordanians in regions with both high and low concentrations of Syrian refugees.

The authors find:

- **Economic concerns do not drive Jordanians' attitudes toward Syrian refugees.** Jordanians who have been more economically impacted by the crisis, either personally or in their communities, are not more likely to hold negative attitudes.
- **Humanitarian and cultural factors drive Jordanians attitudes towards Syrian refugees.** Jordanians who are more exposed to refugees' challenging living conditions and who are less sensitive to cultural threat demonstrate more positive attitudes toward refugees.
- Both humanitarian vulnerability and cultural similarity outweigh egocentric and sociotropic economic threats in determining which Syrian refugees Jordanians prefer to host.

These results undermine egocentric arguments about attitude formation toward migrants, and call into question an emerging consensus around the importance of sociotropic economic factors. However, in line with existing research focused on Europe (e.g., Basak et al) the results highlight the potential for humanitarian concerns to sustain public support for hosting refugees over extended periods of time, even in challenging economic circumstances. Most Syrian refugees in Jordan share cultural similarities with their hosts. If these similarities were replaced by cultural differences, the results suggest that Jordanians would be much less likely to let humanitarian motives override the perceived economic costs of hosting so many refugees. This paper therefore reinforces the consensus on the **importance of cultural factors in shaping attitudes toward migration.**

Does the education level of refugees affect natives' attitudes?

Philipp Lergetporer, Marc Piopiunik, and Lisa Simon

European Economic Review, Volume 134 (2021), Article Number 103710

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2021.103710>

This paper **examines whether attitudes toward refugees in Germany are affected by beliefs about refugees' educational attainment.**

The analysis is based on an online survey experiment conducted with more than 4,000 respondents representative of the adult population in Germany. A randomly selected 'treatment' group of respondents was informed about the average educational attainment of refugees in Germany, following which all respondents were asked about their: (i) beliefs about refugees' education level; (ii) concerns about competition in the labor market; (iii) concerns that refugees increase the overall cost ('fiscal burden') of public services; and (iv) general attitudes toward refugees.

Information about the educational attainment of refugees is drawn from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees in Germany published in 2016, which finds that 32 percent of asylum seekers in Germany aged 18 years and older have a high school degree and 13 percent hold a university degree.

Main findings:

- Providing information about refugees' educational attainment strongly increases the share of respondents who think that refugees are well educated.
- **Providing information about refugees' educational attainment *increases* concerns about labor market competition and *decreases* concerns about the fiscal burden.**
- **Providing information about refugees' educational attainment improves general attitudes towards refugees**, which may suggest that decreased fiscal burden concerns on average more than outweigh increased labor market competition concerns.
- The general pattern of results is very similar for non-tertiary-educated and tertiary-educated respondents.

- Several non-economic factors (e.g., refugees' willingness to integrate or humanitarian aspects) are more important for respondents than economic considerations in shaping attitudes towards refugees.

The authors suggest two policy implications of these findings. First, **correcting misperceptions about refugees through information provision can improve attitudes toward refugees**, which may in turn improve the political feasibility of more progressive asylum policies. Second, **non-economic aspects are important for shaping the attitudes toward refugees**, which suggests that policy makers may increase public acceptance of refugees by highlighting humanitarian aspects or their willingness to integrate, rather than economic factors.

Immigration, Labor Markets and Discrimination Evidence from the Venezuelan Exodus in Perú

Andre Groeger, Gianmarco León-Ciliotta, and Steven Stillman

World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, No. 9982 (2022)

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/37206>

The number of Venezuelans living in Peru increased from 6,615 in 2016 to around 1,000,000 by 2021, increasing the population of Peru by around 2 percent. This paper **estimates the effect of labor market conditions on self-reported discrimination against Venezuelan immigrants in Peru, and whether the presence of Venezuelan immigrants affects residents' labor market outcomes, overall criminal activity, or residents' perceptions about crime and their local community.**

The analysis draws on several data sources including: (a) a specialized survey of Venezuelans living in Peru capturing information about their location as well as their experiences of discrimination and hostility from residents; (b) a nationally representative household survey collected monthly covering demographics, educational attainment, labor market conditions, crime victimization, and perceptions of the main problems in the country and trust in institutions; (c) the Latin American

Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and Gallup World Poll (GWP) opinion surveys; (d) district-level administrative data on Venezuelan immigrants registered to obtain access to social services; and (e) Peruvian census data, including the overall population and the share of workers in the formal and informal sector in each locality.

