Chapter 23

Conflict, Social Protection, and Reparations

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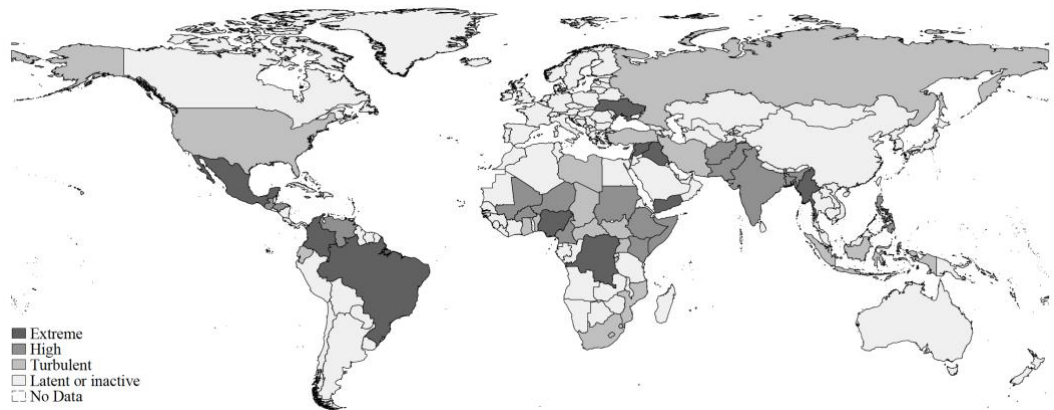
1. Introduction

Recent decades have seen a deterioration in global safety and security and a doubling of major civil wars and medium-intensity conflicts (von Einsiedel et al. 2017; HIIK 2023). Conflicts are expected to escalate further due to political instability and the intensifying effects of climate change on resource scarcity and forced migration (Burke et al. 2015; McGuirk and Nunn, forthcoming).

This rise in conflicts challenges peace, stability, and poverty-reduction efforts. As depicted in figure 1, many regions experiencing conflict struggle with poverty. Globally, fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS) see the highest levels of poverty and the slowest rates of poverty reduction, such that two-thirds of individuals in extreme poverty will reside in FCS by 2030 (Corral et al. 2020). While poverty is not a precursor to conflict, low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are more susceptible to conflict and are responsible for hosting three-quarters of the world's refugees (UNHCR 2023). This underscores the need to research and implement effective social protection (SP) measures aimed at preventing conflict, protecting affected individuals, and aiding their recovery from atrocities.

Figure 1: The Prevalence of Conflict and Poverty

(a) Conflict Severity Index

(b) Poverty Rate
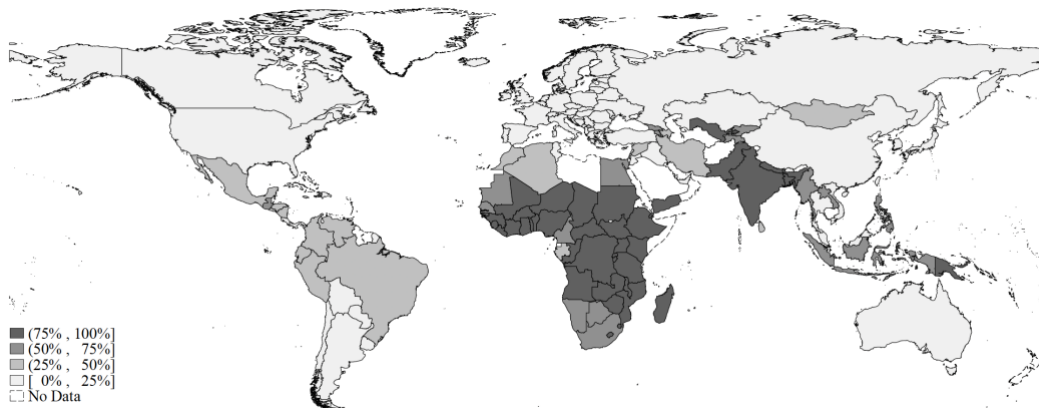
Note: Panel (a) displays the geographic distribution of the Conflict Severity Index category from the 2023 version of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) project, first introduced by Raleigh et al. (2010). Countries with a higher index face the most severe and complex conflicts based on their deadliness, danger, diffusion, and fragmentation.

Panel (b) plots the latest country-level poverty headcount ratio at US$6.85 a day (2017 PPP) from the World Development Indicators.

