QuantMig

Marta Bivand Erdal, Mathilde Bålsrud Mjelva, Andreas Forø Tollefsen

Conflict-related determinants of migration

Deliverable 2.7

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1. Introduction

This QuantMig Background paper seeks to shed new light on how we can investigate and try to understand conflict-related determinants of migration. The terms 'conflict related' and 'migration' and in particular the link between them needs unpacking and defining, as we return to. However, as a point of departure and conceptual precision, it is worth reflecting on the distinction between describing movements within and out of conflict-affected areas as *conflict-induced* or *conflict-related*. Rather than a merely semantic point, the distinction matters because while the former phrase suggests that migration is driven by, brought about by, caused by or an effect of conflict – and conflict alone; the latter phrase suggests an inextricable link with conflict at some level, yet one where other factors may also matter, and significantly one that allows space to more adequately include the fact that most people may never leave the conflict-affected area they live in.

In both cases – conflict-induced and conflict-related migration – it is given that *conflict* is the main reason why people leave, and at times flee for their lives at short notice, yet the latter seeks to account further for how there are always also other interacting, mediating or confounding drivers of mobility and immobility (see also Adkhikari 2013; Braithwaite et al. 2021; Czaika and Kis-Katos 2009; Davenport et al. 2003; Lubkeman 2005; Seven 2022). In other words, analytical attention is pointed toward the plural drivers of migration in conflict, both in the sense of unpacking what it is about conflict that is driving migration – hence, *conflict-related determinants of migration*, but also seeking to include the roles of other interacting migration drivers, which could be similar or different to those found in settings that are not conflict-affected too.

Thus, this diversity of *how* conflict 'leads to displacement' or not, in varying ways, is worthy of critical reflection. How conflict-related determinants of migration may vary is reflected e.g., with the examples of conflicts in Syria, Yemen, the Niger Delta region, and Ukraine, which we turn to below. For, displacement from conflict-affected areas can exhibit significant variation, depending on the specific characteristics and dynamics of each conflict, as well as prospective migrants' varying opportunities both to move and to stay (FitzGerald and Arar 2018; Richmond 1993; Zetter 2018).

For instance, the Syrian Civil War, which began in 2011, has led to a massive exodus of people, with millions of Syrians fleeing the country to seek refuge in neighbouring countries and beyond (UNHCR 2023a). The high intensity of violence, widespread human rights abuses, and the protracted nature of the conflict have contributed to one of the largest refugee crises in recent history (UNHCR 2023b). In Yemen, the ongoing conflict since 2015 has resulted in a significant internal displacement crisis, with millions of people forced to flee their homes due to violence, food insecurity, and a collapsing healthcare system (ReliefWeb 2022). While some Yemenis have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, the majority of the displaced population remains within the country. In contrast, the conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has generated relatively lower levels of displacement, despite ongoing violence and tensions between various armed groups, local communities, and the government (NRC/IDMC 2010). Meanwhile the ongoing war in Ukraine, following Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, at the time of writing (mid-2023), has led to both large-scale internal and international displacements, including extensive ongoing mobilities, within and across Ukraine's borders, reflecting the sometimes hard-to-capture nature of displacement in conflict-settings (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Hoffmann (2022).

Comparing such case studies can be useful and reveal significantly different levels and types of migration from conflict-affected areas, that can be influenced by the intensity, type, and duration of conflict, geographic scope, as well as social and economic factors and opportunities. Every

conflict is different – each with its own idiosyncratic features – which complicates efforts to generalise. Furthermore, in every conflict-affected area, populations also differ in terms of access to resources, information, networks, and overall capabilities, whereby how agency in and scope for decision-making about leaving and staying varies (Bakewell 2011; Carling and Schewel 2018; de Haas 2021; Duvell 2021; Ho 2018; Randell 2016). This is both shaped by conflict dynamics, and broader contextual and individual level factors, which affect how decision-making about moving or staying, can be experienced as more or less voluntary or forced (Crawley and Skleparis 2018; Erdal and Oeppen 2018; Mata-Codesal 2018). It is also worth noting, that leaving and staying, are often not binaries, but rather more fluid, as some family or household members may leave or stay at different points in time, and leaving may at first be very short-distance, and temporary, yet over time can develop differently (Harpviken 2014; Schewel and Fransen 2022). Despite these complexities, we can still identify common trends, factors, or patterns that often influence migration decisions in conflict situations.

In this paper we explore factors which are all likely to contribute to the decision-making processes about staying and leaving among those living in conflict-affected areas, such as: conflict intensity, type, and geographic scope, and the availability of resources, all contributing to different patterns of mobility and immobility. As we expand on below, some factors affecting mobility and immobility in conflict-affected areas, overlap with factors which also matter in areas not affected by violent conflict. In terms of *insecurities* that people face and have to respond to or live with, the parallels to studying mobility and immobility in relation to the effects of climate change, are profound (Carling et al. 2020; Vestby et al. 2022).

Yet, the question which we pose in this background paper, on **conflict-related determinants of migration**, is one which has received less detailed scrutiny, than might be expected, though with some notable exceptions, which we draw on in this paper. In conflict research, much as in the study of forced migration, more pressing questions tend to come to the foreground. These questions are often *present-oriented*, about assistance for people fleeing violence: who should provide assistance, how, but also where? (e.g., Harrell-Bond 1986) Or, given the length of displacement, more *future-oriented* questions are posed about when and where people who have left conflict areas can live their lives long-term, especially where the traditional 'durable solutions' of local settlement, resettlement or return, frequently are not adequate, in the formats in which they currently work (e.g., Alpes et al. 2023). There are very valid reasons why the emphasis in practice, policy – and research – is placed on *the present and future*, rather than on dynamics that lie in *the past*, linked to conflict and mobility and immobility outcomes.

This background paper does not present a criticism of existing research addressing these important questions with a present and future view. Rather, we would like to point analytical attention to a basic fact, which we argue continues to be poorly understood, with potential negative implications both for the knowledge that research enables, and for policy development that relies on in-depth understanding, namely: Why is it the case, that in conflict contexts, some people leave, while others stay behind? And specifically, **what it is *about conflict*, that contributes to the outcome that some people leave, while others do not?**

Like research on migration decisions overall, studies about people leaving conflict-affected areas often face criticism for sampling on the dependent variable – by focusing on, and collecting data about, those who left – rather than those who did not (Schewel 2020). This is an important caveat, to which we return, also because it matters profoundly in conflict-affected areas, where it must be assumed that the challenge of *involuntary immobility* often poses far greater risks than might be the case in areas that are not suffering from violent conflict (Carling 2002; Lubkeman 2008).

The background paper starts with a section where we clarify definitions and the conceptual

foundations. We then proceed to the first substantive section of the paper: a systematic literature review, focusing on conflict-related determinants of migration, in quantitative studies. Next, we turn to the second substantive part of the paper, where we present findings from a review and exploration of the titles and abstracts of all articles published 2018-2023* in the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, a flagship journal in the field of refugee and forced migration studies.

By combining findings from both the systematic literature review of quantitative studies that included regression analyses and the explorative review of article titles and abstracts in the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the conflict-related determinants of migration, bridging the gap between different methods and disciplines. Indeed, both these analyses point in the same direction: there is a scarcity of published research that substantively focuses on *conflict and violence* in the context of people fleeing. Many of the authors that do engage with the theme, approach it in binary terms: the *presence or absence of violent conflict*, often at national levels, and only sometimes zooming in on particular sub-national areas. In the qualitative studies reviewed attention to conflict and violence usually involves a focus on the context described, in relation to the *present* circumstances of refugees' lives, for instance in memories of violence in relation to trauma or thinking about return.

Meanwhile, the more past-oriented issue of conflict-related determinants of migration, specifically in the context of displacement, is not as well understood as one might expect, given the number of people fleeing conflict-affected areas. This is surprising, although it is important to recognise that *most people, even in the face of conflict in fact do not leave*, some due to involuntary immobility, some out of choice, and some perhaps based on limited or inaccessible information or assessment thereof.

In this paper we both document this gap, which, while understandable from a humanitarian and policy-response perspective, nevertheless raises concerns about the existing knowledge base on conflict-related determinants of migration. We also offer some new insights on conflict-related determinants of migration, and suggestions for future research, not least foregrounding issues related to the limitations – and possibilities – of currently available data in this area.

2. Definitions and conceptual foundations

In this chapter we briefly outline some key definitions and conceptual points of departure for the work presented in this Background paper. We start with the question of 'what are determinants of migration', including a note on migration decisions (Czaika et al. 2021). We then proceed to discuss links between conflict and migration and explain our take on conceptualising and defining these. The final section discusses categories of moving people and groups, specifically in relation to the conflict-related determinants of migration.

2.1 What are determinants of migration?

When we refer to migration we include movements, both within countries and across international borders. Whilst, often in migration studies, and to an extent studies of conflict and migration, the default is 'international migration' – most migration globally occurs internally to nation-states (as reflected in demographic research, see e.g., Bell et al. 2015a; Bell et al 2015b).

By *migration* we refer to movements of people across geographic space, where we are assuming a certain distance – and a certain duration. There are different definitions, and this also applies to the reviewed literature we discuss later. Nevertheless, a basic premise is that migration involves someone moving far enough that they have to 'live' and sleep and eat, not in their original home, and that this goes on for a long enough period to constitute more than a short spell or visit (see also Carling et al. 2020). Often, the distinction between a 'temporary' and a 'permanent' stay, however, is far more blurred than a literal interpretation of these terms may suggest. This is relevant, not least in relation to mobility and immobility in conflict contexts.

The determinants of migration refer to the reasons for – or causes of – migration, as seen both from a micro-level perspective, as well as in more aggregate e.g., regional or national level terms. Traditionally, determinants of migration have been understood primarily through an economic prism, with political factors often also entering the picture (Czaika & Reinprecht 2022; de Haas et al. 2019; Erdal & Hagen-Zanker 2022; Van Hear et al. 2018).

Existing research explores both 'drivers' of migration, and *migration aspirations*, which are recognised to be a separate issue, affecting people's desires to stay or leave (Carling 2002; de Haas 2021). The realisation of these migration aspirations is dependent on people's capacities, in a broad sense, to mobilise to migrate (Aslany et al. 2021; Aslany et al 2022; Carling and Mjelva 2021).

Below we attempt a birds-eye view summary of determinants of migration, drawing on the above-referred deliverables from the QuantMig project, and research cited therein. This serves the purpose of outlining our conceptual approach to the potential overlaps of determinants of migration overall – and those determinants that may be perceived as conflict-related specifically.

Intersecting economic considerations are significant in varying ways as determinants of migration, and for the creation of migration aspirations (see also Czaika 2015; Carling and Mjelva 2021; Aslany et al. 2021; 2022), and pertain to:

- Livelihoods opportunities here and now: ability to live a 'normal life' in economic terms.
- Prospects for income *here vs. elsewhere*: comparing different opportunities for income.
- Future outlook here: considerations about the non-migration future in economic terms.

Simultaneously, non-economic factors both intersect with more economically oriented factors, and are complemented by less tangible factors (Hagen-Zanker et al. 2023), such as:

- Imagination
- Personality traits
- Emotions and feelings
- Beliefs and values.

All of the above both affect migration at the level of aspirations – and at the stage of engaging with the realisation of migration aspirations into actual migration projects (Aslany et al 2021; Willekens 2021). At this stage, further factors start playing an important role too, such as:

- Access to resources: degree of access to resources impacts staying and leaving.
- Nature of networks: type and *location* of networks impacts staying and leaving.
- Risk-assessment: individual and family considerations of risk impacts staying and leaving.

The above lists are not mutually exclusive, but rather are likely to interact, and of course may be subjectively interpreted. This is reflective of the ways in which *uncertainty* is a profoundly part of migration considerations – and thus of relevance to any effort at determining migration (Bijak and Czaika 2020; Bijak 2022). Meanwhile, the above points summarise much of existing knowledge about key determinants of migration overall – without specific consideration of conflict, violence and insecurities.

What about conflict, then? Political factors were mentioned tangentially above, and of course matter beyond questions of violent conflict – e.g., in terms of minority rights, freedom of speech, democratic governance, etc. In relation to the *conflict-related determinants of migration* – both based on existing knowledge (Adhikari 2013; Bohra-Mishra & Massey 2011; Melander & Öberg 2007) and intuitively, one may assume that three questions, are crucial in shaping migrating and staying behaviours and patterns:

- What is a conflict-setting? (Proximity to violence impacts staying and leaving.)
- Which kind of violence? (Intensity form and type of violence impacts staying and leaving.)
- Role in conflict? (Being targeted or participating in conflict impacts staying and leaving.)

Significantly, however, these more conflict-specific-determinants, also interact with the previously mentioned factors shaping migrating and/or staying. While at the surface this may be a relatively obvious point and is reflected both in work on 'drivers of migration' as well as theoretical engagement with 'push' and 'pull' factors influencing migration (Van Hear et al. 2018), research conducted specifically on *conflict-related determinants of migration* is curiously limited. This is despite the fact that migration being both proactive and reactive in conflict-affected areas is well-evidenced (e.g., Richmond 1993). And despite the fact that both immediate and slow-grinding impacts of violent conflict have been found to be important, including the human costs of conflict indirectly (e.g., Gates et al. 2012). Nevertheless, conflict-related determinants of migration have as such largely not been at the centre of attention in research conducted, neither in peace and conflict studies, nor in the study of refugees and forced displacement, and rarely beyond a binary approach to conflict/or not in migration studies overall.

2.2 Links between conflict & migration

Our deliberate focus on 'Conflict-related determinants of migration' emphasizes the links between conflict and migration, and suggests that there could be different aspects of conflict that impact staying and migrating, in a given context. As we mentioned above, we also acknowledge that in many instances, factors which are associated with conflict – and others that are not – interact and

produce staying or leaving behaviour at the micro-level, resulting in the migration patterns observed at the aggregate level. This is an important point, and reflects the fact that even in context of conflict, there is *variation* in the influence and impact of conflict on people's lives.