Main results:

- **Weaker informal labor markets lead to a significant increase in the discrimination reported by Venezuelans in Peru.** More than a third of Venezuelans reported having experienced discrimination, with variation across and within municipalities. Overall, a 10 percent decrease in the informal employment rate increases discrimination by 2.3-3 percent. This effect is twice as large for men as for women.
- **Weaker informal labor markets lead to more discrimination for men in public places and on public transport and, for women on public transport.** Weaker informal labor markets do not appear to lead to an increase in workplace discrimination for either sex.
- **Increased immigration from Venezuela has a positive impact on labor market outcomes for Peruvians,** including increased employment rates, incomes and expenditure in locations that receive more Venezuelans.
- **Locations that receive more Venezuelan immigrants have lower levels of reported non-violent crime, improved reported quality of local services, greater reported trust in neighbors, and higher reported community quality.**
- **In locations with more Venezuelans, Peruvians report that their community likes diversity less.**

The authors suggest several policy implications suggested by these results. First, policies that reduce the stigmatization of foreigners should be a first order concern for policymakers, especially in areas with low informal employment rates. Second, policymakers should take into account the improvements in labor market outcomes, the reduced levels of crime and better community life outcomes deriving from the presence of the Venezuelans, when considering the introduction of policies to limit immigration

Inclusive Refugee-Hosting in Uganda Improves Local Development and Prevents Public Backlash

Yang-Yang Zhou, Guy Grossman, and Shuning Ge

World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, No. 9981 (2022)

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/37209>

This paper **examines whether the presence of large numbers of refugees in Uganda affects the provision of public services in nearby host communities, and whether improvements in public services in turn shapes attitudes toward migrants and migration policies.** Uganda hosts around 1.4 million refugees, making it the fourth-largest refugee-hosting country in the world and the seventh largest on a per capita basis.

The analysis draws on: (a) georeferenced data on refugee settlements from UNHCR; (b) geocoded Afrobarometer survey data; (c) novel georeferenced panel data on service delivery covering access to education, access to and utilization of health care, and road density; and (d) geocoded violent events from ACLED.

Main findings:

- **Access to education, health care, and roads significantly improved for Ugandan residents living near refugee settlements, particularly after the 2014 arrival of over 1 million South Sudanese refugees.** This result is consistent across alternative measures of proximity to refugee settlements.
- **A larger refugee presence does not appear to increase (or decrease) support for restrictive migration policies** (although in some years it is associated with a somewhat heightened sense of personal insecurity).

The authors conclude that, even if living near many refugees can make residents feel less safe (and may be associated with other negative externalities not examined in this paper), **resource allocation policies that benefit nearby communities can reduce potential backlash against refugees and improve social cohesion between host communities and refugees.**

‘Refugees welcome?’ The interplay between perceived threats and general concerns on the acceptance of refugees – a factorial survey approach in Germany

Hagen von Hermanni and Robert Neumann

Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Volume 45, Issue 3 (2019), Pages 349-374

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1459183>

This article explores attitudes to asylum seekers in Dresden, Germany.

The analysis is based on online surveys of over 1,000 residents conducted in Dresden in the first half of 2016. In addition to collecting information on local safety concerns and overall wellbeing, respondents were presented with 12 vignettes, each describing a (fictive) refugee with characteristics varying across several dimensions (sex, whether they had children, age, religion, origin, and reason for flight). For each vignette, respondents were asked to rate the application for asylum as being either justified or not justified, using a seven-point scale.

Main findings:

- **Cause of flight was the most important ascribed characteristic of refugees when respondents judge asylum applications.** Political persecution and war were the causes of flight that generated the highest approval ratings of refugees. Natural disasters and poverty were perceived as the least justified causes of flight and for applying for asylum.
- Potential threats due to religious affiliation or cultural dissimilarity did not have the expected effect on approval ratings of refugees.
- Acceptance of refugees from Eastern Europe was significantly lower than for Africa and the Middle East. This counterintuitive result may be due to the already high percentage of immigrants from the former Soviet Union in Greater Dresden.
- Refugees of Muslim faith did not generate lower approval rates in comparison to refugees of Christian faith or non-denominational refugees.
- **Sex of asylum seekers and family status affected approval ratings.** Refugees with children and female refugees generated higher levels of approval of asylum application.

