

# **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

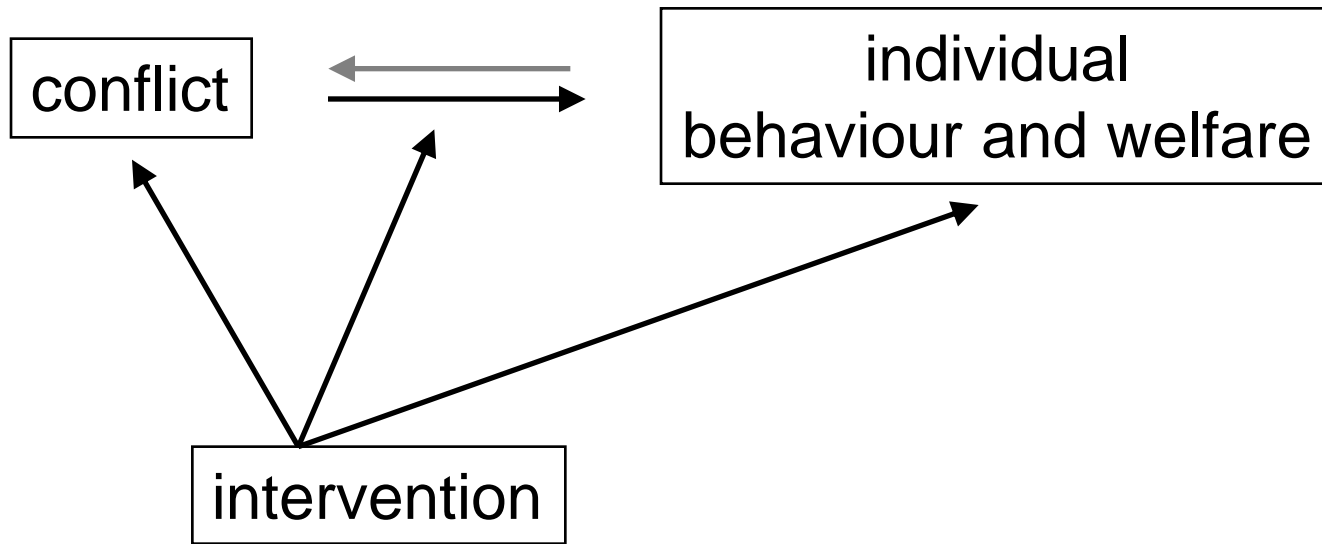
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Systematic challenge to right and ability of the state to define and implement property rights (“institutions”)

“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

	<b>Conflict Zone</b>	<b>Not Conflict Zone</b>
<b>Households Affected by Conflict</b>	direct victims, incl. civilian casualties	indirect victims, e.g. returned IDPs
<b>Households Not Affected by Conflict</b>	indirect victims, e.g. farmers	reference group