This is also reflected in the different terms which exist in the literature – such as *survival migration* and *wartime migration*. When referring to 'wartime migration' in their work on Mozambique (Lubkemann 2005; 2008) or Afghanistan (Harpviken 2009), the authors implicitly or explicitly focus on the impacts of war – including, but not limited to violence. These impacts shape migrating and staying behaviour, mediated by such factors as risk assessment, networks, and resources (Czaika and Reinprecht 2022; Schon 2019). Similarly, for instance, a study of the impacts of wartime migration in Vietnam seen from a life course perspective (Young et al. 2021), maps out many structural reasons for immobility, and their spatial patterns, which contribute to explaining relatively low migration rates (internally) despite ongoing violent conflict.

The concept 'survival migration', advocated by Alexander Betts (2013), merits attention in the context of the discussion on conflict-related determinants of migration, although his focus is solely on international, cross-border movement, and attention is centred on human rights and issues of 'international protection'. Nevertheless, the concept has clear relevance for this paper, as it does not privilege particular *causes* of movement, potentially related to conflict, climate change impacts or generalised insecurity (Betts 2013: 4-5).

Both examples – 'wartime migration' and 'survival migration' serve to illustrate the complex interface between conflict and migration, as an important backdrop for the work presented in this paper. In different ways, the broad-based focus on 'wartime migration' and the narrower focus on 'survival migration', support a need for further disaggregation of what 'conflict' means, how that is relevant to migration of different kinds, and more importantly to different modes of staying, in countries, and regions, that are affected by violent conflict.

Attention to 'staying' and the inherent 'migration bias' of migration research is gaining force (Schewel 2020), not least powered by interest in the impacts of climate change – and populations who remain immobile, sometimes referred to as 'trapped population' (Black & Collyer 2014; Vetstby et al. 2021). Similar dynamics as in the climate-migration nexus), also occur in conflict settings, and are well known, if not much written about in research on conflict and migration (Mallick & Schanze 2020).

In the context of questions of staying and leaving, the terms 'immobility' and 'mobility' are often employed, sometimes lacking clarity about assumptions of choice, preference, or coercion, involved in making decisions about, or being given the space to make decisions about staying or leaving (Czaika et al. 2021; Erdal & Hagen-Zanker 2022). In relation to conflict-related determinants of migration this matters too – as some people stay, while others leave the same areas during violent conflict. As referred to above, there are many factors that may interact to produce varying outcomes, even in the same geographic area, for different individuals and families.

To different degrees, the terms 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' may be helpful in shedding light on agency, although there are also reasons to be cautious – and perhaps instead consider what the grounds are for attaching either label to migrating or staying (Erdal & Oeppen 2018). More often than not, both staying and leaving – not least in a conflict-affected area – will be a difficult decision, perhaps entailing a risky journey, where there are good reasons both for staying and for leaving, that are considered. Often, if no acceptable alternatives are available, it would make sense to describe leaving as involuntary mobility, or coerced mobility (Ali 2022; Bartram 2015). Meanwhile, for those staying– there may be cases where this is involuntary immobility, or other

where it is voluntary immobility. This showcases how the ways in which describing every person leaving an area affected by violent conflict, using a short-hand, as a 'forced migrant' – is analytically slippery.

As we turn to now, the description of people who are leaving – or staying in conflict-affected areas matters, not for semantic reasons, and not only for analytical precision which can yield more robust research, but because it maps directly onto questions of the right to protection, which is also the concern driving the proposed term 'survival migration' (Betts 2013). It is worth noting here also, that those who do leave conflict-affected areas, increasingly are becoming protracted displaced populations, illustrating the temporality of these questions. Both leaving and staying are changeable decisions, and their duration is at the outset unknown (Bijak and Czaika 2020).

2.3 Categorising moving people and groups

When referring to people escaping conflict, the terms 'flight' and 'displacement' are often used, whereas the people on the move might be colloquially referred to as 'refugees', whether or not they cross an international border and are able to claim (or receive) international protection. Other times, such populations can be described as 'displaced', including 'internally displaced persons' or IDPs, within their own nation-state territory. At the face of it, these descriptors, labels or categories used for people on the move within or from conflict-affected regions may be seen as intuitive – someone who has left a warzone is likely to be fleeing for their life, and hence may be described as a refugee, even if they are not recognised as such under international humanitarian law.

At the same time, there are two interlinked challenges associated with the ways in which categorising moving people and groups becomes problematic – especially in the context of violent conflict (Bakewell 2008; 2011; Crawley & Skleparis 2018). First, because inclusion into the category 'refugee' – as a legal category – signals particular rights to protection and refuge, the use of this particular word becomes important, and challenging. Most people on the move today, for whom conflict-related determinants of migration were decisive, would not fit the legal definition of a refugee according to the 1951 Refugee Convention (though more would meet the criteria laid out by the Cartagena declaration in Latin America 1984, or the African Union's approach (Fischel de Andrade 2019; Mulegata Abebe 2010). The majority would *not* have crossed an international border and would be internally displaced persons to start with. Thus, the right to protection is so severely limited in its realisation that there is a huge mismatch between the legal conception of a refugee and the reality for the majority of people who, in an informal, intuitive sense, may fit the *meaning* of this term, in non-legal, social or colloquial terms.

There is also a second reason why categorising people on the move within and out of conflict-affected areas becomes challenging, namely that a straw-man binary persists, where people on the move are seen as *either* fleeing from a conflict-affected area, and thus refugees; *or* alternatively, in all other instances, as economic migrants. Since conflict may be disaggregated into many aspects, which in turn can interact variably with other factors (including economic ones), this simplistic dichotomy is quite *inaccurate*. However, its persistence cannot be seen other than in conjunction with the links between the legal category of refugees to particular forms of international protection – protection that is much needed, and which the Convention helps support claims for.

Instead of a holistic approach to migration, where 'refugees and other migrants' are considered together (Carling 2023), people on the move often end up being categorized for very different purposes, by different actors (Erdal and Oeppen 2018). In this case, 'refugees' are those who fall under the legal definition and are recognized as such. Meanwhile, it is a challenging task to categorize individuals based on assumptions about their ' real causes' for migrating, as prevalent

practice in asylum claims systems in Europe reflect. Interestingly such methods of categorization are far less prevalent in refugee camps and urban settlements, where a majority of people migrating from conflict, whether or not they cross as international border, actually find themselves. Thus in the context of this paper on the conflict-related determinants of migration, we use migrants to refer to all people on the move, including those who have the right to international protection under international humanitarian law, the 1951 refugee convention or regional refugee protection instruments, as well as those who may have the need for such protection or assistance, but no legal right (Betts 2013; Carling 2023).

3. Systematic review of literature using quantitative data

In this section, we discuss the systematic literature review process for the quantitative data. We first present the process of identifying, screening and inclusion of literature, before we look at some metadata of the analyses included. Some limitations of the review are discussed in Section 3.3, while the review of the quantitative analyses on conflict-related drivers of migration is presented in Section 4.

3.1 Identification of literature

The literature base for the current review was identified through two sources: a search through Web of Science and the authors' personal libraries. In Web of Science, we searched for literature that had "conflict" and a migration-related word in the abstract or title, and that included some word referring to a causal investigation.[1] We reviewed a total of 225 records, among which 154 were derived from Web of Science and 78 from the authors' libraries, while seven references appeared in both sources.

To be included in our review, the publications had to:

- Be peer-reviewed and in English (we searched for articles, books, and book chapters).
- Be quantitative and include some type of regression analysis. Purely qualitative or descriptive analyses were excluded because we sought to compare estimated effects of conflict variation on migration.
- Include at least one conflict-related variable (e.g., on the duration of conflict or the use of violence).
- Include an analysis of determinants of *actual migration*. Literature with migration aspirations as dependent variable was excluded (see Aslany et al., 2021 for a literature review of determinants of migration aspirations).

Figure 1 gives an overview of the review process, based on the "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses" (PRISMA) framework (Moher et al. 2009). The PRISMA framework is an evidence-based minimum set of items developed to help authors improve the reporting of systematic reviews and meta-analyses. PRISMA has been recognized as a robust tool for critical appraisal, particularly in health sciences, but can be used across different disciplines. We first screened the publications by reviewing abstracts and titles, and then read through the full text of the articles that were not excluded in the screening process. As a principle, we included all independent analyses that were not based on the same data, e.g., analyses covering different countries or different subgroups of a population. When there was no full model with all variables, the one with the most conflict-related variables was picked. If possible, however, we always chose the full analysis with all variables and all observations. In total, 38 articles corresponding to 42 analyses were included.

[1] The exact search string was: conflict AND (driver* OR cause* OR determin*) NEAR/2 ($migrat* OR refug* OR displac*). We searched in the SSCI, A&HCI and ESCI libraries and conducted the search on April 13, 2021.

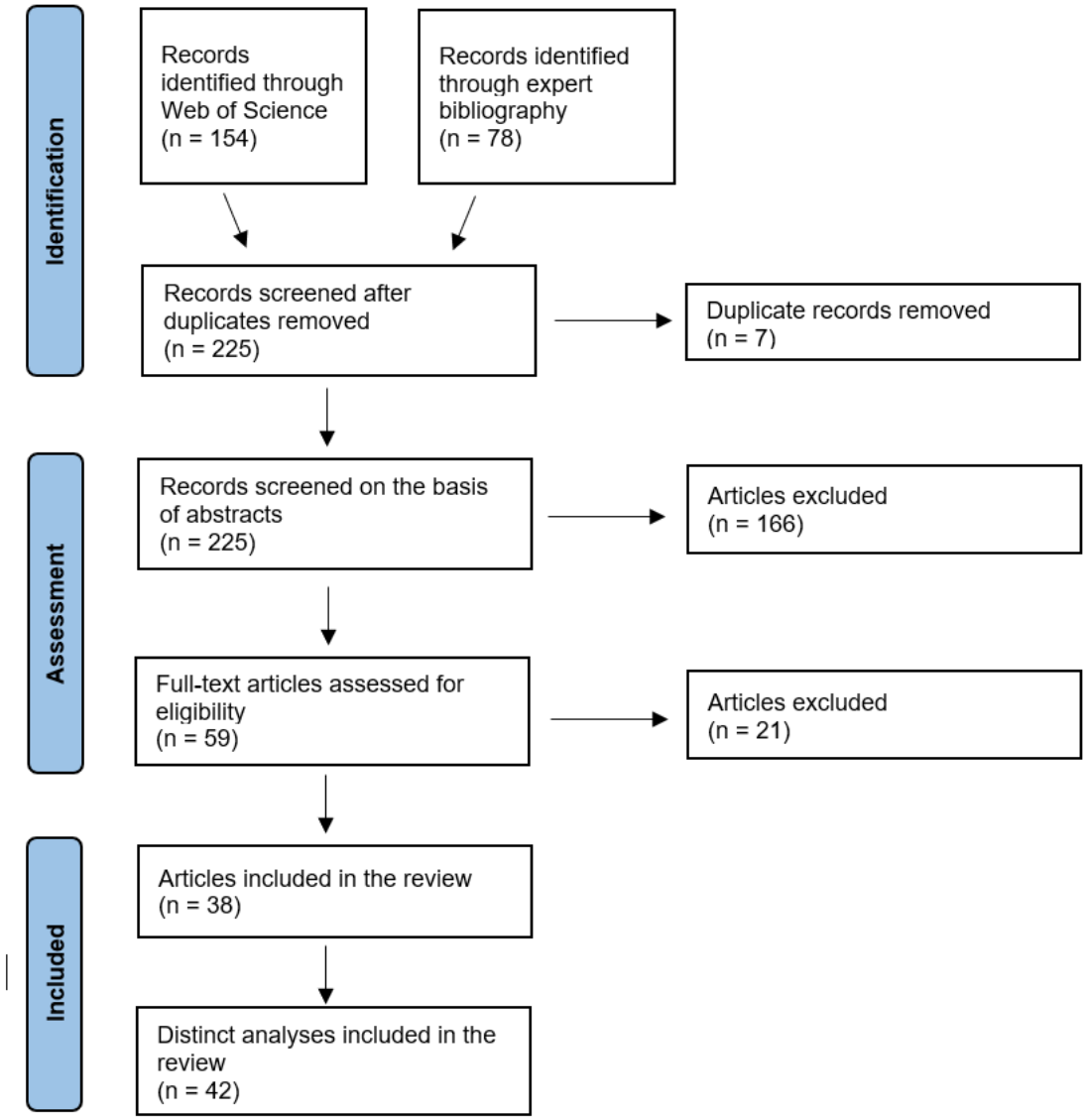

Figure 1 Systematic literature review diagram

3.2 Overview of analyses

This gives an overview of the analyses included in the review. Each article is given a number from 1 to 38 based on the author's name and year of the publication. When there are several analyses included from the same article, each analysis is marked with the article number and a letter.

