Journal of Social and Development Sciences (ISSN 2221-1152)
Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 1-10, December 2022

Host Community Attitudes Towards Internally Displaced Persons: Evidence from Al-Bab, Syria

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Abstract: Considering the unique context of the Al-Bab area in Syria hosting Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), we tested the role of economic individual self-interest in shaping a host community's attitude towards IDPs. The findings from analyzing data collected from 496 households indicated that self-interest had a significant effect on their attitudes. Interestingly, when positive and negative attitudes were isolated from each other, the findings revealed that the factors shaping the former may not always be the same for the latter. The particular value of this study is in exploring the host community's attitude towards IDPs, something which has not been studied and thus contributes to enhancing our knowledge about the attitude towards newcomers.

Keywords: *Self-interest; Attitude; IDPs; Labour market.*

1. Introduction

In 2022 the Syrian crisis entered its twelfth year and has so far resulted in 13.4 million displaced people. There are 6.6 million refugees, who passed the international border to another country, distributed within neighbouring countries, Europe and North America (UNHCR, 2021). The IDPs (internally displaced people), who have been distributed within the home country, are 6.7 million (UNHCR, 2021). The ability of both refugees and internally displaced people to integrate, support themselves, and contribute positively to the host society depends to a significant extent on the attitude of the host community towards them (Dempster and Hargrave, 2017, Fussell, 2014). An understanding of hosts' attitudes towards refugees and IDPs is an important issue for enriching our knowledge of integration and sustainable development (Abedtalas et al., 2020). Likewise, a more nuanced knowledge of these relationships is important for governments, NGOs and international organizations to help them design more insightful policies and interventions (Abedtalas et al., 2021). Attitudes towards immigrants have been studied through the expected impact on the host community at two levels and from two perspectives, with considerable separation and convergence.

The economic perspective, related to competition in the labour market and financial (tax) burdens, has been studied mostly at the level of individuals, while the socioeconomic perspective, related to economic and sociocultural issues, has been studied mostly at the group level. Many researchers believe that attitudes towards immigrants are rooted in individual self-interest in both the narrow and the broad sense. In the narrow sense, it is assumed that individuals, in pursuit of their self-interest, take negative attitudes toward those in competition and conflict with them (Quillian, 1995). As for the broad sense, this can be extended to cover all facets of life in a society, such as social relationships and identity, that satisfy individual needs. The precondition for a negative attitude is a feeling of threat (Sides and Citrin, 2007). Fear of job loss or wage competition and concerns about the costs of social programmes are often cited as economic reasons for attitudes towards immigration. Other reasons are related to cultural alienation and fears that immigrants will undermine traditional languages, religion, share in political power, and other aspects of the host people's way of life.

More recently, scholars have tended to focus on the socioeconomic perspective. Such studies have investigated attitudes towards externally displaced people, where newcomers and hosts come from different socio-cultural backgrounds. This article questions whether the socioeconomic approach alone is able to adequately explain attitudes towards IDPs, Considering that self-interest can be mixed with group socioeconomic factors. this study deals with the attitude towards a specific group of newcomers, IDPs. As IDPs, in contrast to refugees or migrants, belong to the same country as the host community and often with similar sociocultural backgrounds, it is possible to isolate, to an extent, the role of socioeconomic factors and track the role of self-interest. The interaction between local people in the Al-Bab region of Syria and IDPs, where the two parties are Syrians with similar sociocultural backgrounds, affords a suitable case study to

apply this approach and retest the role of self-interest. The article begins with a literature review followed by sections on methodology, findings, and a conclusion.

2. Literature Review

Although we could not find studies of the attitudes towards IDPs, with think that we can draw on literature relating to attitudes towards minorities, migrants, and refugees, taking into account the implication of similarities and differences between them. The similarities are related to displacement and its ramification, while the differences are related to staying inside the home countries with a similar sociocultural context. In general, although there are elements that overlap, we can categorize two different approaches to theorising attitudes towards migrants (newcomers): economic and socioeconomic. The economic approach draws on theories of international trade, concentrating on the impact of migration on individual economic well-being through product prices and the competition in the labour market, especially for those with skills comparable to those of newcomers, as they will face more intense competition with limited opportunity for mobility comparing to capital (Scheve and Slaughter, 2001, Mayda, 2006, Hanson at al., 2007). Besides, there is the possibility that immigrants will have a negative impact through pressure on social security systems, paid for through taxation (Borjas, 1999, Facchini and Mayda, 2009, Hanson et al., 2007). Several scholars have investigated *subjective* indicators of individual economic interest. They have found that the role of economic self-interest cannot be separated from other interests and is less important than group-level factors. Citrin et al. (1997) tested the influence of economic factors on public opinion towards immigration policy in the USA. They indicated that personal economic conditions play a negligible role in shaping opinion, but beliefs about the state of the national economy and concern about taxes are important factors.