This chapter explores recent trends in conflict occurrence and explains why scholars and policymakers committed to eradicating global poverty must pay attention to the complexities of FCS. In FCS, implementing SP measures—such as cash, in-kind, or asset transfers, public works projects, and community-driven reconstruction/development (CDR/D) interventions—poses unique challenges. Moreover, SP can have varying impacts on individuals in FCS. Conflict victims grapple with challenges beyond material poverty and may respond differently to SP than other SP recipients. Successfully adapting SP policies to meet the needs of conflict-affected individuals and communities requires understanding the limitations of traditional SP measures, grasping context-specific factors, and adopting an integrated, comprehensive approach to addressing multidimensional deprivations.

Finally, we discuss reparations, among the most tangible, victim-centric tools for transitioning from conflict to peace and the closest in form to SP. Reparations not only acknowledge victims' harms and rights but also aim to satisfy material and psychological needs. Yet reparations are deeply political, and empirical evidence about how recipients experience reparations, which could build political support for them, is lacking.

2. How conflict affects communities and individuals

To grasp how SP impacts FCS and conflict victims it is essential to comprehend how conflict affects the types of hardship communities and individuals endure. Although a comprehensive review is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is generally understood that conflict affects communities by damaging existing infrastructure and increasing the cost of constructing new infrastructure (Collier et al. 2016), increasing uncertainty and trade-related expenses, and distorting economic activities and investment decisions (Amodio and Maio 2017; Arias et al. 2019). Conflict also has broader implications for institutions, governance, state capacity, markets, and production (Cerra and Saxena 2008).

Additionally, conflicts can have profound, long-lasting impacts on individuals, distinct from the impacts of other adverse events, such as layoffs, health crises, and environmental disasters. Conflict victims are frequently displaced from their homes and seek refuge in camps or other safe areas. Besides the urgent need for shelter, food, water, and medical care, they often face the tragic,

violent loss of family members. These traumatic experiences cause significant losses in physical, human, and social capital and psychological well-being, often leading to disrupted education and livelihoods (Chamarbagwala and Morán 2011), worsened health outcomes (Akresh et al. 2012; Camacho 2008), barriers to accessing financial and urban labor markets, and the breakdown of social networks (Kondylis 2010; Ibáñez et al. 2022). Additionally, survivors commonly struggle with severe psychological trauma (De Jong 2002; Chiovelli et al. 2021) and face discrimination and stigma. For example, forcibly displaced individuals can experience hostility from host communities (Alan et al. 2021), and former child soldiers and victims of sexual violence struggle with long-term psychosocial adjustment (Betancourt et al. 2010; Rose 2023). These cumulative hardships can persist, making it difficult for victims to rebuild their lives and return to a sense of normalcy after the conflict.[1]

The internal armed conflict in Colombia illustrates the devastating impact of conflict on its victims. The conflict, involving guerrillas, paramilitary groups, and state forces, has left roughly nine million individuals as victims, approximately one in six Colombians. Among these victims, eight million have been forcibly displaced, making Colombia home to the world's largest population of forcibly displaced people (UNHCR 2023). Hundreds of

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[1] Exceptionally, Chiovelli et al. (2021) find that while forced displacement erodes social capital and mental health, it also increases human capital and break ties with subsistence agriculture.

thousands of others have endured the traumatic loss of family members due to homicide and forced disappearance and suffered egregious human rights violations, like rape, torture, and disabilities caused by landmines. The repercussions are profound and far-reaching (Ibáñez and Moya 2010). Sikkink et al. (2015) reveal that 90 percent of victims report experiencing psychological, mental, or emotional losses, 78 percent report material or economic losses, 56 percent report moral losses tied to the erosion of their dignity, 46 percent report physical losses, and 41 percent report social losses. Moreover, victims' unmet housing needs are more than three times greater than those of the general population.

Given the complex challenges victims face, it is imperative to implement prompt, comprehensive SP measures to address their needs and facilitate their recovery. However, the delivery and execution of these measures can be strained by conflict. Moreover, given that the population of victims differs from the population of impoverished individuals, traditional SP measures may not have the same impacts in FCS and on conflict victims. The next section discusses the existing evidence.

3. The effects of SP in FCS and on conflict victims

The effects of SP in FCS and on conflict victims are partly shaped by the

considerable challenges to implementing SP measures in conflict-affected or settings. These environments typically suffer from inadequate infrastructure, weak property rights, disrupted markets, political instability, and limited resources. Governments may have weak, if any, control in these areas. Additionally, the aftermath of conflict often includes forced displacement, social unrest, weakened social bonds, and institutional disruptions, further exacerbating the complexities of implementation.