Label	Citation	Spatial level	World region	Nb. of countries	Coverage	Type of migration
1a	Abel et al. 2019	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	157	2006-2010	International
1b	Abel et al. 2019	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	157	2011-2015	International

Label	Citation	Spatial level	World region	Nb. of countries	Coverage	Type of migration
2	Adhikari 2013	National	South Asia	1	2008	Internal
3	Adhikari 2012	National	South Asia	1	1996-2004	Internal and international
4	Alvarado & Massey 2010	Regional	Latin America and the Caribbean	4	1979-2002	International
5a	Balcells & Steele 2016	National	Latin America and the Caribbean	1	1998-2006	Internal
5b	Balcells & Steele 2016	Subnational	Europe	1	1936-1939	Internal and international
6a	Bohra-Mishra & Massey 2011	Subnational	South Asia	1	1997-2006	Internal and international
6b	Bohra-Mishra & Massey 2011	Subnational	South Asia	1	1997-2006	Internal and international
6c	Bohra-Mishra & Massey 2011	Subnational	South Asia	1	1997-2006	Internal and international
7	Breunig et al. 2012	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	148	2000	International
8	Clist & Restelli in press	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	147	2003-2016	International
9	Conte 2019	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	172	1999-2017	International
10	Czaika & Kis-Katos 2009	National	East Asia and Pacific	1	1999-2002	Internal and international
11	Davenport et al. 2003	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	126	1964-1989	Internal and international
12	Echevarria & Gardeazabal 2016	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	178	1990-2013	International
13	Gimenez-Gomez et al. 2019	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	72	1990-2014	International
14	Hurtado et al. 2017	National	Latin America and	1	2000-2010	Internal and international

Label	Citation	Spatial level	World region	Nb. of countries	Coverage	Type of migration
			the Caribbean			
15	Ibanez & Velez 2008	Subnational	Latin America and the Caribbean	1	1999	Internal
16	Ibrahim et al. 2021	Subnational	Africa	1	2014-2015	Internal
17	Iqbal & Zorn 2007	Regional	Africa	43	1992-2000	International
18	Iqbal 2007	Regional	Africa	50	1992-2001	International
19	Krakowski 2017	Subnational	Latin America and the Caribbean	1	2010	Internal and international
20	Melander & Öberg 2007	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	151	1981-1999	Internal and international
21	Melander & Öberg 2006	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	Most countries	1976-1996	Internal and international
22	Melander et al. 2009	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	Unclear	1980-1999	Internal and international
23	Moore & Shellman 2007	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	Most countries	1964-1995	International
24	Moore & Shellman 2006	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	Most countries	1976-1995	Internal and international
25	Moore & Shellman 2004	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	175	1976-1995	Internal and international
26	Morrison 1993	National	Latin America and the Caribbean	1	1966-1981	Internal
27	Naude 2010	Regional	Africa	45	1965-2005	International
28	Neumayer 2005	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	110	1982-1999	
29	Rubin & Moore 2007	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	Most countries	1981-1994	Internal and international
30	Rüegger 2018	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	189	1975-2009	International
31	Saldarriaga & Hua 2019	National	Latin America and	1	1985-2015	Internal

Label	Citation	Spatial level	World region	Nb. of countries	Coverage	Type of migration
			the Caribbean			
32	Schmeidl 1997	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	109	1971-1990	International
33	Schon 2016	Subnational	Africa	1	2007-2013	Internal
34	Shellman & Stewart 2007	National	Latin America and the Caribbean	1	1994-2004	International
35	Stanley 1987	National	Latin America and the Caribbean	1	1979-1984	International
36	Turkoglu & Chadefaux 2018	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	Uclear	1951-2008	International
37	Uzonyi 2014	Multi-regional	Multi-regional	Most countries	1975-2010	International
38	Williams 2013	Subnational	South Asia	1	1997-2006	Internal and international

Table 1 Overview of analyses included in the review.

The dependent variable

In this study, we looked at conflict-related drivers of *actual migration*, meaning migration that is recorded and has happened. We have included analyses that looked at drivers of internal or international migration – or both. Articles that did not specify whether the focus was on internal or international migration were coded as covering both.

This shows the types of dependent variables by world region that appeared in the review. All multi-regional analyses focus on international or internal and international migration, often from one of the regions to another. Only seven of the 42 analyses focus on internal migration only.

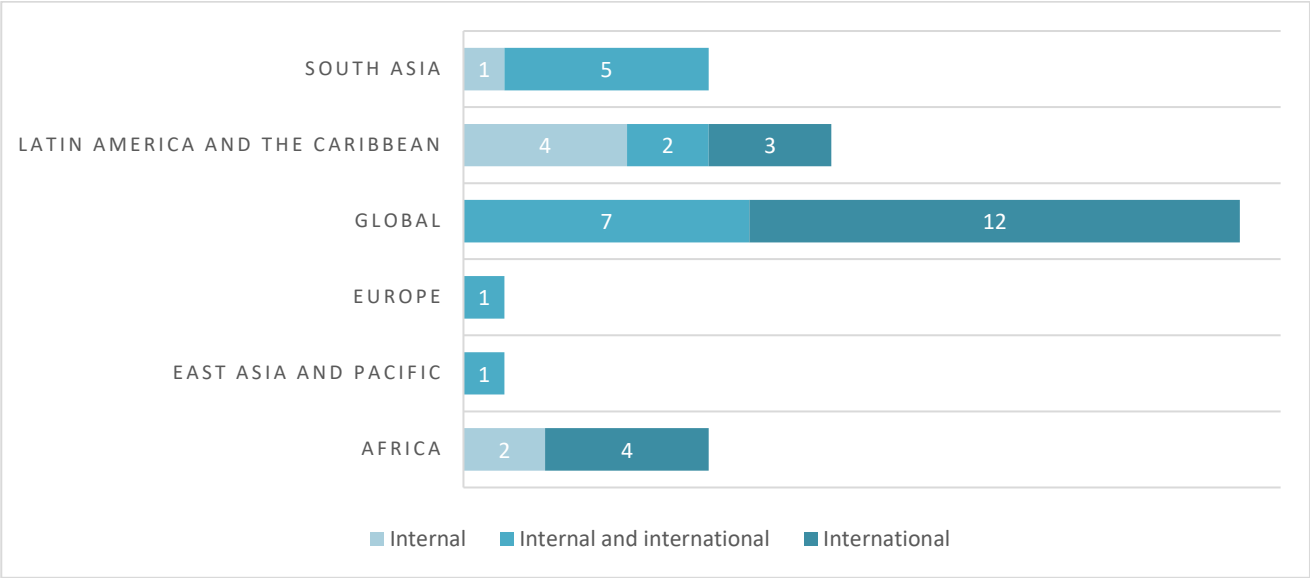

Figure 2 Type of migration by world region in the identified articles.

Temporal scope

Quantitative studies of conflict-related migration were only sporadically published up until 2005, when there was a sudden increase in relevant publications. This is not very surprising given the lack of data for earlier periods. From 2005 and onwards, we identified an increasing number of publications, although with a large variability per year (see Figure 3).

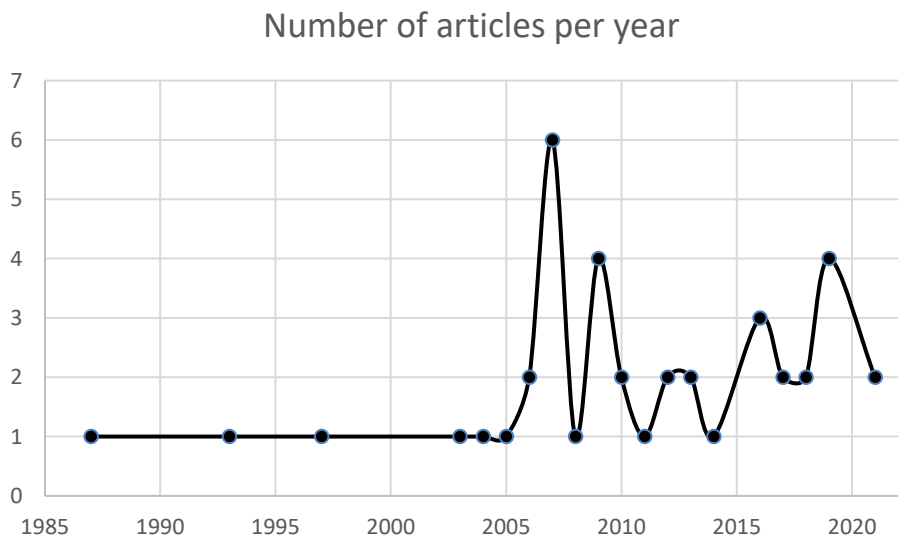

Figure 3 Number of articles per year including analyses on determinants of conflict-related migration

Journal coverage

The 38 articles originate from a broad pool of 29 journals, where only five journals appear more than once (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). By exploring the variation in publication outlets where studies of conflict-related migration are published, we highlight that the study of conflict-related migration is not confined to a single academic discipline but instead intersects with various fields of study, such as political science, economics, demography, sociology, and geography. It also highlights that the majority of quantitative studies of conflict-related migration are published in conflict and international relations focused journals, and not in traditional migration journals.

Table 2 Journal coverage of articles in the study

Journal name	Nb. of citations
Civil Wars	4
Conflict Management And Peace Science	4
International Interactions	3
International Studies Quarterly	3
Journal Of Conflict Resolution	2
American Journal of Political Science	1
British Journal Of Political Science	1
Cities	1
Comparative Political Studies	1
Cuadernos De Economia	1
Demographic Research	1
Demography	1
Economic Development and Cultural Change	1
European Journal of International Relations	1
Global Environmental Change-Human And Policy Dimensions	1
Journal Of African Economies	1
Journal Of Peace Research	1
Journal Of Peacebuilding And Development	1
Latin American Research Review	1
Political Geography	1
Population Studies	1
Public Choice	1
Sage Open	1
Social Science Quarterly	1
The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science	1
World Development	1
World Economy	1

3.3 Limitations

Our synthesis is subject to some limitations. First, the type of data underpinning the analyses may affect comparability. Many of the analyses are based on the same data, such as the UCDP/PRIO

dataset for conflict data, or data from UNHCR for migration data. Although the analyses often cover different parts of the world, some overlap is inevitable. Moreover, we have included analyses based on all types of data as long as the data measures migration or conflict variation. Some of the data stem from surveys, for instance about individuals' experience with physical assault, while other data are administrative and official statistics. such as the number of asylum applications per year, or population change over a certain time period. The studies often mix both survey and other types of data.

Second, the results stem from many types of statistical analyses, such as OLS, logistic regression, and zero-inflated negative binomial regression. As we only summarize effect directions, not effect sizes, we find it justifiable to compare results from different types of regression analyses.

Third, the scope of the systematic review may be limited by language bias, as we only included studies published in English. Consequently, relevant studies published in other languages might not be represented in our analysis, potentially leading to an incomplete understanding of the determinants of conflict-related migration.

Fourth, several methodological aspects of the analyses may affect the results. The number of variables included in each analysis varies from five to 43. Although a premise for regression analyses is that all relevant variables are included, this is in practice based on the judgement of individual researchers. If a relevant variable is not included, the effects we observe may be influenced by omitted variable bias. Moreover, the number of observations the results are based on can affect significance levels, as large quantitative analyses are more likely to get significant results (Gill 1999). Hence the number of variables included in an analysis may affect the reported results.

4. Conflict-related determinants of migration

Having discussed the methodology of our review of quantitative studies of conflict-related determinants of migration, we now turn to our review of these determinants. For the systematic review of literature using quantitative data, we followed the principles outlined in Aslany et al. (2021) when registering results from the analyses. For each analysis, we recorded the operationalization, direction and significance[2] of the effect of each conflict-related independent variable. There was sometimes more than one variable covering the same determinant in an analysis. For instance, analysis 30 had two variables falling within the "number of deaths" determinant in our review, where one was a measure of battle-related deaths and the other of civilian deaths. Our summary of the effect of the number of deaths on migration from this analysis was then based on both these variables.

All analyses have actual migration as the dependent variable, but it varies whether they look at internal, international or internal and international migration, as discussed in Section 0, and how migration is measured, as discussed in Section 0. Although these analyses use different data for studying migration, we discuss their findings together in the below segments, as they all shed light on the impact of conflict on migration.

Based on the recorded results, we coded the determinants from each analysis as having a *positive (p), negative (n), not significant (ns),* or *mixed (m)* effect on migration. *Mixed effects* refer to determinants with significant results detected in different studies, but in diverging directions. Table 3 presents an overview of the determinants, thematic categorization, effect directions and significance levels that appeared in the review. The "tendency" column indicates the overall tendency of the results, from more to less consistent, following terminology derived from Aslany et al (2021): consistently (positive/negative) > overwhelmingly > mainly > slightly > divergent. Determinants that are consistently positive have results that all point in the same direction. At the other end of the spectrum, slightly positive results point slightly in one direction, with exceptions that are either insignificant or in the opposite direction. Presence of conflict, for instance, was recorded in 23 analyses in the review, of which 16 found this determinant to have a positive effect on migration, and 7 found insignificant results. As such, presence of conflict is recorded as having an *overwhelmingly positive* impact on migration.

[2] We classify a finding as significant if it meets the study's significance threshold. Thus, we do not overrule significance thresholds set by the authors. We acknowledge that significance testing and differentiating studies as significant and non-significant based on p-values alone have considerable limitations, and concerns over misinterpretation are real. See Greenland et al. (2016) and Gill (1999) for comprehensive overview of the issue and alternative presentations of results, including confidence intervals, scrutinizing effect sizes, and prediction. Assessing these properties of the included studies would require access to data and replication code which is out of scope of this study.

Table 3 Overview of determinants and the number (N) of analyses by theme

Theme	Determinant	N	Examples (analysis number in parentheses)	Directions[a]	Tendency
Presence of conflict	Presence of conflict (binary)	23	Presence (1) or absence (0) of internal conflicts, which have at least 1000 battle-related deaths (34)	p = 16, ns = 7	Overwhelmingly positive
	Conflict duration	4	The number of years during the 5-year period that were characterized by violent conflict (as measured by more than 25 battle-related deaths) (28)	p = 2, ns = 2	Mainly positive
	Geographic scope	4	Area of conflict. The sum of all conflict zones expressed as percentages of the area of the country (km2) in which UCDP records lethal events (10)	p = 2, ns = 2	Mainly positive
Intensity	Use of violence	10	Total bombs. Capture the extent to which the locality experienced indirect violence (5b)	p = 3, ns = 4, m = 3	Slightly positive
	Number of deaths	15	Number of battle-related deaths (38)	p = 9, ns = 3, n = 3	Mainly positive
	Genocide/politicide	5	Genocide is an indicator measuring the magnitude of genocide and politicide from 0 (no genocide/politicide) to 5 (256,000 killed), developed by the State Failure Project (21)	p = 4, ns = 1	Overwhelmingly positive
	State repression	7	The state's level of human rights abuses each year (39)	p = 7	Consistently positive

Theme	Determinant	N	Examples (analysis number in parentheses)	Directions[a]	Tendency
Parties to the conflict	Paramilitary or guerrilla group and dissident presence	8	Paramilitary assumes a value of one if actions of political violence are attributably reported to paramilitary groups in municipality i in year t (16)	p = 7, ns = 1	Overwhelmingly positive
	Military or police presence	3	Military presence (=1 if Military presence) (17)	p = 2, n = 1	Mainly positive
	International interventions	3	Intervention in civil war. Recorded as a binary variable measuring the presence (1) and absence (0) of any foreign military intervention in any given country-year (34)	p = 2, n = 1	Mainly positive
Socioeconomic costs of conflict	..	3	Estimated cost of projects destroyed during conflict (3)	p = 3	Consistently positive
Media access	..	2	Access to media (Number of categories of public media—radio, newspaper, television, periodicals, others—accessible to household at the place of origin) (17)	n = 2	Consistently negative

a: p = positive; n = negative; ns = not significant (following the study's significance threshold); m = mixed

Inspired by Aslany et al. (2021), we use two modes of synthesis when describing the results: a graphic visualization of the effect directions, and a narrative description when the results are either too few to be visualized or the measurements of the determinant are too disparate to compare across analyses. When synthesizing results, we look for overall trends while being attentive to contextual variations.