- **Respondents' general economic, fiscal and crime concerns moderated the acceptance of refugees.** Fear of crime, economic concerns about the decline in living conditions, and fiscal concerns had a strong negative effect on the judgments by respondents. Fear of crime appears to be the most important moderator for acceptance levels.

The results indicate the persistence of a public consensus about the eligibility of refugees that is in accordance with German asylum laws (i.e., privileging the asylum claims of people fleeing war and political persecution). In their conclusion, the authors also highlight the importance of efforts to mitigate general economic, fiscal and crime concerns, which were shown to affect attitudes towards refugees.

Building Social Cohesion in Ethnically Mixed Schools: An Intervention on Perspective Taking

Sule Alan, Ceren Baysan, Mert Gumren, Elif Kubilay

The Quarterly Journal of Economics, Volume 136, Issue 4 (2021), Pages 2147–2194

<https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjab009>

Research has shown that perspective-taking (a cognitive process of viewing a situation from the perspective of another person) is associated with lower social aggression, higher trust, and social cooperation. It is also related to being able to analyze social situations through slow deliberations (weighing pros and cons before action), which has been shown to reduce crime and violent behavior in various contexts.

This paper **evaluates an educational program in Turkey that aimed to develop social skills and build social cohesion in schools by developing perspective-taking ability in children.** The program was implemented in schools where the ethnic composition has changed rapidly due to the influx of refugee children, which is perceived by host communities to have had a detrimental effect on schools by increasing peer violence, and creating visible ethnic segregation in schools. The program was implemented as a cluster randomized controlled trial covering over 6,500 children (16 percent of whom were refugees), aged 8-12, from 80 elementary schools

in southeastern Turkey. 40 schools were randomly selected to implement the program in the 2018-19 academic year, involving a full-year curricular module to be covered by teachers for at least 3 hours per week.

Key results:

- **The program was highly effective in lowering high-intensity peer violence and victimization in school grounds**, as measured via diary logs completed by school administrators.
- **The program reduced social exclusion and ethnic segregation in the classroom.** Treated children (refugees and hosts) were less likely to be socially excluded and more likely to receive emotional and academic support from their classmates. These effects were particularly strong for refugee children: refugee children in treated schools were 12 and 10 percentage points more likely to receive emotional and academic support respectively from host classmates, compared to refugee children in untreated schools.
- **The program increased trust, reciprocity, and cooperation among students, as well as their altruism toward one another.** Treated children exhibit higher trust and reciprocity toward their peers, cooperate more, and show higher altruistic tendencies. Prosocial behavior improves towards both classmates and anonymous out-school peers.

Overall, the program appears to have been effective in building a cohesive classroom environment, and refugees were the primary beneficiaries of this environment. In addition to facilitating their social inclusion, treated refugee children achieved better test scores in Turkish language tests.

The analysis suggests that these results emerge because of improvements in children's perspective-taking abilities (although other mechanisms may have also contributed to the results). The program also improves children's ability to self-regulate impulsivity (ability to weigh the pros and cons of a prospective act), which may have also contributed to reductions in peer violence and victimization. The authors conclude that well-targeted educational strategies can go a long way in building social capital,

even in socio-politically difficult circumstances. Additionally, developing perspective-taking ability in children is possible through educational tools and teacher training.

Perspective taking can promote short-term inclusionary behavior toward Syrian refugees

Claire L. Adida and Melina R. Platas

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Volume 115, Issue 38 (2018), Pages 9521-9526

<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1804002115>

This paper **tests whether a perspective-taking exercise can increase the likelihood that American citizens adopt more inclusionary behavior toward Syrian refugees in the United States.**

The analysis draws on the findings of a nationally representative survey of 5,400 American citizens just prior to the 2016 presidential election. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of three groups: (1) perspective taking; (2) information; and (3) control. The perspective taking group were asked to answer a short set of questions while imagining themselves as a refugee. The second group was provided with information about the US commitment to resettling Syrian refugees and the low number of Syrian refugees the United States has committed to resettle. All respondents were asked if they would be willing to write an anonymous letter to the President expressing support for refugees and given the opportunity to do so. Some respondents in each group were randomly assigned to answer the question about letter writing a week after the initial part of the survey to test the durability of the results.

