Impact Evaluations in Conflict and Fragile States

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Overview

1. Introduction and Concepts
2. Challenges
3. Examples
Motivation

Why bother?
– either control for “conflict” in the IE to avoid bias
– or study an intervention on “conflict” as a topic in its own right
⇒ either way, data is needed to account for “conflict” (or fragility etc)

Move to measure “conflict” itself
– traditionally, “conflict” has been unobservable
– rather measure effects of “conflict” (e.g. battle deaths)
– to truly open black box, we should measure “conflict” itself
⇒ developed module on “conflict” for household surveys
Definitions

Mass violent conflict

= Systematic challenge to right and ability of the state to define and implement property rights ("institutions")

“Conflict” is a special case of a humanitarian emergency

A common issue in many cases will be a dramatic change in institutions, broadly defined ("fragility")
A Model of Conflict

What do we wish to evaluate?
How can we measure it?
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The Case of IE in Humanitarian Crises

Humanitarian assistance
  – since 2005: $90 Billion spent
  – but only 39 impact evaluations conducted

Quality of impact evaluations
  – all used experimental or quasi-experimental methods
  – 29 of these studies had a theory of change

But
  – 23 studies did not have any balance tests (between comparison and treatment groups)
  – 29 studies did not have any power analysis (to show confidence in results)
  – only 5 studies discussed ethical concerns

based on Puri et al (work in progress)
What is our Comparison Group?

Conflict analysis 1.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conflict Zone</th>
<th>Not Conflict Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households Affected by Conflict</td>
<td>direct victims, incl. civilian casualties</td>
<td>indirect victims, e.g. returned IDPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households Not Affected by Conflict</td>
<td>indirect victims, e.g. farmers</td>
<td>reference group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conflict analysis 2.0

- differentiate causes, nature and effects of conflict across groups, space and time - including by victims and perpetrators
- consider degrees of conflict - hence much more data-intensive
Challenges for IE in Emergencies

Institutional
- Need for speed (esp. in unexpected humanitarian crises)
- Large budgets being spent (‘action fallacy’?)
- Multiplicity of actors

Methodological
- Imperfect and absent data
- High co-variability
Challenges for IE in Emergencies

Moral
- Impossibility to assess preventive action with counterfactual
- Ethics

Practical
- Weak capacities in research and analysis (both due to conflict and in ‘under-researched’ countries in general)
- Low trust among project partners or vis-à-vis government
- Security (for enumerators/researchers and for participants)
Priorities for Data Collection

Identify conflict-induced losses and damages
  human capital, physical assets, infrastructure etc

Identify effects of conflict on people
  changes in coping strategies ("doing")
  changes in welfare, including food security ("being")

Identify effects of conflict on infrastructure and markets
  including trust, social capital, exchange etc

\(\Rightarrow\) Account for pre-war, war-time and post-war periods
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Kyrgyzstan: Civil Conflict | as of 18 June 2010

- 75,000 refugees
- 260,000 IDPs with host families (planning figure)
- 40,000 IDPs requiring shelter (planning figure)

Map Sources: UNCS, ESRI, OCHA

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Map created on 18 June 2010
Current IE Projects in Kyrgyzstan

Can peace be maintained with social engineering?

1. Impact evaluation of peace-building educational program in secondary public schools in the South of Kyrgyzstan

1. Impact evaluation of community-driven development (CDD) micro-projects in mono-ethnic and multi-ethnic communities in Kyrgyzstan

research based on prior work with ‘Life in Kyrgyzstan’ panel
Peace-building Educational Program

Purpose of intervention
  – to promote inter-ethnic, religious, and racial understanding, leadership and conflict resolution skills among youths in a society prone to conflict

Details
  – 8-week sessions of additional classes
  – 20 public schools in three southern oblasts in Kyrgyzstan (Osh, Batken, Jalalabad)
  – School-going youth aged 15-18
  – Timeline intervention: Feb-Dec 2014
Peace-building Educational Program

IE methodology
- First level: pair-matched randomization of schools into treatment and control
- Second level: randomization of applied students within each school

Methodological approach
- Behavioral activities to measure outcomes such as trust, cooperation, altruism towards other groups

Preliminary results: Oct. 2014
CDD for Social Cohesion

**Intervention purpose**
- to identify successful approaches to promote social cohesion in community driven development
- in particular: social cohesion as a result of development or as a result of the process of CDD projects (or no impact)?

**Details**
- Infrastructure and service-type micro-projects
- 15 treatment communities: 10 multi-ethnic communities (in Osh) and 5 mono-ethnic communities (in Naryn)
CDD for Social Cohesion

IE Methodology
- First level: pair-matched randomization of aiyl-aimaks (local administrative units) into treatment and control areas
- Second level: randomization of households

Methodological approach
- 2000 households to be surveyed
- Develop social cohesion indicator
Practical Challenges

1. Differential attrition across ethnic groups?
in practice, much harder to survey higher income groups

2. Temporary displacement of population (especially among ethnic minority)
in practice, a quick return of displaced posed less of a problem than feared

3. Potential risk in asking about security experiences and perceptions
in practice, questions about economic status are more sensitive

4. Weak research capacity in fragile state / fragile areas
in practice, this impedes effectiveness of research and requires more time commitment from research team
Further References


• www.hicn.org (for versions of above papers)