

The Legacy of Conflict: Aggregate Evidence from Sierra Leone

Tillman Hönig ^{*}
London School of Economics

JOB MARKET PAPER

January 2021

([click here for latest version](#))

Abstract

This paper studies the general equilibrium impact of civil war in Sierra Leone. I first use an instrumental variable (IV) strategy and geographic conflict variation to estimate reduced-form effects. I show that civil war leads to affected areas having a higher share of workers in agriculture and lower worker income as a result. In order to explicitly take into account general equilibrium effects such as selective migration in response to the war, I then develop an economic geography model. The model sheds light on different mechanisms through which conflict affects aggregate income: Changes in education and firm productivity have both direct effects on income and indirect effects by changing the allocation of labor across sectors and locations. Changes in amenities also affect the spatial allocation of labor. Next, while education outcomes are observed, I leverage the structure of the model to identify unobserved firm productivities as well as amenities. I find that conflict strongly affects education and non-agricultural firm productivity while amenities and agricultural firm productivity are unaffected in the long run. Finally, I use the model to perform counterfactual simulations. In the absence of civil war, aggregate income in Sierra Leone would be 14.8% higher today. Human capital losses can only account for about 1/3 of the effect.

JEL classification: D74, J24, O12, O15, O47, R1

^{*}Contact: t.hoenig@lse.ac.uk. I am extremely grateful to Tim Besley, Gharad Bryan and Daniel Sturm for invaluable guidance and support with this project. I thank Lydia Assouad, Oriana Bandiera, Robin Burgess, Noémie Chomet, Alexandre Desbuquois, Maitreesh Ghatak, Musa Kpaka, Rachael Meager, Niclas Moneke, Gerard Padró i Miquel, Kohei Takeda, Martina Zanella, Céline Zipfel, as well as seminar participants at the LSE and the RGS Econ conferences for helpful comments and discussions. I gratefully acknowledge Statistics Sierra Leone for the provision of the underlying data.

1. Introduction

Violent conflict is still a major global challenge with devastating consequences. In the last decade, civil war plagued about a fifth of all countries worldwide with a global death toll of almost 900,000 people.¹ While a growing literature documents the economic impact on conflict affected places, we have little evidence on the aggregate income consequences in the long run. Investigating the effect on aggregate income requires taking into account general equilibrium effects. This paper provides a general equilibrium analysis of the 1991-2002 civil war in Sierra Leone. Specifically, this paper asks two questions. First, what is the long-run effect of the civil war on aggregate income? Second, what are the potential drivers of aggregate income losses?

The main original contribution of the paper is to develop and structurally estimate a general equilibrium model of the impact of conflict. I find that civil war strongly reduces human capital and firm productivity in the non-agricultural sector. This has both direct implications for aggregate income and indirect ones by changing the sector composition of workers and the labor allocation across space. Taken together, aggregate income is 14.8% lower today as a result of the war that ended almost twenty years ago. While having received the most attention in the literature as a mechanism, the human capital reduction can only account for about 1/3 of the effect.

This paper has two parts. The first part is a reduced-form analysis of the effect of conflict. This analysis shows that conflict alters the economy in major ways and motivates key elements of the general equilibrium model I develop and estimate in a second part. Drawing mainly on household survey data from 2018, I observe workers' income, sector choice and education. I measure conflict intensity as the average victimization households experience within a chiefdom.² Since conflict is not randomly placed I use distance to the Liberian border as an instrument. As a result of Liberian involvement in the beginning of the war, distance to the border strongly predicts conflict intensity. At the same time, Sierra Leonean trade with Liberia was negligible before the war. Chiefdoms close to and far from the border within small districts are comparable on various pre-war observables. Thus, the instrument creates exogenous variation of conflict within districts. A placebo test on education effects for people above school age when the war started confirms exogeneity.

The reduced-form analysis establishes large income differences between more and less affected chiefdoms. However, spatial income differences do not necessarily reflect *aggregate* income effects. In general equilibrium, people move. Therefore, spatial income differences capture both the direct effect of conflict and the reallocation of labor.

One purpose of the general equilibrium model I develop in the second part of the paper is to address this issue. The general equilibrium structure allows me to estimate aggregate

¹This is according to UCDP data from [Pettersson & Öberg \(2020\)](#).

²Chiefdoms are the lowest level of administration in Sierra Leone. There are 159 chiefdoms in the country of which sufficient information is observed in 151 that are used in the analysis.

income effects. Another purpose is to provide a theoretical framework of the underlying mechanisms. Importantly, this allows me to include mechanisms that are not directly observed in the data but which I can identify in a structural estimation of the model. The basic setup is an economic geography model with 151 locations reflecting the chiefdoms of Sierra Leone. To capture population movement and a sector shift in response to the war, the model features labor mobility across these locations and two sectors, agriculture and non-agriculture. Individuals are heterogeneous in sector- and destination-specific productivities and exogenous education realizations. In a [Roy \(1951\)](#) fashion, this gives rise to worker sorting into a destination and sector. Locations differ in amenities such as local public goods and services and firm-level productivities in each sector.

Conflict is assumed to affect three sets of parameters with both direct and indirect implications for aggregate income: (i) (observed) education, (ii) (unobserved) firm-level productivities, and (iii) (unobserved) amenities. Structural estimation identifies the model parameters. In particular, I use observed incomes and migration flows to estimate firm productivities and location amenities. To estimate the causal impact of conflict on these parameters, I use the same IV strategy as before. With these estimates in hand, I perform counterfactual simulations which estimate the aggregate income effect of conflict. The simulations take into account general equilibrium changes.

A key result emerging from the reduced-form analysis is that workers living in chiefdoms hit by conflict experience substantial income losses, even twenty years after the end of the war. A one standard deviation increase in conflict intensity in one chiefdom vis-à-vis another leads to a drop in income by 23%. A look at the sector allocation of workers reveals an important driver behind this income loss: reverse structural transformation. Workers are 12 percentage points more likely to work in the lower paying agricultural sector in chiefdoms that experience more conflict.

The general equilibrium model highlights how conflict affects income and sector allocation. Education, firm productivity and amenities can decrease in response to conflict. This has direct effects in the locations affected and indirect effects in general equilibrium when people move and market wages change. Increasing conflict by one standard deviation leads to a loss of schooling by 0.6 years. Returns to education are estimated to be higher in non-agriculture than in agriculture which implies that education losses lead to a sector shift. Lower human capital also directly decreases income in both sectors. As for firm productivities, I show that conflict affects the sectors differentially. While there is no effect on agricultural productivity, non-agricultural productivity reduces by 7.7% per standard deviation of conflict. Naturally, a firm-level productivity loss in non-agriculture is also consistent with the sector shift into agricultural work and income losses in non-agriculture.

Beyond these direct effects, education losses and non-agricultural firm productivity reductions have an important general equilibrium implication. People move in response to these changes. Workers are assumed to be mobile subject to a migration cost that is

specific to their level of education and their sector of work. The migration cost is estimated to be sizeable. Thus, workers who choose to move to another chiefdom must be highly selected in terms of their individual productivity for their chosen destination relative to workers staying at home. Lower firm productivity in a chiefdom encourages more workers to leave. At the same time, migration cost for educated workers is estimated to be lower than for uneducated workers. This provides a countervailing force on population movement coming from education losses. A higher share of uneducated workers implies fewer leavers.

Since amenities are not sector-specific and are a component of utility but not of income, any amenity changes would only result in aggregate income effects through general equilibrium effects of worker movement. However, the estimated effect of conflict on amenities is small and insignificant. In the long run, it seems that amenities are not affected by the civil war.

General equilibrium effects imply that the observed sector allocation and income difference between more and less affected chiefdoms by conflict reflects not only the direct effect of conflict but also selective migration. In particular, with high migration cost and positive selection of those leaving high-conflict chiefdoms, the spatial divergence in income may overstate the aggregate income effect. To address this issue, I use the model to simulate two counterfactual scenarios that reverse conflict and all general equilibrium effects of it. First, I consider a full reversal of the war. In this scenario, both the education and non-agricultural firm productivity loss are reverted. Second, to assess the quantitative importance of the channels, I revert only the education loss. The IV estimates inform the degree to which I increase these parameters in a chiefdom as a function of the intensity of conflict it experiences.

The first scenario estimates an aggregate real income gain of 14.8% in the absence of conflict with the share of agricultural workers being 6.3 percentage points lower. In the second scenario, aggregate real income is 4.7% higher without conflict and the share of agricultural workers 1.4 percentage points lower. A comparison of the two scenarios implies that human capital losses can only explain about 1/3 of the total effect while firm productivity losses seem to play a more important role.

While the estimate on the full war effect is large, it is still substantially lower than what the reduced-form evidence on spatial divergence suggests. If we were to take the reduced-form estimate and calculate a country-wide weighted average by conflict intensity and chiefdom population we would arrive at a 42% aggregate income loss. This suggests that general equilibrium forces such as selective migration play a major role in generating spatial income differences between more and less affected chiefdoms by conflict.

This paper makes two main contributions. First, it provides estimates of the long-run aggregate income effect of civil war that explicitly take into account general equilibrium forces. While early cross-country macro studies ([Alesina & Perotti, 1996](#); [Barro, 1991](#); [Collier, 1999](#)) show a clear negative link between conflict and aggregate economic per-

formance, establishing causality from these correlations is difficult.³ A great number of institutional and economic differences between war-torn countries and countries at peace may drive the result. On the other hand, micro-empirical within-country studies that compare more and less affected households or locations such as Miguel & Roland (2011), Besley & Reynal-Querol (2014), Serneels & Verpoorten (2015) and Abadie & Gardeazabal (2003) are similar in nature to my reduced-form analysis. As Blattman & Miguel (2010) note,⁴ even with a solid identification strategy, this approach cannot account for general equilibrium effects. I combine the best of both worlds. Using a within-country identification strategy in combination with a general equilibrium model allows me to estimate aggregate effects that can causally be attributed to the civil war. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first paper to estimate a general equilibrium model in the study of conflict.⁵

The model I develop is an economic geography model that draws on Bryan & Morten (2019), Hsieh et al. (2019) and Eaton & Kortum (2002).⁶ In particular, civil war typically leads to the reallocation of labor across space with important general equilibrium implications. This concerns not only the size of population movement but also the selection. Indeed, Davis & Weinstein (2002) and Brakman et al. (2004) find that city growth is unaffected by bombing intensity. However, this does not speak to the selection of migrants. In this study, I also find that the number of migrants is unaffected by conflict but the selection of migrants seems to play a major role in accounting for spatial differences in income as a result of the war.⁷

The second contribution of this paper is to shed light on a channel of the impact of conflict that has received little attention so far: reverse structural transformation, in particular as fuelled by decreases in non-agricultural firm productivity. This can capture a variety of elements that could be affected by war such as market access or electricity connection. My model features labor as the only input into production. Immobile physical capital would enter the model in the same way as firm-level productivity. Therefore, reductions in the latter could also capture physical capital reductions such as the destruction of local buildings or machines. Only few studies consider firm or sector allocation outcomes and these are typically short-run analyses (Bozzoli et al., 2012; Camacho & Rodriguez, 2013; Collier & Duponchel, 2013). By contrast, the literature on human capital effects of conflicts is large.⁸ Indeed, this paper also demonstrates evidence on human capital losses

³Cerra & Saxena (2008) is similar to these analyses but broader in scope since it considers not only civil war but also financial crises. The authors estimate impulse response functions using a panel of many countries over several decades.

⁴Their paper also provides an excellent overview of the economic literature on conflict.

⁵Dal Bó & Dal Bó (2011) use a general equilibrium model in their analysis of conflict. However, their paper is about the causes of conflict and not about the general equilibrium consequences of it. It is also purely theoretical. They do not make use of data, let alone carry out structural estimation.

⁶The model also has similarities with elements in Allen & Arkolakis (2014), Redding (2016) and Lagakos & Waugh (2013).

⁷This result is also in line with other papers that highlight the importance of selective migration in explaining spatial income differences such as Young (2013).

⁸Focusing on civil war and long-run outcomes at least 10 years after the end of war, these include Akbulut-Yuksel (2014); Akresh & De Walque (2011); Galdo (2013); La Mattina (2018); Leon (2012); Saing & Kazianga (2020).

as a result of the war. But their role in explaining persistent aggregate income effects is shown to be limited. Depending on which factors are the main drivers behind persistent consequences of conflict for economic welfare, the implications for post-war policy differ greatly. My paper suggests that restoring firm-level productivity deserves greater policy focus.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a brief overview of the Sierra Leonean civil war that motivates it as an empirical setting. Section 3 discusses the empirical design of this study and section 4 presents reduced-form results. In section 5, I develop the model and discuss its estimation strategy in section 6. Section 7 presents the results of the model estimation, followed by the presentation and discussion of counterfactual simulations in section 8. Finally, section 9 concludes.

2. The Civil War in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone suffered an atrocious civil war between 1991 and 2002 that caused some 70,000 casualties, displacement of roughly half the population and left many people injured, maimed and raped (UNDP, 2006). While the war was extremely brutal, Sierra Leone has experienced a long period of sustained peace since it ended in early 2002. This provides an ideal setting to investigate long-run effects of the war today.

The civil war started as an insurgency by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) under Foday Sankoh in 1991 entering the country from Liberia in the south-eastern part of the country.⁹ The RUF was a small rebel group at the onset of war with the political goal of overthrowing the ruling one-party regime, led by the All People’s Congress (APC) party under Joseph Saidu Momoh (Richards, 1996). Their insurgency was supported by the National Patriotic Front for Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor and involved in the ongoing Liberian civil war. In fact, the RUF had started their fighting activities in Liberia along with the NPFL when the war broke out in the neighboring country in 1989. Foday Sankoh and Charles Taylor had met each other and worked and trained together before. The RUF remained mainly active and the fighting very much concentrated in the southern parts of Sierra Leone bordering Liberia between 1991 and 1995 until it eventually spread to other parts of the country. This involvement with Liberia means that distance to the Liberian border is highly predictive of conflict intensity and can be used as an instrument for it.

As Richards (1996) argues, the element of political grievances played a great role as a cause of the civil war. In particular young people were discontent with a patrimonial system in which a small group of patrons rules and decides on the allocation of opportunities and transfers arbitrarily. They felt disenfranchised and robbed of education and opportunities. The RUF’s ideological roots lied in an idea of egalitarianism which initially helped in recruiting disenfranchised youth – however, as knowledge of the atrocities committed

⁹Figure 1 displays the location of Sierra Leone and Liberia in West Africa.

by the group spread, recruitment by capture became more necessary and common.

One of the atrocious features of the Sierra Leonean civil war was the extreme degree of violence against civilians, in particular all the community looting operations as well as the raping, killing and maiming that characterized the war. Quite tellingly, such operations were called “Operation Pay Yourself” or “Operation No Living Thing”. These acts of violence were not only committed by the RUF, but also by the Sierra Leonean Army (SLA) throughout the war, often by so-called “Sobels” who were soldiers by day and rebels by night, taking on an identity under which it was more legitimate and less consequential to engage in these activities. Since such violent activities characterized how households were affected by the war, it is very convenient that the Sierra Leonean Integrated Household Survey 2011 provides direct information on how households were victimized as a result of the war. This information can be used as a measure for conflict intensity that captures the effect of the civil war well.

The opportunistic behavior of fighters demonstrates that there was an element of “greed” to the civil war that also became increasingly prevalent in the illicit mining or smuggling of diamonds. The diamond wealth resulting from these activities helped funding the war and provided incentives to prolong it (Keen, 2005; Richards, 2004). Therefore, throughout the war, economic motives became increasingly important in the rebels’ decision to engage in fighting.

Another interesting feature is the lack of ethnic or religious divisions as a key driver of war, as Bellows & Miguel (2009) point out. No ethnic group appeared to be disproportionately victimized and there seems to be no evidence that violence against a particular civil community was more pronounced if the community and the fighting group have largely differing ethnicity.

3. Empirical Design

3.1. Data

The main source of data for this paper is the Sierra Leonean Integrated Household Survey (IHS) 2011 and 2018 which are general representative individual-level surveys. I use detailed questions on economic activity in 2018 to construct the following outcome variables. First, as a proxy for worker income, I use household expenditure information on food and non-food items and divide this by the number of working people in a household.¹⁰ The reason for using information on expenditures rather than income directly is that the expenditure data is much more complete and highly likely to be more reliable. It is recorded in weekly visits by enumerators during which households indicate the items they bought and at which price they did so. Such information is significantly easier to remember than

¹⁰The division by the number of workers is done to reflect worker income. However, all my IV analyses can be performed on related measures such as total household expenditures or expenditures per adult equivalent. All main findings go through in this robustness exercise as demonstrated in section 4.2.

providing information on different income sources over the past year in a setting where most workers are subsistence farmers or engage in small business activities without any bookkeeping.

Second, the main sector that individuals work in is constructed according to the ISIC classification (see Figure 3). For all main results, a simple binary distinction between agriculture and non-agriculture (manufacturing and services) is made.

Third, education outcomes are recorded directly. From information on completed grades, I use years of schooling and an indicator for having finished primary education.

Regarding conflict data, the 2011 survey contains a section with a number of questions on the impact of conflict on individuals and households that I make use of. As a main conflict measure, I follow Bellows & Miguel (2009) in constructing a victimization index. This index is the share of “yes” answers to eight binary questions in the survey that cover how households were affected by the war along the following dimensions: (1) whether the household lost property or assets; (2) whether the house was burnt; (3) whether household members were killed; (4) whether relatives were killed; (5) whether household members lost limbs; (6) whether household members were molested or raped; (7) whether household members were displaced; (8) whether the war had any other effect on the household.¹¹ Given that the extreme degree of violence against civilians was a feature of the Sierra Leonean civil war, a victimization index seems to be a sensible measure of the intensity of conflict. For my analysis and in line with Bellows & Miguel (2009), I aggregate the household-level victimization experience at the chiefdom level to construct conflict measures at that level. With five chiefdoms missing in the household survey 2018 and three different ones missing in the household survey 2011, I observe 150 chiefdoms in addition to the capital Freetown in 2018. Chiefdoms are the lowest level of administration. At the next higher level, Sierra Leone is administered in 14 districts, the level of my fixed effects in the empirical analysis. The aggregation and subsequent treatment of conflict at the chiefdom level serves to capture potentially large within-chiefdom spillovers of conflict.

Furthermore, the 2018 survey contains detailed information on migration. In particular, the chiefdom of birth as well as the chiefdom of residence and the year of moving are recorded for each individual. This information is crucial when estimating the model. The estimation requires knowledge of both origin and destination for all individuals.