These findings were confirmed by Chandler and Tsai (2001). However, Hernes and Knudsen (1992) and Tucci (2005) emphasized that concerns about an individual's financial situation influence concerns about immigration. Meanwhile, Card et al. (2005), Citrin (2007), Dustmann and Preston (2007) and Preston (2007) indicated that attitudes towards migration are shaped by perspectives on a variety of ways through which migration affects concerns about the labour market, welfare (public finance), ethnic and cultural issues. Furthermore, Sides and Citrin (2007), Card et al. (2012) and Gordon (2016) revealed a stronger influence of cultural and national identity than individual economic interests. However, subjective indicators might be susceptible to the mixing of individual and group interests. Economic and social concerns about migration may be based in part on ignorance and/or the tendency of people to overemphasize anecdotal rather than systematic evidence about the impact of migration (Kessler, 2001, Semyonov et al., 2004, Card et al., 2007). Besides, those concerns differ according to the economic and social characteristics of immigrants and their hosts (Dustmann and Preston, 2007, Card et al., 2007). Using *objective* individual indicators of economic self-interest, Espenshade and Hempstead (1996), found that people with a higher income and education, as indicators of individual competitiveness in the labour market, are more receptive to higher levels of immigration. Likewise, Scheve and Slaughter (2001) documented a strong correlation between skills and labour market competitiveness and attitude towards immigration.

Although Kessler (2001) showed that the labour market factor determines the attitude towards immigration, he did not exclude the role of political beliefs. This was confirmed by Gang et al (2002), Mayda (2006), O'Rourke and Sinnott (2006) and Facchini and Mayda (2009). Finally, Hanson et al. (2007) concentrated on a fiscal perspective and studied the differences in preferences of American individuals towards immigration policies and concluded that high exposure to immigrant financial pressures, which translates into a higher tax burden, leads to hostility to the immigration flow, especially among highly skilled individuals. From a socioeconomic perspective, many theoretical models have been developed to explain the attitude towards immigrants. The Collective Threat Theory sees that the host group attitude is based on perceptions of threats to their privileges (Quillian, 1995), which may include political power and control over acceptable social and cultural behaviours (Card et al., 2007). While many of these threats are related to the struggle for economic resources from a collective perspective (Citrin et al., 1997), the Symbolic Policy Theory emphasizes the importance of values and identities (Fussell, 2014, Berg, 2015). Likewise, the Social Identity Theory also states that people tend to think positively of themselves and the groups to which they belong and differentiate themselves from strangers through the expression of negative attitudes (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010). Following the socioeconomic approach, Quillian (1995) and Palmer (1996) found that anti-immigrant

attitudes were a result of a perceived economic and social threat to the dominant native group. In two interesting papers, Esses et al. (1998) used the model of real group conflict and revealed that group competition for economic resources shapes attitudes towards immigrants.

While Semyonov et al. (2004) focussed on the perceived threat and found that this mediates between a real threat and a negative attitude towards immigrants. Using symbolic theory, Pedersen (2005) showed that higher levels of education (as an indicator of socialization), right-wing political positions, high levels of national identity and increasing age explain, to a large extent, the negative attitude towards asylum seekers. Likewise, Pantoja, (2006) found that the core American values of individualism, humanity and equality shape public opinion toward US immigration policies. Similar findings were confirmed by Savelkoul et al. (2011) revealing the role of ethnicity in the formation of anti-Muslim attitudes in the Netherlands. In conclusion, there is an overlap between individual economic interests and group economic and social interests as well as the dynamic interaction between them. Furthermore, all of the studies deal with attitudes towards externally displaced people or minorities, where there are differences in the sociocultural backgrounds of the two parties that make newcomers a source of threat, which is not always the case with IDPs. Accordingly, studying the attitude of the Al-Bab host community toward IDPs, where the two parties share the same sociocultural background, can isolate the concerns of group identity and help in developing our understanding of attitudes towards newcomers. So we will test the following hypothesis: Economic self-interest affect the local attitude towards IDPs.