These disruptions undermine the effectiveness of SP programs in several ways. First, they can hinder the successful deployment of SP programs to their intended beneficiaries and lower their long-run returns (e.g., Moreno Sánchez et al. 2019). Second, they can prevent households from seizing and benefiting from opportunities. Third, they can pose significant challenges in obtaining accurate information about living conditions and identifying survivors (Brune et al. 2022; Corral et al. 2020). This data deficiency complicates identification and monitoring efforts and represents a major obstacle to understanding the difficulties victims face. It also hampers evaluations assessing program impacts, resulting in limited empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of SP programs in FCS (Jeong and Trako 2022).[2]

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[2] Given these data challenges, it is worth highlighting that research from Colombia shows that standard SP policies can be useful for identifying, registering, and monitoring victims of conflict (Ibáñez et al. 2022; Sikkink et al. 2015).

Additionally, there is limited evidence regarding the impact of SP measures on conflict victims. SP programs focus on impoverished individuals rather than specifically targeting victims. While victims may end up benefiting from SP programs, the assistance they receive is mainly due to their economic vulnerability and not directly related to their status as victims. Moreover, traditional SP programs primarily aim to alleviate poverty, so they can mitigate some, but not all, of the hardships victims endure.

For these reasons, traditional SP measures may not have the same impacts on conflict victims. In what follows, we provide a brief overview of the existing evidence concerning the effects of SP programs in FCS and on victims, focusing on SP's role in preventing or mitigating conflict and addressing its aftermath by improving economic well-being, promoting social cohesion, and addressing victims' mental health. Overall, we find that policies are most successful in assisting victims when they are tailored to their needs and challenges.

3.1 Preventing or mitigating conflict

SP can attenuate conflict risk. Economic grievances may drive individuals to join rebel groups to express dissatisfaction with the state's failure to provide necessary goods and services, so government-led cash transfers and broader SP measures can address these grievances, making recipients more supportive of

the government (Ghorpade 2020). By doing so, they can also facilitate the exchange of information and intelligence, enhancing the state's capacity to counter rebel movements (Berman et al. 2011; Khanna and Zimmermann 2017). Moreover, SP (even when not provided directly by the government) can also attenuate conflict risk by insuring individuals against environmental shocks (Gehring and Schaudt 2023), addressing horizontal inequalities between groups, and increasing the opportunity costs of taking up arms (Blattman and Annan 2016; McGuirk and Burke 2020; Miguel et al. 2004).

On the other hand, expanding SP programs can trigger a short-to-medium-run *increase* in conflict. While the evidence is mixed, studies in Niger, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and Pakistan have found that insurgents sabotage government-led SP programs for political reasons, as successful implementation would undermine their position and influence (Crost et al. 2014; Ghorpade 2020; Premand and Rohner 2024; Sexton 2016). As a result, some experts suggest that SP programs, particularly those implemented by governments (even when externally funded), can inadvertently exacerbate conflict, especially during the early stages of program preparation and implementation.

3.2   Economic well-being

Much of the evidence on the impact of SP in FCS is consistent with studies in LMICs, reviewed by Bastagli et al. (2019). In FCS, cash and in-kind transfers

typically lead to short-term improvements in the food consumption and food security of impoverished households (Aker 2017; Kurdi 2021), while productive asset transfers can increase consumption, savings, and asset ownership (Bedoya et al. 2019; Brune et al. 2022). Similarly, public works programs and CDR/D programs have positive short-term impacts: public works programs effectively provide short-term employment and income gains (Bagga et al. 2023), while CDR/D projects improve short-term food and economic security (Casey 2018).

Nevertheless, conflict can reduce SP's effectiveness and long-run returns (Brune et al. 2022). Moreover, evidence on whether these policies impact outcomes beyond those directly targeted or have any long-term effects is inconclusive, as some positive effects dissipate over time (Blattman et al. 2020; Brune et al. 2022; Ibáñez and Moya 2010).

Additionally, while SP programs offer essential relief to conflict victims, they can fall short of enabling them to "catch up" or disrupting the poverty cycle that spans time and generations (Ibáñez et al. 2022). This is not surprising, as the primary objective of SP programs is to provide immediate relief to poor households, not necessarily to address socioeconomic dynamics or close the gap caused by conflict.