In addition to socio-economic control variables from the IHS data, I use data from Glennerster et al. (2013) for some land characteristics as controls and census data from 1963, 1985, 2004 and 2015.¹² I also use geographic information to compute distance of a chiefdom centroid from the Liberian border which serves as an instrument in my IV analysis. In order to test whether this instrument correlates with pre-war characteristics, I draw on data used in Bellows & Miguel (2009) and Acemoglu et al. (2014). They provide

¹¹In fact, Bellows & Miguel (2009) use very similar questions in a survey carried out by the Institutional Reform and Capacity Building Project (IRCBP) to construct their victimization index.

¹²I only have aggregate information at the chiefdom level for the 1963 and 1985 census and excerpts for the later waves of the census.

information on economic outcomes before the war, albeit partially incomplete, including education and expenditure in 1989 as well as historic tax and trade variables. Summary statistics for all variables used are provided in Table 1.

3.2. Identification Strategy

My main specification to estimate the effect of conflict on outcomes is an instrumental variable (IV) specification using the distance to the Liberian border as an instrument for conflict. Given the inter-linkages between the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone and the fact that fighting originated and concentrated in the border area for a long time, it seems reasonable that the distance to the Liberian border is strongly correlated with conflict intensity. As Figure 4 depicts clearly, while fighting spread to most parts of the country throughout the war, the highest conflict levels are experienced by areas bordering Liberia in the South east and in the corridor between the border and the capital Freetown in the very West towards which the rebels progressed. My IV-2SLS specification is characterized by the following equations:

$$y_{ic} = \alpha_{district} + \beta \widehat{conflict}_c + \mathbf{X}_{ic}'\mu + \epsilon_{ic} \quad (\text{Second Stage}) \quad (1)$$

$$\widehat{conflict}_c = \hat{\alpha}_{district}^{FS} + \hat{\gamma}^{FS} distance_c + \mathbf{X}_{ic}'\hat{\mu}^{FS} \quad (\text{First Stage}) \quad (2)$$

where y_{ic} is the outcome of interest for individual i in chiefdom c , $distance_c$ is the instrument and $\alpha_{district}$ capture district-level fixed effects. The vector of controls includes a set of socio-economic controls as well as characteristics of the land. Importantly, in all specifications, I control for distance to one of the five largest cities in Sierra Leone (Freetown, Bo, Kenema, Koidu, Makeni). These five cities are well known as urban and regional economic centres and the only large cities of the country with a population exceeding 100,000 inhabitants. Controlling for distance to these cities ensures that any potential mechanical relationship between border distance and distance to large cities does not act as a confounder. The underlying reason for a potentially confounding relationship is that economic development can have a highly geographic component. Growth in an area can subsequently lead to economic development around that area (Felkner & Townsend, 2011).¹³

While different regions within Sierra Leone differ not only in their distance to the Liberian border but also in terms of other characteristics that are correlated with economic outcomes, performing the analysis within districts is crucial to satisfy the exclusion restriction. The identification assumption is therefore that, within districts and conditional on the set of control variables used, distance to the Liberian border only affects

¹³In addition, the full set of controls contains the following variables. Socio-economic controls are household head's sex, an urban dummy, age, age squared, religion as well as household size. The land characteristics are a vector ruggedness measure, the average elevation in a chiefdom, the share of chiefdom terrain with slope between 2-8%, 8-30% and 30-45%, the share of chiefdom terrain with coarse texture and with medium texture, as well as the share of chiefdom soil with poor drainage and with excessive drainage.

outcomes after the war through inducing variation in conflict, but not through any other channel.

One potential concern with this assumption is that distance to the Liberian border is naturally related to trade. Even within the same district, chiefdoms that are located closer to the border may have been more active in trading before the war and therefore at a different level of economic development. This would lead to a violation of the identification assumption. However, I argue that such a violation is unlikely to play a major role. Trade with Liberia is only of negligible size relative to the total trade volumes of Sierra Leone before the war. Exports to Liberia as a share of total exports are less than 0.1% before the war.¹⁴ The main trading partners of Sierra Leone are Europe and the US and trade with these partners would not go through Sierra Leone but rather through their main port in Freetown. Distance to Freetown as one of the major urban centres is controlled for in all specifications. Furthermore, I provide a test against the hypothesis of trade as a major confounder by excluding chiefdoms directly bordering Liberia and repeating my main IV analysis on worker income as an outcome. To the extent that chiefdoms with a direct border would benefit particularly from trade, this should lead to results that differ from the main results on the full sample. However, the results with the restricted sample are very comparable to the main results. Finally, districts are small. Sierra Leone as a whole country is as large in area as the Netherlands and Belgium and subdivided into 13 rural districts, excluding Freetown. The average rural district's area is therefore only 5000 square kilometers. While location likely matters for trade at the country level, it is therefore unclear to what extent it would play a role within these small districts.

Another concern pertaining in particular to the sector allocation as an outcome of interest may be differences in the quality of the land that are related to the border distance. This is the main reason behind including a variety of land characteristics as a set of control variables in the analysis. In fact, the inclusion of these controls leads to stronger IV results. Therefore, choosing the sparser and more precisely estimated specification without land controls as my preferred specification is a conservative approach which means that the results can be interpreted as a lower bound on the true effect.

Further to these considerations, I also use pre-war characteristics drawing on data used in [Bellows & Miguel \(2009\)](#) and [Acemoglu et al. \(2014\)](#) to test whether distance to the Liberian border has predictive power for economic outcomes before the war within districts. The results are shown in Table 2. Distance to the border within districts has no significant predictive power (at the conventional 5% level) for all outcomes. In fact, only one outcome has a significant coefficient at the 10% level which can easily arise by chance when testing nine outcomes. Given these results on observable variables, it seems very unlikely that the instrument is related to post-war outcomes through other unobservable channels.

Considering the first stage, Figure 6 graphically displays the correlation between my

¹⁴UN Comtrade Database (accessed in October 2020 under <https://comtrade.un.org/>). The most recent year with information on trade in Sierra Leone before the war started is 1986.

standardized conflict measure and distance to the Liberian border within districts. I formally test the first stage and report the results in Table 3. I include Kleibergen-Paap F statistics that allow for the cluster structure of my error term and are still comfortably above the conventional threshold of 10.¹⁵

For the analysis of education outcomes, the fact that education is usually obtained during a particular age provides me with additional cohort variation that I can exploit for two purposes. First, it allows for a placebo test of the identification assumption. I can split the sample and run the IV analysis separately for people who were at school age when the war started and those who were already old enough to have finished their education. I use a generous definition of school age with age 30 at the beginning of the war as cut-off point.¹⁶ If the instruments does not satisfy the exclusion restriction in a way that is relevant for education as an outcome, this should become visible in the analysis of the old cohort. I show that conflict only affects people at school age but there is no effect for the old cohort. This lends further support to the exogeneity of the instrument.

Second, I also estimate the following regression in the spirit of a difference-in-differences IV approach:

$$y_{ijc} = \alpha_c + \delta(\widehat{conflict_c} \times coh_j) + \zeta coh_j + \tilde{\mathbf{X}}'_{ijc}\mu + \epsilon_{ijc} \quad (3)$$

$$(\widehat{conflict_c} \times coh_j) = \hat{\alpha}_c^{FS} + \hat{\gamma}^{FS}(\widehat{distance_c} \times coh_j) + \hat{\zeta}^{FS} coh_j + \tilde{\mathbf{X}}'_{ijc}\hat{\mu}^{FS} \quad (4)$$

where i denotes an individual, j the cohort and c denotes the chiefdom. The variable coh_j is a cohort dummy variable indicating whether an individual was at school age during the war or not. I use the same cohort definition as before with individuals born after 1961 considered at school age and those born before 1961 considered above school age during the war.¹⁷ The vector of controls $\tilde{\mathbf{X}}_{ijc}$ includes all socio-economic control variables that are used in the main specification. Unlike in the above IV design, the additional cohort variation allows me to control for *chiefdom* fixed effects α_c . Therefore, any further chiefdom-level controls such as the land characteristics are captured in the fixed effect and not controlled for separately. Taking δ as the causal effect of interest, the identification assumption now becomes a weaker condition. A relationship between distance to the border and education outcomes other than through conflict may exist within chiefdoms, we only require it to be the same for school-aged and older individuals at the start of the war. This corresponds to the classic difference-in-differences (DID) assumption applied to the instrument.

¹⁵Note that Kleibergen-Paap F statistics are equivalent to Montiel-Pflueger F statistics in the weak IV test in my case with one endogenous regressor and one instrument.

¹⁶The results are robust to using different cut-off points, e.g., anyone aged 18 or older at the beginning of the war.

¹⁷These results are also robust to choosing a different cut-off year such as 1973.

4. Reduced-form Results

4.1. Main Results

Table 4 demonstrates the results of an OLS regression and the IV specification for worker income, as proxied for by expenditures per worker, for different sets of control variables. The effect of conflict is large. An additional standard variation of conflict intensity reduces income by 24-30% twenty years after the end of the war. This suggests substantially lower livelihoods of households living in chiefdoms that are more heavily affected by the war.

Two observations that apply to this and further results on economic outcomes are noteworthy. First, the specification including land controls delivers a stronger result. This could be the case because there is some bias when not controlling for geographic features of the chiefdoms. Considering the first stage results and the large size of the effect even without land controls, however, this could also plausibly reflect the strength of the instrument conditional on the whole set of socio-economic and land controls. The relevant F statistic drops from 20.8 to 12.6 when including land controls. In the spirit of a cautious interpretation of the results, I would therefore consider the specification without land controls as the more reliable one and take it as a more reasonable estimate of the effect of civil war.

Second, the IV results are stronger than the OLS results. The difference between IV and OLS results is consistent with a positive selection into conflict in the sense that conflict takes place in areas that are richer to begin with. In light of the fact that economic considerations played a key role in the rebels' decision to engage in conflict this is plausible.¹⁸ At the individual level, many young people were easily recruited by the rebel movement because engagement in looting communities was economically more attractive than alternative ways to make a living. At the collective level, the rebel movement aimed at controlling and generating revenue from diamond mines as a source of income.¹⁹

A large sector shift in economic activity may be a key driver of these income effects. The results on the main sector of work are shown in Table 5 and graphically displayed in Figure 7 for the preferred specification with socio-economic controls only. With a standard deviation increase in conflict intensity, workers are 12 percentage points more likely to work in agriculture and correspondingly less likely to engage in non-agricultural activities. The employment share in agriculture in the whole country is 55%. An increase by 12 percentage points in areas experiencing more conflict is a large shift in the sector allocation. Both the manufacturing and services sector are affected to a similar extent. Since pay in the agricultural sector is on average just above 1/3 of what it is in the non-agricultural sector in Sierra Leone, a sector shift into agricultural work can be an

¹⁸In their analysis of Rwanda, [Justino & Verwimp \(2013\)](#) also find that richer households were targeted.

¹⁹This may raise an endogeneity concern if the location of diamond mines at the beginning of the war is correlated with the instrument. Unfortunately, no information on the location of diamond mines in 1991 is available. Using information on their location in 2002 from [Bellows & Miguel \(2009\)](#), however, I can establish that the instrument is uncorrelated with distance to diamond mines in 2002. Furthermore, controlling for distance to diamond mines does not change any results in the IV analysis.

important driving force of lower average income.²⁰

To the extent that education and the sector of employment are correlated, human capital loss as a result of the war may be the reason for the sector shift. Indeed, the correlation between education and employment in agriculture is strong. While 68% of workers without primary school education are employed in agriculture, this share drops to 27% for workers who finished primary school.²¹ The estimation results of the effect of conflict on education are presented in Table 6 and 7. In the preferred specification in column (3), individuals are 7 percentage points less likely to finish primary school as conflict intensity increases by one standard deviation. On the intensive margin, they lose 0.64 years of schooling. Relative to the country-wide share of primary educated workers of 37% and an average education of 4.2 years, these are substantial losses.

4.2. Identification Tests and Robustness

These results pass an important placebo test for the exogeneity of the instrument and are robust to a number of robustness checks. First, it is reassuring to see that the education effect only materializes for young people who were actually at school age when the war started while there is no significant effect for those old enough to have finished their education by that time. Table 8 demonstrates these results. Columns (1) and (4) present the education effect for individuals at school age when the war starts. The effect is slightly stronger than the main effect for everyone. By contrast, columns (2) and (5) show the effect for people above school age for both education outcomes. The coefficients are close to zero and insignificant. Furthermore, the DID-IV analysis in columns (3) and (6) of the same table delivers a very similar and statistically indistinguishable result from the main IV analysis. The DID-IV analysis requires a much weaker identification assumption as outlined above. Therefore, both the results by cohort and the DID-IV results provide support for the main identification assumption and robustness for the education results.

Second, the main results on worker expenditures are robust to the exclusion of chiefdoms directly bordering Liberia. Table 9 provides the results for the restricted sample. The effect of conflict is a 23.8% reduction in expenditures per worker as conflict increases by one standard deviation in the preferred specification in column (3). The coefficient is almost identical to the corresponding effect for all chiefdoms, 23.6%, and statistically indistinguishable. Other specifications and OLS results are also very similar. This suggests that trade with Liberia is unlikely to be a threat to identification.

Third, the main results on worker expenditures are robust to using different variations of household expenditure measures. The division by the number of workers is not driving the result. Table 10 and 11 show the results for total household expenditures and total

²⁰In 2018, expenditures per worker in 20 days were on average 34 USD for agricultural workers and 91 USD for non-agricultural workers.

²¹This correlation can be the result of lower returns to education in agriculture. Differential returns by sector are a key part in the model that generates a correlation between education and sector choice. In line with the given correlation, the structural estimation of the model estimates returns to education in the non-agricultural sector to be substantially larger than returns in agriculture.

household expenditures per adult equivalent, respectively. While the IV coefficients for both alternative measures are a bit smaller than the ones reported in the main results, they are still sizeable and significant. The reduction ranges between 14% and 20% per standard deviation of conflict increase.

Fourth, the results on all outcomes are robust to the exclusion of the capital Freetown. [Bellows & Miguel \(2009\)](#) argue that the capital's local institutions and history are quite different from the rest of the country. However, any such differences do not seem to be driving my results since the outcomes without Freetown are very comparable to my main results with Freetown. Table 12 shows the results on expenditures per worker, employment in agriculture, years of schooling and primary education when the sample excludes the capital Freetown. All OLS and IV coefficients are very close to the ones in the main specifications including Freetown.

4.3. Further Discussion

These reduced-form results suggest that civil war has strong persistent effects on the livelihoods of households that live in affected chiefdoms. A loss of human capital has direct implications for worker income and can be a reason for a shift in the sector of employment to the extent that lower education is correlated with employment in agriculture. Workers are a lot more likely to work in agriculture as a result of their chiefdom being hit by conflict. Since pay in agriculture is lower than in the non-agricultural sector, such a shift is a driving force for lower income in chiefdoms that are more heavily affected by conflict.

The presented estimates identify spatial differences. The results are essentially generated by comparing more and less affected areas by the civil war. If productive resources are reallocated across space as a result of the war, however, spatial differences do not only capture the direct effect of conflict but also the reallocation of resources. In particular, we may be concerned about labor supply changing in locations when people move in response to the war.

The 2011 survey indicates that around 50% of all households were displaced at some point during or after the war. Even considering migration in the long run, migration rates in the 2015 census and 2018 household survey are between 25% and 30%. It is quite plausible that the selection of migrants changes as a result of the war. For example, if more productive non-agricultural workers leave conflict areas during or after the war and stay in less affected areas, my estimate would also capture this type of selective migration. The fact that income is higher in less affected areas after the war is partly due to the changing type of movers to these areas. As a result, spatial income differences would overstate the aggregate income effect of conflict. In order to understand the aggregate income effect, the following part develops a model that explicitly takes into account general equilibrium effects of the war such as selective migration. Structural estimation of the model and counterfactual simulations allow me to estimate the aggregate income effect of the civil war in Sierra Leone.

Further to estimating the aggregate income effect, the development and estimation of the model also allows me to shed light on *unobserved* mechanisms of the effect of war. While education is observed, there are other important determinants of productivity that could be affected by the war and a driver of the sector shift and income effects. A simple quantitative evaluation of the observed effects suggests that education is unlikely to be the only driving force of income effects. Workers lose on average 0.64 years of schooling and 23.6% of their income as conflict increases by one standard deviation in their chiefdom. If education was the only channel leading to income reductions, the returns to education for an additional year of schooling would need to be 36% to generate my findings. This is an order of magnitude larger than the typical estimates ranging between 7% and 9%.²² In the model, other determinants of the sector shift and income effects are captured by sector-specific firm productivities. Using the structure of the model, I can estimate these objects and evaluate the impact that conflict has on them.

5. Model

The model is a static general equilibrium economic geography model. The basic setup draws on [Bryan & Morten \(2019\)](#) and [Hsieh et al. \(2019\)](#) and contains elements that are similar to other work in quantitative economic geography, in particular [Eaton & Kortum \(2002\)](#), [Allen & Arkolakis \(2014\)](#) and [Redding \(2016\)](#). In order to capture basic characteristics of the Sierra Leonean economy and the key pathways how conflict affects the economy, the model contains the following principal features that are motivated by reduced-form results. First, the high migration rate in Sierra Leone with movement potentially responding to conflict motivate an economic geography setup with endogenous location choice. Workers choose locations on the basis of an individual location-specific productivity and subject to migration cost. Furthermore, locations differ in aggregate firm productivities and amenities, both of which can be affected by conflict. In this way, conflict can change the spatial allocation of labor.

Second, the reduced-form results indicate that the sector allocation is an important pathway how conflict affects the economy. Therefore, the model features an agricultural and non-agricultural sector. Workers sort into sectors on the basis of individual sector-specific productivities. Firm productivities are also sector-specific and govern sector choice. A differential effect of conflict on firm productivities by sectors can be one mechanism how conflict affects sector allocation.

Third, education and employment in the non-agricultural sector are highly correlated in Sierra Leone. This could be the result of differing returns to education across sectors. With sector-specific returns to education, an education loss resulting from conflict can have both direct effects on income and indirect effects through a change in the sector

²²For reviews on worldwide returns to an additional year of schooling, see for example [Peet et al. \(2015\)](#) and [Psacharopoulos & Patrinos \(2018\)](#).

composition. To capture this mechanism, the model features education with differential returns by sector.²³

This structure allows me to lay out both the direct effects of conflict and the indirect effects through a change in the sector composition and spatial allocation of labor. By explicitly taking into account general equilibrium forces, I am able to estimate aggregate income effects when estimating the model in a next step. While the reduced-form results identify spatial income differences, aggregate income effects may be very different if there is a strong spatial reallocation of labor in response to the war. In addition, estimating unobserved parameters such as firm productivities and amenities using the structure of the model allows me to consider potential mechanisms of a conflict impact on income that are not directly observed in the data.

