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

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**Abstract**

Agriculture and conflict are linked. The extent and the sign of the relationship vary by the motives of actors and the forms of conflict. We examine whether harvest-time agricultural shocks, associated with transitory shifts in employment and income, lead to changes in social conflict. Using 13 years of data from eight Southeast Asian countries, we find a seven percent increase in battles, and a 12 percent increase in violence against civilians in the croplands during harvest season compared to the rest of the year. These statistically significant effects plausibly link agricultural harvest with conflict through the rapacity mechanism. We also observe a three percent decrease in protests and riots during the same period, aligning with the opportunity cost mechanism, but these estimates are not statistically significant. The offsetting resentment mechanism may be partly responsible for this, but we also cannot rule out the possibility of the null effect. These findings, which contribute to research on the agroclimatic and economic roots of conflict, offer valuable insights to policymakers by suggesting the temporal displacement of conflict, and specifically of violence against civilians, due to the seasonality of agricultural harvest in rice-producing regions of Southeast Asia.

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

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