4.1 Presence of conflict

Conflict influences migration rates, but how does the duration and scope of conflicts matter for outflows from a conflict area? A small portion of the analyses in our review looked into the influence of conflict duration and geographic scope on migration, which we discuss in the below sections. Moreover, a number of analyses investigated whether the *presence of conflict*, per se, influenced migration, without distinguishing between conflict types. However, as some of these analyses looked at civil conflict and others at international war, we review and discuss potential differences in results below.

Presence of conflict (binary)

The systematic review identified multiple analyses examining the impact of the presence of conflict on migration, as a binary term. Although our focus is on the conflict factors that increase migration, and not the effect of conflict in itself, these studies are interesting as the operationalization of conflict varies, which could potentially yield varying results. The independent variables indicating conflict can broadly be divided into three types: variables on the presence of civil conflict; variables on the presence of international war; and variables that do not make a distinction between the international character of the conflict. Overall, this group of analyses show that the presence of conflict has a mainly positive effect on migration, see an

overview in Figure 4. Yet, there is an interesting difference in results between the studies on international war and on civil conflict. Out of the six analyses that included a binary variable on international war, five had insignificant results, while only one, Moore and Shellman (2007), found international war to have a significant impact on refugee flows. At the same time, eight out of ten of the civil conflict studies found significantly positive effects on migration (and the remaining two insignificant results). The difference between the effect of internal and international conflict on migration is puzzling, but could be driven by data limitations, or that the difference can be attributed to the conflict dynamics. Moreover, all the analyses that included a variable on the presence of conflict had international migration or internal and international migration (without distinguishing between the two) as the dependent variable. Results might have been different had they looked closer at internal migration flows specifically. Most of the analyses that included a variable on international war also had a variable on civil conflict, which may allude to an explorative body of literature trying to understand the relationship between conflict and migration. Existing literature and theory on the subject is relatively limited, and this may lead to more exploratory research, rather than theory-based research.

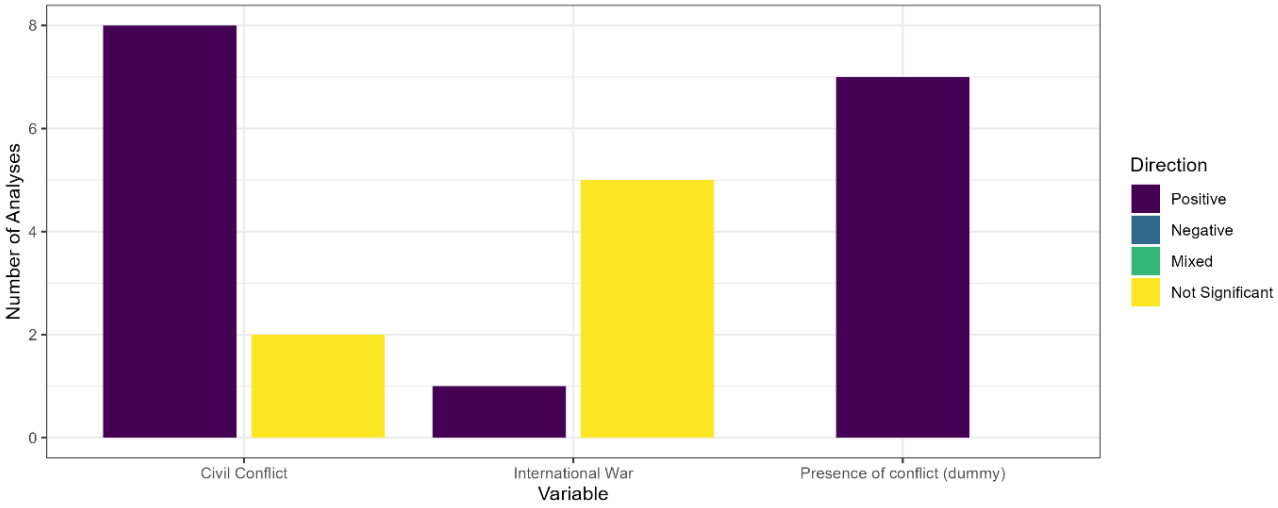

Figure 4 Presence of conflict

Although most of the conflict variables were based on the same data (the UCDP-PRIO or the Correlations of War dataset), conflict was operationalized in various ways. Many of the articles used a threshold for the number of battle-related deaths to have occurred during a year for an event to be classified as conflict, with thresholds varying from 1 to 1000. This variation did not have a visible impact on the results, however.

Conflict duration

The duration of conflict may also impact migration. Civilians may not necessarily migrate at the moment of the first conflict incidence, as it might take some time to create an impression of what the conflict entails in terms of physical and economic danger, duration and intensity. Out of four analyses that included conflict duration, two found that longer conflicts led to higher migration rates, while two did not yield significant results.

All four analyses measured duration as the number of years with conflict in a place within a certain time period (Breunig et al. 2012; Krakowski 2017; Naude 2010) or as the number of years since the conflict began (Turkoglu and Chadefaux 2018). It would be interesting to disaggregate the duration variable to, for instance, months or days, to investigate whether there are moments

within conflicts when people are more or less likely to leave their homes. There might be a threshold of days, weeks, or months within the first year of conflict when people tend to make such decisions. Looking at Ukraine, the largest outflow of people after the Russian invasion in 2022 happened within the first weeks of the conflict, while migration flows diminished in size but kept steady since, with return rates growing after a few months (Centre for Research & Analysis of Migration 2023). The perception people have about the conflict at their doorstep, their access to information, and their ability and motivation to move probably influence the timing of migration decisions. Changes in displacement rates are also likely to be closely linked to developments in the conflict itself, such as intensity rates, geographic scope, or actors entering or exiting the conflict. Studying not just the duration of conflict but the impact of different conflict *phases* on migration flows is important to enhance our understanding of the timing of migration decisions in conflict zones.

Geographic scope

Four analyses included variables on geographic scope, all measured as proportions of the area of the country affected by conflict. Two of the analyses found conflicts with larger geographic scopes to have a positive effect on migration, while the remaining two found no significant effect. It is perhaps not surprising that conflicts that spread out in large parts of a country are more likely to have more displaced people, as larger proportions of the country's populations will be affected by the conflict in their everyday lives. Perhaps of more interest than the geographic scope of a conflict is the proximity of individuals to the conflict zone. Does the distance between an individual's home and the centre of the conflict impact their migration considerations? However, none of the papers identified in the systematic review included geographic proximity to violence as an explanatory variable, so this was not explored here.

4.2 Intensity of conflict

The intensity of conflict refers to the level or severity of violence and confrontation in a specific conflict situation. Variation in the intensity of a conflict impacts how a conflict affects the lives of civilians. Intensity may therefore be an important explanation for why some conflicts generate high migration rates, and others do not. We found different measures of conflict intensity in the literature: use of violence, number of deaths, the presence of genocide/politicide, and state repression. In the below sections, we describe the results of these measures of intensity separately. A summary of the analysis results is displayed in Figure 5.

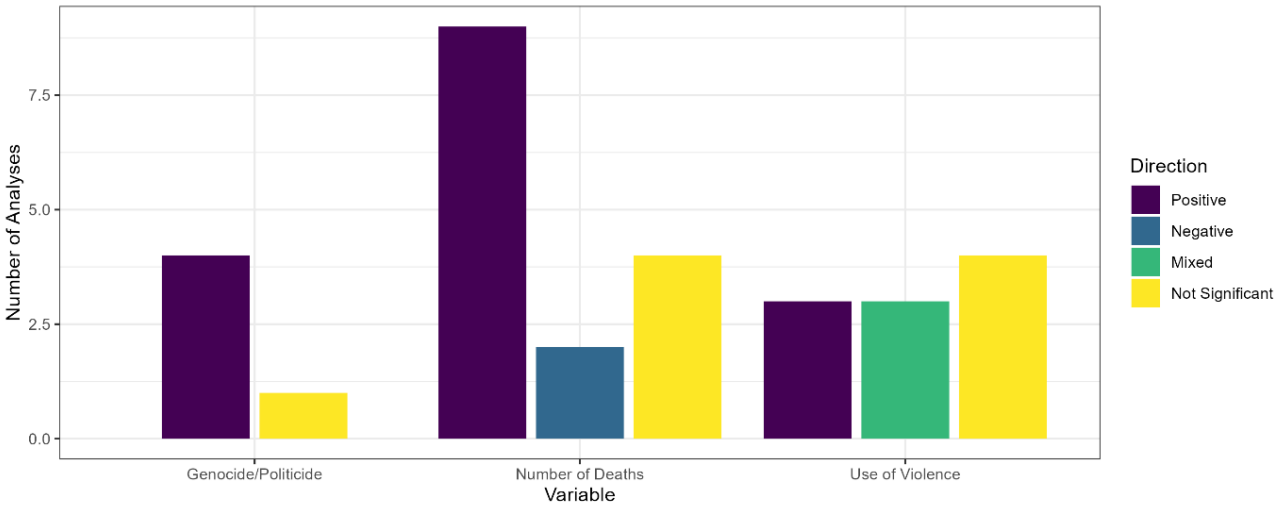

Figure 5 Intensity of conflict

Use of violence

Whether, and to what extent, violence is used in a conflict can affect levels of physical insecurity among civilians, which may alter migration decisions. Ten analyses included some measure of the use of violence, producing varying results. Bohra-Mishra and Massey (2011) found violence to have a non-linear effect on migration in Nepal. They ran three analyses with different dependent variables: one with within-district migration, one with between-district migration and one with international migration as the dependent variable. Low levels of violence decreased migration while high levels increased migration in all three analyses, indicating that violence levels may need to reach a certain threshold before impacting migration movements. If this is the case, it can be hypothesised that at least some of the studies that found insignificant impact of the presence of violence (Davenport et al. 2003; c 2017) or the level of violence (Balcells and Steele 2016; Schon 2016) on migration, might have produced significant effects, had they accounted for non-linear relationships. Moreover, different types of violence may impact migration decisions in different ways, and certain combinations of violence may have greater impact than others. As an example, it would be interesting to see whether Krakowski (2017), who looked at the presence of selective homicides on migration, would have found significant results had they investigated the interaction between homicides and other types of violence, or accounted for a non-linear relation.

More important than the level of violence in a conflict is perhaps the level of threat felt by individuals when migration decisions are made. Using survey data from Nepal, Adhikari (2013) found individuals who had experienced physical assault to be more likely to have been internally displaced. They also found that individuals who perceived the threat of violence to be high were more likely to have been displaced during the conflict, regardless of their personal experience with violence. Pointing to a similar mechanism, Williams (2013), also using data from Nepal, found migration rates to increase with the number of major gun battles that were large enough for the general public to have heard about them. Ibáñez and Vélez (2008) found that survey respondents in Colombia, who were aware of violent events in their hometown or nearby town, had a higher probability of being internally displaced. In addition to the mere use of violence in conflicts, individuals' perceptions of insecurity may be a decisive factor influencing migration decisions, whether emerging from personal experience with violence or the knowledge of violent events.

Number of deaths

Another indicator of the level of violence in a conflict is the number of deaths due to conflict. There may be much violence during a conflict that does not increase death tolls, but that still impact migration decisions. Yet, where death tolls are high, other types of violence are also likely to be present, so death tolls should give an indication of the intensity and severity of the violence. In our sample, fifteen studies included a measure of the number of deaths, among which nine found a positive effect of high deaths tolls on migration, while two find the opposite relation. There were also three analyses with insignificant results. Some of the analyses focused specifically on battle-related deaths, but there does not seem to be any systematic difference in results from those looking at civilian or total death tolls, nor any systematic variation based on geographic location.

Hence, on the whole, the literature points to a slightly positive effect of death tolls on migration, regardless of how death tolls are counted or geographic context. It may also be the case that death tolls and migration rates have a non-linear relationship, for instance that violence needs to reach a certain threshold before impacting migration, or that higher rates of violence have a relatively higher effect on migration than low rates. Morrison (1993) was the only article accounting for a non-linear relation, testing whether the effect on migration of violence at origin (relative to destination) increases with the level of violence (i.e., an exponential relation between violence and migration). Morrison found violence to increase migration flows, but only found an exponential

relation when excluding variables on government spending, literacy and farm size at origin and destination. The possibility of a non-linear relation between violence and migration nevertheless deserves more investigation.

Genocide and politicide

Genocide would plausibly lead to high migration rates among the victim group. The literature points to an overwhelmingly positive relation. The analyses including this variable use binary measures indicating presence or absence of genocide and/or politicide (a term used by Harff and Gurr describing mass killing based on political affiliation, see Harff 2003), and four out of five are based on data from Harff and Gurr (1988), or an updated version by Harff (2003). Two of these articles (Davenport et al. 2003; Schmeidl 1997) also use a list of genocides and other state-sponsored massacres provided by Fein (1993) to create their variable. The articles using this data all find positive effects of genocide and politicide on migration. Turkaglu and Chadefaux (2018) use data from the Political Stability Task Force, which records the occurrence of a genocide within different countries in the period 1951–2008. The analysis yields a positive but insignificant relation between genocide and refugee counts. Future research should check whether these results also hold for newer data.