3.3 Social cohesion

Improving social cohesion is crucial in FCS since conflict often disrupts social networks and destroys social capital. However, the impact of SP on social cohesion is nuanced. While promoting financial stability can build social capital and reduce marginalization, it can also highlight out-group differences and intensify in-group loyalty, undermining social cohesion. While cash transfers typically have a net positive impact on social cohesion for both refugees and host communities (Beltramo et al. 2023), the evidence on the impact of public work programs is more limited (Bagga et al. 2023). Similarly, while CDR/D initiatives are often employed in postconflict settings to foster social cohesion and societal healing, it remains uncertain whether they effectively achieve these goals or succeed in nurturing trust and meaningfully transforming community dynamics (Casey 2018).

One exception is a CDR/D initiative implemented in Sierra Leone. Cilliers et al. (2016) demonstrate that two-day truth and reconciliation forums, which brought together victims and perpetrators to share accounts of war atrocities and confess to war crimes, had positive, enduring effects on social capital, including promoting forgiveness toward perpetrators and fostering trust in former rebel combatants.

3.4 Mental health

Cash transfers to impoverished households can enhance mental health for recipients in LMICs (e.g., Haushofer and Shapiro 2016; McGuire et al. 2022), as well as in FCS and among conflict victims (Bedoya et al. 2019; Quattrochi et al. 2022). However, certain policies may be more effective in improving victims' outcomes than cash alone. For forcibly displaced people living in refugee camps, employment yields substantially larger mental and physical health benefits than cash (Hussam et al. 2022).

Conversely, SP programs can adversely affect victims' mental health if they evoke painful memories of conflict. The aforementioned reconciliation ceremonies studied by Cilliers et al. (2016) had a persistent negative impact on psychological outcomes, causing more trauma, anxiety, and depression. Therefore, programs that address victims' psychological needs through sustained counseling and therapy may be more effective in helping victims heal.

3.5   Nonstandard SP measures to address mental health and social cohesion

Conventional SP policies offer immediate assistance but may not consistently yield enduring improvements or effectively address victims' multifaceted hardships. Indeed, standard SP measures are not tailored to victims or their unique challenges. Specialized programs have built upon existing anti-poverty strategies to address mental health and social cohesion among victims.

Clinical psychologists and health experts have worked to address mental health challenges among conflict victims. They emphasize that violence can elevate parental stress, diminish responsive caregiving, and increase mental health issues in children. These, in turn, can impact early childhood development and disrupt individuals' life trajectories and outcomes (Sánchez-Ariza et al. 2023).

Experimental studies have demonstrated positive outcomes from interventions to improve parenting skills, including improvements in children's mental health and behavior (e.g., Annan et al. 2017; Jensen 2021). Similarly, a psychosocial support program targeting primary caregivers in FCS shows promising early results in enhancing maternal mental health, strengthening child-parent relationships, and supporting early childhood development (Sánchez-Ariza et al. 2023). Given the potential of these initiatives to break the intergenerational cycle of violence, we consider this research area particularly promising.

Even relatively short-term therapy interventions can meaningfully improve outcomes for individuals. Blattman et al. (2017) focus on men with criminal involvement, many of whom had participated in Liberia's civil war, and find that cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) reduced their engagement in violent and illicit activities.

Last, Alan et al. (2021) show that targeted educational programs can enhance social cohesion between refugees and host communities. They evaluated a

program in Turkey, which had a large influx of Syrian refugees, aimed at improving students' perspective-taking abilities. The program reduced peer violence and social exclusion and promoted interethnic social ties, benefiting refugee children and improving their language skills.

These examples suggest that to tackle the complex challenges victims face, adopting more comprehensive strategies is key. Reparations stand out as a victim-focused mechanism that acknowledges victims' harms and rights and may also fulfill their material and psychological needs.

4. Reparations

Reparations for victims of human rights violations are close in form to SP, and they interact with SP measures to promote social justice and, some believe, contribute to broader developmental goals. In their narrowest definition, reparations are intended to acknowledge and address harms directly inflicted by the state or its failure to prevent atrocities. However, experts argue that reparations can also serve broader and more far-reaching goals: fostering justice, facilitating recovery, promoting reconciliation, and driving economic development.

