Conflict and Forced Displacement:

Bayesian Analysis of Disaggregate Data From Somalia*

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Abstract

Forced displacement is a key humanitarian and developmental challenge, with conflict repeatedly identified as the single most important driver. We use weekly district-level displacement data and daily conflict data from Somalia to highlight several challenges potentially arising when analysing survey-based large N large T panel data sets, including complex patterns of censoring. We develop a Bayesian modelling framework that overcomes these issues and obtain estimates of the short-run impact of conflict on forced displacement. We find that displacement is mainly driven by conflict events that directly affect the threat level perceived by the civilian population, fully in line with the implications derived from theoretical models. The proposed empirical framework is also competitive in terms of predictive accuracy, and we discuss potential use cases in humanitarian forecasting.

Keywords: Forced migration, humanitarian aid, violence, panel, sample selection.

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