How Refugee Resentment Shapes National Identity and Citizen Participation in Africa.

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**OVERVIEW**

How does the presence of refugees affect the social and political identities and behaviors of nearby citizens?

- **Motivation:** Highest number of refugees ever recorded at 25.4 million, 85% remain in developing world – understudied context.
- **Argument:** Citizen resentment of nearby refugees can have positive nation-building consequences.
- **Multi-Method Approach:** Experimental citizen focus groups and survey; elite interviews; observational primary school data.
- **Findings:** Greater exposure to refugees increases national identification and resentment over aid, leading to more citizen participation and improved public goods outcomes.
- **Normative Implications:** Fuel anti-refugee sentiments as a tool of nation-building? No – many negative consequences of refugee resentment (Adida 2011, Onoma 2013, Zhou 2018). Design interventions that promote inclusive relations and development.

**THEORY & CONTRIBUTIONS**

- But pressures from forced migration, a consequence of weak borders, can spur nationalism through out-group distancing (Tajfel and Turner 1979) and feelings of relative deprivation (Gurr 2015).

**BURUNDIAN REFUGEE INFLUX IN KIGOMA, TANZANIA**

- History of nation-building in Tanzania under Nyerere.
- Low state capacity and extreme poverty for the 2 million citizens.
- Coethnicty between Hutu refugees and Ha citizens (Brewer 1991).

**NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION OUTCOMES**

Citizens who are more exposed to refugees express greater (less) attachment to their national (ethnic) identity due to out-group distances.

**Burundi Crisis (2015-2018)**

- Foreign threat to refugees
- Aid and resources
- Refugee camps

**Burundi Crisis (2015-2018)**

- Out-group distancing
- Identification through relative deprivation

**Figure: Map of camps, survey respondents, and focus groups in Kigoma.**

To examine citizens’ attitudes towards refugees, levels of national identification, resource resentment, and public goods demands:

1. Regionally representative survey of 2025 citizen respondents, stratified by distance to camp, balanced on gender.
2. 10 community focus groups randomly selected, stratified by distance to camp; 15 adult citizen participants each, balanced on gender.

**Figure: Distribution of survey respondent distances to the refugee camp.**

**MEASURING IDENTITY ATTACHMENTS**

**Figure: Survey question measuring identity attachments.**

Respondents are given 10 beads to distribute among the 6 identity bins.

**Figure: Comparison of experimental (bottom) and control (top) outcomes for national (left) and ethnic (right) identification.**

**Citizen Participation in Public Goods**

Citizens who are more exposed to refugees make more demands of the state for better public goods provision (qualitative evidence). Subsequently, public goods for communities nearest to the refugee camps improve.

**Figure: Difference-in-difference effect of proximity to refugee camp post-influx on government primary school outcomes.**