## 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**

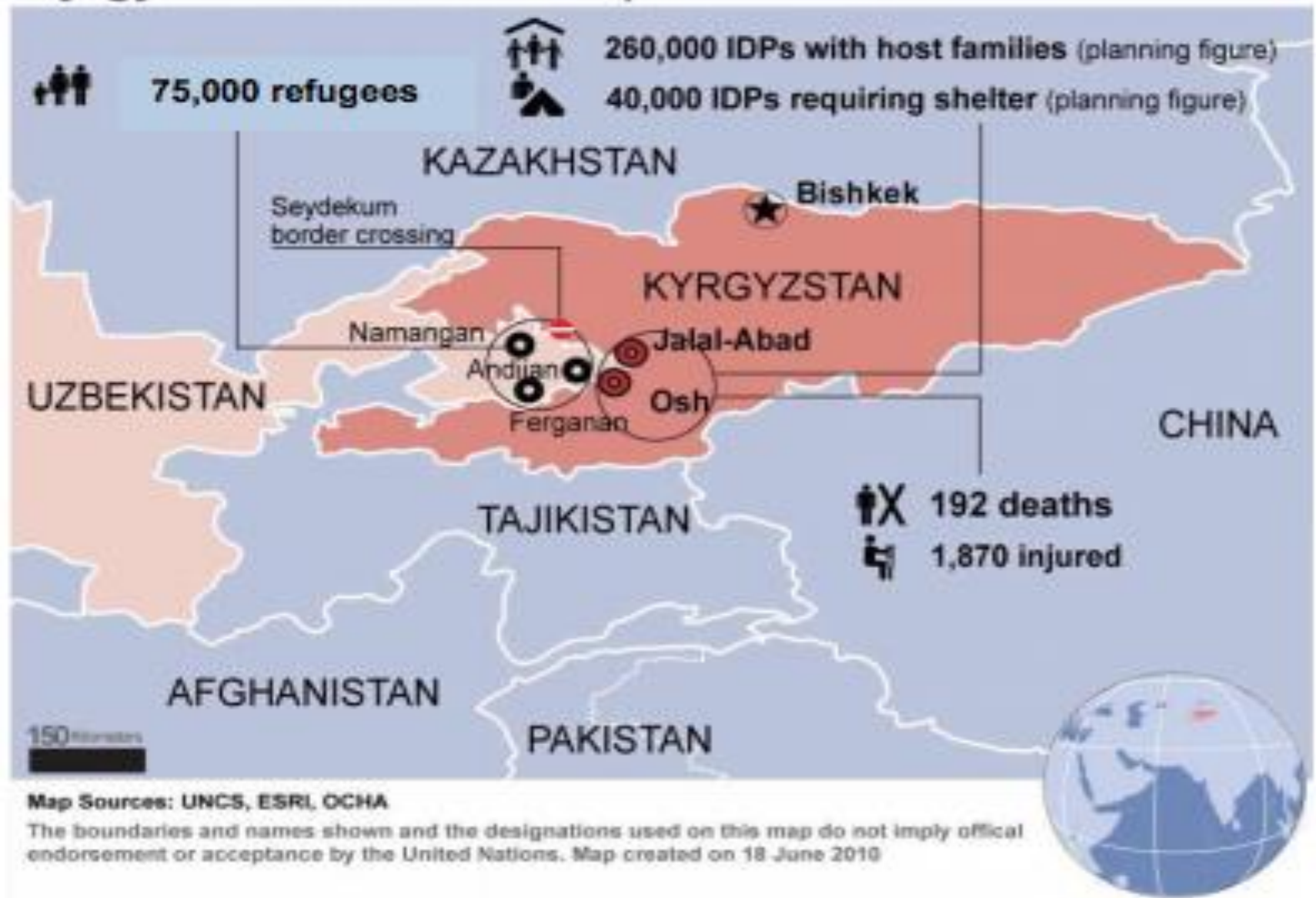
including trust, social capital, exchange etc

⇒ **Account for pre-war, war-time and post-war periods**

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# Kyrgyzstan: Civil Conflict | as of 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)
- Timeline intervention: 2014-2017

# 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

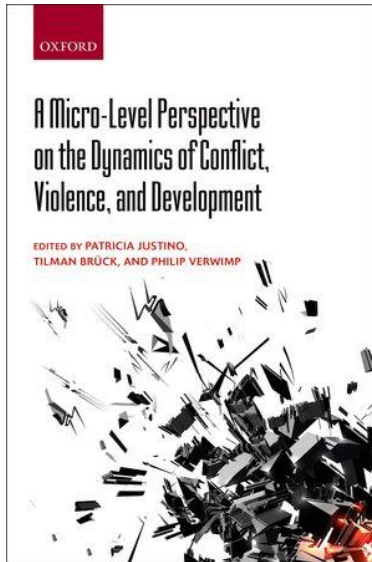
**3. Potential risk in asking about security experiences and perceptions**

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



- Bozzoli, C., T. Brück and N. Wald (2013). **“Evaluating Programmes in Conflict-affected Areas”**. In: P. Justino, T. Brück and P. Verwimp, eds. *A Micro-Level Perspective on the Dynamics of Conflict, Violence and Development*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Brück, T., W. Naudé and P. Verwimp, eds. (2013). **“Entrepreneurship and Conflict”**. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 57, no. 1.
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- [www.hicn.org](http://www.hicn.org) (for versions of above papers)