5.1. Basic setup

Economic environment. The economy consists of 151 locations (chiefdoms) with the set of them denoted by \mathcal{K} and comprises a continuum of individuals indexed by i . They are born in an origin chiefdom $c \in \mathcal{K}$ and can decide to move to destination chiefdom $d \in \mathcal{K}$ where they work in a particular sector $S \in \{A, N\}$, either agriculture or non-agriculture. Movement is costly and differs by sector and education level. Movement cost is denoted by τ_{ecd}^S and enters as a utility cost.

In an [Armington \(1969\)](#) fashion, each location produces a unique agricultural and non-agricultural good that is consumed everywhere. This structure serves as a dispersion force. In order to keep the model as simple as possible, I abstract from trade cost and assume that goods are traded costlessly across space.²⁴ Locations differ in the firm productivities in each sector A_d^S and amenities a_d .

In the spirit of [Roy \(1951\)](#), workers are heterogeneous in their productivity which is specific to both the sector and the destination they choose to work in (or the sectoral product that is produced in that destination). Workers are also endowed with an exogenous education level e .²⁵

Preferences. Individuals have CES preferences over all goods produced in each sector and destination. They consume quantity c_{id}^S of the good produced in sector S and des-

²³The structure of labor mobility under movement cost and destination choice based on individual productivity draws is comparable to the core structure in [Bryan & Morten \(2019\)](#). Conceptually similar to the industries in [Hsieh et al. \(2019\)](#), I have two sectors and sector-specific individual productivity draws. I also introduce human capital with differential returns to education by sector. Relevant to my context, this gives rise to worker sorting across sectors on the basis of both (firm and individual) productivities and education.

²⁴Empirically, a lack of sufficient data on trade between chiefdoms or price differences across chiefdoms also prevent the estimation of a model featuring trade cost. Section 6 and 8 discuss how the introduction of trade cost would change the model estimation and counterfactual simulations, respectively.

²⁵Education is assumed to be exogenous for the sake of simplicity. Conflict is assumed to affect education directly as an exogenous parameter. However, making education endogenous and considering conflict as a shock to an exogenous education *cost* parameter delivers results that are conceptually equivalent to the model with exogenous education. An extension with endogenous education choice and exogenous education cost is presented in Appendix D.1.

ination d . Their utility is also influenced by amenities in their destination a_d and the cost of moving to that destination and choosing their sector to work in τ_{ecd}^S . The utility function is therefore

$$U_{id}^S = a_d(1 - \tau_{ecd}^S) \left(\sum_d (c_{id}^A)^{\frac{\sigma-1}{\sigma}} + (c_{id}^N)^{\frac{\sigma-1}{\sigma}} \right)^{\frac{\sigma}{\sigma-1}} \quad (5)$$

where σ denotes the elasticity of substitution. In line with standard economic geography models, amenities can be thought of to capture elements such as natural beauty, the availability of local public goods and services and the quality of housing. In the particular context of this conflict study, an additional way to think of what amenities capture would be the safety of a place. They enter multiplicatively in the utility function. Like migration cost, they play a key role in workers' location choice. I model migration cost τ_{ecd}^S as the share of income that workers with education e lose when moving from c to d and choosing sector S . Migration cost can be thought of in several ways. One is the actual physical cost of moving away from home. Beyond that and potentially much more importantly, however, this parameter captures the cost of integration into a new community in order to be able to work there. In the Sierra Leonean context, chiefdoms still have traditional chiefdom administrations and strong local governance structures. Traditional chiefs who are members of locally well-known and respected so-called "ruling families" govern many parts of public life. In this context, integration into a new community is an important factor to be able to live and work there.

This cost τ_{ecd}^S is assumed to be both education and sector-specific. The motivation behind this is threefold. First, this is the most general type of moving cost the model could allow for. I am able to estimate this cost non-parametrically and therefore let the data decide to what extent moving cost may actually differ across sectors and education level. Second, a growing theoretical and empirical literature seems to suggest that moving cost may differ by education level.²⁶ Reasons cited here are, for example, a better state of information about opportunities in different places among more educated people or greater availability of valuable job matches. Third, with sector dependence this parameter captures any friction of entering the non-agricultural sector. This may be due to the necessity of moving to a larger town within the same location for non-agricultural employment. This could also embody the fact that non-agricultural work requires connections or fixed investments for people born in rural areas where agricultural work is the default option. Empirically, it turns out that such frictions are quite real. Given the estimated large wage differences between workers in agriculture and non-agriculture, such a friction can rationalize the relatively high number of workers in agriculture.

Costless trade of goods results in common prices for each good p_d^S and a common CES price index P for the entire economy across all destinations:

²⁶See, for example, [Amior \(2015\)](#); [Kennan & Walker \(2011\)](#); [Wozniak \(2010\)](#).

$$P = \left(\sum_d (p_d^A)^{1-\sigma} + (p_d^N)^{1-\sigma} \right)^{\frac{1}{1-\sigma}} \quad (6)$$

Workers supply l_{id}^S effective units of labor in the sector and destination of their choice and are getting paid at the wage rate w_d^S . Their nominal income is therefore $m_{id}^S = w_d^S l_{id}^S$. Standard CES utility maximization results in indirect utility as a linear function of worker income:

$$V_{id}^S = \frac{a_d(1 - \tau_{ecd}^S)w_d^S l_{id}^S}{P} \quad (7)$$

Productivities and labor supply. Workers draw individual productivities for each sector and destination z_{id}^S from a Fréchet distribution. The average productivity draw is different for each sector and destination and it also varies by origin and education level. For workers from origin c with education level e , the average productivity draw for sector S and destination d is captured in the scale parameter q_{ecd}^S . Along with independence, this results in the following multivariate distribution from which productivities are drawn:

$$F_{ec}(\mathbf{z}) = \exp \left(- \sum_d \sum_S \left(\frac{z_{id}^S}{q_{ecd}^S} \right)^{-\theta} \right) \quad (8)$$

where \mathbf{z} denotes the vector of productivity draws and the shape parameter θ governs the dispersion of productivities. A high realization of θ means low dispersion, that is, productivities for the goods produced in different destinations are close to each other. One interpretation of this would be a high degree of similarity across products produced in different destinations.

In this formulation, workers from origin c with education e are, on average, the same in the sense that they draw from the same productivity distribution. Let $q_{ecd}^S = \bar{q}_{ec} \epsilon_{ecd}^S$, that is, average productivity draws are made up of a common component \bar{q}_{ec} for all workers from c with education e and some variation across sectors and destination with mean 1. Differences in the common component \bar{q}_{ec} across origins and education levels capture the idea that some origins have better capabilities to produce high-productivity individuals, e.g., better quality of schooling, childcare, etc.

Apart from productivities, workers also differ in the exogenous realization of their education level e which determines human capital in a standard Mincerian way. Let ϕ^S be the sector-specific returns to education. Human capital for workers with education e is exogenous and assumed to be

$$h_e^S = \exp(\phi^S e) \quad (9)$$

Human capital is combined with a worker's productivity draw to determine their effective individual amount of labor supplied in the market place:

$$l_{id}^S = h_e^S z_{id}^S \quad (10)$$

Sector and destination choice. Using the expression for labor supply 10 in the indirect utility function 7, we can rewrite indirect utility as

$$V_{id}^S = \frac{v_{ecd}^S z_{id}^S}{P} \quad (11)$$

where $v_{ecd}^S := a_d(1 - \tau_{ecd}^S)w_d^S h_e^S$. This essentially captures the wage rate in destination-sector (d, S) adjusted for amenities, movement cost and human capital. From the distribution of productivities, it follows that indirect utility for workers from origin c with education e across sectors and destinations follows a Fréchet distribution with scale parameter $\frac{v_{ecd}^S z_{id}^S}{P}$. Based on this distribution, we can characterize workers' sector and destination choice. The probability that a worker with education level e from origin c chooses sector S in destination d is

$$\pi_{ecd}^S := Pr \left[V_{id}^S > V_{id'}^{S'} \forall d', S' \right] = \frac{(v_{ecd}^S \epsilon_{ecd}^S)^\theta}{\sum_{d'} \sum_{S'} (v_{ecd'}^{S'} \epsilon_{ecd'}^{S'})^\theta} \quad (12)$$

This equation describes worker sorting behavior. If the adjusted wage rate in a particular chiefdom and sector is high relative to all other chiefdoms and sectors, the chiefdom and sector are attractive to work in.

In a similar way, properties of the Fréchet distribution give rise to the following characterization of the average productivity of workers *choosing* sector S and destination d :

$$E [z_i | i \in M_{ecd}^S] = (\pi_{ecd}^S)^{-1/\theta} q_{ecd}^S \Gamma \left(\frac{\theta - 1}{\theta} \right) \quad (13)$$

where $\Gamma(\cdot)$ is the Gamma function.²⁷ Average productivity in a destination-sector (d, S) depends negatively on the share of workers choosing that destination d and sector S . This reflects a selection mechanism. The marginal migrant who chooses to make that move is the one drawn from the left-most part of the distribution with the lowest productivity. This selection mechanism is displayed graphically for sector choice in Figure 2. The negative relationship between the share of workers choosing (d, S) and average productivity in that destination-sector pair giving rise to this selection mechanism is a result of alignment of comparative and absolute advantage. Graphically, this is represented by the upward sloping curves in the figure. This assumption of alignment is hard-baked into the model by using independent Fréchet draws. Heckman & Honore (1990) refer to this as the standard case and it is intuitively appealing that those workers who have a comparative advantage for working in a particular destination-sector pair would also absolutely perform better there.²⁸

²⁷Derivations of equation 12 and 13 are provided in the Appendix, section C.

²⁸Lagakos & Waugh (2013) and Adao (2016) expand on this notion more formally. Lagakos & Waugh (2013) also provides an alternative multivariate characterization of the Fréchet distribution using the Frank copula and arbitrary correlation between productivity draws. This version does *not* automat-

This formulation of average productivities is useful to represent the relationship between average wages and average productivity:

$$\overline{m_{ecd}^S} = w_d^S h_e^S (\pi_{ecd}^S)^{-1/\theta} q_{ecd}^S \Gamma\left(\frac{\theta-1}{\theta}\right) \quad (14)$$

Since average productivity determines average wage in a sector S and destination d for all workers from c with education e , the same negative relationship between the share of workers and wages manifests here. The strength of this negative relationship is determined by the size of $1/\theta$. Lower productivity dispersion (high θ) leads to a small size of $1/\theta$ and therefore little reactivity of average wages to the share of workers from c with education e choosing (d, S) . This is intuitively appealing. Low productivity dispersion implies that the marginal migrant worker is very similar to previous migrants in terms of their productivity. Equation 12 and 14 are the key estimating equations to determine parameters of the model.

Production. Production is linear in the sole input of production, labor L_d^S . Within sectors and destinations, perfectly competing firms are identical and the representative firm deploys firm-level productivity A_d^S . Therefore, production in sector S and destination d is

$$Y_d^S = A_d^S L_d^S \quad (15)$$

Denote the set of workers with education level e from origin c choosing to live in destination d and work in in sector S by M_{ecd}^S . The labor force in a particular sector is the accumulation of individual sector-specific productivities:

$$L_d^S = \sum_c \sum_e \int_{i:i \in M_{ecd}^S} l_{id}^S dF_{ec}(z_{id}^S) \quad (16)$$

Firms are paying the wage rate w_d^S per effective unit of labor supplied. Perfect competition among firms within a sector and destination implies that prices equal marginal cost:

$$p_d^S = \frac{w_d^S}{A_d^S} \quad (17)$$

5.2. Equilibrium and Conflict Impact

Market clearing and equilibrium. Market clearing implies that total production equals total consumption for each unique sectoral good in a destination:

$$A_d^S L_d^S = C_d^S = \frac{(p_d^S)^{-\sigma}}{P^{1-\sigma}} GDP \quad (18)$$

ically generate alignment between comparative and absolute advantage. The aim of their analysis is indeed to allow for different cases and let the data in their global cross-country analysis decide whether they find evidence of such alignment. This turns out to be the case in their empirical analysis.

where C_d^S denotes total consumption of the good produced in destination d and sector S and GDP denotes GDP or total income in the economy. The second equality comes from CES preferences over all goods.

Using the definition of individual labor supply 10 and the characterization of average productivity in a destination-sector 13, we can reformulate total labor supply in a destination-sector as a function of labor movement across space π_{ecd}^S and exogenous parameters only:

$$L_d^S = \sum_c \sum_e \overline{N_{ec}} (\pi_{ecd}^S)^{1-\frac{1}{\theta}} h_e^S q_{ecd}^S \Gamma \left(\frac{\theta-1}{\theta} \right) \quad (19)$$

where $\overline{N_{ec}}$ is the birth population in origin c with education level e . Noting that the movement probabilities π_{ecd}^S are itself a function of exogenous parameters and endogenous wage rates w_d^S , substituting equation 17 in for prices and taking the ratio of the market clearing conditions across a sector or destination, the model can be solved as the following system of equations in endogenous destination-sector labor unit wage rates:

$$\left(\frac{w_d^S}{w_f^T} \right)^\sigma = \left(\frac{A_d^S}{A_f^T} \right)^{\sigma-1} \frac{L_f^T}{L_d^S} \quad \forall S, T \in \{A, N\} \quad \forall d, f \in \mathcal{K} \quad (20)$$

The impact of conflict. In this economy, conflict is considered to have an impact on the following sets of parameters. First, it may affect education. The destruction of schools and killings of teachers can plausibly result in individuals losing out on education in their chieftom of origin. If individuals have a worse realization of education e , this directly translates into lower human capital $h_e^S = \exp(\phi^S e)$. To what extent human capital suffers from the education reduction is governed by the returns to education in each sector ϕ^S .

Second, conflict may affect firm-level productivities A_d^S in each sector. In the model, this parameter would essentially capture any sector-specific determinant of productivity. For example, it could entail the destruction of essential infrastructure for production in a sector. It could also capture immobile physical capital. I do not model physical capital here explicitly. To the extent that physical capital is immobile, however, this would enter the model in exactly the same way as A_d^S . Any destruction of physical capital without reconstruction in the long run would therefore be captured by a reduction of A_d^S .

Third, conflict may have an impact on the amenities of a chieftom a_d . If fighting leads to the destruction of local public goods or a generally risky environment to live in, this would be captured by the amenities in the model.

Changes to these parameter have direct implications for income of workers and indirect implications through changing the allocation of labor across sectors and space. Figure 5 shows these relationships in a diagram. The market clearing condition 20 reveals that changes to firm-level productivities have a first-order impact on labor unit wage rates while changes to education and amenities only affect wages through the general equilibrium channel by affecting labor supply in each sector and destination. This means that

shocks to firm-level productivities have first-order impacts on income as well as sector and destination choice through their direct impact on wage rates.²⁹

The effect on income is rather straightforward. Worker income is a direct function of the sector-destination wage rate w_d^S and human capital h_e^S . Hence, reductions in education and firm productivities directly decrease income.

For the effect on sector and destination choice, it is instructive to consider the ratio of π_{ecd}^S across sectors and locations to see how conflict changes the labor allocation across sectors and space:

$$\frac{\pi_{ecd}^A}{\pi_{ecd}^N} = \left(\frac{w_d^A \exp(\phi^A e)(1 - \tau_{ecd}^A) \epsilon_{ecd}^A}{w_d^N \exp(\phi^N e)(1 - \tau_{ecd}^N) \epsilon_{ecd}^N} \right)^\theta \quad (21)$$

$$\frac{\pi_{ecd}^S}{\pi_{ecc}^S} = \left(\frac{a_d w_d^S (1 - \tau_{ecd}^S) \epsilon_{ecd}^S}{a_c w_c^S (1 - \tau_{ecc}^S) \epsilon_{ecc}^S} \right)^\theta \quad (22)$$

As equation 21 reveals, education has a direct impact on sector choice within a location to the extent that returns to education differ by sector. In particular, if $\phi^N > \phi^A$, workers are more likely to work in agriculture as conflict negatively affects their education since education losses translate into a greater human capital loss in sector N .

Through its first-order impact on wage rates w_d^S , any changes in firm-level productivities also affect sector choice to the extent that one sector is hit harder than the other. If non-agricultural firm productivity decreases to a greater extent than agricultural firm productivity, this leads to a decrease in the relative wage w_d^N/w_d^A with the implication that individuals move out of sector N into sector A .

Changes in amenities do not have a direct effect on the sector composition but they directly affect location choice. Equation 22 represents the probability of leaving relative to the probability of staying at home within a given sector S . Considering a conflict effect at origin, as a_c decreases workers are more likely to leave. Similarly, if firm productivities at home go down wage rates w_d^S decrease which encourages leaving.

Education losses can lead to direct effects on location choice if moving cost differs by education level. In particular, if moving is more costly for the uneducated, $\tau_{0cd}^S > \tau_{1cd}^S$, a decrease in education encourages more stayers. This effect goes in the opposite direction of the amenity and firm productivity effect. Apart from potentially changing the number of movers, the interplay of education, firm productivity and amenity changes as a result of conflict may also change the selection of movers. How the selection changes would, for example, depend on whether and to what extent moving cost differentials between educated and uneducated people exist in the two sectors.

²⁹The intuition for this positive first-order impact of A_d^S on w_d^S is straight-forward. Consider an increase in A_d^S . As a result, marginal cost decreases and the price drops. Demand rises and the wage adjusts on the labor market to enable increased production.

6. Model Estimation

In order to test directly how these different parameters of the model are affected, I need to estimate the parameters of the model first. While education outcomes are observed in the data, firm-level productivities and amenities are not. The structure of the model allows for a recursive estimation strategy in four steps, similar to the estimation strategy used by Bryan & Morten (2019). First, I use a measure of observed income variance to identify the Fréchet shape parameter θ that captures the dispersion of individual productivities. Second, the variation of income across sectors, space and education levels identifies labor unit wage rates w_d^S , returns to education ϕ^S and the common component of the Fréchet scale parameter by origin and education $\overline{q_{ec}}$. The model definition of average income (equation 14) is used as a regression equation in this step. Third, from estimated wage rates in each location and sector w_d^S I can infer firm-level productivities A_d^S using the market clearing conditions. Fourth, I make use of the fact that location and sector choice depend on amenity and wage rate differences across space and sectors as well as migration cost (equation 12). Conditional on estimated wage rates w_d^S , observed migration flows and sector choices identify amenities a_d and migration cost τ_{ecd}^S . This section explains these steps in detail.

