

Replication data and code

Data and code to replicate results of listed published papers. If you encounter any difficulties in replicating the results; find errors; or have any other questions; do not hesitate to contact me at stijn.vanweezele@ucd.ie

Half a million excess deaths in the Iraq war: Terms and conditions may apply

Research and Politics

Abstract: Hagopian et al. (2013) published a headline-grabbing estimate for the Iraq war of half a million excess deaths, i.e. deaths that would not have happened without the war. We reanalyse the data from the University Collaborative Iraq Mortality Study and refute their dramatic claim. The Hagopian et al. (2013) estimate has four main defects: i) most importantly, it conflates non-violent deaths with violent ones; ii) it fails to account for the stratified sampling design of the UCIMS; iii) it fully includes all reported deaths regardless of death certificate backing, even when respondents say they have a death certificate but cannot produce one when prompted; iv) it adds approximately 100,000 speculative deaths not supported by data. Thus, we reject the 500,000 estimate. Indeed, we find that the UCIMS data cannot even support a claim that the number of non-violent excess deaths in the Iraq war has been greater than zero. We recommend future research to follow our methodological lead in two main directions; supplement traditional excess death estimates with excess death estimates for non-violent deaths alone, and use differences-in-differences estimates to uncover the relationship between violence and non-violent death rates.

Food imports, international prices, and violence in Africa

Oxford Economic Papers

Abstract: This study examines the effect of food price fluctuations on violence in Africa, using international food prices as a source of exogenous shock weighted by a country's import pattern of major food commodities to create a country-specific food price index. The regression analysis shows that between 1990 and 2011, food price increases are associated with higher levels of violence. Moving from low to high values in the price index corresponds, after controlling for economic, social, and political factors, to an increase in violence intensity of 1.3 incidents. This effect is predominantly driven by imports of low-value-added primary products. Despite the statistically significant results, the predictive power of food prices is relatively low, both in and out of sample. Using 2012 data for out-of-sample forecast shows that food prices are a relatively poor predictor of violence.*

Economic shocks & civil conflict onset in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1981–2010

Defence and Peace Economics

Abstract: A number of studies have examined the link between rainfall and conflict but results so far have been inconclusive. This study examines the effect of rainfall on economic performance in different sectors and conflict onset. The empirical analysis finds no support for a strong relation between rainfall and conflict as most results are not robust to different model specifications. The results also do not provide conclusive evidence for a link between growth in specific economic sectors and civil conflict onset.