State repression

The existence of state repression during wartime – and peacetime – can cause uncertainty and insecurity among citizens, and may thus be a driver of migration. All seven analyses that include a variable on state repression found it to increase migration rates. Although giving an indication of the relation between state repression and migration, the consistency of these results is not so surprising considering how similar the analyses are: all are large-N, multi-regional studies, based on one of two datasets: the Political Terror Scale (PTS) and Cingranelli-Richards Human Rights Database (CIRI), both covering state's human rights practices (such as political imprisonment and disappearances). Apart from Uzonyi (2014) who use data from 1975–2010, and Conte and Migali (2019) with data from 1999–2017, all analyses use data from before 2000. It would be interesting to test whether there are regional differences in the results and whether the results hold using more disaggregated data.

4.3 Parties to the conflict

Does the presence of some types of conflict actors provoke more displacement than others? The type of violence, brutality, and unpredictability of the parties in a conflict, and the varying level of protection offered from governmental actors, may impact the extent of uncertainty and threat civilians feel during wartime. This section describes findings from the literature on how the presence of non-governmental actors, such as paramilitary and guerrilla groups, governmental actors such as the military and police forces, and international interventions, affect conflict-related migration. The role the actors play in a conflict and the actions they take are likely to be more important for migration outcomes than the actors' mere presence.

Paramilitary, guerrilla, and dissident behaviour

Several articles include variables on the presence of paramilitary, guerrilla, and dissident groups, and find presence of such groups to have an overwhelmingly positive effect on migration. Most of these articles study how different types of events and violence typical of these actors, and not presence per se, impact migration. Five articles used global data on riots and guerrilla attacks from Banks' Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive, and all but one of these found these events to impact migration positively. The remaining article, Rubin and Moore 2007, had insignificant

results. Davenport et al. (2003) found dissident conflict behaviour, when measured as the count of the number of different types of dissident events (such as protest demonstrations and guerrilla warfare) to increase migration.

In a study on Colombia, Hurtado, Pereira-Villa and Villa (2017) coded different types of violent events as either typical of paramilitary groups or of guerrilla groups. In particular, massacres and political assassinations are viewed as typical of paramilitary groups, while events such as attacks on police facilities, ambushes, kidnappings, and harassment are viewed as typical of guerrilla warfare, although the observed actions may have been also conducted by other actors (Hurtado et al. 2017, p. 458 text and footnote). The article found the presence of violent actions typical of paramilitary groups to have a migration-inducing effect across models using different estimation techniques, while the variable for guerrilla-related violence had significant effects on migration for two out of three estimation methods.

Some of the observed effects mentioned above may pick up on the presence of violent events *per se*, not the presence of attacks by paramilitary or dissident groups. It would be interesting to investigate whether different types of violence, no matter who is behind it, have different types of impacts on migration. Moreover, the effect that violent events have on migration likely depends on the frequency of such events, and who the violence is targeted at. Ibáñez and Vélez (2008) studied the impact of paramilitary and guerrilla presence on migration by use of survey data which covered individuals who were and were not displaced from two Colombian regions. Households that were displaced had sensed a higher presence of paramilitary and guerrilla groups at origin than those who were not displaced, indicating that such groups present a considerable threat to civilians.

Military or police presence

The impact of police and military presence in conflict areas on migration likely depends on the role they play in the conflict: to what extent they protect or threaten civilians. Three articles in our pool included variables on police and/or military presence. Czaika and Kis-Katos (2009) found that those villages in Indonesia where the police station was easy to reach had lower levels of migration than villages where that was not the case. Likewise, Ibáñez and Vélez (2008, p. 666) found higher levels of perceived military and police presence to decrease likelihood of displacement in two regions of Colombia. The police seem to have had a stabilizing role in these conflicts. At the same time, in a study on El Salvador, Stanley (1987) used military and paramilitary sweeps as a proxy for violence, and found them to increase the likelihood of migration. Yet, when not able to control for other violence and conflict events, we cannot know the isolated effect of the military and paramilitary presence on migration in that context. Future research should further investigate the impact of police and military forces on migration rates, and how this depends on whether the police and military are viewed as a source of security or threat to civilians.

International interventions

International interventions may either increase or decrease migration rates from conflict zones, depending on how the intervention affects the conflict. Perhaps not surprisingly, the articles including variables on foreign interventions showed a mixed picture. Schmeidl (1997) found foreign interventions in conflicts to increase migration, while Turkoglu and Chadefaux (2018) did not see a consistent impact of such interventions on migration rates. Both articles use global data on refugee stocks. Schon (2016) investigated the impact of the African Union's African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) on displacement out of Mogadishu. The study found presence of AMISOM to increase displacement. To grasp when international interventions impact displacement in conflict zones, we may need to look closer at how these groups act on the ground, and whether their

presence changes conflict dynamics, which may in turn shift migration rates.

4.4 Socio-economic consequences of conflict

Damage to homes and other property, disruption of opportunities for sustaining income and other forms of livelihood, school and hospital closing and market collapse can make it difficult to stay in a conflict zone during conflict, and can create uncertainty regarding the prospects of a stable life after the conflict ends. Despite the potentially large influence socio-economic consequences of conflict have on decisions to leave or stay, few of the quantitative papers have explored this.

Indeed, only three of the articles investigated the impact of some form of socio-economic cost of war on migration. Using survey data from north-western Nigeria, Ibrahim et al. (2021) found that the number of livestock lost to cattle raid had a positive effect on the number of household members engaged in rural migration. Adhikari (2012, 2013) found similar tendencies in studies on Nepal. In a study from 2012, Adhikari found that Nepali districts with high levels of conflict-related damage on public infrastructure were likely to have a high number of displaced people. Moreover, in a study based on survey data from 2008, Adhikari (2013) found individuals who lived in communities where large proportions of industry was destroyed and who experienced that their crops or land was seized during the conflict to be more likely to have been displaced. Adhikari (2013) also investigated whether individuals who had their homes damaged or destructed during the conflict were more likely to have been displaced. This variable had a positive impact on internal displacement only when demographic variables were excluded from the analysis.

Overall, the studies from Nigeria and Nepal show a tendency of negative socio-economic consequences of conflict to increase migration. Considering the potentially large impact of these factors on migration decisions, this relation should be further investigated in research on other contexts. Not only the level of violence but its socio-economic consequences influence people's lives during and after conflict and are, hence, likely to affect decisions to leave or stay in most conflict settings. The impact of socio-economic consequences of conflict likely interact with other factors such as conflict duration, as e.g. market collapse or unstable income may put more strain on people the longer a conflict endures.

4.5 Media access

Access to formal and informal media is essential for informing civilians in conflict zones. News and comments about conflict events, number of injuries and deaths, actors entering or withdrawing from the conflict, and the availability of assets such as food and fuel help people make informed decisions about whether to leave or stay in their current environment. Media outlets can spread a sense of hope or hopelessness regarding the probable duration and intensity of the conflict, which may influence migration decisions. In addition to traditional media platforms such as television, radio, or newspapers, access to social media makes it possible for news to spread fast and for people to stay up-to-date with new developments in the conflict.

Only two articles looked at the role of media in conflict-related migration. In a study on internal migration in Colombia, Ibáñez and Vélez (2008) used survey data to study how the number of categories of public media (radio, newspaper, television, periodicals and others) that were accessible to households at the place of origin affected the probability of displacement. They found households who had access to more media to be less likely to migrate. Moreover, in a study on internal migration in Somalia, Schon (2016) used a measure of the level of consistency in information stemming from different sources as a proxy to capture civilian uncertainty about the

conflict. He found uncertainty to significantly increase migration rates out of Mogadishu.

Both the level of media access and uncertainty between different media outlets increased displacement in these analyses from Colombia and Somalia. Future research should study whether access to accurate information influences migration decisions also in other contexts, and how various types of information impact the audience. News stories suggesting that conflict events are decreasing are likely to have other impacts on migration decisions than stories showing heightened conflict severity. The credibility of and trust in media outlets can also influence how much civilians pay attention to information stemming from such outlets when making migration decisions. Prike et al. (2022), for instance, found participants in a survey experiment to be most influenced by information about the safety of traveling when communicated through official organizations deemed trustworthy. Access to information, trust in information and the type of information people have access to are all potentially important factors for migration decision-making, and should be further explored.

4.6 Summary of the quantitative literature review

Many factors can influence why some conflicts generate more migrants than others. We have here reviewed 12 conflict-related factors that appeared in analyses in our literature review. The results from the literature are summarized in

Table 4, which is inspired by Table 9 in Aslany et al. (2021). Columns in the table specify the number of analyses that include a determinant, which indicates the degree of corroboration of the results, while the rows show the level of consistency across studies. Determinants that are consistently positive have results that all point in the same direction. At the other end of the spectrum, slightly positive results point slightly in one direction, with exceptions that are either insignificant or in the opposite direction. In the table, all determinants are formulated so that the effects can be described as positive, meaning, for instance, that the effect of media access is inverted to fit the table.

Table 4 shows that all determinants have results pointing in one direction, although some more consistently across analyses than others. Presence of conflict, with its 23 analyses, have overwhelmingly positive and consistent results, with the only exceptions being results that were found not significant. Socioeconomic costs of conflict, lack of media access, and state repression also yield results pointing consistently in one direction, but the effect of socioeconomic costs and media access are scarcely studied, while the analyses of state repression all use similar data. The analyses including use of violence have, overall, slightly positive results, but with some analysis effects being non-significant and others showing a mixed picture.

Table 4 Summary of results from literature review

Classification of results	Number of analyses		
	5 or less	*6-10*	*Above 10*
Consistently positive	• Socioeconomically costly conflict • Lack of media access	• State repression	
Overwhelmingly positive	• Genocide and politicide	• Paramilitary or guerrilla group and dissident presence	• Presence of conflict (23 analyses)
Mainly positive	• Military or police presence • International interventions • Duration • Geographically large conflicts		• Number of deaths (15 analyses)
Slightly positive		• Use of violence	

About half of the analyses in the literature included a binary variable on the presence of conflict (civil conflict, international conflict or both), making it the most-studied factor, while most of the determinants are included in five or fewer analyses. The second most-studied factor is the number of deaths, which is included in 15 analyses. Five of these do not include other conflict-related variables, which renders the death toll to be a key measure of conflict presence for these studies. This allocation of focus corresponds to our perception that much research is done on the impact of the presence of conflict on migration, but not so much on what factors of conflict most influence migration decisions.

One observation is clear from this literature review: there is need for more research on the impact of all of these conflict factors on migration. Some, like state repression and genocide or politicide, need to be tested also on disaggregated data and with other types of data, for instance survey-based. Some, like military or police presence and paramilitary, guerrilla and dissident behaviour, need to be tested also in other contexts and with more aggregated data. Others, like duration of conflict, geographic scope, socioeconomic costs and media access, simply need more research.

Maybe more important than the individual impact of each of these factors on migration is how these factors interact. Long conflicts with low intensity may create low migration flows if the impact of the conflict on peoples physical and socioeconomic security is low. Alternatively, long conflicts with low levels of violence may see high accumulated migration rates over time if the conflict has severe impacts on job opportunities, infrastructure or livelihoods. Conflicts with high levels of violence, however, may yield low levels of migration if socioeconomic needs are looked

after. The impacts of conflict duration, level of violence, and socioeconomic consequences of conflict on migration probably intersects with people's perception about the future when they choose whether to leave or stay in a conflict-ridden area. A new conflict may create high immediate outflows of the conflict area, or migration rates may be low in the beginning and heighten over time, depending on people's hopes and fears of the future at different stages of the conflict. Perceptions about the actors involved in conflict may also influence hope and fear for the future. Conflicts are also likely to go through different stages, often with international and local actors entering and leaving, with conflict intensity and scope varying over time, which could create different levels of migration corresponding to different conflict phases. Future research should investigate the possibility of interaction effects between the determinants reviewed in this paper, and others, including possible mediation and confounding. Many other factors than what has been explored here likely influence migration during conflict. Future research should particularly investigate how factors that influence migration at peace time interact with conflict-related drivers of migration.

Future research should also accommodate for the possibility of non-linear relationships between these factors and migration. If people do not migrate at the first sign of conflict, is there a threshold in time, intensity, costs, scope, or all of the above, that need to be met before migration rates increase? Do migration rates typically vary with different conflict phases, and if so – why? Moreover, many aspiring migrants lack the ability to leave, leading to large numbers of involuntary non-migrants (Carling 2002; Carling et al. 2020, p. 9). Lack of ability to migrate could be some of the explanation behind the inverted u-shaped relationship between economic development and emigration (Carling et al. 2020, pp. 13-14). Involuntary immobility is likely also a factor during conflict, as those economically disadvantaged or who lack important networks have fewer means to migrate, also with a conflict at their doorstep. To properly understand *who* leaves conflict zones at what times and under which circumstances, a better understanding of the constraints conflict puts on people's ability to leave – and how this affects migration decisions – is needed. Such an understanding would also produce more precise assumptions about who stays behind. Future research should further explore both the interaction between different types of conflict-related and non-conflict-related drivers of migration, and the nature of the relationship between these factors and migration outflows from conflict zones.

5. An exploration of publications in the *Journal of Refugee Studies*

A significant body of research about displacement, drawing on qualitative methods and data, has emerged over the past half-century. This literature is critical to include in any serious engagement with research on migration and conflict – such as, on conflict-related determinants of migration. However, there are many differences in how the interface of migration and conflict emerge in different types of research – based among other on their approach and method, as well as disciplinary differences. Added to that, there are some differences also in modes and venues of publication, all taken together resulting in a risk of methodological silos, and lacking interaction across disciplinary and across data-based divides. In order to systematically engage with existing research-based knowledge broadly at the interface of conflict and migration – as part of our review of what is known about the determinants of conflict-related migration, we conducted a systematic exploration of publications in the *Journal of Refugee Studies.*

Why did we choose this approach? We chose to systematically explore publications in this journal, because it is arguably the flagship academic journal of 'refugee studies' – closely related to the overlapping fields of 'forced migration' and 'displacement' research. The journal's publications over a five-year period (2018–2023) give a good snapshot into the methodological approaches, thematic foci, geographic scope, modes of engagement with labels and categories, as well as prevalent types of conflict.