Reparations programs have been implemented in over 30 countries, with notable examples including Germany's reparations to Holocaust survivors, the

United States' reparations to Japanese Americans interned during World War II, and South Africa's post-apartheid reparations. Additionally, postconflict countries such as Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, East Timor, Sierra Leone, Peru, El Salvador, Ireland, Indonesia, and Rwanda have established reparations programs, as have postauthoritarian countries like Argentina, Brazil, and Chile.

4.1   Basic principles, tensions, and the concept of transformation

The United Nations "Basic Principles and Guidelines" on reparations established a framework of five key components that collectively address the suffering endured by victims of gross human rights violations (UN, 2005):

1. *Compensation* for harm suffered (e.g., physical or mental suffering, lost opportunities, material and moral damages, legal expenses).

2. *Restitution* to restore victims to their pre-violation condition, including rights, property, and residence.

3. *Rehabilitation* covering medical and psychological care, legal and social support.

4. *Satisfaction* measures to halt ongoing violations, uncover truth, locate

missing persons, issue public apologies, conduct commemorations.

5. *Guarantees of non-repetition* actions to prevent future violations, like reinforcing judicial independence.

While reparation is straightforward when addressing isolated human rights violations, it becomes complex following large-scale violations in postconflict and transitional contexts. In these settings, societies often grapple with deep-rooted inequality and poverty. For instance, many victims in Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, and El Salvador were already in vulnerable conditions or facing discrimination before their victimization. Simply applying the principle of restitution would be unjust and counterproductive as it would restore victims to a state of poverty and discrimination while failing to address the underlying causes and consequences of conflict (Sandoval-Villalba 2017). Consequently, a normative tension arises between recognizing victims' rights by providing redress (*corrective* justice) and addressing socioeconomic inequality, poverty, and discrimination by offering victims a better life (*distributive* justice).

To alleviate the tension between corrective and distributive justice, a *transformative* paradigm has emerged in the field of transitional justice. It also helps bridge reparations programs and traditional SP policies in postconflict and transitional settings, where weak institutional capacity and budget constraints may make it difficult to develop both programs simultaneously

(Uprimny-Yepes 2009). The key idea is that reparations should not only address specific violations and ongoing harm but also bring about lasting change by "transforming" the underlying conditions that allowed violations to occur (Evans 2021; Gready and Robins 2014; Roht-Arriaza and Orlovsky 2009; Uprimny-Yepes 2009). Transformative reparations have gained recognition from institutions like the International Criminal Court and have been integrated into UN policies and operational guidelines. Countries like Colombia have also begun applying a transformative framework in their reparations programs (box I).

Box I. Colombia's Reparations Program: The Victims' Law of 2011

Colombia offers an example of transformative reparations of substantial interest to scholars and stakeholders. The Victims' Law of 2011 establishes an ambitious, intricate reparations program, encompassing financial compensation, land restitution, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition across various dimensions—individual, collective, material, moral, and symbolic. The program stands out for its scale: it aims to compensate over seven million victims, despite the ongoing conflict.

For instance, financial compensation has been provided as a lump-sum payment to over a million victims in the past decade, with the explicit goal of "transforming" their lives. Alongside compensation, the state sends a personalized letter expressing remorse for the human rights violation and offering support for victims to rebuild their lives. As most victims live in poverty, the average compensation payment is more than three times their annual household income (Guarin et al. 2023a). Victims are encouraged to invest the compensation in the next generation's human capital, entrepreneurship, and homes.

The transformative goal of Colombia's reparations program is well understood by victims, who perceive the main goal of compensation to be life transformation (52 percent) rather than harm repair (31 percent) or recognition (20 percent). Furthermore, 72 percent of victims believe reparations effectively contribute to their life transformation (Sikkink et al. 2015).

To realize reparations' full transformative potential, they must be implemented appropriately and in coordination with SP, as reparations and SP are often similar in form and ends, distributed through similar screening and implementation processes, and used in combination (Dixon 2017). For

example, Colombia provides victims with assistance to respond to their immediate needs as they wait for reparations, and deems this necessary for victims to fully benefit from the transformative potential of reparations. Depending on how they are used and communicated to victims, SP measures can detract from reparations' significance or increase their reach and impact (Dixon 2015; Firchow 2013; Pham et al. 2016).