6.1. Step 1: Estimating productivity dispersion θ

The Fréchet distribution permits the following expression of moments of average income:

$$\frac{\text{var}[m_{ecd}^S]}{\overline{m_{ecd}^S}^2} = \frac{\Gamma(\frac{\theta-2}{\theta})}{\Gamma(\frac{\theta-1}{\theta})^2} - 1 \quad (23)$$

To use this and further relationships from the model in the estimation, I construct a dataset in which the unit of observation is a (c, e, d, S) cell on the migration matrix. Throughout, the education realization is a simple binary indicating whether workers have finished primary school or not. For each origin-education pair (151 origin chiefdoms \times 2 education levels), I consider outcomes in each destination-sector pair (151 destination chiefdoms \times 2 sectors).³⁰

The left-hand side of equation 23 is the squared coefficient of variation of income. How income varies within a destination-sector for people sharing the same origin and education level identifies the dispersion of individual productivities. The intuition is that this group of workers faces the same wage rates, human capital and average individual productivity and is selected in the same way. Therefore, the only element that can explain how their income varies is variation in their individual productivities.

Using the observed moment on the left-hand side in each (c, e, d, S) cell, I perform a general method-of-moment estimation of θ . For the second moment on the Fréchet

³⁰The 151 chiefdoms consist of 146 observed chiefdoms (5 missing in the 2018 household data, 3 missing in the 2011 household data with conflict information) in all but the Western Region, the four chiefdoms in the Western Rural District and taking the capital Freetown as one chiefdom.

distribution to exist, θ needs to exceed 2. In this admissible range of θ values greater than 2, the function has a unique solution, that is, I can uniquely identify the parameter.

6.2. Step 2: Estimating wage rates w_d^S , education returns ϕ^S and average individual productivities $\overline{q_{ec}}$

Taking the logarithm of equation 14 yields the following regression equation:

$$\ln \overline{m_{ecd}^S} = \underbrace{\ln \Gamma \left(\frac{\theta - 1}{\theta} \right) w_d^S - \frac{1}{\theta} \ln \pi_{ecd}^S}_{\text{Destination-sector FE}} + (\phi^A - \phi^N)(e \times I^A) + \underbrace{\phi^N e + \ln \overline{q_{ec}}}_{\text{Origin-education FE}} + \ln \epsilon_{ecd}^S \quad (24)$$

where I^A is a dummy variable for the agricultural sector. Average wages for workers with origin-education (c, e) who choose destination-sector (d, S) is determined by the wage rate in that destination-sector, their human capital and the average individual productivity draw $q_{ecd}^S = \overline{q_{ec}} \epsilon_{ecd}^S$. The share of workers π_{ecd}^S with origin c and education e who choose destination d and sector S enters as a selection term: The more people make that choice, the lower the average productivity (see discussion above and Figure 2). Observing π_{ecd}^S and having estimated θ , we can fully control for this selection mechanism by plugging this information into the equation. Taking $\ln \epsilon_{ecd}^S$ with mean 0 as an error term, a regression of $\ln \overline{m_{ecd}^S} + \frac{1}{\theta} \ln \pi_{ecd}^S$ on destination-sector fixed effects, origin-education fixed effects and observed education realization times sector choice identifies the wage rates w_d^S , origin-education component of the average individual productivity $\overline{q_{ec}}$, and differential returns to education in the two sectors $\phi^A - \phi^N$.³¹ Intuitively, controlling for the selection into a destination and sector, variation in income across space, sector and education levels identifies the wage rates, average individual productivities and returns to education.³² Using the θ estimates from Step 1, I can recover estimates of w_d^S from the destination-sector fixed effects.

³¹With sector-origin fixed effects, I am not able to separately identify ϕ^A , ϕ^N and $\overline{q_{ec}}$. Instead, I can identify $\phi^A - \phi^N$, $\ln \overline{q_{0c}}$ for the uneducated and $\phi^N + \ln \overline{q_{1c}}$ for the educated. For all further estimations and simulations, however, this information suffices since average individual productivities $\overline{q_{ec}}$ and human capital $\exp(\phi^S e)$ only enter jointly in these calculations.

³²Destination-sector fixed effects and origin-education fixed effects are only identified up to scale relative to each other since origins and destinations are the same locations. As a normalization, I choose the origin-education fixed effect of Freetown to be 0 with the implication that $\exp(\phi^N) \overline{q_{1, \text{Freetown}}} = 1$. Therefore, all other origin scale parameter average estimates $\overline{q_{ec}}$ are evaluated relative to the distribution for educated people in the capital. To the extent that ϵ_{ecd}^S differs by sector on average, this is captured in the destination-sector fixed effects and thus the estimate of w_d^S . In particular, the estimate of wage rates is scaled by the sector average of ϵ_{ecd}^S . Since this estimate is used in the following to find firm productivities A_d^S , the latter estimate is also scaled with the implication that its logarithm $\ln A_d^S$ is shifted by a constant. However, this is irrelevant for the simulations since the necessary information that informs the counterfactual simulations is the relationship between $\ln A_d^S$ and conflict. A constant shift of $\ln A_d^S$ does not change that relationship.

6.3. Step 3: Computing labor supply L_d^S and firm productivity A_d^S

Using estimates from the previous steps and observed origin populations by education level $\overline{N_{ec}}$ allows me to compute labor supply in each destination and sector as stated in equation 19. Having computed labor supplies and drawing on my w_d^S estimates from Step 2, I only need an estimate of the elasticity of substitution σ to proceed with the identification of firm-level productivities A_d^S . I borrow the value from the literature and set $\sigma = 8$.³³

With these values in hand, firm-level productivities are identified up to scale in the market clearing conditions 20, restated here for ease of reference:

$$\left(\frac{w_d^S}{w_f^T}\right)^\sigma = \left(\frac{A_d^S}{A_f^T}\right)^{\sigma-1} \frac{L_f^T}{L_d^S} \quad \forall S, T \in \{A, N\} \quad \forall d, f \in \mathcal{K} \quad (25)$$

I choose to normalize $A_{Freetown}^N \equiv 1$ and can then recover A_d^S for each destination and sector one-by-one. The normalization essentially implies that all values of A_d^S are measured relative to the non-agricultural productivity in the capital Freetown.³⁴

6.4. Step 4: Estimating amenities a_d and migration cost τ_{ecd}^S

In order to estimate amenities and movement cost across sectors and destinations, I consider the share of leavers within a sector relative to stayers and the sector share differential within a location. This yields the following equations (the logarithms of equations 22 and 21):

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\ln \pi_{ecd}^S - \ln \pi_{ecc}^S}{\theta} &= \ln a_d - \ln a_c + \ln w_d^S - \ln w_c^S \\ &\quad + \ln(1 - \tau_{ecd}^S) - \ln(1 - \tau_{ecc}^S) + \ln \epsilon_{ecd}^S - \ln \epsilon_{ecc}^S \end{aligned} \quad (27)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\ln \pi_{ecc}^A - \ln \pi_{ecc}^N}{\theta} &= \ln w_c^A - \ln w_c^N + (\phi^A - \phi^N)e \\ &\quad + \ln(1 - \tau_{ecc}^A) - \ln(1 - \tau_{ecc}^N) + \ln \epsilon_{ecc}^A - \ln \epsilon_{ecc}^N \end{aligned} \quad (28)$$

³³I follow Bryan & Morten (2019) and Allen & Arkolakis (2014) who, like in my model, have an elasticity of substitution of Armington goods across space within a country. Hsieh et al. (2019) and Bernard et al. (2003) use values between 3 and 4 for the substitution between goods across industries and countries, respectively. I discuss robustness of my main results to different values of σ between 2 and 10 in section 8.

³⁴An introduction of trade cost in the classic iceberg format would have an implication for the estimation of A_d^S in this step. Denote the iceberg trade cost by $\eta_{dg}^S \geq 1$ as the amount of good produced in d that would need to be bought in any other location g to consume one unit of that good in g . The market clearing conditions would contain a market access term:

$$\left(\frac{w_d^S}{w_f^T}\right)^\sigma = \left(\frac{A_d^S}{A_f^T}\right)^{\sigma-1} \frac{\sum_g (\eta_{dg}^S)^{-\sigma} GDP_g / P_g^{1-\sigma} L_f^T}{\sum_g (\eta_{fg}^S)^{-\sigma} GDP_g / P_g^{1-\sigma} L_d^S} \quad (26)$$

Market access is the weighted sum of real GDP in all buying locations of a good that is produced in d or f where the weights are the inverse trade cost. With trade cost, therefore, my estimates of firm productivities A_d^S are in fact a composite of firm productivities and market access. Section 8 discusses the implications for the results in counterfactual simulations and the estimation of the aggregate effects of civil war.

Using estimated θ, w_c^S and observed migration flows across sectors and destinations π_{ecd}^S , equation 27 identifies amenities up to scale. I treat the whole expression on the bottom involving τ and ϵ as a residual in a regression. The amenities are coefficients on the regressor $I_{d=k} - I_{c=k}$ which is a destination minus an origin dummy variable. Intuitively, controlling for wage rate differences across space, migration flows are governed by amenity differences between locations and migration cost. To the extent that migration cost is symmetric, amenity differences and migration cost can be separated. In this case, amenity differences shape affect migration flows asymmetrically while migration cost affects migration flows symmetrically. If amenities in location d are much larger than in location c , few people move from d to c while many people make the opposite move. If migration cost between the two locations is large, few people move both ways. Asymmetries in migration cost between two locations, that is $\tau_{ecd}^S \neq \tau_{edc}^S$, are loaded onto the amenity estimate. Since amenities are the same across education levels and sectors within a location while migration cost is education- and sector-specific, the amenity estimate is a composite of amenities and the average asymmetry in migration cost across education and sectors in that case. This only affects the interpretation of the estimate, but not any substantial results in counterfactual simulations performed below.

In the same spirit as before with firm-level productivities, I normalize everything against the capital and set $a_{Freetown} \equiv 1$. To be able to make use of information when $\pi_{ecd}^S = 0$ and deal with potential heteroskedasticity issues introducing bias in this log-specification, I follow [Silva & Tenreyro \(2006\)](#) and make use of Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood (PPML) estimation for this equation.³⁵

In order to uncover migration cost τ_{ecd}^S , the residuals from this regression can be computed. Focusing on the τ elements in the error term, we note that we identify movement cost only relative to the cost of staying at home within a sector. The cost to enter a particular sector may be different for the agricultural and non-agricultural sector. In order to capture systematic differences between $1 - \tau_{ecc}^A$ and $1 - \tau_{ecc}^N$, I use equation 28 which contains the difference between these two terms. Combining the difference with the first regression residuals, I can identify τ_{ecd}^S for both sectors relative to the cost of staying at home and working in agriculture τ_{ecc}^A .³⁶

³⁵The moments corresponding to the score vectors in this ML estimation are:

$$E \left[\left(\left(\frac{\pi_{ecd}^S}{\pi_{ecc}^S} \right)^{\frac{1}{\theta}} \frac{w_c^S}{w_d^S} - \exp(\ln a_d - \ln a_c) \right) (I_{d=k} - I_{c=k}) \right]$$

where $I_{d=k} - I_{c=k}$ is a destination minus origin dummy variable.

³⁶The simple adjustment of the first regression residuals for non-agriculture is to subtract $\ln(1 - \tau_{ecc}^A) - \ln(1 - \tau_{ecc}^N)$ computed using the second equation since $\ln(1 - \tau_{ecd}^N) - \ln(1 - \tau_{ecc}^A) = \ln(1 - \tau_{ecd}^N) - \ln(1 - \tau_{ecc}^N) - (\ln(1 - \tau_{ecc}^A) - \ln(1 - \tau_{ecc}^N))$. I have abstracted from the ϵ elements here which are random variations with a mean of 1. Strictly speaking, when computing the residuals as described and taking the exponential, I would identify a composite term, namely $(1 - \tau_{ecd}^S)\epsilon_{ecd}^S / (1 - \tau_{ecc}^A)\epsilon_{ecc}^A$. When using these estimates going forward in a model simulation, however, they only enter in the expression for π_{ecd}^S both in the numerator and the denominator (cf. equation 12). The origin-agriculture specific element in the denominator of the identified residual would cancel out in the expression of π_{ecd}^S .

7. Estimation Results

7.1. Model Parameters

Table 13 shows the estimated model parameters. The dispersion parameter θ is estimated to be 4.729. In relation to Bryan & Morten (2019) who estimate this object as well, I find parameters that compare plausibly to theirs. Their equivalent estimate of θ is 3.18 for Indonesia and 2.69 for the US. The degree of productivity dispersion this measures can be interpreted as the degree of similarity of goods produced in different locations. It would therefore be expected that less developed countries with a smaller range of varied goods produced would have a smaller degree of dispersion which is reflected in a higher θ realization.

The returns to education estimates show a great differential by sector. This estimate stems from regression equation 24 with log wage as an outcome variable and can therefore be interpreted as a relative return. Returns to primary school education in non-agriculture exceed returns to education in agriculture by 14 percentage points. Considering migration cost by sector and education level, there is a significant difference by sector. It turns out to be much more costly for people to enter the non-agricultural sector and move somewhere than the agricultural sector. Relative to Bryan & Morten (2019) who find 39% migration cost in Indonesia, I find generally higher migration cost in Sierra Leone. The average across both education levels and sectors is 56%. Like in their case, I find a strong positive correlation between my estimate of τ and log distance between two places. Figure 8 displays the strong positive relationship with distance which suggests that the estimated parameters capture something real about the cost of moving. Another interesting fact about estimated moving cost is that there is a clear differential by education level in the agricultural sector. Uneducated people have to forego 19 percentage points more of their income when leaving one's origin than educated people in that sector. No such difference exists for non-agricultural workers. This could reflect a dissimilarity in crops across space whereby educated farmers are better able to adapt to different crops. Alternatively, this may also be due to an information barrier or the degree of connections to other chiefdoms. Educated farmers may be better informed about crops or opportunities for agricultural work elsewhere or better connected to farmers away from home. Since integration into a new chiefdom in Sierra Leone is important in order to work there, this could be a key driver of the education differential.

The estimates of labor unit wage rates by sector are shown in Figure 9 relative to the distribution of observed income. In line with the income distribution, labor unit wage rates in non-agriculture are higher than in agriculture. Interestingly, their variation is also greater. Generally, there is substantial variation in wage rates. The highest wage rates differ from the lowest wage rates by a factor of more than ten. Firm-level produc-

Furthermore, ϵ_{ecd}^S actually appears multiplicatively in π_{ecd}^S , so this residual is exactly what we need. Since it only captures mean one random variation, however, to fix ideas it is easier to abstract from ϵ_{ecd}^S when we conceptually think about the estimation.

tivities vary similarly substantially. Their distribution by sector is shown in Figure 10. Average agricultural firm-level productivity is 16% of the non-agricultural productivity in the capital and average non-agricultural firm-level productivity is 20% of non-agricultural firm-level productivity in the capital. To assess whether these estimates are capturing something real about firm-level productivities in Sierra Leone, I correlate them with observed variables related to firm-level productivity in the data. Figure 11 demonstrates the result. Agricultural productivity estimates are strongly positively correlated with access to agricultural drying or storage space. Similarly, non-agricultural productivity estimates are highly positively correlated with measures of the existence and extent of electricity connection.

Finally, Figure 12 displays the distribution of amenities across space. Compared to wage rate and firm-level productivities, amenities vary considerably less space. Relative to the capital Freetown, average amenities are 13% smaller. In a similar exercise as before, I also test the plausibility of these estimates by correlating them with observed variables in the data that plausibly reflect amenities. From information on access to eight public goods and services, I construct two public good indices.³⁷ I also consider phone coverage and recharge possibilities within chiefdoms. With all these measures, amenities are strongly positively correlated as Figure 13 shows.

7.2. Impact of Conflict Estimates

With these parameter estimates in hand, we can proceed to estimate the impact of conflict on firm-level productivities and location amenities directly. For this exercise, I need to take a stance on the specific relationship between conflict and the parameters of the model. I assume a log-linear relationship between the continuous parameters and conflict:

$$\begin{aligned}\ln A_c^A &= \gamma_0^A + \gamma_1^A \text{conflict}_c + v_c^A \\ \ln A_c^N &= \gamma_0^N + \gamma_1^N \text{conflict}_c + v_c^N \\ \ln a_c &= \delta_0 + \delta_1 \text{conflict}_c + w_c\end{aligned}\tag{29}$$

where c is a chiefdom index. The parameters $(\gamma_1^A, \gamma_1^N, \delta_1)$ capture the way conflict affects the economy as discussed in section 5.2. These are the parameters of interest to be estimated. Since conflict variation is not exogenous, I employ the same IV identification strategy as the reduced-form analysis. In particular, the reduced-form results suggest that conflict intensity is higher in places that have higher income to begin with since the OLS results are considerably weaker than the IV results. In the context of the model, higher initial income in locations that experience conflict is plausibly related to greater productivity of firms in such places before the war. Therefore, when investigating the

³⁷In particular, the public goods indices measure whether, on average, the following public goods are within 30 or 60 minute reach: (i) supply of drinking water, (ii) a food market, (iii) public transportation, (iv) a primary school, (v) a secondary school, (vi) a health clinic, (vii) a hospital, and (viii) an all year motorable road.

effect of conflict on firm productivities, a simple OLS estimate would suffer from selection bias.

Using distance to the Liberian border as an instrument for conflict intensity, I can identify the causal effect of conflict on firm productivities and amenities.³⁸ Table 14 shows the results at the chiefdom level.³⁹ The effect of conflict on agricultural firm productivity and amenities is small and insignificant. While the effect of conflict on firm productivity in sector N is also insignificant, its size is non-negligible. An increase in conflict intensity by one standard deviation would lead to a decrease in non-agricultural firm productivity by 7.7% according to this estimate. Since this is not a trivial decrease and given that the IV estimation procedure is quite imprecise here, I am cautious not to simply interpret this as a zero effect owing to a lack of significance. In the following, I provide counterfactual simulations both with and without considering an effect on non-agricultural firm productivity.

8. Counterfactual Simulations

Having estimated all the parameters of the model, I can perform counterfactual simulations. These simulations serve two purposes. First, by simulating away the conflict in the whole economy, I can generate a true counterfactual of what the entire Sierra Leonean economy would look like today in the absence of civil war. This allows for the estimation of *aggregate* effects. If people move in response to the war, the reduced-form analysis does not provide such a counterfactual. The reduced-form IV analysis essentially considers chiefdoms that are farther away from the Liberian border a counterfactual for chiefdoms closer to the border. However, population movement in response to the war implies that any difference between such chiefdoms captures both the direct effect of conflict as well as migration. In order to generate a no-war counterfactual of the Sierra Leonean economy, the first simulation reverts all effects that the war has on model parameters. I identify two such effects: first, a reduction in education and second, a reduction in firm productivity in the non-agricultural sector. The IV estimates inform the size of the conflict effect. Figure 14 displays how this scenario changes the underlying distribution of educated origin populations as well as non-agricultural firm productivity A_d^N . By reverting the effect of the war, chiefdoms that experienced conflict have a larger educated population and greater non-agricultural firm productivity in the simulated counterfactual.