Another motivation for this particular form of exploration in addition to the above systematic review is that it broadens the types of methodological approaches we capture. The systematic review only looked into quantitative literature, whereas in this exploration we also review qualitative research. The search string used for the quantitative literature had a quantitative bias as it used terms that are often used in quantitative literature, like 'driver', 'determinant' or 'cause'. The search for literature for the above systematic review did capture two articles from the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, however these were not included in the final review, as they did not include analyses with regression coefficients. This reflects the divide in the research literature, based on methods, publication outlets, and fields, suggesting need for further future cross-fertilization. As we return to below, our exploration of articles in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* also indicates that the lacking overlap with the systematic literature review, is not only about method and hence terminology, but also about types of research questions addressed.

In Section 6 of this paper we present our substantive findings – before offering a reflection on what this offers in relation to our study of the conflict-related determinants of migration. Below follows a summary of our methodological approach for this exploration.

5.1 Scope

We explored the titles, key words and abstracts of all articles published in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* volumes 31 – 32 – 33 – 34 – 35 – 36 (only issue 1 included). This amounted to a total of **425 articles** across the years 2018–2023. As Figure 4 below shows, a very high proportion of articles (218) was published in 2021, with several very long issues, and special issues being published during this year. Overall, we treat the 425 articles published within this period as one pool, which we have mapped and explored, and we do not seek to make any comments about trends and developments during this period, which would also be complicated due to the disproportionate number of articles published in 2021. For remaining years, the numbers of articles were: 2018 = 34; 2019 = 50; 2020 = 38; and then 2021 = 218; 2022 = 77; and issue 1 in 2023 = 8.

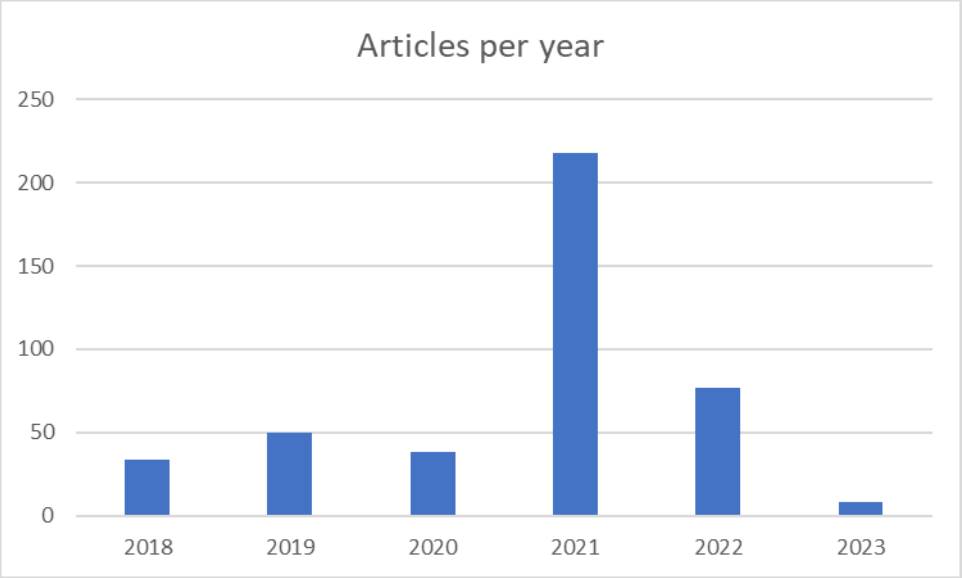

Figure 6 Number of articles per year

The exploration was conducted using a systematic approach, where each article was categorised in relation to the following thematic taxonomy:

- Methodological approach
  - Qualitative
  - Quantitative
  - Legal
  - Conceptual or Methodological
- Thematic focus
  - 29 thematic key words
- Geographic scope – flight within or from countries
  - 14 countries (and 2 other mixed groups)
- Geographic scope – flight to which countries
  - 35 countries (and 4 other mixed groups)
- Labels / categories describing people in titles
  - Asylum seekers
  - Combatants
  - Exiles
  - IDPs
  - Host
  - Migrants
  - Unaccompanied minors
  - Refugees
  - Returnees
- Explicitly on violence or conflict nature
  - Armed mobilization
  - Duration of conflict
  - Protracted conflict
  - Rebels
  - Violence

5.2 A systematic exploration?

Our mapping of 425 articles from the *Journal of Refugee Studies* was done by considering every article separately, focusing on the title, key words and abstract – and, based on the provided information, categorizing the article in relation to the above taxonomy. Where necessary, we also examined the full text of articles in order to verify e.g. the geographic scope or methodological approach. However, we did not review the entire articles for the use of labels / categories, nor engagement with the nature of conflict. We therefore refer to this exercise as a systematic exploration – as it offers the insights gained from a mapping exercise – more than a full review.

The above taxonomy was developed based on preliminary work with articles published in 2020-2021 and finalised based on the initial mapping for the first 50-80 articles. Thereafter, the taxonomy was fine-tuned as necessary, adding any new themes which emerged as critical – and then checking the items already reviewed in order to ascertain whether or not the theme could have been present earlier. Similarly, countries – whether those that people were displaced within or from, or those they might be going to or living in post-displacement – were added incrementally, and the mixed "other" groups was then defined at the end, as a residual category. A re-checking was also conducted once the full exploration was completed, to verify that no themes had been missed, countries overlooked, and so on.

Meanwhile, given the approach taken, and this being a mapping and not a full review, there are clearly some limitations and caveats which should be noted. Primarily, the main body of text of the articles have not been fully reviewed, and there are certainly articles e.g. engaging with further countries as comparative discussion cases, even if the main countries have been captured through our approach. Similarly, there is further (critical) engagement with labels/ categories beyond what we have captured in the main body of text of articles. We are also aware that in many cases, the nature of the conflict may be discussed in the context/background sections of articles, or in the introductions, even when this is not the main focus of the article and its analysis. Therefore, it is important to stress that our findings, such as the "main" themes of the articles, or how conflict is engaged with "explicitly", is based on what emerges from titles, key words and abstracts.

6. Publications in Journal of Refugee Studies

In this section we present the results from our thematic exploration of the 425 articles published in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* (2018-2023*) – an exercise we pursued in order to map themes, and the extent to which conflict-related determinants of migration were among the main themes of articles. We do so based on our five points of inquiry – namely: methodological approach, main themes, geographic scope, labels and categories used, and engagement (explicitly) with conflict nature. As discussed, this is based on what emerges from titles, key words and abstracts, as we only consulted full texts in some cases for verification. After summarising the insights gained from this exploration, we return to the question of the conflict-related determinants of migration. In our exploration, we do not delve into the question of who publishes in the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, as this falls outside the scope of this study, however, others have looked into this (Neang et al. 2022[3]).

6.1 Methodological approach

Among the 425 articles published in the period under study, a majority (322) followed a qualitative methodological approach, often using semi-structured interviews, but with other examples from across the qualitative methodological tool kit.

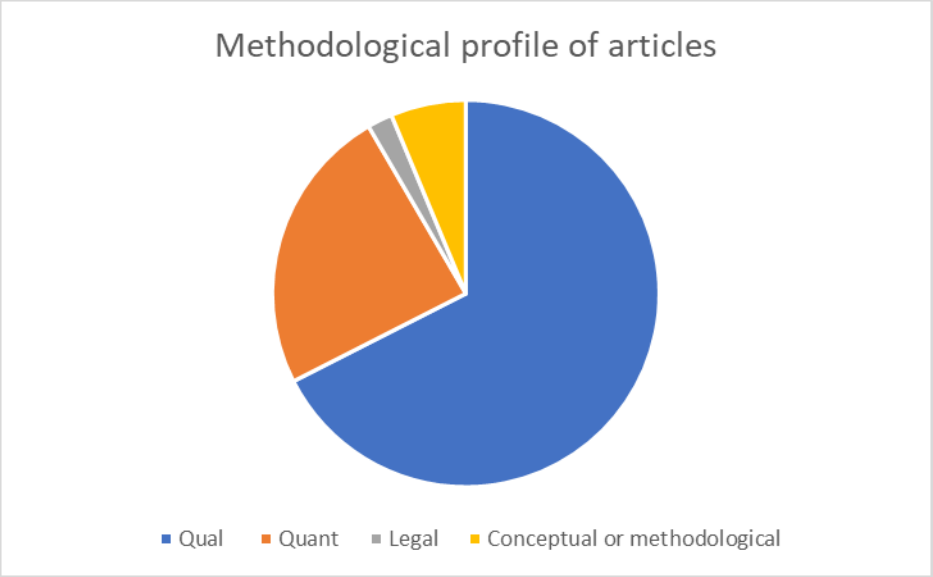

Figure 7 Methodological profile of articles published in Journal of Refugee Studies (2018-2023)*

Many of the articles drawing on qualitative methods and data were case-studies, among which studies of one national-background group in another national context – was a common trend. Examples of such studies are listed in Table 5.

[3] https://carleton.ca/lerrn/2022/jrs-analysis/

Voices of Resettled Refugee Congolese Women: A Qualitative Exploration of Challenges Associated with Resettling in Ohio (Evans et al. 2022)
Building a Life in Australia: Young Hazara Men and the Journey to 'Adulthood' (Neve 2022)
Refugees but not Refugees: The UAE's Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis Viewed through the Lived Experience of Syrians in Abu Dhabi (Charles 2021)
Business People in War Times, the 'Fluid Capital' and the 'Shy Diaspora': The Case of Syrians in Turkey (AkÇalI & GörmüŞ 2021)

Table 5 Examples of article titles – qualitative approaches

On the whole, there were 115 articles which used a quantitative approach, among these there was also a variety of types of data and analyses used. These ranged from surveys with refugees (in either camp-settings or in settlement contexts), but also e.g., media analyses, public attitudes to refugees, health or educational related data, as well as economic and labour market statistics involving data on refugees. Typical examples are presented in Table 6.

Geographical Trajectories of Refugees in Sweden: Uncovering Patterns and Drivers of Inter-Regional (Im)mobility (Vogiazides & Mondani 2021)
No Longer a 'Lost Generation'? Opportunities and Obstacles of Online and Blended Learning Programmes for Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon (Reinprecht et al. 2021)
Success or Self-Sufficiency? The Role of Race in Refugees' Long-Term Economic Outcomes (Tesfai 2023)
Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Perceptions of Asylum Seekers in Recipient Populations (Bjånesøy 2019)

Table 6 Examples of article titles – quantitative approaches

There were ten articles which explicitly followed a legal approach, considering legal documents and regulation of rights. A further category of articles when it comes to approach, were those which were of a more conceptual nature – or explicitly focused on methodology – with 30 articles. Furthermore, 52 articles with categorized under more than one category – of these 30 were both qualitative and quantitative, thus drawing on some form of 'mixed methods' approach, while a further 22 articles combined mainly qualitative and conceptual or methodological approaches.

6.2 Main themes of articles

The 425 articles we explored were all categorised according to the main theme – or main themes – which emerged from the title, key words and abstract. Across the articles, we had 1.8 themes on average, where 162 articles were categorised with one main theme, 154 articles two main themes, 77 articles were with three themes, and 21 articles were categorised with four or more themes, which we had included in our schema.

The themes which the articles were categorised as covering were:

Activism/volunteers; Asylum; Border; Democracy; Displacement; Education; Family; Fear; Gender; Health (including mental health); Home; Integration; Law; LGBTQ; Livelihood; Media & Social media; Migration management; Peace; Policy; Populism/nativism; Reconciliation; Repatriation; Resettlement; Return; Secondary movement; Socio-Economic; Technology; Welfare; War.

Figure 3 below displays the 29 themes which were identified and the number of articles which

were categorised as having this as their only or one of their main theme(s). The theme with the overwhelmingly highest number of articles discussing it is rather unsurprisingly perhaps – displacement (109 articles), with policy appearing as the second most popular theme (73 articles), and followed by health (including mental health) (67 articles), and reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of both the area of research, and of the *Journal of Refugee Studies*.

Themes which more than 20 articles among the 425 had as their main theme(s) – were: Socio-economic (49); Integration (48); Migration management (48); Livelihoods (39); Resettlement (37); Family (37); Asylum (36); Gender (34); Education (24); Home (23). Among the remaining 16 themes, each had 19 or fewer articles, that were primarily focused on the theme in question.

Interestingly, two articles had *peace* as a main theme, whereas eight articles had *war* placed centrally within their scope. As we return to below, a small number of articles were focused on conflict-related matters as such – whereas experiences of conflict naturally were a backdrop in the vast majority of the articles.