3. Methodology

Al-Bab is an agricultural region around the city of Al-Bab, in North West Syria. It is affiliated administratively with the Governorate of Aleppo. It is currently controlled by opposition forces allied with Turkey. Unfortunately, there is not any census or trustable data about the area recently. The first wave of IDPs to Al-Bab came from the wider metropolitan area of Aleppo. They included large numbers of people who had previously migrated there from rural areas, as well as to other cities, in search of education and work (Balanche 2017). Due to its relative stability, the Al-Bab region continued to receive waves of IDPs from the Aleppo, Homs and Deir Ezzor regions (Support Coordination Unit, 2017). There are no reliable estimates of the number of IDPs in the region, but the personal observations of the two authors indicate that, on average, the ratio of local people to IDPs is less than 3 to 1. The IDPs are distributed between the city of Al-Bab, smaller towns and the countryside. Some of them live in scattered camps on the outskirts of towns and villages, while others live in rented housing (Enab Baladi 2017). Given that the IDPs are Syrians, some of them are even originally from the Al-Bab region.

There are few differences between them and the host communities in terms of their general social and cultural identity that might provoke conflict between them as groups. However, there will be individual competition for economic resources. In addition, no government migration policy might influence the host communities' attitudes, positively or negatively, towards IDPs. Accordingly, Al-Bab is a good place to test the explanatory capability of the economic self-interest approach for host community attitudes towards IDPs. We choose a quantitative method as we had specific variables (Cohin et al., 2002) expected to affect the attitude towards IDPs. As people in the region tend to be suspicious of strangers, especially those collecting data, random sampling was impossible and we had to use snowball sampling. The researchers identified a limited number of individuals who had an interest in the topic and these people were then used as informants to identify other individuals and/or communicate with new contacts (Cohin et al., 2002). We began by choosing eleven research assistants through focus groups. Each had an extensive social network in the area and had an adequate educational level. They used their social networks as a way of convincing people to fill out the questionnaire.

Five hundred completed questionnaires were returned by the heads of households from Al-Bab city, Qabbasin town, and Qubbat Al-Shih village. Four hundred and ninety-six of the questionnaires were acceptable for statistical analysis. As we were interested in economic factors and self-interest, and given the absence of taxation and social security systems, we excluded tax concerns and focused on competition in the labour market. Our underlying hypothesis was that whoever suffers from poor employability in the labour market, or more intense competition in the labour market will hold a negative attitude towards IDPs (Hernes and

Knudsen, 1992). Therefore, the independent variables were education, as a proxy of an individual's human skills, along with gender, age, employment status, income level and source (McLaren and Johnson, 2007, Wilkes, et al., 2008), as well as the place of residence (among the three sites from which the data was collected). Regarding the dependent variable (host community attitude towards IDPs).

We used a question about the possibility of settling IDPs in the region. The answers to this question were on the Likert five-point scale: Strongly Agree: 5; Agree: 4; Neutral : 3; Disagree: 2; Strongly Disagree: 1. Dependingly, a questionnaire was prepared in Arabic containing demographics questions and questions related to the other variables. The initial version of the questionnaire was reviewed by three colleagues, academics ar Mardin Artuklu University, interested in this field, after that we made some marginal adjustments. Then we tested the questionnaire by filling it by 10 local people and we made some changes to make the language more accurately understandable. We estimated three regressions. Model (1) is a linear regression model of the attitude on the independent variables. And regression models (2) and (3) are logistic binaries, with the same variables but based on the method of Wilkes et al. (2008), which, in turn, drew on Cacioppo et al. (1997). Cacioppo et al. (1997) considered that attitudes towards refugees do not sit on a continuum between negative and positive poles, but rather, both negative and positive attitudes are qualitatively different positions. Therefore, we calculated two new dummy variables, which are the negative and positive attitudes towards IDPs. The negative attitude takes the value 1 when the answer to the attitude question is *strongly disagree* and *disagree*, and 0 otherwise.

Likewise, for a positive attitude, it takes the value 1 when the answer to the attitude question is *strongly agree* and *agree* and 0 otherwise. The purpose of these two regression models is to understand whether the positive and negative attitudes are formed independently and to know if there really are significant differences between them. Model 1 takes the following form:

$$Y = a + \beta X + u$$

Where:

Y is the dependent variable which measures the attitude, X represents the independent variables, α is the intercept, β are unknown parameters to be estimated and u is the error term. Models 2 and 3 take the following form:

$$\log\left(\frac{p_1}{1-p_1}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \ldots\ldots\ldots \beta_I X_I$$

Where: p_1 is the probability that Y (the dependent variable) =1 (the event), given X_1 ... X_I are the covariates (predictors) and βs are the regression coefficients, which have to be estimated from the data (Wilson and Lorenz, 2015).