4.2 Logistical, moral, and political challenges

Existing normative accounts of reparations often fall short of effectively addressing practical aspects. They are either overly optimistic and difficult to implement or lack the conceptual tools to navigate the moral complexities of achieving meaningful redress (Moffett 2023). Moreover, uncertainties persist regarding the feasibility and operation details of transformative reparations programs (Dixon 2015; Dixon et al. 2019). For instance, when selecting beneficiaries, should current material needs be considered alongside the severity of past abuses, as in Peru and Guatemala? Should priority be given to vulnerable groups (e.g., children, single mothers, widows, elderly citizens, and disabled individuals), as in Colombia? What forms should reparations take to catalyze a "developmental boost"?

Furthermore, a significant gap exists between the commendable goals of reparations and the actual benefits received by victims. Implementing

reparations programs with limited state capacity poses numerous practical challenges and can set up unrealistic expectations. For instance, non-monetary reparations, such as restitution, can be slow and difficult to implement due to the involvement of multiple agencies and coordination difficulties.[3] As a result, many countries have focused on providing financial compensation, which can be more straightforward to implement and monitor. Partly for this reason, the full-scale implementation of transformative reparations remains uncommon.

Furthermore, determining who is eligible for reparations is logistically, morally, and politically challenging. In most cases, victims' registries either do not exist or fail to capture a substantial number of victims, hindering the accurate identification of victims (OHCHR 2008). Requiring corroborating evidence for registration can burden or exclude those without supporting documentation, and the stigma of sexual violence may discourage victims from coming forward. Laws can further reinforce discrimination, particularly against female survivors. Furthermore, recognizing victims in the aftermath of mass violence can be morally and politically contentious due to conflicting narratives of victimhood. For example, in Chile and Argentina, reparations were provided selectively to victims of military dictatorships. Similarly, in Peru, concerns

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[3] For example, outdated landholding information, difficulties demonstrating tenure or ownership, and conflicts on the ground can challenge land restitution (see Guarin et al. 2023b and references therein).

about including former insurgents, who were seen as undeserving due to their perceived involvement in the conflict, diminished political support for reparations (de Greiff 2006).

Indeed, unlike most SP measures, reparations are politically contested. Many governments argue against them due to perceived high costs, arguing that developmental needs take priority over justice. While it is noteworthy that some countries facing widespread poverty have prioritized reparations (e.g., Argentina, Colombia, South Africa, and Sierra Leone), relatively few countries have implemented comprehensive reparations programs as part of transitional justice processes, and those that have are often unable to follow through on their promise (Dixon 2017). Consequently, most victims worldwide have not received reparations within their lifetimes (Moffett 2017).[4]

Ultimately, political priorities determine whether reparations are deemed affordable, feasible, and urgent (de Greiff 2006). Compelling evidence that reparations fulfill their promises may help garner the necessary political support. We now turn to the available evidence.

4.3   Reviewing the evidence on what reparations do for

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[4] Even in Colombia, despite remarkable progress in implementing reparations, most eligible victims have not yet received compensation after a decade, with millions still awaiting payment (Guarin et al. 2023b). Similar situations exist in other countries, such as South Africa (du Toit 2017).

victims

Despite the growing popularity of reparations, research has primarily focused on theory and desired outcomes rather than providing a comprehensive understanding of their actual impact.[5] To bridge this gap, scholars from various disciplines, including psychology, political science, philosophy, and sociology, have researched victims' perceptions and experiences with reparations. They have used diverse methodologies, including structured and unstructured interviews, in-depth interviews, focus groups, ethnography, and qualitative fieldwork.[6]

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research. First, it relies on self-reported data, so biases can arise due to non-random non-response, inaccuracies in recall, and concerns related to social desirability and the so-called Hawthorne effect. Second, these studies often make simple comparisons between recipients and non-recipients. However, individuals who receive reparations often differ from those who do not at baseline, and receiving

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[5] For example, scholars have focused on the legal framework of reparations as a transitional justice mechanism and its conceptual and normative challenges (e.g., de Greiff 2006; Evans 2021; Gallen and Moffett 2022).

[6] For instance, Firchow (2013, 2017), Pham et al. (2016), Dixon (2015), Weber (2017, 2020), and Butti and Leyh (2019) employ these methodologies. Interviews with 75 beneficiaries of the reparations program and government officials and stakeholders in Sierra Leone (Ottendoerfer 2018) and 37 victims of Argentina's "dirty war" (Sveaass and Sonneland 2015) were also conducted. Additionally, Vallejo (2019) interviewed 15 to 25 compensated victims in Colombia and Peru, while Weber (2017) interviewed 32 participants from two communities and 15 stakeholders. Lastly, Sikkink et al. (2015) surveyed Colombian victims who received reparations and those who did not, comparing their responses.

reparations is not exogenously determined. This can introduce omitted variable bias and make causal interpretations challenging. As a result, empirical evidence on the causal effects of reparations programs remains scarce.

