**Agricultural Shocks and Social Conflict in Southeast Asia**

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**Abstract**

Social conflicts are inevitable, but their occurrence and intensity have varied over time and across locations. In lower-income economies, where employment and income from agriculture are substantial, forms of political violence and social conflict may be linked with this sector. We investigate this linkage using granular conflict data covering a 13-year period across seven Southeast Asian countries. We focus on changes in conflict incidents during the rice harvest season, which is the most produced and consumed cereal crop in the region. We observe an increase in political violence but a decrease in social unrest in rice-producing areas during the harvest season. We investigate different plausible mechanisms that may lead to such effects, by incorporating shocks associated with rice prices and growing season rainfall, and by comparing regions with predominantly irrigated vs predominantly rainfed rice production practices. These findings offer important insights to policymakers as they point to possible temporal and geographic displacements of conflict, which can be linked with locations where a crop is produced and times when it is harvested.

**Keywords**: Agriculture, Conflict, Seasonality, Southeast Asia

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