Unlike a partial equilibrium exercise in which everything else is kept constant, the simulation generates a new counterfactual in general equilibrium. The model traces through both the direct implications of these parameter changes for aggregate income as well as

³⁸There is an implicit functional form assumption. I assume that the relationship between the amenity and firm productivity parameters and conflict is log-linear.

³⁹Some firm productivities cannot be estimated since no one actually works in that sector and destination. Hence, we do not have any income information for those sector-destinations. This applies to one location in agriculture and 13 locations in non-agriculture. These chiefdoms are excluded from the analysis of firm productivities here. In the simulations, the firm productivity for those sector-destinations is set equal to zero to rationalize no worker choosing them.

the indirect implications by changing the allocation of labor across sectors and space. A greater share of educated people in a chiefdom leads to a greater share of workers in the non-agricultural sector in which returns to education are larger. In the agricultural sector in which migration cost is much lower among the educated, it also results in more leavers in locations with higher human capital. By contrast, higher firm productivity in non-agriculture attracts more stayers and in-migrants in that sector.

Second, by simulating away only the effect of conflict on education, I can assess the quantitative importance of the human capital effect of war relative to firm productivity losses. In this scenario, only the educated populations in affected chiefdoms is increased while firm productivity stays at the level at which it is everywhere. The simulation traces through both the direct effect of human capital increases on income and indirect implications by reallocating labor across sectors and space in response to higher levels of human capital in some locations.

I find evidence of a strong effect of civil war on aggregate income in the first scenario. In the absence of the war, aggregate income in Sierra Leone would be 14.8% higher today. With lower pay in agriculture, an aggregate sector shift seems to be an important driver of this result. The economy-wide share of people in agriculture would be 6.3 percentage points lower.

These results mask substantial heterogeneity. Considering the full reversal of the war, Figure 15 displays the aggregate income increases in each chiefdom with the largest gainers experiencing a 31% increase in income.

In contrast to the results in the first scenario, the differences in aggregate income and the share of agricultural workers are a lot smaller in the second simulation, albeit still sizeable. Only reverting the human capital loss resulting from war, aggregate income in the country would be 4.7% higher today and the economy-wide share of workers in agriculture 1.4 percentage points lower. This means that the human capital loss can account for about 1/3 of the total long-run effect of civil war in Sierra Leone while a reduction in non-agricultural firm productivity accounts for about 2/3.⁴⁰

8.1. Limitations

There are four limitations to this analysis that qualify the result. First, the identification of aggregate effects implicitly assumes that some chiefdoms are not at all affected by the war. The identification of how conflict affects key parameters of the model rests on within-country comparisons of chiefdoms that are closer to or farther from the Liberian border and therefore experience conflict to varying degrees. In the counterfactual analysis, chiefdoms that are very far from the border with a zero realization on the conflict measure are assumed not to experience any effect of civil war. If those chiefdoms suffer in some

⁴⁰There is no important interaction between the education and firm productivity channel. Indeed, if I only revert the firm productivity loss, I get results that are almost perfectly complementary to the second scenario. Aggregate income would be 9.2% higher and the economy-wide share of workers in agriculture 4.7 percentage points lower.

way from the war, my estimates would be an underestimate of the true aggregate effect.

Second, the estimate captures the net effect of civil war in the long run after post-conflict interventions between the end of the war and 2018. Since the international community was engaged in reconstruction work after the war, the aggregate effects I present are not the pure effect of civil war but rather how the economy still suffers after taking into account reconstruction efforts. The pure effect of the war would therefore be weakly greater than my estimate.

Third, if one were to relax the assumption of costlessly tradable goods across space, the actual effect of conflict on firm productivities may be smaller and my aggregate income effect thus overestimated. With trade cost, my estimates of firm productivities would capture a combination of these productivities and market access of a location. Market access is the weighted sum of all other locations' real GDP where the weights are inverse trade cost (cf. equation 26). Part of the conflict effect on firm productivities that I estimate could stem from a reduction in market access. If market access is lower because trade cost increased as a result of the war, my estimate of the aggregate income effect is not necessarily different but the mechanisms driving this result are – part of the effect would be due to increased trade cost rather than reduced firm productivity. However, if market access is lower because economic performance in close chiefdoms with low trade cost contracted, this contraction should not be loaded on a reduction in the firm productivity parameter. As a result, the actual effect on firm productivities would be lower and the aggregate income effect would be smaller. However, the market access term would contaminate the firm productivity estimates for both agriculture and non-agriculture. Since I do not find any effect of conflict on agricultural firm productivity it is unlikely that the latter channel plays a major role. Therefore, any potential upward bias from assuming free trade across chiefdoms is likely to be small.

Fourth, while the aggregate income results are robust to different values of the elasticity of substitution σ , the sector shift is more sensitive to the choice of that value. Figures 19 and 20 show the aggregate income and sector shift changes for a range of σ values between 2 and 12. The sector shift is stronger the higher the value. This is intuitive since the elasticity of substitution governs the trade-off between two competing effects on the sector allocation as productivity changes. As productivity in sector N decreases relative to sector A , the non-agricultural good gets more expensive which leads to lower demand. Hence, production in that sector goes down. At the same time, lower productivity implies that the labor input needed to produce a given amount is larger. The elasticity of substitution determines the strength of the first effect. The larger the elasticity, the stronger the substitution effect and the more people shift sector to accommodate changing demand.⁴¹ The relevant literature does not use a value below $\sigma = 4$. Even in that case, my result

⁴¹As long as the $\sigma > 1$, the result on the sector shift only changes quantitatively. If $\sigma < 1$, the first effect is weaker than the second effect and a productivity decrease in sector N implies more people working in that sector. This is indeed Baumol's cost disease argument and shown formally in Ngai & Pissarides (2007). However, empirically, the relevant literature for the elasticity of substitution used in my context suggests values that are considerably larger than 1.

on the sector shift is still sizeable with the share of agriculture increasing by 4.5 (1.1) percentage points in the first (second) scenario. The aggregate income increase is 13.9% (4.6%), very close to my original results.

8.2. Selective Migration

While the aggregate income effect of civil war in many chiefdoms is sizeable, it is substantially smaller than what the reduced-form estimates would suggest. If we were to take the reduced-form estimate and calculate a country-wide weighted average by conflict intensity and chiefdom population we would arrive at a 42% aggregate income loss. The fact that spatial income differences exceed aggregate income differences suggests that selective migration in response to conflict matters a great deal.

It is therefore worth considering the nature of this migration response. Changing both human capital and non-agricultural firm productivity in the model generates no correlation between conflict intensity and population change in a chiefdom. Figure 16 displays this relationship. By contrast, as demonstrated in Figure 17, changing only human capital generates a positive relationship between conflict intensity and population change in a chiefdom. The changes considered here are negative changes, that is, (partial) simulations of conflict relative to a no-war scenario. These correlations are driven by two opposing forces on population changes. One is that a drop in firm productivity encourages leaving. The other one is that a drop in human capital encourages staying since moving cost is higher for the uneducated. It seems that these two forces cancel each other off in the first scenario.

This result corresponds to the empirical reality which implies that both human capital and non-agricultural firm productivity decreases as a result of civil war seems to be the appropriate scenario to capture the full effect of conflict. Empirically, I can use the population information from the censuses in 1985 before the war and in 2015 after the war in each chiefdom to test the relationship between conflict and population changes. Figure 18 depicts this relationship. Conflict intensity is clearly unrelated to population changes.⁴² This result is in line with Davis & Weinstein (2002) who find that population densities in cities in Japan recovers from bombing in the long run.

However, while this suggest that the migration flows are unaffected by the war, it does not speak to the *composition* of movers that may change as a result of the war. A look at moving cost is informative in this regard. Moving costs are higher for the uneducated, but only in the agricultural sector. For agricultural workers, it is on average 19 percentage points more costly to move if they are uneducated. For non-agricultural workers, there is no significant difference in moving cost (see Table 13). Therefore, as conflict affects education and sector composition, it has implications for the composition of movers. Human capital losses and firm productivity losses push individuals back into

⁴²The lack of a significant relationship holds up when performing this analysis within districts or using distance to the border as an instrument for conflict.

agriculture and bring about a higher share of uneducated people in a chiefdom. While uneducated agricultural workers face higher moving cost and are less likely to move, non-agricultural workers leave in response to conflict. This selective migration response to the war implies that spatial income differences observed after the war overstate the aggregate income effect of the war.

9. Conclusion

This paper investigates the general equilibrium impact of civil war in Sierra Leone. To this end, I first establish that conflict leads to large spatial differences in income between areas that were more and less affected. These seem to be driven by a sector shift. People are more likely to work in agriculture as a result of the war. While I can identify spatial differences with an identification strategy that deals with the non-random placement of conflict, they still capture both the direct effect of conflict as well as general equilibrium forces. Thus, spatial differences are not reflective of changes in *aggregate* income or sector composition.

In order to make progress on estimating aggregate effects, this paper develops an economic geography model. To keep track of population movement and its general equilibrium implication in response to the war, labor mobility under migration cost is a key feature of the model. Individuals can also choose their sector of work subject to a productivity draw for each sector and destination. In the model, conflict can change human capital, firm productivities and amenities. This affects aggregate income both directly and indirectly through changing the sector composition and spatial allocation of labor.

The key parameters of the model can be estimated in a simple recursive procedure. In particular, observed income and migration flows identify firm productivities in each sector and destination as well as location amenities. While education outcomes are directly observed in the data those parameters are not. Having estimated all parameters, I can assess the effect of conflict on education, firm productivities and amenities. I find that education and firm productivity in the non-agricultural sector are persistently and strongly affected by the war while amenities and agricultural firm productivity are not.

Finally, these results can be taken forward for counterfactual simulations of the Sierra Leonean economy in the absence of the war. A full reversal of the war scenario involves reverting both the human capital loss and non-agricultural firm productivity loss. In this scenario, Sierra Leonean aggregate income would be 14.8% higher today and the economy-wide share of workers in agriculture 6.3 percentage points lower. By contrast, if only the human capital loss is reverted, aggregate income would be 4.7% higher today and the share of agricultural workers 1.4 percentage points lower. While the latter effects are still sizeable, they also suggest that firm productivity effects of civil war play a greater role in explaining aggregate income losses than human capital loss in Sierra Leone. Identifying exactly the relevant elements for firm productivity that are potential drivers behind this

and using a similar model structure to learn about the aggregate effect and mechanisms of conflict impact in other settings are left as promising avenues for future research.

References

- Abadie, A. & Gardeazabal, J. (2003). The economic costs of conflict: A case study of the Basque country. *The American Economic Review*, 93(1), 113–132. [Cited on page 4.]
- Acemoglu, D., Reed, T., & Robinson, J. A. (2014). Chiefs: Economic development and elite control of civil society in Sierra Leone. *Journal of Political Economy*, 122(2), 319–368. [Cited on pages 7 and 9.]
- Adao, R. (2016). Worker heterogeneity, wage inequality, and international trade. *Working Paper, University of Chicago*. [Cited on page 18.]
- Akbulut-Yuksel, M. (2014). Children of war: The long-run effects of large-scale physical destruction and warfare on children. *Journal of Human Resources*, 49(3), 634–662. [Cited on page 4.]
- Akresh, R. & De Walque, D. (2011). Armed conflict and schooling: Evidence from the 1994 Rwandan genocide. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*. [Cited on page 4.]
- Alesina, A. & Perotti, R. (1996). Income distribution, political instability, and investment. *European Economic Review*, 40(6), 1203–1228. [Cited on page 3.]
- Allen, T. & Arkolakis, C. (2014). Trade and the topography of the spatial economy. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 129(3), 1085–1140. [Cited on pages 4, 14, and 24.]
- Amior, M. (2015). Why are higher skilled workers more mobile geographically? the role of the job surplus. *Working Paper, LSE*. [Cited on page 16.]
- Armington, P. S. (1969). A theory of demand for products distinguished by place of production. *IMF Staff Papers*, 16(1), 159–178. [Cited on page 15.]
- Barro, R. J. (1991). Economic growth in a cross section of countries. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 106(2), 407–443. [Cited on page 3.]
- Bellows, J. & Miguel, E. (2009). War and local collective action in Sierra Leone. *Journal of Public Economics*, 93(11), 1144–1157. [Cited on pages 6, 7, 9, 11, and 13.]
- Bernard, A. B., Eaton, J., Jensen, J. B., & Kortum, S. (2003). Plants and productivity in international trade. *The American Economic Review*, 93(4), 1268–1290. [Cited on page 24.]
- Besley, T. & Reynal-Querol, M. (2014). The legacy of historical conflict: Evidence from Africa. *American Political Science Review*, 108(02), 319–336. [Cited on page 4.]
- Blattman, C. & Miguel, E. (2010). Civil war. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 48(1), 3–57. [Cited on page 4.]
- Bozzoli, C., Brück, T., & Wald, N. (2012). Self-employment and conflict in Colombia. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 57(1), 117–142. [Cited on page 4.]
- Brakman, S., Garretsen, H., & Schramm, M. (2004). The strategic bombing of cities in Germany in World War II and its impact on city growth. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 4(1), 201–218. [Cited on page 4.]

- Bryan, G. & Morten, M. (2019). The aggregate productivity effects of internal migration: Evidence from Indonesia. *Journal of Political Economy*, 127(5), 2229–2268. [Cited on pages 4, 14, 15, 22, 24, and 26.]
- Camacho, A. & Rodriguez, C. (2013). Firm exit and armed conflict in Colombia. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 57(1), 89–116. [Cited on page 4.]
- Cerra, V. & Saxena, S. C. (2008). Growth dynamics: The myth of economic recovery. *The American Economic Review*, 98(1), 439–57. [Cited on page 4.]
- Collier, P. (1999). On the economic consequences of civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 51(1), 168–183. [Cited on page 3.]
- Collier, P. & Duponchel, M. (2013). The economic legacy of civil war: Firm-level evidence from Sierra Leone. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 57(1), 65–88. [Cited on page 4.]
- Dal Bó, E. & Dal Bó, P. (2011). Workers, warriors, and criminals: Social conflict in general equilibrium. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 9(4), 646–677. [Cited on page 4.]
- Davis, D. R. & Weinstein, D. E. (2002). Bones, bombs, and break points: The geography of economic activity. *The American Economic Review*, 92(5), 1269–1289. [Cited on pages 4 and 31.]
- Eaton, J. & Kortum, S. (2002). Technology, geography, and trade. *Econometrica*, 70(5), 1741–1779. [Cited on pages 4 and 14.]
- Felkner, J. S. & Townsend, R. M. (2011). The geographic concentration of enterprise in developing countries. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 126(4), 2005–2061. [Cited on page 8.]
- Galdo, J. (2013). The long-run labor-market consequences of civil war: Evidence from the Shining Path in Peru. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 61(4), 789–823. [Cited on page 4.]
- Glennster, R., Miguel, E., & Rothenberg, A. D. (2013). Collective action in diverse Sierra Leone communities. *The Economic Journal*, 123(568), 285–316. [Cited on page 7.]
- Heckman, J. J. & Honore, B. E. (1990). The empirical content of the Roy model. *Econometrica*, (pp. 1121–1149). [Cited on page 18.]
- Hsieh, C.-T., Hurst, E., Jones, C. I., & Klenow, P. J. (2019). The allocation of talent and us economic growth. *Econometrica*, 87(5), 1439–1474. [Cited on pages 4, 14, 15, and 24.]
- Justino, P. & Verwimp, P. (2013). Poverty dynamics, violent conflict, and convergence in Rwanda. *Review of Income and Wealth*, 59(1), 66–90. [Cited on page 11.]
- Keen, D. (2005). *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*. James Currey. [Cited on page 6.]
- Kennan, J. & Walker, J. R. (2011). The effect of expected income on individual migration decisions. *Econometrica*, 79(1), 211–251. [Cited on page 16.]
- La Mattina, G. (2018). How persistent is the effect of conflict on primary education? long-run evidence from the rwandan genocide. *Economics Letters*, 163, 32–35. [Cited on page 4.]

- Lagakos, D. & Waugh, M. E. (2013). Selection, agriculture, and cross-country productivity differences. *American Economic Review*, 103(2), 948–80. [Cited on pages 4 and 18.]
- Leon, G. (2012). Civil conflict and human capital accumulation: The long-term effects of political violence in Perú. *Journal of Human Resources*, 47(4), 991–1022. [Cited on page 4.]
- Miguel, E. & Roland, G. (2011). The long-run impact of bombing Vietnam. *Journal of Development Economics*, 96(1), 1–15. [Cited on page 4.]
- Ngai, L. R. & Pissarides, C. A. (2007). Structural change in a multisector model of growth. *The American Economic Review*, 97(1), 429–443. [Cited on page 30.]
- Peet, E. D., Fink, G., & Fawzi, W. (2015). Returns to education in developing countries: Evidence from the living standards and measurement study surveys. *Economics of Education Review*, 49, 69–90. [Cited on page 14.]
- Pettersson, T. & Öberg, M. (2020). Organized violence, 1989-2019. *Journal of Peace Research*, 57(4). [Cited on page 1.]
- Psacharopoulos, G. & Patrinos, H. A. (2018). Returns to investment in education: A decennial review of the global literature. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*. [Cited on page 14.]
- Redding, S. J. (2016). Goods trade, factor mobility and welfare. *Journal of International Economics*, 101, 148–167. [Cited on pages 4 and 14.]
- Richards, P. (1996). *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth & Resources in Sierra Leone*. James Currey. [Cited on page 5.]
- Richards, P. (2004). The political economy of internal conflict in Sierra Leone. *Working Paper*. [Cited on page 6.]
- Roy, A. D. (1951). Some thoughts on the distribution of earnings. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 3(2), 135–146. [Cited on pages 2 and 15.]
- Saing, C. H. & Kazianga, H. (2020). The long-term impacts of violent conflicts on human capital: Us bombing and, education, earnings, health, fertility and marriage in Cambodia. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 56(5), 874–889. [Cited on page 4.]
- Serneels, P. & Verpoorten, M. (2015). The impact of armed conflict on economic performance: Evidence from Rwanda. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 59(4), 555–592. [Cited on page 4.]
- Silva, J. S. & Tenreyro, S. (2006). The log of gravity. *The Review of Economics and statistics*, 88(4), 641–658. [Cited on page 25.]
- UNDP (2006). Case study Sierra Leone: Evaluation of UNDP assistance to conflict-affected countries. *Report*. [Cited on page 5.]
- Wozniak, A. (2010). Are college graduates more responsive to distant labor market opportunities? *Journal of Human Resources*, 45(4), 944–970. [Cited on page 16.]
- Young, A. (2013). Inequality, the urban-rural gap, and migration. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 128(4), 1727–1785. [Cited on page 4.]