Despite these limitations, existing studies offer valuable insights into victims' perspectives and shed light on the nuanced nature of their experiences with reparations. Victims' experiences vary greatly across contexts, and the research indicates that participating in reparations programs can have both positive and negative effects, largely influenced by the quality of program implementation and the presence of justice alongside financial compensation.

4.3.1　Victims' attitudes toward compensation

Applying for and receiving reparations can be emotionally challenging for victims, often triggering traumatic memories. Recipients frequently grapple with conflicting emotions when compensated for the loss or disappearance of loved ones. Additional complexities also arise. For example, in Peru, victims expressed disappointment with lower-than-expected compensation, feeling betrayed by the state (de Waardt 2013; Vallejo 2019). Similarly, although compensation amounts were higher in Colombia, over half of victims reported sadness upon receiving them (Sikkink et al. 2015). In Ireland, compensation based solely on loss of income, rather than an assessment of harm, devalued

women's lives, resulting in inadequate and offensive compensation (O'Rourke and Swaine 2017).

Furthermore, victims express that no money could adequately compensate for the loss of a loved one or the trauma they endured. Argentine victims, for instance, emphasized that compensation did not "repair" their suffering (Sveaass and Sonneland 2015), and victims in Peru and Colombia expressed that their pain was immeasurable and could not be eased by financial compensation (Vallejo 2019). In Colombia, two-thirds of compensated victims stated that compensation did not alleviate the harm inflicted upon them (Sikkink et al. 2015). Because severe human rights violations cannot be fully undone, reparations may primarily serve a symbolic function; they can never fully compensate victims (Danieli 2014; de Greiff 2006).

4.3.2   Promoting recognition, justice, trust, and reconciliation

Where reparations *can* play a role is in acknowledging harm and providing victims with a sense of recognition. Indeed, Argentine victims perceived reparations as an acknowledgment of their pain and loss by the state (Sveaass and Sonneland 2015), and Peruvian victims viewed them as an official acknowledgment of their experiences and the state's failure to protect them (de Waardt 2013). In Colombia, over half of compensated victims stated that reparations helped them feel recognized, which 95 percent of recipients

considered "important" or "very important" (Sikkink et al. 2015).

Unfortunately, reparations seem less likely to succeed in achieving justice for victims. In Argentina, none of the interviewed victims considered reparations a form of justice (Sveaass and Sonneland 2015). Similarly, in Colombia, two-fifths of victims expressed that reparations did *not* bring them justice, and two-thirds reported that financial compensation per se did *not* provide a sense of justice (Sikkink et al. 2015). In Guatemala, the administration of compensation without judicial proceedings seemed to amplify victims' perception of *in*justice (Viaene 2011). In cases where reparations were not integrated into a comprehensive justice policy, victims viewed them as an attempt to silence them or buy acquiescence, labeling the benefits as "blood money" (OHCHR 2008; Sveaass and Sonneland 2015). Concerns of this nature led Argentina's Madres de la Plaza de Mayo to reject financial compensation (Danieli 2014; Moon 2012). Similarly, in Algeria and Morocco, victims rejected initial rounds of compensation because they lacked acknowledgment of responsibility and a public apology (Slyomovics 2011).

Similarly, despite the notion that reparations can contribute to reconciliation by increasing trust and social cohesion, the evidence indicates that reparations often fall short of these expectations. For example, Firchow (2017) compares two rural communities in Colombia, one receiving reparations and the other

not, using community-defined indicators of peace and reconciliation. Surprisingly, both communities showed low levels of reconciliation, implying that reparations alone are insufficient. Moreover, she cautions that implementing reparations unevenly could exacerbate already existing tensions, positing that compensation should be complemented by efforts to rebuild social bonds through dialogue, psychosocial support, and community memorialization activities.

Additionally, survey evidence indicates that victims view forgiveness as dependent on recognition from the perpetrators, obtaining justice, and receiving an apology. For Colombian victims, lasting peace hinged on the state effectively addressing the underlying causes of violence by improving economic conditions, employment opportunities, and access to education (Sikkink et al. 2015). Yet victims often express a strong sense of resentment toward the state (Sikkink et al. 2015; Vallejo 2019; Weber 2017), and there is little indication that reparations influence their distrust. In some cases, poor implementation of reparations programs has amplified resentment toward the state, as in Peru and Sierra Leone (Ottendoerfer 2018).

