

LONG-LASTING EFFECTS OF FORCED EMIGRATION: Evidence from the resettlement of the Sudetenland on residential migration

The mass expulsion of ethnic Germans from the Sudetenland, in today's Czech Republic, in the aftermath of the Second World War led to a very-long term increase in migration from and to these regions. Even 70 years after the post-war events, the affected municipalities still experience higher emigration and immigration rates than comparable nearby unaffected municipalities.

These are among the findings of new research by **Martin Guzi**, **Peter Huber** and **Štěpán Mikula**, to be presented at the annual congress of the European Economic Association in Manchester in August 2019. Their study shows that the almost complete destruction of the social structure of the resettled municipalities led to very persistently lower social activities in resettled municipalities. This is also the most likely cause for higher residential migration.

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What are the effects of forced emigration and how long do they last? To explore this question, the researchers analyse the long-run impact of the almost complete mass expulsion of ethnic Germans from the area of today's Czech Republic (in the so-called Sudetenland) and its rapid resettlement by another population group in the aftermath of the Second World War.

This is an instance in which within four years around three million ethnic Germans were forced to leave an ethnically highly segregated area of settlement in the Czech Republic, while at the same time around two million ethnic Czechs moved into the emptied villages immediately after the emigration.

The researchers use data for 1971-2015 to show that this resettlement caused a very long-term increase in population moves in and out of the region: Even 70 years after the post-war events the resettled municipalities still experience 0.4 percentage points higher emigration and immigration rates than comparable nearby municipalities that were not resettled. This is about one quarter lower than in unaffected municipalities.

The study shows that the populations in resettled areas and in the remainder of the country share similar values and do not differ statistically in terms of their propensity to give donations, attend social events, and participate in voluntary work.

But resettled municipalities have significantly fewer local club memberships, lower turnout in municipal elections, and organise social events less frequently. The almost complete destruction of the social structure of the resettled villages therefore led to very persistently lower local social activities in the resettled municipalities. This is likely to have caused the increase of residential migration.

The research thus contributes to a growing body of evidence that suggests that the destruction of the social structures of a community has potentially more long-lasting economic effects on communities than the massive destruction of physical capital. It also contributes to a growing body of research documenting the long-lasting and sizeable negative effects of forced emigration and mass murder that marked twentieth century Europe history have on the development of the affected regions.

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