Appendix

A. Tables

Table 1: Summary Statistics

	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Dev.
<i>Individual Level</i>			
Female dummy	14532	0.52	0.50
Urban dummy	14532	0.42	0.49
Household size	14532	6.94	3.45
Age	14532	37.9	14.0
Religion is Christianity	14532	0.21	0.41
Religion is Islam	14532	0.78	0.41
Years of schooling	14526	4.21	5.21
Finished primary school	14526	0.37	0.48
Main sector is agriculture	14532	0.54	0.50
Main sector is manufacturing	14532	0.090	0.29
Main sector is services	14532	0.36	0.48
20 day expenditures per worker (in USD)	14405	60.2	61.8
<i>Chieftdom Level</i>			
Conflict	163	0.21	1.01
Distance to border (km)	166	114.9	80.0
Vector ruggedness measure, (3x3 window)	166	0.37	0.081
Average Elevation (km)	166	0.17	0.15
% of chieftdom w/ slope between 2-8%	166	58.5	14.8
% of chieftdom w/ slope between 8-30%	166	19.8	15.3
% of chieftdom w/ slope between 30-45%	166	3.31	5.04
Coarse texture soils (%)	166	7.45	17.3
Medium texture soils (%)	166	89.7	20.2
Soil w/ poor drainage (%)	166	51.7	24.2
Soil w/ excessive drainage (%)	166	2.67	12.0
Minimum distance to five large towns	166	48.6	28.5
School attendance 1989	76	0.28	0.20
School enrollment 1989	76	0.30	0.20
Log p.c. expend. 1989	76	7.94	0.68
Log pop. density 1985	159	3.79	0.78
19th Cen. trading route	154	20.0	19.7
Mining permission 1930	154	0.18	0.38
Hut Tax/Area 1900	89	0.94	1.42
Hut Tax/Pop. 1900	88	0.028	0.030
Population 1963	153	13712.0	9961.6

The individual sample consists of all working individuals in 2018 who were born before the end of the war in 2001. All monetary values are in 2018 USD and the top 1% is truncated. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Table 2: Correlation of Instrument with Pre-war Observables

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	School attendance 1989	School enrollment 1989	Log p.c. expend. 1989
Distance to border	0.00140 (0.00119)	0.00128 (0.00126)	0.00673 (0.00659)
N	76	76	76
R^2	0.511	0.438	0.326
District FE	✓	✓	✓
	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Log pop. density 1985	19th Cen. trading route	Mining permission 1930
Distance to border	0.00401* (0.00235)	-0.0652 (0.0492)	0.00109 (0.00128)
N	159	154	154
R^2	0.280	0.571	0.208
District FE	✓	✓	✓
	(7)	(8)	(9)
	Hut Tax/Area 1900	Hut Tax/Pop. 1900	Population 1963
Distance to border	0.000485 (0.00629)	0.0000284 (0.000140)	0.954 (24.33)
N	89	88	153
R^2	0.332	0.416	0.199
District FE	✓	✓	✓

Note: All specifications include district fixed effect. Clustered standard errors at the chiefdom level are reported in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ [[Back to main](#)]

Table 3: First Stage

	(1)	(2)
	Conflict	Conflict
Distance to border	-0.0117*** (0.00256)	-0.00967*** (0.00272)
N	14482	14482
R^2	0.733	0.747
F (Kleibergen-Paap)	20.79	12.61
Socio-econ. Controls	✓	✓
Land Controls		✓
District FE	✓	✓

Note: All specifications include district fixed effect. Clustered standard errors at the chiefdom level are reported in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ [\[Back to main\]](#)

Table 4: Expenditures per Worker

	Log household expenditures per worker			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Conflict	-0.0507* (0.0301)	-0.0495* (0.0286)	-0.238** (0.0967)	-0.309** (0.138)
N	14482	14482	14482	14482
R^2	0.424	0.432	0.407	0.402
Estimation Method	OLS	OLS	IV	IV
F (Kleibergen-Paap)			20.79	12.61
Socio-econ. Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land Controls		✓		✓
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note – Outcome variable: Log total expenditures per worker. Conflict standardized and instrumented with distance to border. Clustered standard errors at the chiefdom level in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ [\[Back to main\]](#)

Table 5: Sector Allocation

	Work in Agriculture				Work in Non-agriculture			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Conflict	0.0415*** (0.0149)	0.0456*** (0.0138)	0.121*** (0.0422)	0.170*** (0.0569)	-0.0415*** (0.0149)	-0.0456*** (0.0138)	-0.121*** (0.0422)	-0.170*** (0.0569)
N	14482	14482	14482	14482	14482	14482	14482	14482
R ²	0.528	0.533	0.519	0.515	0.528	0.533	0.519	0.515
Estimation Method	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	OLS	OLS	IV	IV
F (Kleibergen-Paap)			20.79	12.61			20.79	12.61
Socio-econ. Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land Controls		✓		✓		✓		✓
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Work in Manufacturing				Work in Services			
	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
Conflict	-0.0152 (0.00923)	-0.0124 (0.00896)	-0.0623*** (0.0200)	-0.0789*** (0.0291)	-0.0263** (0.0124)	-0.0332*** (0.00989)	-0.0584* (0.0313)	-0.0909** (0.0407)
N	14482	14482	14482	14482	14482	14482	14482	14482
R ²	0.0865	0.0892	0.0776	0.0733	0.416	0.423	0.415	0.419
Estimation Method	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	OLS	OLS	IV	IV
F (Kleibergen-Paap)			20.79	12.61			20.79	12.61
Socio-econ. Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land Controls		✓		✓		✓		✓
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note – Outcome variables: Indicator variables for sector of work. Conflict standardized and instrumented with distance to border. Clustered standard errors at the chiefdom level in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ [\[Back to main\]](#)

Table 6: Years of Schooling

	Years of Schooling			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Conflict	-0.129 (0.113)	-0.177 (0.114)	-0.641* (0.354)	-0.961** (0.463)
N	14476	14476	14476	14476
R^2	0.338	0.343	0.334	0.336
Estimation Method	OLS	OLS	IV	IV
F (Kleibergen-Paap)			20.79	12.61
Socio-econ. Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land Controls		✓		✓
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note – Outcome variable: Years of schooling. Conflict standardized and instrumented with distance to border. Clustered standard errors at the chiefdom level in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ [\[Back to main\]](#)

Table 7: Primary Education

	Primary Education			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Conflict	-0.0141 (0.00958)	-0.0162* (0.00944)	-0.0697** (0.0312)	-0.0928** (0.0413)
N	14476	14476	14476	14476
R^2	0.287	0.292	0.282	0.284
Estimation Method	OLS	OLS	IV	IV
F (Kleibergen-Paap)			20.79	12.61
Socio-econ. Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land Controls		✓		✓
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note – Outcome variable: Indicator for having finished primary school. Conflict standardized and instrumented with distance to border. Clustered standard errors at the chiefdom level in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ [\[Back to main\]](#)

Table 8: Further Results: Education

	Years of Schooling			Primary Education		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Conflict	-0.751** (0.382)	0.0807 (0.431)		-0.0832** (0.0349)	0.0178 (0.0368)	
Conflict \times 61-01			-0.511*** (0.187)			-0.0438** (0.0170)
N	12967	1509	14476	12967	1509	14476
R^2	0.325	0.309	0.368	0.271	0.279	0.313
Estimation Method	IV	IV	DID-IV	IV	IV	DID-IV
F (Kleibergen-Paap)	20.79	12.61		20.79	12.61	
Sample	Young	Old	All	Young	Old	All
Socio-econ. Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FE Level	District	District	Chiefdom	District	District	Chiefdom

Note – Outcome variables: Years of schooling (columns 1-3) and indicator for having finished primary school (columns 4-6). Samples: ‘Old’ are all individuals born before 1961, ‘Young’ are all individuals born after 1961. Conflict standardized and instrumented with distance to border. Clustered standard errors at the chiefdom level in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ [\[Back to main\]](#)

Table 9: Robustness: Exclusion of Chiefdoms with Direct Border

	Log household expenditures per worker			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Conflict	-0.0701** (0.0308)	-0.0699** (0.0296)	-0.236*** (0.0909)	-0.278** (0.115)
N	13711	13711	13711	13711
R^2	0.426	0.434	0.412	0.415
Estimation Method	OLS	OLS	IV	IV
F (Kleibergen-Paap)			23.59	15.88
Socio-econ. Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land Controls		✓		✓
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note – The sample is restricted to chiefdoms that do not have a direct border with Liberia. This excludes 10 chiefdoms from the analysis. Outcome variables: Log total expenditures per worker. Conflict standardized and instrumented with distance to border. Clustered standard errors at the chiefdom level in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ [\[Back to main\]](#)

Table 10: Robustness: Household Expenditures

	Log household expenditures			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Conflict	-0.0468** (0.0233)	-0.0481* (0.0256)	-0.141** (0.0628)	-0.197** (0.0873)
N	22058	22058	22058	22058
R^2	0.475	0.482	0.467	0.464
Estimation Method	OLS	OLS	IV	IV
F (Kleibergen-Paap)			23.59	15.88
Socio-econ. Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land Controls		✓		✓
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note – Outcome variable: Log total household expenditures. Conflict standardized and instrumented with distance to border. Clustered standard errors at the chiefdom level in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ [\[Back to main\]](#)

Table 11: Robustness: Expenditures per Adult Equivalent

	Log expenditures per adult equivalent			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Conflict	-0.0427* (0.0233)	-0.0443* (0.0254)	-0.137** (0.0629)	-0.200** (0.0899)
N	22058	22058	22058	22058
R^2	0.504	0.510	0.497	0.492
Estimation Method	OLS	OLS	IV	IV
F (Kleibergen-Paap)			23.59	15.88
Socio-econ. Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land Controls		✓		✓
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note – Outcome variable: Log total expenditures per adult equivalent. Conflict standardized and instrumented with distance to border. Clustered standard errors at the chiefdom level in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ [\[Back to main\]](#)

Table 12: Robustness: Exclusion of Freetown

	Log household expenditures per worker				Work in Agriculture			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Conflict	-0.0680** (0.0322)	-0.0689** (0.0301)	-0.240** (0.0968)	-0.366** (0.157)	0.0458*** (0.0165)	0.0564*** (0.0147)	0.120*** (0.0421)	0.192*** (0.0614)
N	12263	12263	12263	12263	12263	12263	12263	12263
R ²	0.296	0.314	0.277	0.266	0.407	0.419	0.399	0.396
Estimation Method	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	OLS	OLS	IV	IV
F (Kleibergen-Paap)			20.82	11.78			20.82	11.78
Socio-econ. Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land Controls		✓		✓		✓		✓
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Years of schooling				Primary Education			
	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
Conflict	-0.0797 (0.111)	-0.162 (0.122)	-0.646* (0.348)	-1.134** (0.499)	-0.0114 (0.00978)	-0.0169 (0.0108)	-0.0695** (0.0309)	-0.105** (0.0444)
N	12259	12259	12259	12259	12259	12259	12259	12259
R ²	0.296	0.302	0.291	0.290	0.250	0.255	0.244	0.245
Estimation Method	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	OLS	OLS	IV	IV
F (Kleibergen-Paap)			20.82	11.78			20.82	11.78
Socio-econ. Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land Controls		✓		✓		✓		✓
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note – The capital Freetown is excluded from the analysis. Outcome variables: Log total expenditures per worker; indicator variable for work in agriculture; years of schooling; indicator variable for having primary education. Conflict standardized and instrumented with distance to border. Clustered standard errors at the chiefdom level in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ [Back to main]

Table 13: Model parameters

Parameter	Description	Value	Source
θ	Fréchet dispersion	4.729	Estimation
$\phi^A - \phi^N$	Diff. in educ. returns	0.14	Estimation
σ	Elast. of subst.	8	Literature
A_d^A	Agric. firm product.	mean: 0.155	Estimation
A_d^N	Non-agric. firm product.	mean: 0.199	Estimation
a_d	Amenities	mean: 0.872	Estimation
q_{0c}	Avg. non-educ. origin prod.	mean: 0.844	Estimation
q_{1c}	Avg. educ. origin prod.	mean: 1.048	Estimation
τ_0^A	Migr. cost non-educ. in A	mean: 0.527	Estimation
τ_0^N	Migr. cost non-educ. in N	mean: 0.693	Estimation
τ_1^A	Migr. cost educ. in A	mean: 0.340	Estimation
τ_1^N	Migr. cost educ. in N	mean: 0.689	Estimation
N_0	Non-educ. origin pop.	mean: 1204	Observed
N_1	Educ. origin pop.	mean: 425	Observed

Note – Model parameters. Normalizations: $A_{Freetown}^N = a_{Freetown} = \phi^N q_{1,Freetown} = 1$. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Table 14: Effect of conflict on A_d^S and a_d

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	$\ln A_d^A$	$\ln A_d^N$	$\ln a_d$
Conflict	0.0116 (0.134)	-0.0765 (0.174)	-0.00635 (0.0339)
N	150	138	151
R^2	0.412	0.523	0.418
Estimation Method	IV	IV	IV
F (Kleibergen-Paap)	13.11	18.18	13.70
Socio-econ. Controls	✓	✓	✓
District FE	✓	✓	✓

Note – Outcome variables: Log firm-level productivity in agriculture and non-agriculture (columns (1) and (2)) and log amenities (column (3)) at chiefdom level. Conflict standardized and instrumented with distance to border. Clustered standard errors at the chiefdom level in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ [\[Back to main\]](#)

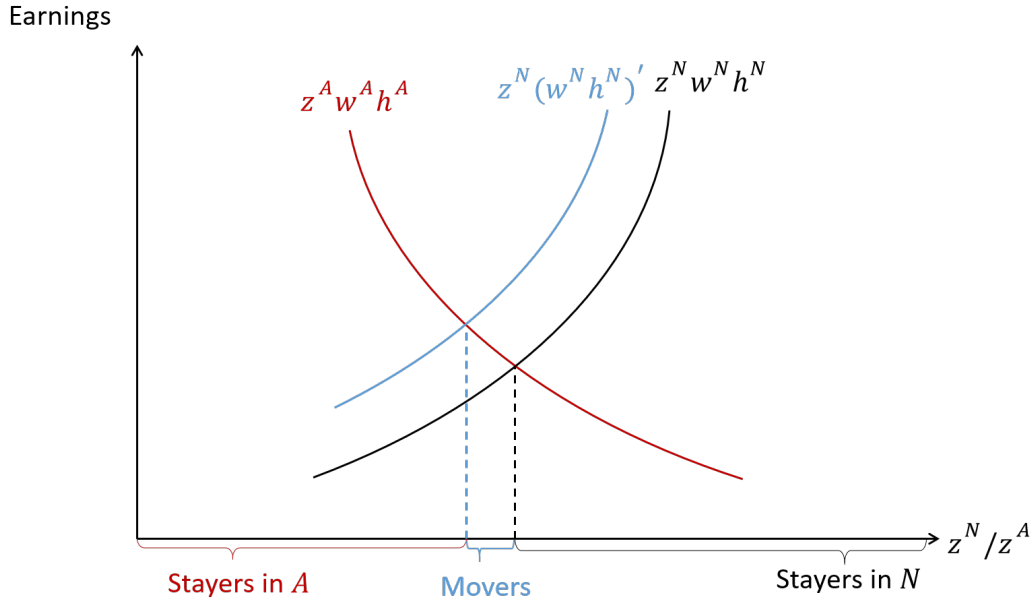
B. Figures

Figure 1: Map of Sierra Leone in West Africa



Note – Freetown is the capital of Sierra Leone. Source: Open Street Map. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 2: Worker selection



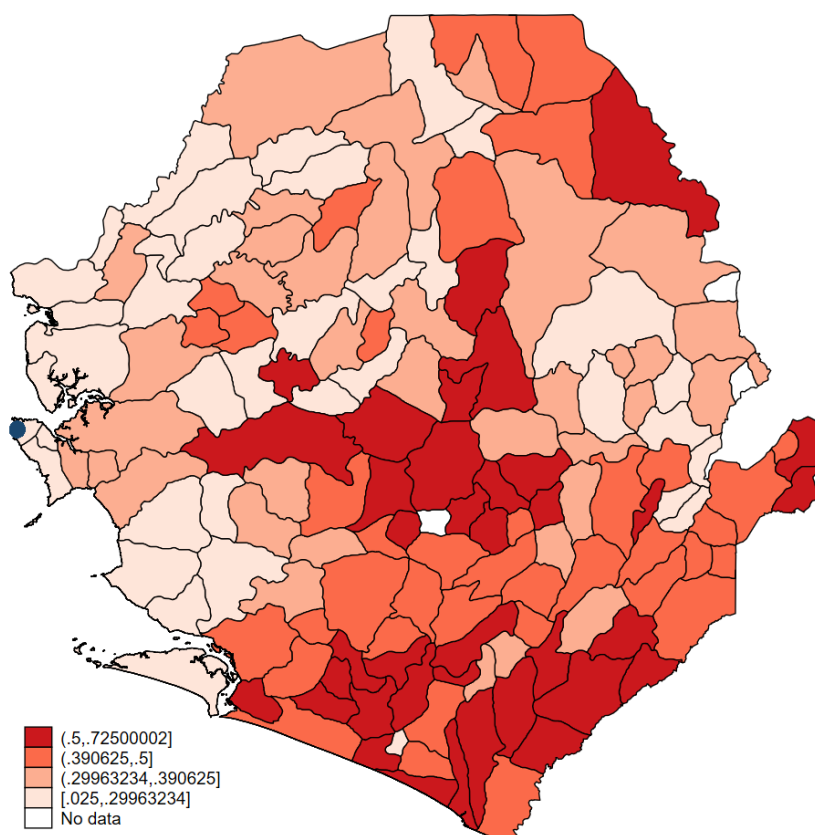
This graph shows the sector choice response within a location as wages change. A higher wage in non-agriculture implies more people choosing to work in this sector. As a result of comparative and absolute advantage being aligned (both curves upward sloping), the average productivity of the movers is lower than that of the stayers in N . Therefore, overall average productivity in that sector must go down. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 3: ISIC Sector Classification

Section	Divisions	Description	
A	01–03	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	Agriculture
B	05–09	Mining and quarrying	
C	10–33	Manufacturing	
D	35	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	Manufacturing
E	36–39	Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	
F	41–43	Construction	
G	45–47	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Services
H	49–53	Transportation and storage	
I	55–56	Accommodation and food service activities	
J	58–63	Information and communication	
K	64–66	Financial and insurance activities	
L	68	Real estate activities	
M	69–75	Professional, scientific and technical activities	
N	77–82	Administrative and support service activities	
O	84	Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	
P	85	Education	
Q	86–88	Human health and social work activities	
R	90–93	Arts, entertainment and recreation	
S	94–96	Other service activities	
T	97–98	Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use	
U	99	Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	

