

Social Consequences of Conflict

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Research agenda

- Analyse the impact of violent conflict on a range of social indicators (welfare, schooling, health)
- Use the result of the analyses to advocate for adequate prevention, adaption and coping strategies
- Method: use or collect micro-level datasets and advanced econometrics to find the causal effect and the magnitude of the impact of violent conflict
- The later often represented by a number of death and wounded, the destruction of houses, the timing and duration of forced displacement
- The (if any) difference between the short term and the long term impact, the direct and the indirect impact

Recent advances

Welfare

- Not everyone loses out from conflict. Rebel leaders and members of rebel groups may be awarded substantial sums of money and well-paid jobs as a result of a peace agreement

Schooling

- Conflict causes a decrease in school attainment and school completion (HiCN Working papers 100-106)
- This means that temporary shocks have a permanent impact!

Health:

- Conflict leads to child undernutrition (Akresh et al, 2009, 2011)
- Child undernutrition increases the risk of mortality (Verwimp, 2011)
- Child mortality leads to higher fertility (Verwimp and Van Bavel, 2005)
- Conflict affected and non-affected mothers end up with the same number of surviving children (Verwimp and Van Bavel, 2005; Bruck and Schindler, 2011)

Challenges ahead

- To what extent do conflict shocks differ from economic shocks ?
Gender, age, socio-economic profile,...
- Channels of impact (mechanisms) ?
Displacement, loss of assets, breakdown of trust, missing out on schooling ?
- Endogeneity and selection bias:
will remain a serious problem as we can hardly do experimental research in conflict studies
- Need for impact evaluation studies with special attention for spillover effects
- How do institutions change, and how does individual behaviour change as a result of conflict?