In summary, it is challenging to understand the causal effects of reparations on victims' perceptions of recognition, justice, and reconciliation. However, existing research highlights victims' intricate and varied attitudes toward

reparations. While reparations can effectively acknowledge victims' rights, their ability to promote emotional healing, justice, and reconciliation seems to be inconsistent at best. Poor implementation or providing financial compensation without a sense of justice can result in a minimal or even negative impact. Therefore, a comprehensive approach that combines financial compensation, restitution, rehabilitation (such as psychological assistance for inner healing), satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition may be crucial for reparations to effectively contribute to peaceful societies.

4.3.3   Improving socioeconomic conditions

Compensation, as part of reparations, can potentially enhance the well-being of victims, particularly those in poverty. Understanding the long-term socioeconomic impact of reparations is crucial for postconflict states with limited budgets aiming to promote economic development and implement human rights agendas.

The potential for financial compensation to improve victims' socioeconomic conditions depends on contextual factors such as the amount of compensation and victims' baseline conditions. For example, in Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, small compensation payments (less than US$200) offered short-term relief but had minimal influence on victims' living conditions, especially for those with chronic health issues (e.g., Ottendoerfer

2018). In contrast, Argentine victims reported that larger compensation amounts enabled them to purchase homes (Sveaass and Sonneland 2015). Surveys conducted in Colombia also indicated that most compensated victims believed the reparations program was "transforming" their lives (see box I).

In the first large-scale evaluation of a reparations program, Guarin et al. (2023a) assess the socioeconomic impact of Colombia's reparations program. The authors leverage the staggered rollout of the policy and unexpected timing of payouts to identify causal effects. Using linked administrative data, they show that reparations have a positive, lasting impact on the well-being of victims and their children. Four years after receiving reparations, recipients experienced significant improvements in their work and living conditions, reflected in better job quality and increased business survival. While there was a slight decrease in labor supply, the overall effect is favorable. Reparations also contributed to higher living standards by promoting increased consumption and facilitating land and home ownership. As a result, recipients enjoyed improved health outcomes and reduced reliance on healthcare services. Furthermore, reparations fostered investment in the next generation's human capital, leading to higher test scores and increased college access and persistence. Guarin et al. (2023a) conclude that reparations yield long-term benefits and can be cost-beneficial, with positive effects extending to future generations.

In sum, while reparations for victims are receiving renewed attention for promoting healing and recovery, evidence of their causal impacts remains limited. Reparations effectively acknowledge victims' rights and improve their socioeconomic outcomes, but their broader effects, such as promoting justice, trust, and reconciliation, remain uncertain.

5. Open Questions and Areas for Future Research

This chapter has reviewed the evidence on the role of SP and reparations in FCS. Although SP can offer victims immediate relief, implementing SP programs in these contexts presents challenges, and their long-term success hinges on addressing victims' multiple constraints. Thus, successfully adapting SP policies to FCS requires a deep understanding of context and an integrated approach. Reparations can potentially improve victims' well-being, but they remain understudied.

In conclusion, we offer some open questions and areas for future research:

- What interventions can help support victims' mental health and help break the intergenerational cycles of trauma and violence?

- What are the complementarities and comparative advantages of various SP measures in conflict-affected regions? Which measures are more effective in promoting recovery?

- How can SP programs be adapted for FCS and to mitigate tensions between recipients and nonrecipients, target triggers of conflict, and improve their efficiency?

- How can policymakers structure reconciliation processes and similar interventions to reduce psychological costs?

Given the high stakes involved, research on designing and implementing reparations programs effectively is also essential, especially for postconflict countries grappling with the enduring consequences of violence:

- What is the causal effect of reparations on non-socioeconomic outcomes, including healing, peacebuilding, and recovery?

- How should reparations policies be designed to catalyze a "developmental boost" for victims and their families? What should the total dollar value of all reparations benefits (financial and otherwise) be?

- How should reparations interact with SP to promote synergies? Can pairing financial compensation with other measures, such as psychosocial support, improve outcomes for victims and their families?

A full set of references for all Handbook chapters, including this one, can be found at this link: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/9lqs2mdrawkjdrv4m648e/References-Social-Protection-Handbook.pdf?rlkey=jt0f8kute31mhdke77aoiw99d&st=kd7l8ff1&dl=0