4. Findings

Table 1 shows the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the sample. A large share of the sample was collected from the village of Qubbat al-Shih, followed by the city of Al-Bab and then the town of Qabasin, and is dominated by males, which is unsurprising given that social norms in the region usually entrust family leadership to men. With regard to age, younger groups predominate; this corresponds with the demographic composition of Syria. However, the exception is the under-25s group which is very low by Syrian standards and may be the result of youth migration. For education level, there is a high degree of illiteracy, but also a good percentage of the higher educated. The unemployment rate is 14.1%, which is a high percentage. There is a high percentage of employers, which is normal given that most of the economic activities in the region are small businesses, crafts and agriculture. Regarding the sectorial distribution of activities, it is meaningful to compare it with the official Syrian statistics of sectorial activities for the year 2009, which were as follows: Agriculture: 16%, industry 36%, construction 6%, services 44% (Syria Statistic Collection, 2011). In our sample the agricultural sector represents 14% which is a significant decline compared with 2009, indicating the deterioration of the agricultural sector as a result of the war, the lack of supplies, fuel and marketing capabilities.

As for the industrial sector (and considering that the 2009 data incorporates Other into Industrial), about 42.3% of the sample are fully or partially employed in this sector, compared to the 2009 average of 36%, which included the oil industry. There is thus a remarkable increase in industrial activities resulting from the displacement of many industrial activities from the city of Aleppo towards rural areas, including Al-Bab. In addition, the division of Syria between different de facto authorities forced isolated regions such as Al-Bab to develop many industrial activities. The construction sector has also experienced some expansion, which is related to the increase in population resulting from displacement. Regarding services, there is a decline since 2009, which is mostly due to the absence of official government agencies. With regard to sources of income, the majority depends on wages, followed by profits and various sources of aid, as well as remittances from abroad. About income groups, about 56.4% have an income of between zero and 220,000 Syrian pounds (440 US dollars in 2019) per month.

Table 1: The Samples Demographic Characteristics

Places				
Albab	**Qubasin**	**Qubeshih**		
30%	23.60%	46.40%		
Gender				
Male	**Female**			
82.50%	17.50%			
Age				
≤25	**26-35**	**36-45**	**46-55**	**≥56**
15.50%	35.70%	23.40%	14.90%	10.50%
Education				
Illiterate	**elementary**	**preparatory**	**Secondary**	**Higher education**
14.30%	25.60%	24.60%	9.90%	25.60%
Work Status				
Employer(and self-employed)	**Employee**	**Unemployed**		
38.70%	51.40%	14.10%		
Sector				
Agriculture	**Industry**	**Construction**	**Service**	**Other**
13.70%	12.30%	11.50%	40.10%	31%
Income resource				
Wage	**Profit**	**Remittances**	**Other**	
50%	44.20%	8.70%	12.30%	
Income groups*				
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
56.40%	33.70%	6.50%	1.40%	2.00%

*For income groups, measured by monthly Syrian Pound income, 1: 0-220000, 2:220001-440000, 3:440001-660000, 4:660001-880000 and 5:880000 and more.

In Table 2 there are three regression models. Model 1 is a linear regression of the attitude towards IDPs, as a range between negative and positive, on the independent variables that were previously defined. That is, we consider the negative attitude as the opposite of the positive, with both resulting from the same underlying process. As we can see from the table, the significant coefficients are that of age, level of education, agricultural sector, other sources of income and the location of Qubashih and Al-Bab (two out of three data collection sites).

Older Adults are Negative Towards IDPs: Attitudes appear to increase negatively with increasing age, as indicated by the negative sign of the regression coefficient. This means that older local people are negative towards IDPs compared with younger adults. In the context of Al-Bab, we do not believe that the negative

attitude of older hosts can be explained by the argument of O'Rourke and Sinnott (2006) that the elderly are conservative towards the social change represented by the newcomers, given that both the displaced and the hosts share the same social background. Likewise, the negative attitude cannot be the result of what Hernes and Knudsen (1992) proposed about competition for social benefits between the displaced and the elderly, given that there is no system of social security nor assistance for IDPs provided by the government or any other official body. We believe this can be explained by competition in the labour market, which is more intense among older groups and less so among the younger groups, a result of the massive migration of young people outside the country (as we noted from the age structure of the sample previously) and the recruitment of young males into military forces.