Results:

- The perspective-taking exercise increased the likelihood of writing a letter supportive of refugees, while the informational message had no significant effect on letter writing.

- The effect of the perspective-taking exercise occurred in the short run only, manifested as a behavioral rather than an attitudinal response, and was strongest among Democrats (but also observable among Republicans).

The authors conclude that **perspective taking exercises can prod individuals, who already have inclusionary attitudes, to act on that preference in the short term, but are not effective in changing attitudes.**

Forced Migration, Social Cohesion and Conflict: The 2015 Refugee Inflow in Germany

Emanuele Albarosa and Benjamin Elsner

World Bank Policy Research Working Paper Series, No. 9913 (2022)

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/36914>

This paper **investigates whether large-scale refugee arrivals in 2015/16 affected social cohesion in Germany.** Over one million asylum seekers arrived in Germany between 2014 and 2016.

To estimate a causal effect of refugees on social cohesion, the authors exploit the fact that asylum seekers in Germany were assigned across federal states according to the state's population and tax revenues two years prior (i.e., unrelated to economic, political or social conditions at the time). The authors measure social cohesion across several dimensions including generalized trust, perceived fairness, attitudes towards foreigners, and anti-immigrant violence. The analysis draws on regional data on asylum seeker inflows, data from the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) panel survey, and regional data on incidents of anti-immigrant violence.

Main findings:

- **There is no evidence that refugee inflows affected self-reported measures of social cohesion, at least in the short run.** There is no evidence that inflows of refugees affected social attitudes and perceptions such as trust, perceived fairness, attitudes towards foreigners, or economic concerns. Additionally,

there were no discernible effects on attitudes in areas with high or low employment, and in areas with a high or low share of right-wing voters.

- **The local presence of refugees increased the incidence of anti-immigrant violence.** The incidence of anti-immigrant violence increased disproportionately in counties receiving larger numbers of refugees. This increase was mainly driven by attacks on refugee accommodation and was concentrated among the top 10 percent of municipalities with the largest inflows of refugees. The effect was stronger in areas with high unemployment and in areas with a higher share of right-wing voters.

Overall, the findings suggest that, while the general population does not react to the presence of asylum seekers, a small segment of the population shows extreme reactions, in the form of anti-immigration violence. The authors conclude that high-income countries can absorb large numbers of refugees without major impacts on social cohesion. Moreover, policies that foster inclusiveness and empathy with immigrants should be adopted and targeted in areas that are prone to anti-immigrant violence. Based on the relevant literature, the authors indicate that perspective-taking interventions— such as priming family immigration stories among natives— can increase support for refugees. They also point out that promoting narratives that raise awareness on specific aspects of the experience of refugees, such as the hardship they faced, can have positive effects on intergroup and policy attitudes.

Annex A: Overview of Articles

Adida, C.L., Lo, A. and Platas, M.R. (2018) '**Perspective taking can promote short-term inclusionary behavior toward Syrian refugees**', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115(38), pp. 9521–9526. doi:10.1073/pnas.1804002115.

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Groeger, A., León-Ciliotta, G. and Stillman, S. (2022) **Immigration, Labor Markets and Discrimination: Evidence from the Venezuelan Exodus in Perú**. Policy Research Working Paper 9982. World Bank.

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von Hermanni, H. and Neumann, R. (2019) '**Refugees welcome?" The interplay between perceived threats and general concerns on the acceptance of refugees – a factorial survey approach in Germany**', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(3), pp. 349–374. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2018.1459183.

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Liebe, U. et al. (2018) '**From welcome culture to welcome limits? Uncovering preference changes over time for sheltering refugees in Germany**', *PLOS ONE*. Edited by M.B. Laws, 13(8), p. e0199923. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0199923.