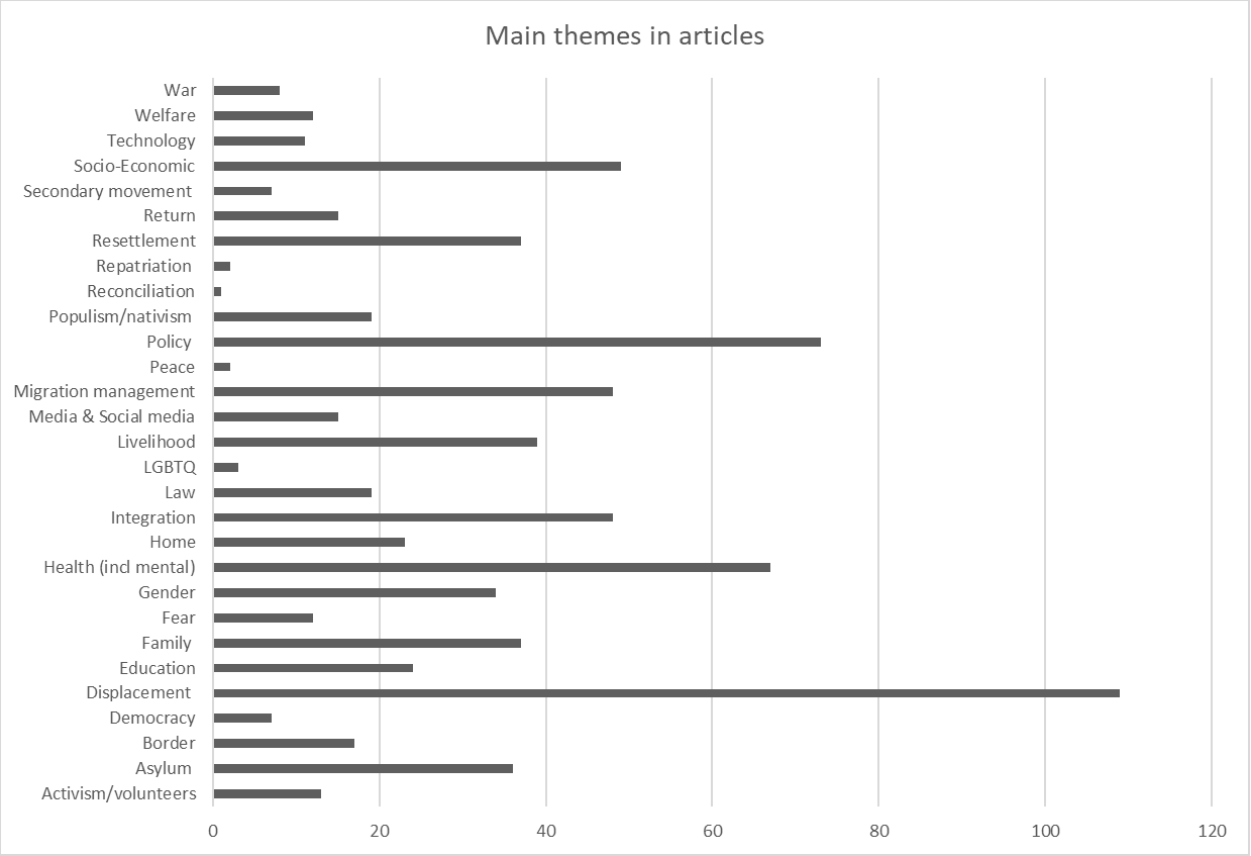

Figure 8 Main themes in articles published in JRS (2018-2023)*

6.3 Geographic scope

We explored the geographic scope of articles published in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* as regards the places from where – or within which – displacement was happening. We see that among the 425 articles almost 80 focus on Syria as the context from which people are displaced. Given the period of exploration, 2018–2023, this has been expected, and can be also explained by the fact there were special issues published in this period, which were concerned with people who had left Syria. The list of next countries which are the origin contexts for displacement in articles include: Myanmar, Afghanistan, Iraq, DR Congo and Somalia – all with significant populations of

displaced people both internally and internationally, and in most cases over a long period of time. (see Figure 4).

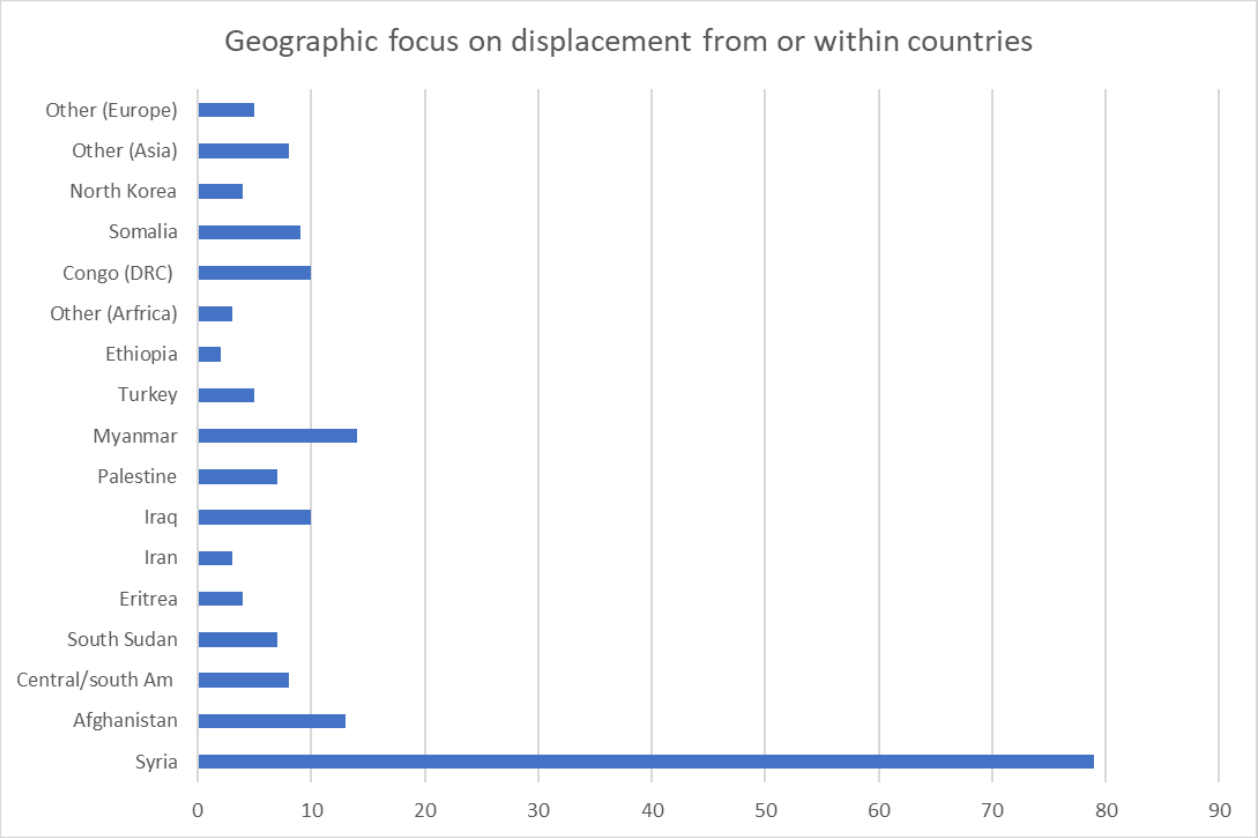

Figure 9 Geographic focus (origin) in articles published in JRS (2018-2023)*

Considering which countries were the geographic focus of articles, as the places where displaced people go, or where they are based, there are a few overarching points to make. While there is a disproportionate attention to countries in the 'Global North' (including the US, Sweden, Germany and the UK), as compared to realities of where most displaced populations are located globally, there are also a significant number of articles whose geographic focus is on important countries of refuge in the 'Global South'. This includes Lebanon, Turkey and Uganda, as well as Jordan and Kenya. Other countries who also are hosts to substantial populations of refugees are also among those that there are articles focusing on, such as: Thailand, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and Brazil (see Figure 5 for details).

6.4 Labels and categories

Further, we also explored the labels and categories used in the articles' titles, which rather unsurprisingly given the journal's own title, very often include the term 'refugees'. The other categories and labels related to mobilities and/or to conflict that we considered are listed in Figure 6, with 'asylum seekers' the second most used. Following this, some article titles also directly referred to 'returnees' and to 'unaccompanied minors' or to 'hosts' or 'IDPs'.

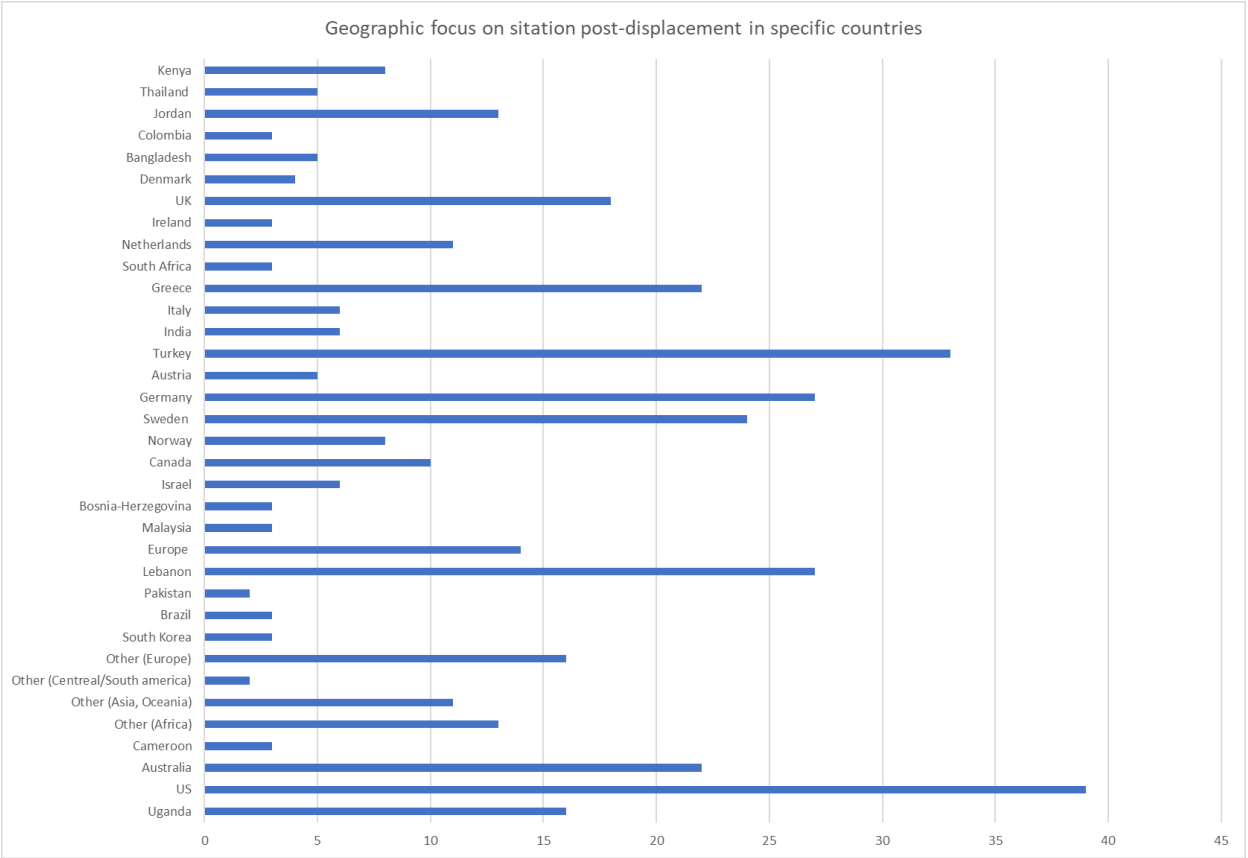

Figure 10 Geographic focus (destination) in articles published in JRS (2018-2023)*

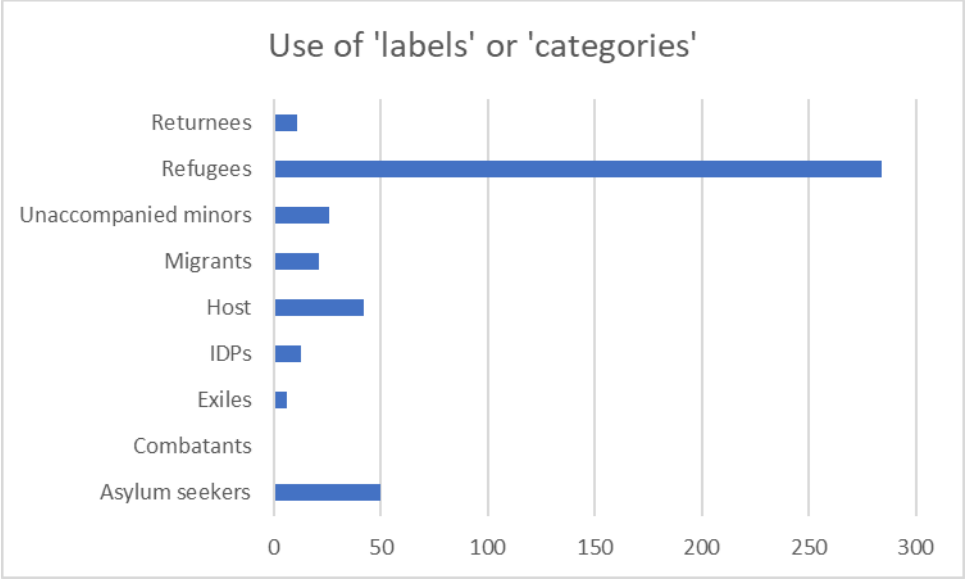

Figure 11 Main Labels and categories used in titles of articles published in JRS (2018-2023)*

Very few article titles refer to 'migrants' (21) – but those that do (see also examples in Table 7 below) provide an interesting glimpse into the ways in which these labels and categories intersect and overlap. Meanwhile, as the above examples illustrate, there is little engagement directly with the 'conflict-related' part of the conflict-related migration which we are exploring in this report – and which presumably also constitutes the bulk of types of experiences that are in fact discussed in research published in the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, also reflective of a focus on the here, now and future of these articles, as opposed to a focus on questions of what happened in the past, and why. Below we turn to engagement with conflict nature, specifically.

Gender Differences in Second Language Proficiency—Evidence from Recent Humanitarian Migrants in Germany (Bernhard & Bernhard 2022)
The 'Host' Label: Forming and Transforming a Community Identity at the Kakuma Refugee Camp (Rodgers 2021)
Refugees as Actors? Critical Reflections on Global Refugee Policies on Self-reliance and Resilience (Krause & Schmidt 2020)
'What Does the Term Refugee Mean to You?': Perspectives from Syrian Refugee Women in Lebanon (Gissi 2019)
Syrian Refugees as Seasonal Migrant Workers: Re-Construction of Unequal Power Relations in Turkish Agriculture (Pelek 2019)

Table 7 Example of article titles – applying different labels and categories

6.5 Engagement with conflict nature

Among the 425 articles, only 17 explicitly engaged with conflict in some substantive manner, although as mentioned earlier, of course – conflict, war, violence and the related experiences serve as a contextual backdrop in many of the articles, at least the ones which are situated in contexts of displacement, or proximate areas, or pertain to return mobilities. The table below presents some example titles of articles which we found to engage with various aspects of violence and conflict, and as may be seen, this pertains to surviving conflict and implications for life thereafter. There are also articles which unveil the violence of migration management practices. Other articles focus on gendered experiences of violence, which are directly and indirectly associated with violent conflict. Some articles focus on links with crime, while others recognise the impacts of the increasing degrees of protractedness in displacement. Finally, a few centre on the issue of recruitment of refugees by armed groups, as another link between violence and conflict-related migration.