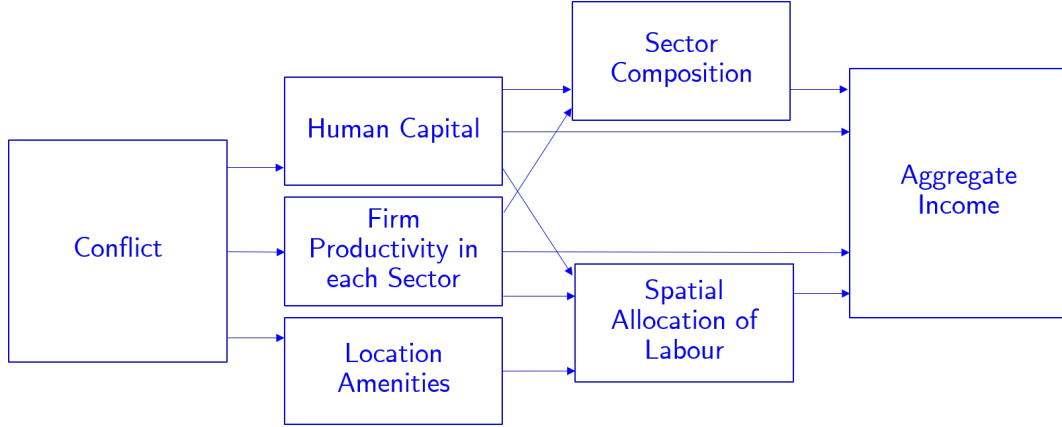
Note – From information on the ISIC section of their main professional activity, workers are classified to work in one of the three sectors according to the above figure. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 4: Variation of the Victimization Index



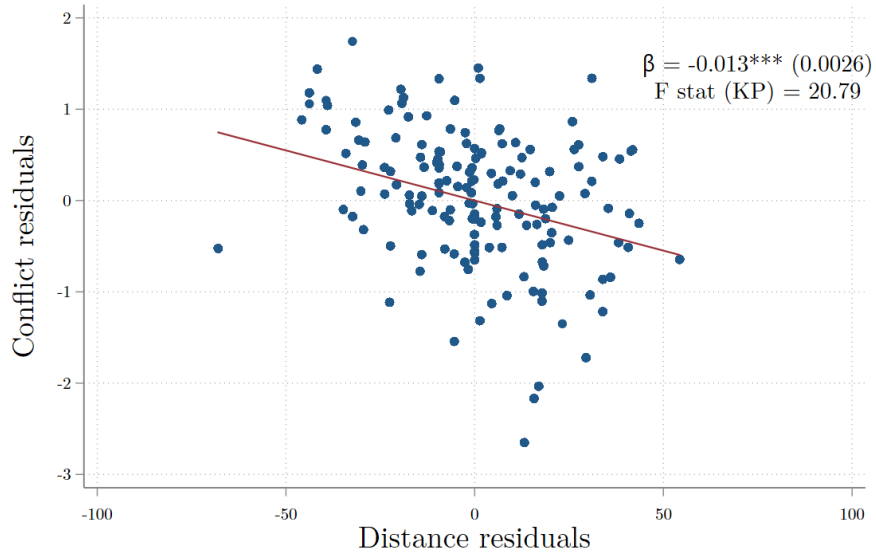
Note – The victimization index is explained in section 3.1. The realization is displayed for all chiefdoms of Sierra Leone. The south-eastern border on the map is the border with Liberia. The blue dot in the western part of the country marks the capital Freetown. Missing conflict information in three chiefdoms. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 5: Key Mechanisms in the Model



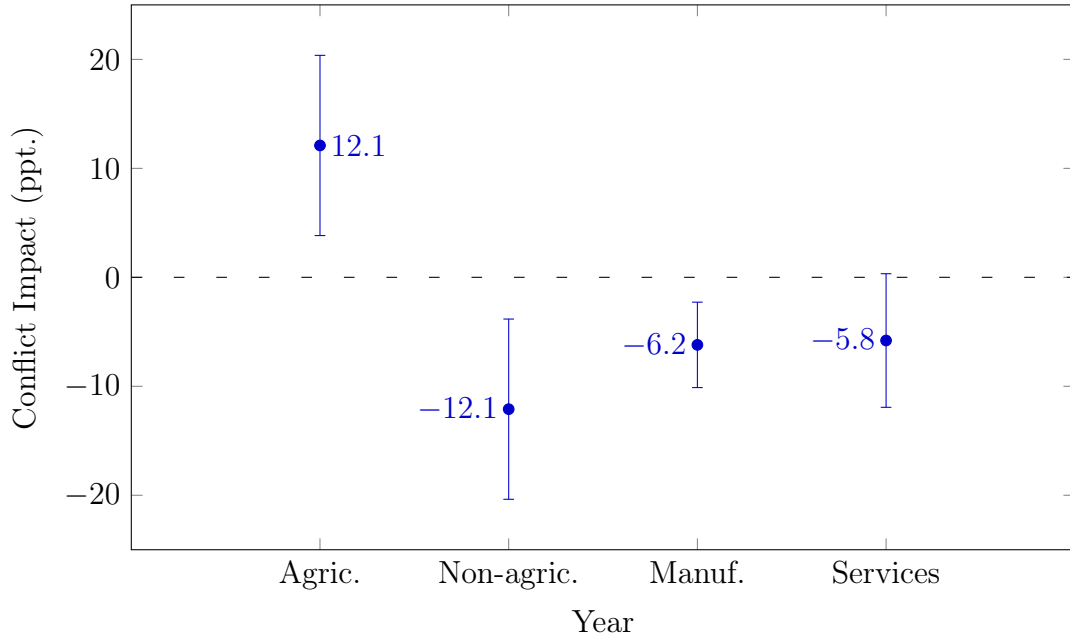
Note – This diagram depicts the key mechanisms how conflict affects income both directly and indirectly in the model. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 6: First Stage Within Districts



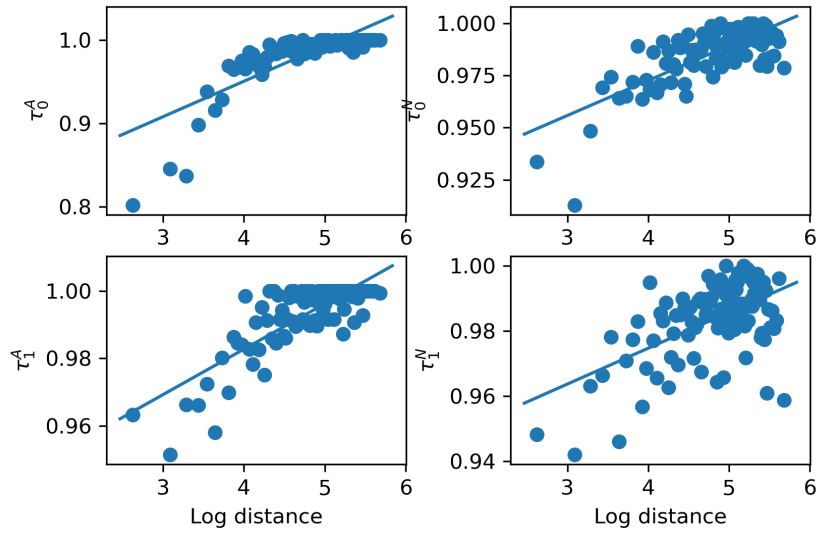
Note – The conflict measure is standardized and distance is measured in km. The red line presents an OLS line of best fit. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 7: Sector Shift



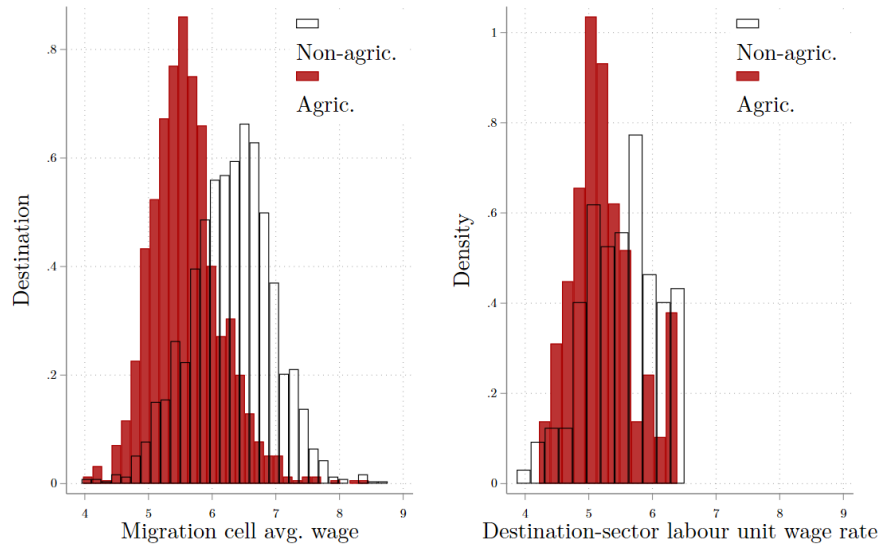
Note – IV coefficients depicted for specification with socio-economic controls, district fixed effects and minimum distance to large cities controlled for. 95% confidence intervals based on clustered standard errors at the chiefdom level. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 8: Migration cost and distance



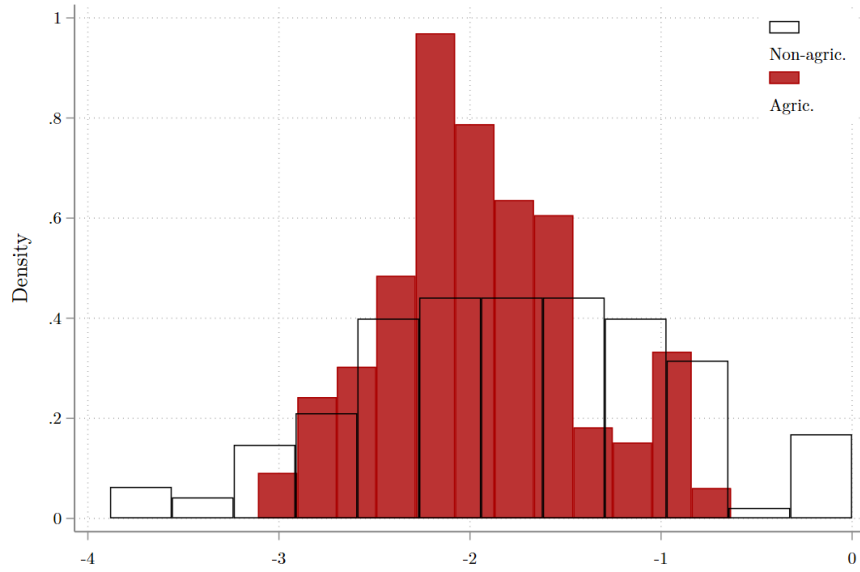
Note – Binscatter of the relationship between migration cost (by primary school education and sector) and log distance between locations. The line is the OLS line of best fit. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 9: Distribution of labor unit wage rates



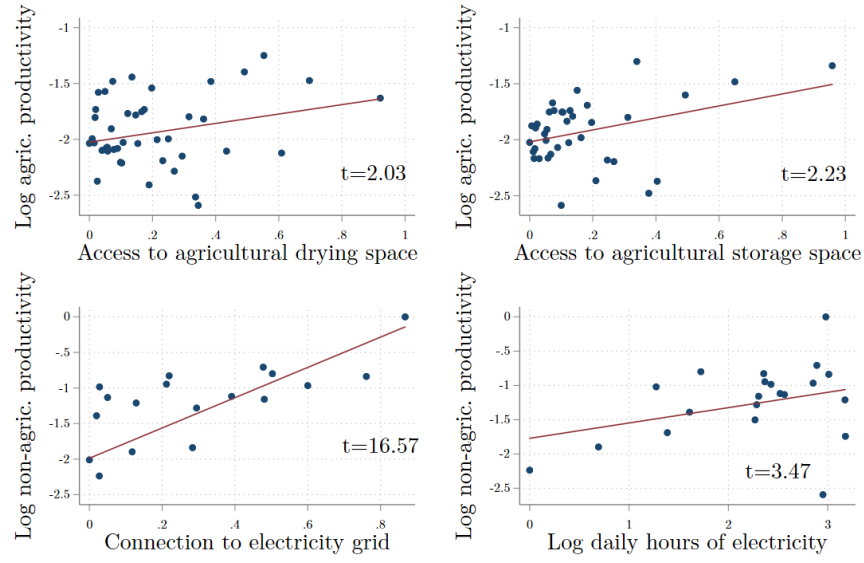
Note – Histograms of observed log income in the data $\ln M_{ecd}^S$ and estimated log labor unit wage rates $\ln w_d^S$ by sector. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 10: Distribution of firm-level productivities



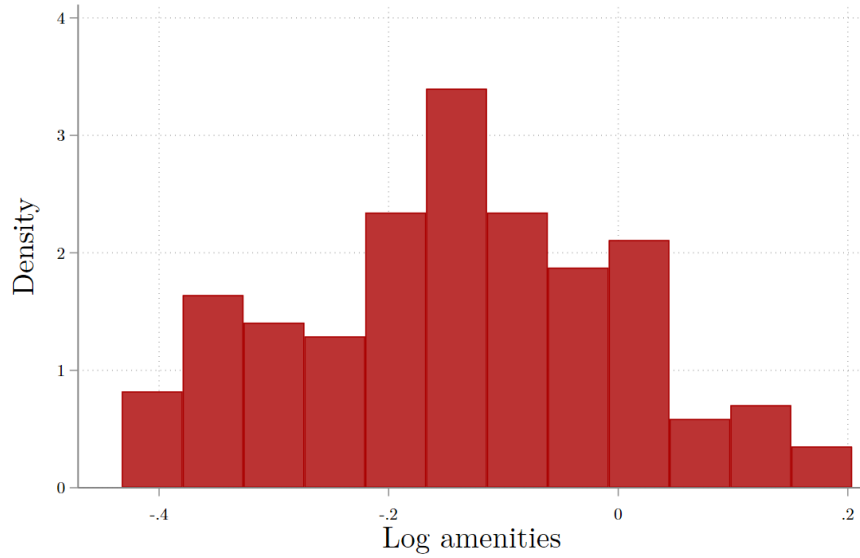
Note – Histograms of log firm-level productivities by sector. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 11: Correlates with firm-level productivities



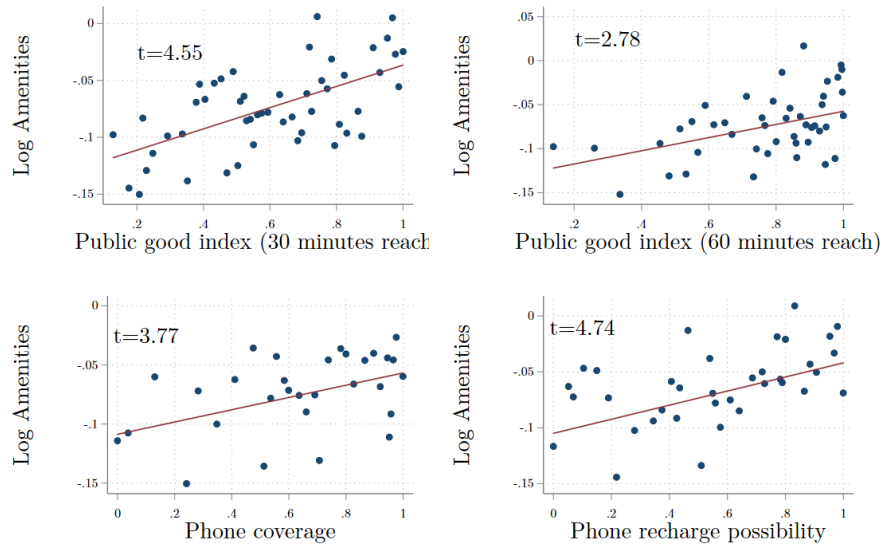
Note – Bin scatter plots with line of best fit of the relationship between log (non-)agricultural firm-level productivity $\ln A_d^A$ ($\ln A_d^N$) and various outcomes on the x -axis. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 12: Distribution of amenities



Note – Histograms of log amenities. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 13: Correlates with amenities



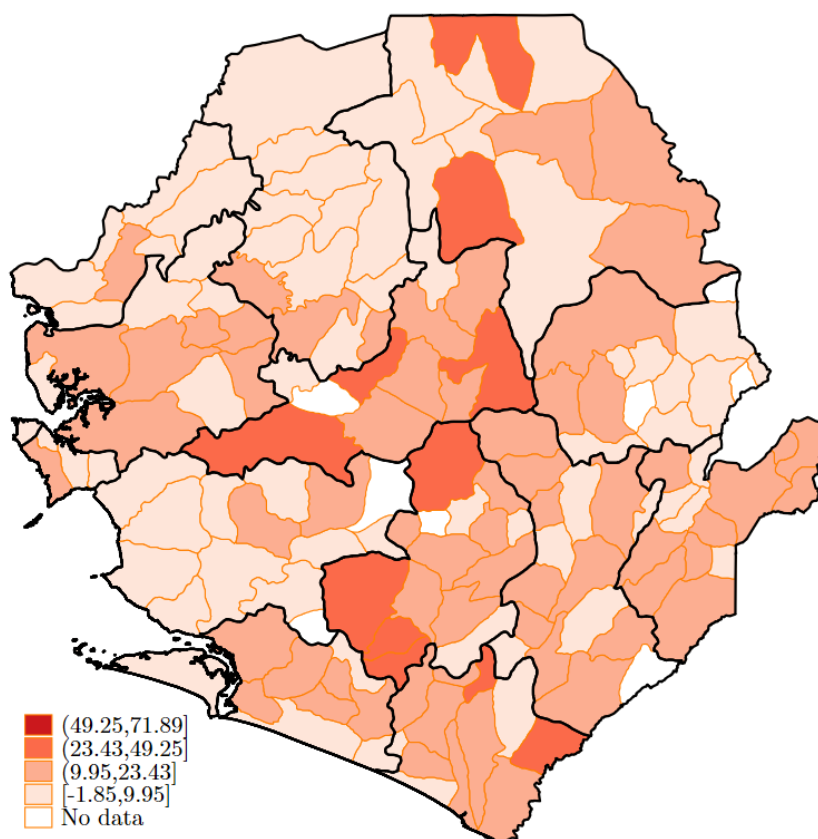
Note – Bin scatter plots with line of best fit of the relationship between log amenities $\ln a_d$ and various outcomes on the x -axis. The public good index is the average of eight binary variables indicating whether the following public goods/services are within 30 (60) minutes reach: (i) supply of drinking water, (ii) food market, (iii) public transportation, (iv) primary school, (v) secondary school, (vi) health clinic, (vii) hospital, (viii) all year motorable road [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 14: Parameter changes



