



## Editorial

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# Fifth Walter Isard Annual Award for the Best Article in Peace Economics Peace Science and Public Policy

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I am delighted to announce the Fifth Walter Isard Annual Award for the best article in Peace Economics Peace Science and Public Policy. The award goes to “The Effects of Agricultural Income Shocks on Forced Migration: Evidence from Colombia” authored by Paola Palacios and Miguel A. Pérez-Uribe. This article (Palacios and Pérez-Uribe 2021) has been published in the issue n.3 released in September 2021.

The article focuses on the impact of agricultural income shocks on the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing from violence, in the context of the Colombian armed conflict. The point of departure of the research is the relevance of economic factors which ought not be disregarded also in the case of forced migration. Put differently, albeit violence is the main driver of internal displacement in the context of armed conflicts, a more comprehensive approach needs to take into account also relevant economic correlates. By throwing light on this, the article therefore fills a gap in the existing literature. Needless to say, the work is methodologically robust. In particular, in order to deal with the possible endogeneity between forced migration and income, the authors employ a IV estimation. They use the standardized deviation of rainfall from its historic mean as an instrumental variable for municipal agricultural income. The main result that the authors claim for their work is that the elasticity of forced migration with respect to agricultural income shocks is unitary. This finding suggests that forced migration is the result of a complex decision-making process where violence interacts with individual characteristics and environmental factors. In simpler words, both conflict intensity and changes in agricultural income impact the number of IDPs.

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Needless to say, such evidence may have a substantial impact on the design of public policies. In fact, policies designed to prevent forced migration from rural to urban areas can be expected to be based upon comprehensive strategies that not only improve security conditions at the place of origin but also enhance agricultural productivity and provide access to risk-coping mechanisms for farmers. In brief, the article is a very stimulating piece of research because it provides scholars with a robust model which can be applied also to other scenarios around the world. In fact, the number of IDPs around the world in 2020 had exceeded 55 million of people. In particular, at the end of 2020, 48 million people were internally displaced due to armed conflict, generalized violence or human rights violations, according to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). Then, the awarded article by Paola Palacios and Miguel A. Pérez-Urbe can become a relevant contribution not only for scholars but also for policy-makers.

The annual award for the best paper published on PEPS is named after Walter Isard founder of the journal in 1993. Walter Isard – who was widely recognized as the father of both Regional Science and Peace Science – founded PEPS with the aim to create a novel outlet for peace scientists. In particular, PEPS was designed to attract contributions from an interdisciplinary community of scholars from a wide variety of disciplines such as economics and political science, as well as regional science, geography and mathematics. Moreover, PEPS was intended to combine both positive and normative studies alongside policy-oriented papers. Nowadays, PEPS follows not only the path defined by Walter Isard but also the advancements occurred in peace science in the latest years.

## Reference

- Palacios, P., and M. A. Pérez-Urbe. 2021. “The Effects of Agricultural Income Shocks on Forced Migration: Evidence from Colombia.” *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy* 27 (3): 311–40.