Breaking the Spell of Silence: Collective Healing as Activism amongst Refugee Male Survivors of Sexual Violence in Uganda (Edström & Dolan 2019)
Suffering to Save Lives: Torture, Cruelty, and Moral Disengagement in Australia's Offshore Detention Centres (Barnes 2022)
Life after violence in North India: Islamic relief organizations and transactional relationships in a plural humanitarian space (Larouche 2022)
Geographies of Shame: Diachronic and Transnational Shame in Forced Migrants with Experiences of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (Papoutsi et al. 2022)
Guiding Refugee Women Who Have Experienced Violence: Representation of Trust in Counsellors' Journals (Lehti et al. 2022)
Refugee Crisis, Valuation of Life, and Violent Crime (Kivimäki & Nicholson 2021)
Contingent Homes: Mobility and Long-Term Conflict in the Contested Periphery of Georgia (Aydemir 2021)
Forced Migration Magnitude and violence in international crises: 1945–2015 (Ben-Yehuda & Goldstein 2020)
Recruiting Refugees for Militarization: The Determinants of Mobilization Attempts (Haer &

Hecker 2019)
Navigating Social Spaces: Armed Mobilization and Circular Return in Eastern DR Congo (Vlassenroot et al. 2020)

Table 8 Example of article titles – explicitly relating to conflict nature

6.6 Summary of explorative mapping of articles in the *Journal of Refugee Studies*

What does our thematic exploration of recent articles published in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* show?

- A majority of articles are based on qualitative methods, often semi-structured interviews, and often relatively few and in-depth, usually with people from one national background, living in one national context of settlement. These are furthermore, most often labelled refugees (often but not always reflecting this as a legal status).
- The nature of the conflict in the country of origin is rarely the focus of analysis directly, or even indirectly. The questions asked (and addressed) in these articles are not about "why" people migrate from conflict-affected areas. Rather, the focus is on life in the settlement context. These include integration-related topics, which at times indirectly link to the conflict experience, e.g. in research on health and trauma.
- Some articles have a focus defined by mode of migrating, especially resettlement, but also return (and repatriation), including migration management and the politics thereof.
- Conflict and its dimensions are often discussed as part of the contextual backdrop. Such background, in journal articles, however, is typically brief, and often renders a rather superficial at-a-glance impression of often long-term, complex conflicts, where cleavages and interest-stakes are equally intricate, and necessarily embedded within local, national, regional history.
- The geographic focus often includes country of origin and country of settlement – although not in the case of internal displacement or return. Importantly, **the empirical data is usually collected in the country of settlement**. This basic fact arguably sheds light on the reasons why the dynamics and nature of conflicts, e.g., types of violence, types of exposure to conflict and direct and indirect impacts thereof, perhaps are not in focus in much research on conflict-related migration, flight, displacement and refugees, that is published in this journal.
- A significant proportion of work published in *JRS* is about integration, and happens to involve refugee groups, and often, but not exclusively, resettled refugees, who globally speaking, are a tiny proportion of displaced populations, who are (now) in the Global North. The refugee-linked aspects of these people's stories, from conflict-affected areas, meanwhile, are rarely focused on in-depth, except if related to e.g., trauma.
- The articles use a range of labels to describe or categories the populations studied, mostly as 'refugees', or 'displaced populations', often combined with national group labels. Migrant/migration is less frequently referred to (at least in the framing of papers). The focus is on *mobility* usually when linked to return mobilities, in a few papers on circulatory mobility (e.g. between Uganda and South Sudan), but rarely investigating the dynamics and mechanisms of migration-decision making and its links with the *nature of a given conflict*.

6.7 What about the conflict-related determinants of migration?

Our thematic exploration of articles (titles and abstracts) published recently in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* indicates that the topics explored in research published in this journal are *not* strongly linked to, or really *about*, the conflict-related determinants of migration. Put differently, this is research, which is asking different questions – usually about the here and now, or the possibility of durable solutions to displacement. Therefore, it is also reasonable that it can only to a limited extent shed light on the determinants of conflict-related migration This is *despite* the fact that JRS articles tend to be based on a high degree of primary data collection, meaning authors likely have substantial contextual knowledge about the conflicts their interlocutors have left.

On the one hand, it is possible to suggest that articles in the field of refugee studies, and perhaps relatedly, forced migration and displacement, can suffer from a triple bias. This bias is about, first: **temporality** = the focus is on the present and solutions for the future; and second, **geography** = the research is conducted, more often than not, in context of displacement – away from the conflict-affected areas. This results in a tilt away from conflict-affected areas and dynamics at play there. These two biases also mean that much research is based on the experiences of those who have already been **displaced**. There are often justifiable methodological, as well as real-world-relevance related reasons why this is the case: it is generally not feasible to conduct robust research in warzones, or it raises huge research ethical challenges.

On the other hand, we suggest that a complementary research perspective – one that centre-stages questions about why, how, and when migration from conflict-affected areas comes about – is also necessary. Such a perspective can also be justified in relation to real-world relevance, as better comprehension of the determinants of conflict-related migration, may enable better protection of civilians in conflict, whether they are mobile or immobile, including understanding and assessing potential for return or non-return. To an extent, such research questions may be asked, without putting researchers or participants at any risk, through retrospective data collection, or the use of data sources which do not require fieldwork. While there are limitations to retrospective methods and data, this is the case whenever these are employed, and not specific to questions about conflict-related determinants of migration (Beauchemin & González-Ferrer 2011; Beauchemin & Schoumaker 2016; Riosmena 2016).

Finally, it is worth underscoring that many of the articles in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* contain important contextual information about conflict settings, and about conflict dynamics at times. However, due to the focus of the research published, this remains limited to providing contextual backdrop. Nevertheless, in order to gain highly-relevant contextualised insights for understanding the determinants of conflict-related migration, there is potentially much value to be gained from further and deeper interaction between these bodies of literature, and much of the quantitively oriented research, discussed in section 4. In turn, much can be gained in research within refugee studies and on forced migration and displacement, by engaging with research that centre-stages conflict and conflict nature more specifically, especially when this is conducted at the subnational level, in particular geographic areas – because this focus may help counter the inevitable **mobility bias** in research conducted with those who left – and not those who stayed behind.

7. Conclusion

Through the lens of existing literature, in this paper we have explored what research to date can tell us about *conflict-related determinants of migration*. We understand conflict-related determinants as set within a broader landscape of links between conflict and migration, where different factors, directly and indirectly, shape mobility and immobility. Our two-pronged approach reveals a methodological and disciplinary disconnect between quantitative research on these issues, employing regression analyses, on the one hand, and knowledge production in the wider field of 'forced migration' studies, on the other hand. This disconnect, we suggest, results in a much more fragmented body of knowledge than necessary, to the detriment of research, but also policy and practice.

We found that patterns of, as well as considerations and choices about mobility and immobility in conflict-affected contexts are shaped by the conflict-dimensions *to a degree*, reflective of the specific nature, duration and intensity of the conflict, in *particular geographic areas*. This is also the reason why **we refer to conflict-related determinants of migration – rather than determinants of conflict-related migration**. For, people's moving and staying behaviours – also in areas that are to a varying degree affected by different types of violent conflict – need to be understood in light of both conflict-related determinants and other determinants of migration (Czaika and Reinprecht 2022; Erdal and Hagen-Zanker 2022). These always interact in different ways, and factors such as resources, networks and attitudes to risk, may play important mediating roles (Rubin and Moore 2007).

Based on the work presented in this paper, and the review of existing research that underpins it, we suggest that attention needs to be paid to the following factors in particular, in the pursuit of more precise understandings of the specificity of conflict-related determinants of migration, comparatively across different cases:

- **Duration of conflict** and the interplay of duration with intensity in different locations. This is because people's decisions about leaving and staying, which are based on their evaluations of the situation where they are, and elsewhere, change over time
- **Insecurity (as a form of uncertainty),** connects with *duration*, and matters in ways that are non-linear, yet appear to have cumulative traits: the length – and extent of insecurity matters, and is not the same as *levels of violence* as such (Czaika et al. 2020; Bijak and Czaika 2020).
- **Protracted insecurity** rather unsurprisingly may play an important role in considerations about leaving and staying. However, *when* a "tipping point" occurs seems to be more subjectively assessed (see also Hagen-Zanker et al. 2023).
- **Lack of *future prospects and hope*** appears important. This is not entirely dissimilar to how considerations about the future matter for migration aspirations and determinants in contexts not affected by violent conflict (Aslany et al. 2021).
- **Fear** (as distinct from insecurity) also appears to matter – this can be fear of violence, but also a more general 'fear of tomorrow' – which could be low-key or intense, but plays a role in considerations about staying or leaving, varyingly also in conjunction with conflict.
- **Socio-economic (human) costs of conflict** such as market collapse, inability to maintain livelihoods, school closures, hospital closures, and lack of basic infrastructure – all appear to play a role. This pertains to the breakdown of society, and the detrimental development that conflict-affected societies mostly experience. There is of course a scale from total collapse to an experience of long-drawn gradual deterioration, which tends to interact with

other determinants – with overlaps in migration determinants with contexts where there are no conflict-related determinants to consider.

- **Aspiration *and* ability** to leave, may be as significant to understand migration in conflict-settings (as a two-step process), as in areas not affected by conflict, where the *ability* part plays out in similar ways, i.e., access to resources, contacts, networks, routes etc . Such a two-step approach to migration, however, seems to contradict ideas underlying "forced migration" where people's agency to make decisions about when, how and in particular whether to leave, is rendered little attention. Meanwhile, in conflict-affected areas many people decide to go, but many others stay, and in turn others want to leave, but cannot. Others again prefer, after all, to stay, since leaving can be risky too, and in some cases, the decision is that someone in the family needs to stay, for instance to see to land. Therefore, it might be prudent to consider whether the tools for analysis of migration decision-making could be better utilized in conflict-affected contexts, while of course recognising the specificities of conflicts, and giving due attention to *conflict-related determinants of migration*.
- Comparing and contrasting **internal and international mobility** within and out of conflict-affected areas, also appears to be a theme in need of further scrutiny. Despite the volume of research over the past couple of decades on displacement, few studies offer robust answers to the question of why some conflicts lead to mass internal displacement, without significant international mobility, while others – lead often to both.
- **Mobilities** in the plural, may be a helpful entry point to understand dynamics of leaving and staying – not least in conflict affected contexts. This is because mobility may be circular, onward, returning, and with split-households, rather than about a single 'migration-decision'. Instead, migration is often reversible (tentatively) – and changes over time. This perhaps makes migration within and from conflict-affected contexts more similar, rather than more different, from migration in many other settings. This is in particular the case where some level of *survival* is at stake, which is very relevant in relation to migration in contexts of insecurity connected with climate change impacts, but also livelihood insecurity. Often, mobility patterns are not new, and not exclusively resulting from conflict, but following past mobility patterns pre-dating a given conflict. This is important to be aware of, to adequately understand mobility seen in times of conflict.

In order to better understand the impacts of conflict on decisions about moving or staying, comparisons with migration in various settings (socio-economic, security, regime type) are necessary. Only then, will it be possible to more fully map and understand systematic differences – and similarities – in staying and leaving behaviour, across different contexts. Such different contexts could pertain to geographic areas varyingly affected by violent conflict, repression, or other forms of imminent or gradual threats to populations, including those posed by impacts of climate change.

Clearly, there are cases where the difference is diametrical, between migration from (and within) a warzone, and from (and within) a peaceful area. For people whose movement is characterized by fleeing for their lives, leaving everything behind, quite suddenly, comparisons with for instance student movements for post-graduate degrees to countries half-way across the globe, would seem to have very little in common. However, there is arguably a continuum in how we can approach and understand contexts to be characterised by peace and war. Many places are less peaceful and more violent, though they may not be characterised as warzones. In such cases, understanding the determinants of mobility and of immobility necessitate sensitivity to the specific circumstances, reflecting a need to move beyond binary approaches, where a context – often nationally defined – is counted as conflict-affected – or not. Instead, awareness and attention to sub-national variation,

also for the purposes of understanding mobility and immobility, of both voluntary and involuntary nature, appears important.

Simultaneously, a lot of mobility within and out of conflict-affected areas is characterised by being protracted, as conflicts last. However, often there are also periods of relative stability, which may be interspersed with episodes of violence, causing fear. This means that mobility and immobility are also often dynamic and changing over time. While somewhat challenging to convey in the face of legal-political realities and a context of polarized policy debates in many countries as regards refugees and other migrants; it is possible, or even likely, that there is an overlap in the determinants of migration in settings with varying intensities of conflict, violence or different types of insecurity, with those characterised by relatively peaceful and stable circumstances.

Working towards a more precise understanding of conflict-related determinants of migration is important as it may improve our ability to address the challenges faced by people affected by conflict, whether they stay or leave. In this paper we have documented the relatively limited knowledge from existing research, with more sophisticated levels of precisions, about *conflict-related determinants of migration.* The paucity in exact understanding of what it is *about conflict* that shapes whether people stay or go may be surprising, given the huge numbers of people displaced globally. With this paper we hope to set the scene for future studies which may take on the analytical and methodological challenge of further disaggregating and measuring *how* different types of conflict – in relation to forms of violence, durations, and actors' roles – may varyingly affect the staying and leaving behaviour of affected populations.

Meanwhile, the existence and availability of data which are suited to such analyses, remains a challenge (Vestby et al. 2022). There are promising developments in terms of making data available and shareable, however, there are often significant problems with the precision and scope, as well as timing, of data that would be necessary in order to move knowledge frontiers forward. In this context, working toward better quality data should be combined with openness and humility about the limitations of data that is being analysed. In other words, both the phenomena in question – migration in conflict-affected areas, and specifically conflict-related determinants of migration – are characterised by changeability and thus uncertainty at any given point in time, as, in many ways, are the data employed to understand these phenomena.

Nevertheless, more precise understanding immobility, as much as mobility, in contexts of crisis – whether caused by violent conflict or the impacts of climate change – is among the most pressing challenges looking ahead, both for research and in aid of better informed policy responses.

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