Table 2: Regression Models

	Model 1 Linear Regression for Attitude as Dependent Variable		**Model 2 Binary Logistic Regression for Positive Attitude as Dependent Variable**		**Model 3 Binary Logistic Regression for Negative Attitude as Dependent Variable**	
	B	P	B	P	β	P
(Constant)	3.792*	0.000	0.775	0.349	-1.960**	0.027
Age	-0.140*	0.007	-0.250*	0.008	0.222**	0.032
Gender	-0.321	0.075	-0.429	0.190	0.551	0.118
Education	-0.103**	0.028	-0.105	0.217	0.196**	0.031
Unemployed (reference Employed)	0.048	0.828	-0.303	0.463	-0.617	0.169
Employee (reference employer)	0.010	0.953	-0.342	0.238	-0.214	0.483
Sectors (reference service sector)						
Agriculture	-0.847*	0.000	-1.317*	0.001	0.1337*	0.00
Industry	0.043	0.816	0.210	0.522	-0.084	0.818
Construction	0.152	0.461	0.398	0.276	-0.274	0.500
Other	-0.122	0.382	-0.021	0.933	0.273	0.312
Income resources (reference profit)						
Wage	-0.047	0.765	0.111	0.700	0.136	0.655
Remittances	-0.195	0.406	-0.545	0.234	0.373	0.422
Other	0.462**	0.025	0.853**	0.026	-0.669	0.116
Income groups	0.053	0.459	0.127	0.334	-0.070	0.634
Place (reference Qubasin)						
Qubashih	0.604*	0.00	0.902*	0.002	-1.171*	0.00
Albab	1.098*	0.00	1.492*	0.000	-1.645*	0.00
	Adjusted R^2	**0.17**	**Cox & Snell R Square**	**0.157**	**Cox & Snell R Square**	**0.151**
			Nagelkerke R Square	**0.218**	**Nagelkerke R Square**	**0.202**

(P) is the level of significance, * significant at level 0.01. ** significant at level 0.05.

More Educated People have Negative Attitudes Towards IDPs: It appears from the table that there is an inverse association between the level of education and the degree of acceptance of the IDPs. This is in contrast to most of the studies conducted so far, whether on the economic or non-economic background. In contrast to Hernes and Knudsen (1992), our study found that educated hosts did not appear to be more tolerant, nor did they try to appear more tolerant than they were, as Burns and Gimpel (2000) predicted. On the contrary, they are more negative towards IDPs. Hanson et al. (2007) and Mayda (2006) used international trade theory and individual interest and also found tolerance correlated with education level. However, they investigated hostility based on low-skilled competition. Our findings show similar hostility based on competition for jobs, but at a higher skill level. As we mentioned earlier, we expect that the IDPs in our region of study may have a higher level of education and skills, considering they came from more urbanized areas. Therefore, competition between highly-skilled individuals is more intense, and the more educated the host, the more negative the attitude towards IDPs. This is not outside the implications of international trade theory on the labour market, in terms of the possibility of skilled labour migration to countries that have a density of unskilled labour but lack capital.

People Working in Agricultural Sector are Negative Towards IDPs: The coefficient of the agricultural sector was negative and significant, showing that workers in the agricultural sector are more hostile to the displaced than in other sectors. This is related to the deterioration that the agricultural sector has undergone due to the war, combined with years of drought, and the lack of agricultural supplies and fuel. Likewise, some agricultural production workers are specialized and their ability to move to other sectors is limited. So it is common for workers in the agricultural sector to feel weak in the labour market and to take a negative attitude towards real or potential competition from IDPs. This result is consistent with research relying on theories of international trade (Facchini and Mayda, 2009) and individual interest, and what was confirmed by Dancygier and Donnelly (2013) about the monetary cost of moving from one sector to another. It is also consistent with Lee and Wolpin (2006)'s finding about the psychological costs, such as anxiety and stress, of moving from one sector to another.

People who Receive Aid are Positive Towards IDPs: Regarding income, only those with "other sources of income" (consisting mainly of aid) have a significant positive attitude. The comment that we can make here is that a large proportion of the flow of aid is linked to the influx and presence of the IDPs in the region. Therefore, it would not be unusual for beneficiaries of this aid to have a positive attitude towards IDPs.

