

FORCED DISPLACEMENT, EXPOSURE TO  
CONFLICT AND LONG-RUN EDUCATION AND  
INCOME INEQUALITY : EVIDENCE FROM  
CROATIA AND BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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Forced Displacement and Social Cohesion: New Evidence  
from Europe

World Bank, UNHCR and FCDO

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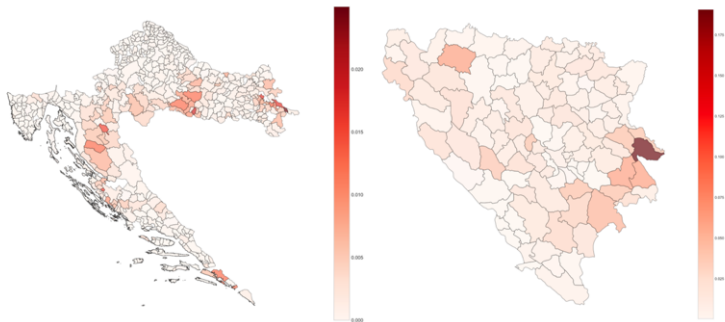
- 1 INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL SETTING
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- This paper investigates the long-term relationship between conflict-related migration and individual socioeconomic inequality
- Focus at the post-conflict environments of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Croatia two decades after the conflicts (1991-1995)
- During the conflicts, over 50% of BiH's population and over 20% of Croatia's moved internally or externally.
- Differences in educational performance and income between four groups: migrants, internally displaced persons, refugees, and those who did not move
- Using siblings data and interacted with birth cohorts investigate growth dynamics of different groups of migrants

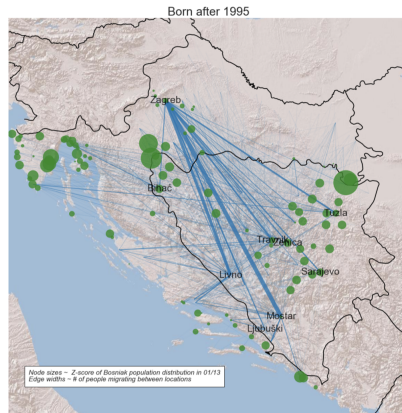
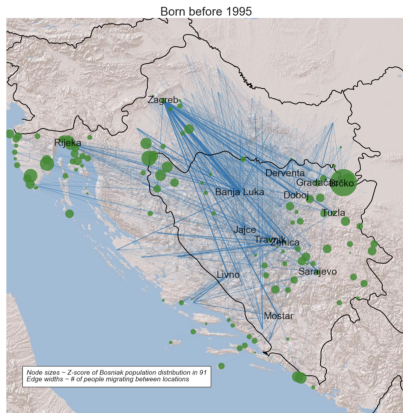
# Historical Setting



# War casualties in Croatia and BiH



# Migration of refugees before and after the war



## Data and specifics of the conflict:

- Available estimates suggest that conflicts displaced more than 2.0 million individuals across BiH (UNHCR, 2011)
- Country representative survey ((n = 6, 021) in 2015 (20 years after the conflict) with information on:
  - Migration status (hosts, internal migrants, and external migrants)
  - The reason for - migration or return
  - Wide range of individual SE characteristics

## Findings:

- Individuals with greater exposure to conflict had systematically worse educational performance and lower earnings 20 years after the war
- Returnees have better educational and economic outcomes than hosts, but these advantages are smaller for individuals who were forced to move
- The difference between the educational performance of refugees and that of economic migrants, approx.17 pp

## Croatia and Forced Displacement

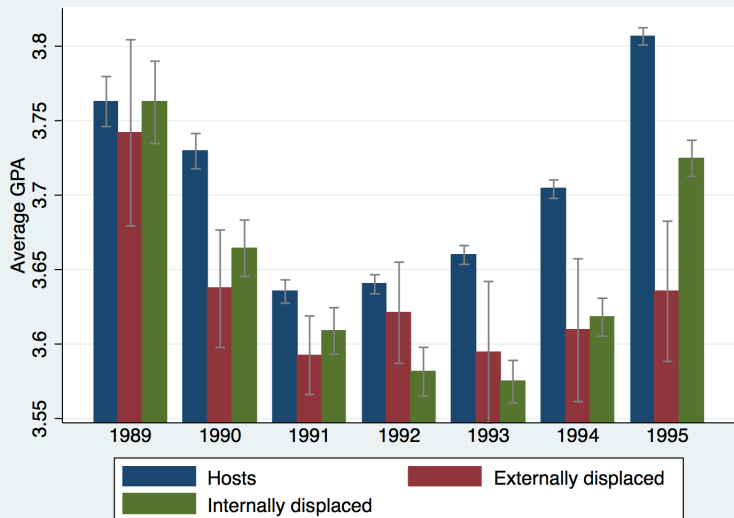
In the early 1990s Croatia found itself in the difficult situation of being many migrants' destination country:

- In 1992, Croatia registered 316,000 refugees - a ratio of 15:1 relative to its total population
- 420,000 to 450,000 Bosnian refugees, 35,000 refugees from Serbia (mostly from Vojvodina and Kosovo), and 265,000 internally displaced people
- In today's terms, this would be the equivalent of Germany hosting 10 million displaced people, or France 8 million.



- Long-run effects - 11 to 20 years after the conflict
- The universe of all children from grades 1 to 12 and college in Croatia - +55 mil observations
- High school and elementary: 2007 to 2016; College choices: 2010 to 2021; State exam data 2010 to 2021
- Student information per school year: grade for every subject, justified and unjustified absence, head teacher
- Demographics - date of birth, gender, number of siblings, place of birth, place of residence, school behaviour, within and outside school activities

# Croatia and Forced Displacement



- For Croatia, we find that school-aged children displaced by the conflict suffered significantly in terms of multiple measures of educational performance: GPA (18-30 p.p.), school absence(10-15 p.p.) and school behavior (22-30 p.p.)
- These differences became smaller over time, suggesting that families are eventually able to overcome some of the challenges of forced migration
- Importantly, younger children in displaced families performed significantly better in school than their older siblings, although they were not able to fully close the achievement gap with those who did not move
- Older siblings who are externally displaced have worse GPAs, more absences, and worse behaviour than their younger siblings
- These results suggest that given time, families can adapt to their new circumstances and enable children to succeed
- Future work - on policies affecting faster convergence

- Nearly two decades later, we find evidence that exposure to conflict and forced displacement have had strong negative effects on individuals' educational and economic outcomes
- Our results have several important policy and program implications:
  - It is critical to target benefits on the basis of individual and family conflict exposure, rather than simply by geography.
  - Policies supporting the return of both voluntary external migrants and former refugees could offset the long-term human capital loss caused by the conflict.
  - There could be tremendous value in combining educational records with household survey data.

- Identifying policies and factors affecting faster convergence
- Currently the long term effects are an average effect over the entire education system - in most studies
- In order to really understand and provide policies which are most effective - understand year to year changes
- For Croatia - investigate education dynamics from elementary to college (forced displacement and host groups)
- Extend the study for elementary and high school (2007-2016), college enrolment and state exam (2010-2021)
- Conduct a country - representative survey similar to the one for BiH