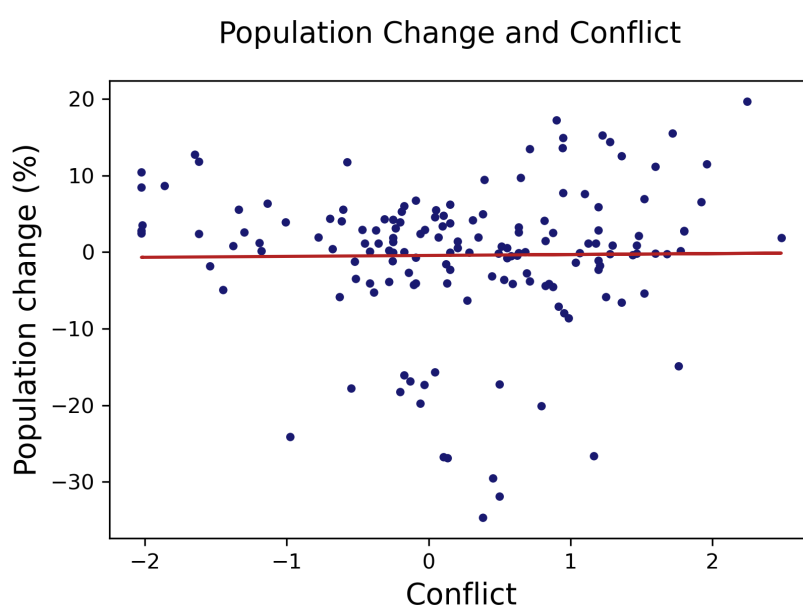
Note – Distributions of origin populations of individuals with and without primary school education as well as the parameter A_d^S (in logarithms). The black histogram displays the original distributions and the red histogram displays the counterfactual distributions. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 15: Aggregate Income Changes



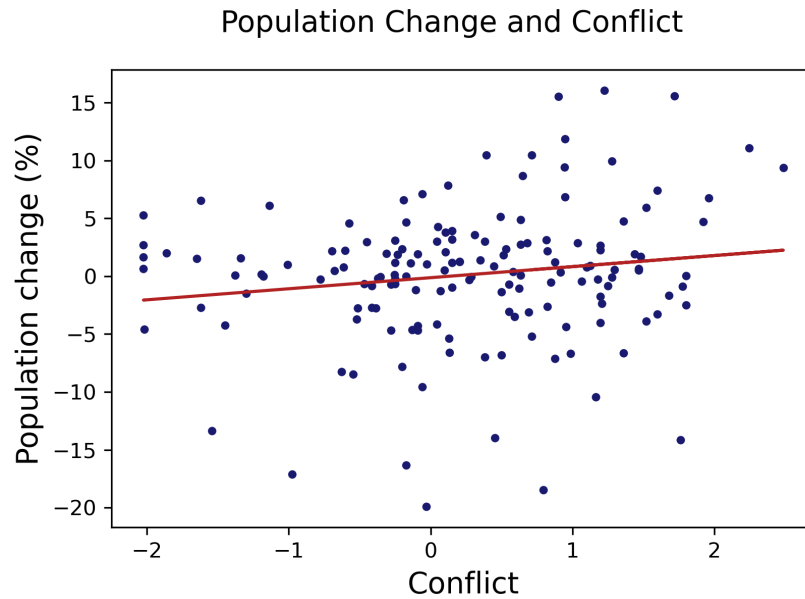
Note – Absolute value of aggregate income changes (in %) in each chiefdom as a result of the civil war relative to a no-war scenario. Both human capital and non-agricultural firm productivity losses considered. Estimates stem from model simulation. Missing data: 5 chiefdoms unobserved in households survey 2018; 3 chiefdoms without conflict information. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 16: Population Change and Conflict in First Scenario



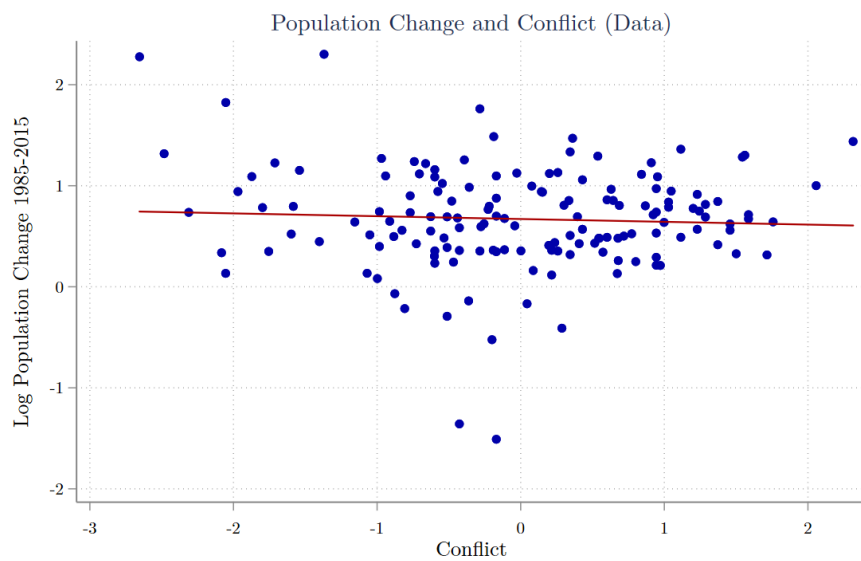
Note – Relationship between population changes in a full war scenario (both human capital and non-agricultural firm productivity loss) and conflict intensity in a chiefdom. Estimates stem from a model simulation. The straight line presents an OLS line of best fit. $\hat{\beta} = 0.12$ ($t = 0.15$) [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 17: Population Change and Conflict in Second Scenario



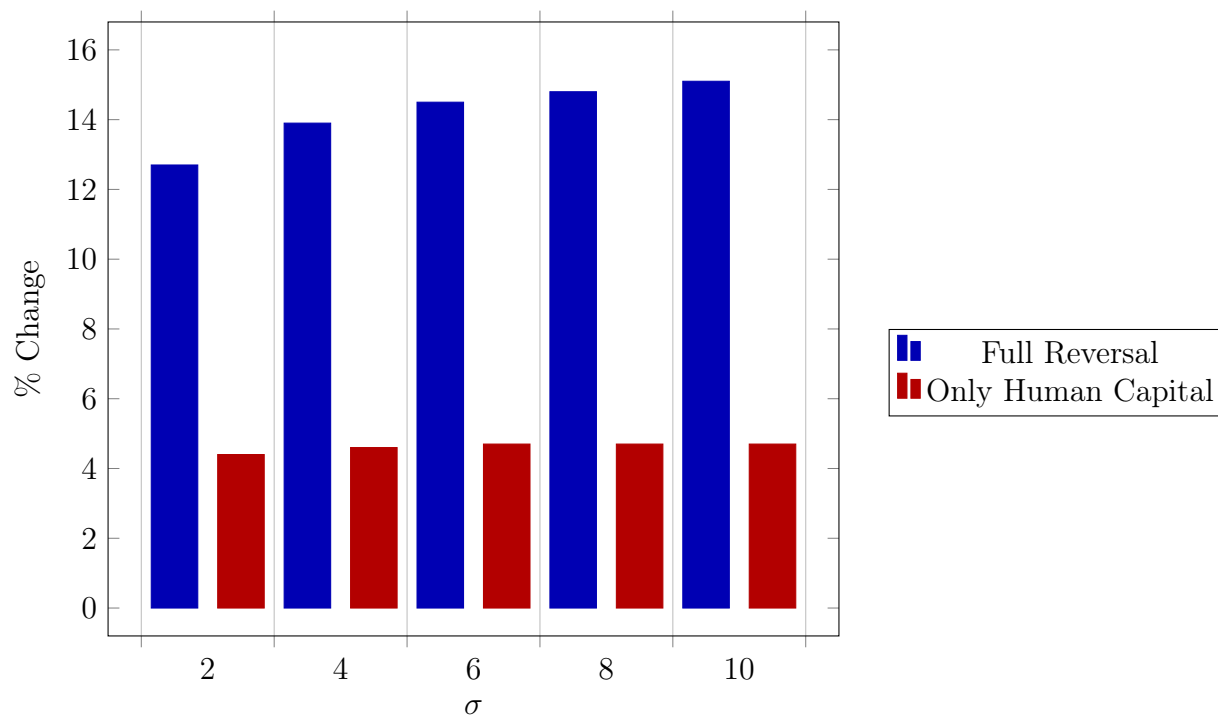
Note – Relationship between population changes in response to human capital loss only and conflict intensity in a chiefdom. Estimates stem from a model simulation. The straight line presents an OLS line of best fit. $\hat{\beta} = 2.05$ ($t = 1.73$) [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 18: Observed Population Change and Conflict in Data



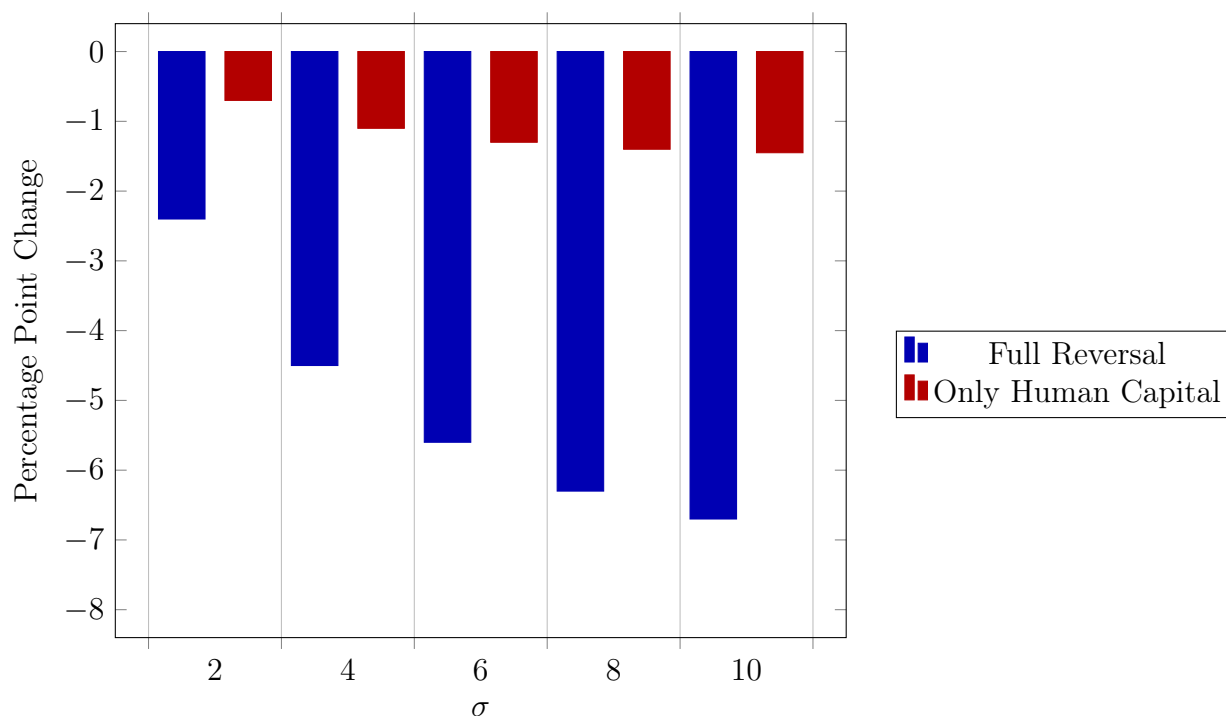
Note – Relationship between observed population changes between 1985 and 2015 and conflict intensity in a chiefdom. The straight line presents an OLS line of best fit. $\hat{\beta} = -0.0277$ ($t = -0.67$). [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 19: Robustness to different σ values: Aggregate Income



Note – Aggregate income changes for different values of the elasticity of substitution σ . The first scenario (Full Reversal) is without human capital and firm productivity effects, the second scenario (Only Human Capital) is only without human capital effects. [\[Back to main\]](#)

Figure 20: Robustness to different σ values: Employment in Agriculture



Note – Changes in the economy-wide size of the agricultural sector for different values of the elasticity of substitution σ . The first scenario (Full Reversal) is without human capital and firm productivity effects, the second scenario (Only Human Capital) is only without human capital effects. [\[Back to main\]](#)

C. Proofs

Proof of equation 12. Recall that individual productivity draws z_{id}^S for destination d and sector S are independently Fréchet distributed:

$$F_{ec}(z_{id}^S) = \exp \left(- \left(\frac{z_{id}^S}{q_{ecd}^S} \right)^{-\theta} \right) \quad (30)$$

Consider the indirect utility distribution of workers *choosing* destination d and sector S , that is, the distribution of $\bar{V}_{id}^S := V_{id}^S | i \in M_{ecd}^S = \max_{d', S'} \{V_{id'}^{S'}\}$. Using the fact that $V_{id}^S = \frac{v_{ecd}^S z_{id}^S}{P}$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} F_{\bar{V}_{id}^S}(u) &= Pr \left[V_{id'}^{S'} < u \ \forall d', S' \right] \\ &= \exp \left(- \sum_{d'} \sum_{S'} \left(\frac{uP}{v_{ecd'}^{S'} q_{ecd'}^{S'}} \right)^{-\theta} \right) \\ &= \exp \left(-u^{-\theta} \sum_{d'} \sum_{S'} \left(\frac{v_{ecd'}^{S'} q_{ecd'}^{S'}}{P} \right)^{\theta} \right) \\ &= \exp \left(- \left(\frac{u}{\left(\sum_{d'} \sum_{S'} \left(\frac{v_{ecd'}^{S'} q_{ecd'}^{S'}}{P} \right)^{\theta} \right)^{\frac{1}{\theta}}} \right)^{-\theta} \right) \end{aligned} \quad (31)$$

Therefore, the distribution of \bar{V}_{id}^S is Fréchet itself with scale parameter

$$t_{ec} := \left(\sum_{d'} \sum_{S'} \left(\frac{v_{ecd'}^{S'} q_{ecd'}^{S'}}{P} \right)^{\theta} \right)^{\frac{1}{\theta}} \quad (32)$$

The probability that someone chooses d and sector S is

$$\begin{aligned} \pi_{ecd}^S &= Pr \left[V_{id}^S > V_{id'}^{S'} \ \forall d', S' \neq d, S \right] \\ &= \int_0^\infty Pr \left[V_{id'}^{S'} < u \ \forall d', S' \neq d, S \right] dF_{V_{id}^S}(u) \\ &= \int_0^\infty \frac{F_{\bar{V}_{id}^S}(u)}{F_{V_{id}^S}(u)} \theta u^{-1-\theta} \left(\frac{v_{ecd}^S q_{ecd}^S}{P} \right)^{\theta} F_{V_{id}^S}(u) du \\ &= \left(\frac{v_{ecd}^S q_{ecd}^S}{P} \right)^{\theta} t_{ec}^{-\theta} \int_0^\infty \underbrace{\theta u^{-1-\theta} t_{ec}^{\theta} F_{\bar{V}_{id}^S}(u)}_{f_{\bar{V}_{id}^S}(u)} du \\ &= \frac{(v_{ecd}^S q_{ecd}^S)^{\theta}}{\sum_{d'} \sum_{S'} (v_{ecd'}^{S'} q_{ecd'}^{S'})^{\theta}} \end{aligned} \quad (33)$$

where the last step makes use of the decomposition of $q_{ecd}^S = \bar{q}_{ec} \epsilon_{ecd}^S$ into an origin-education average and remaining variation.

Proof of equation 13. Using the distribution of \bar{V}_{id}^S , we have that $z_i | i \in M_{ecd}^S = \frac{\bar{V}_{id}^S P}{v_{ecd}^S}$ also follows a Fréchet distribution with scale parameter

$$\frac{t_{ec}P}{v_{ecd}^S} = \left(\frac{\sum_{d'} \sum_{S'} (v_{ecd'}^{S'} q_{ecd'}^{S'})^\theta}{(v_{ecd}^S)^\theta} \right)^{\frac{1}{\theta}} \quad (34)$$

It follows that

$$\begin{aligned} E [z_i | i \in M_{ecd}^S] &= \frac{t_{ec}P}{v_{ecd}^S} \Gamma \left(\frac{\theta - 1}{\theta} \right) \\ &= \left(\frac{\sum_{d'} \sum_{S'} (v_{ecd'}^{S'} q_{ecd'}^{S'})^\theta}{(v_{ecd}^S)^\theta} \right)^{\frac{1}{\theta}} \Gamma \left(\frac{\theta - 1}{\theta} \right) \\ &= (\pi_{ecd}^S)^{-1/\theta} q_{ecd}^S \Gamma \left(\frac{\theta - 1}{\theta} \right) \end{aligned} \quad (35)$$

D. Extensions

D.1. Endogenous Education

As a simple extension of the model with endogenous education choice, consider the individual productivity shock that workers draw to be sector-, destination-, *and education-*specific. Workers draw the shock z_{ied}^S for each sector S , destination d , and education level e from independent Fréchet distributions with scale parameter q_{ecd}^S . Denote the origin-specific cost of getting education level e by k_{ec} satisfying $k_{0c} = 1$ and $k_{1c} > 1$. It is assumed to enter as a denominator in your income. Therefore, workers who choose education e , sector S and destination d have indirect utility

$$V_{ied}^S = \frac{v_{ecd}^S z_{ied}^S}{k_{ec} P} \quad (36)$$

Workers maximise utility to choose their education level, sector and destination. Similar considerations as before give that the probability of choosing education level e , destination d and sector S is

$$\hat{\pi}_{ecd}^S := Pr \left[V_{ied}^S > V_{ie'd'}^{S'} \quad \forall e', d', S' \right] = \frac{(v_{ecd}^S \epsilon_{ecd}^S / k_{ec})^\theta}{\sum_{e'} \sum_{d'} \sum_{S'} (v_{ecd'}^{S'} \epsilon_{ecd'}^{S'} / k_{e'c})^\theta} \quad (37)$$

As a result, education choice can be described by the ratio of the probability to become educated and the probability to stay uneducated within a sector-destination:

$$\frac{\hat{\pi}_{1cd}^S}{\hat{\pi}_{0cd}^S} = \left(\frac{\exp(\phi^S) (1 - \tau_{1cd}^S) \epsilon_{1cd}^S}{k_{1c} (1 - \tau_{0cd}^S) \epsilon_{0cd}^S} \right)^\theta \quad (38)$$

In this setting, the effect of conflict on education operates through an effect on the cost of education. The destruction of schools and killings of teachers in origin c make it more costly for individuals born there to get educated, that is, k_{1c} increases. Clearly, fewer people will get educated as a result. The implications of this and conflict effects on firm productivities and location amenities for sector and destination choice are the same as in the original model.