Host Community Members who Live in Urban Centers are Positive Towards IDPs: When we look at particular localities, it seems that Al-Bab city has the most positive attitude, followed by the village of Qubbat Al-Shih and then the town of Qabasin. This coincides partially with our basic expectation, drawing on Burns and Gimpel (2000), that the closer to urban areas, the more positive the attitude towards IDPs, considering the more abundant economic opportunity and the less labour competition. Furthermore, this finding agrees with Czaika and Di Lillo (2018) that there are differences in attitude related to location. We believe that the reason for the greater negativity in the town of Qabasin towards IDPs, as reported by the residents, is due to the heritage of frequent conflict over ownership of land and buildings. This issue was not reported from the village of Qubbat Al-Shih.

The Development Process of Positive and Negative Attitudes Towards IDPs Might Be Partially Separated: In Model 2, which is a binary logistic regression for a positive attitude, we find that the significant coefficients are only those of age, the agricultural sector, other sources of income and place. In Model 3, which is a binary logistic regression for the negative attitude, the significant coefficients were that of age, education and place. The trends are not different from those mentioned in Model 1, which supports the above findings. However, what can be observed is the absence of education in the formation of a positive attitude, and other sources of income from the formation of a negative attitude, which may lead to the conclusion that the composition of positive and negative attitudes may be distinct and that they may also overlap due to the presence of common factors. This agrees with Wilkes et al. (2008).

5. Conclusion and Recomendations

In this study, we tested the validity of the theory of economic self-interest in explaining host community attitudes towards IDPs in Syria. We relied on previous studies, especially those based on international trade theory, in explaining negative attitudes towards IDPs, with the indicators of competition for economic resources, especially in the labour market. Our indicators of the exposure of individual interest to the competition were the level of human skills measured by educational level, in addition to some indicators of weakness in the context of economic competition, namely, age, gender, source of income, work status, activity sector and income level. In addition, we tested the effect of place of residence between the countryside and the city. We estimated two types of regression. Firstly, a linear regression of the general attitude towards IDPs, and secondly, two logistical regressions, after dividing the attitudes into negative and positive. We found that the indicators of economic self-interest play an important role in shaping attitudes towards IDPs. Higher levels of education are associated with a negative attitude towards IDPs, which is consistent with the results of studies that have been based on the theory of international trade. Likewise, some other indicators of economic vulnerability, such as age plus reduction in an activity sector, play a negative role in attitudes towards IDPs. On the other hand, receiving aid has a positive effect on host community attitudes.

All of this supports the idea that self-interest plays an important role in the formation of attitudes towards IDPs. It was also concluded that the process of forming a negative attitude may be separated, in some aspects, from the process of forming a positive attitude. This is because education did not play a role in forming a positive attitude, while income from aid did not affect the negative position. At the same time, there are common aspects related to the effects of age, economic sector and place. Finally, we found that place of residence may affect attitudes towards IDPs and that urban areas, with more abundant economic opportunities, may hold more positive attitudes. In general, our findings are in contrast with Hainmueller and Hopkins' (2013) claim that the economic self-interest approach, which depends on the theory of competition in the labour market and the financial burdens of hosting newcomers, is a kind of zombie theory, because of the insistence of scholars on using it, even while it lacked the support of empirical evidence. Our results mean, rather, that the insistence of some researchers on relying on individual self-interest is not absurd, and that the lack of supporting evidence results from the methodologies of approaching the subject and the contexts of carrying out the relevant studies.

So we confirmed our hypothesis that self-interest can, besides other factors, explain host community attitudes towards IDPs. We believe that those interested in the relationship between IDPs and host communities, Scholars and practitioners, must take the self-interest factor into account. The intervention policies should focus on creating economic opportunities for both parties, IDPs and locals, simultaneously, and providing support to the sectors most affected by the crisis, such as agriculture, health, education and public utilities. Such an approach can make these sectors levers for improved understanding between the two parties instead of being the basis for conflict. The data for this study was collected to measure host communities' attitudes towards IDPs and concentrate our analysis on competition in the labour market. Accordingly, we suggest for future research surveys comparative samples of hosts and IDPs to allow for a better understanding of the dimensions of economic competition between them. Furthermore, it would be very beneficial, for comparative knowledge about attitudes towards IDPs and refugees, to study convergent samples on both sides of the Turkish-Syrian border.

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