

University of Göttingen  
 Chair of International Economic Policy

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**Course content** There are more than 50 conflicts ongoing in the world. The consequences of violent conflicts go far beyond death and destruction as they often also result in missing education, a lack of job opportunities, forced migration, hunger, or epidemics. Knowing how conflicts arise is important in order to design effective mechanisms to prevent their outbreak but also to mitigate their effects. In this seminar, we will study various determinants of armed conflicts, and will assess their impact on human and social capital. Finally, we will address the role of policy interventions in fuelling or mitigating conflicts as well as dealing with their long-term effects.

This is done by examining and evaluating current empirical studies written in the realm of economics or neighboring fields. Thus, apart from getting to know the conflict literature, students will learn to read and analyze empirical studies. Additionally, the seminar will introduce basic concepts of scientific writing (and interpreting empirical evidence). The seminar targets advanced bachelor students of economics who are interested in understanding more about the causes and consequences of armed conflict as well as about potential policy interventions.

Meetings	Date	Time	Room
Introduction	Tuesday, October 22	14.00-16.00	VG 4.105
Scientific writing	Thursday, November 14	14.00-16.00	VG 3.108
Progress Report	Thursday, November 28	13.00-17.00	Oec 2.169
Regression tables	Thursday, December 19	14.00-16.00	VG 4.104
Block seminar	Friday, January 24	9.00-18.00	Oec. 1.165
Block seminar	Saturday, January 25	9.00-18.00	KWZ 0.601

**Course requirements** **Attendance to all meetings is obligatory**; only exception: you may send a friend as a representative to the first meeting (introduction).  
 Submission of a progress report (and presentation at the progress report meeting in small groups).  
 Submission of the final seminar paper (and presentation during the block seminar).

**Seminar paper** Submit a seminar paper according to the following rules:

1. Submit 1 electronic copy of about 15 pages + Appendix
2. Motivate your topic at the beginning.
3. Briefly summarize your primary literature and discuss at least one central result of the paper, also providing all relevant technical details.
4. Make sure your interpretation of the empirical results is correct.
5. Find additional literature, contrast it to your main paper, discuss their implications and draw your own conclusion.
6. Include a list of references and an appendix with the main statistical tables.

**Presentation** Prepare your 20-minutes presentation according to the following rules:

1. Present the research question of your seminar paper.
2. Tell us why it is relevant/interesting.
3. Do not go through theoretical models, if necessary, sketch the main argument shortly.
4. Explain the main empirical approach of your primary literature (also referring to an estimating equation).
5. Select the main result (1 table) and explain it in detail.
6. Summarize further results and main types of robustness checks only shortly.
7. Tell us at least one thing that you liked/disliked about the primary paper.
8. Use about 15 slides (do not overload them); make sure that your presentation is not longer than 18 minutes (you will have 20 minutes for your presentation).

## Topics and corresponding papers

### A. Causes of conflict

1. Historical roots as a cause of conflict
  - a. Arbatli, C.E., Ashraf, Q.H., Galor, O. and Klemp, M. (2019): Diversity and conflict, *NBER Working Paper* No. 21079, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge.
  - b. Skali, A. (2017): Moralizing gods and armed conflict, *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 63, 184-198.
2. Natural resources as a cause of conflict
  - a. Crost, B., & Felter, J. H. (2019): Export crops and civil conflict, *Journal of the European Economic Association*, DOI: 10.1093/jeea/jvz025.
  - b. Berman, N., M. Couttenier, D. Rohner, and M. Thoenig (2017): This mine is mine! How minerals fuel conflicts in Africa, *American Economic Review*, 107 (6), 1564-1610.
3. Demography as a cause of conflict
  - a. \* Brückner, M. (2010): Population size and civil conflict risk: Is there a causal link?, *Economic Journal*, 120(544), 535-550.
  - b. \* Flückiger, M., & Ludwig, M. (2018): Youth bulges and civil conflict: causal evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 62(9), 1932-1962.
4. Infectious diseases as a cause of conflict
  - a. Cervellati, M., Esposito, E., Sunde, U., & Valmori, S. (2017): Malaria risk and civil violence, *CESifo Working Paper* No. 6413, Center for Economic Studies and ifo institute, Munich.
  - b. Cervellati, M., Sunde, U., & Valmori, S. (2017): Pathogens, weather shocks and civil conflicts, *Economic Journal*, 127(607), 2581-2616.

### B. Consequences of conflict

1. The effects of conflict on education
  - a. Brück, T., Di Maio, M., & Miaari, S. H. (2019): Learning the hard way: The effect of violent conflict on student academic achievement, *Journal of the European Economic Association*, DOI: 10.1093/jeea/jvy051.
  - b. Di Maio, M., & Nandi, T. K. (2013): The effect of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict on child labor and school attendance in the West Bank, *Journal of Development Economics*, 100(1), 107-116.

## 2. The effects of conflict on health

- a. Kesternich, I., Siflinger, B., Smith, J. P., & Winter, J. K. (2014): The effects of World War II on economic and health outcomes across Europe, *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 96(1), 103-118.
- b. \* Singhal, S. (2018): Early life shocks and mental health: The long-term effect of war in Vietnam, *Journal of Development Economics*, DOI: 10.1016/j.jdeveco.2018.06.002.

## 3. The effects of conflict on risk preferences

- a. Jakiela, P., & Ozier, O. (2019): The impact of violence on individual risk preferences: Evidence from a natural experiment, *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 101(3), 547-559.
- b. Callen, M., Isaqzadeh, M., Long, J. D., & Sprenger, C. (2014): Violence and risk preference: Experimental evidence from Afghanistan, *American Economic Review*, 104(1), 123-48.

**C. The role of policy interventions**

## 1. The role of foreign aid

- a. Child, T. B. (2018): Conflict and counterinsurgency aid: Drawing sectoral distinctions, *Journal of Development Economics*, DOI: 10.1016/j.jdeveco.2018.06.003.
- b. \* Crost, B., Felter, J., & Johnston, P. (2014): Aid under fire: Development projects and civil conflict, *American Economic Review*, 104(6), 1833-56.

## 2. State policies as a counteraction of conflict

- a. \* Fetzer, T. (2014): Can workfare programs moderate violence? Evidence from India, *Economic Organisation and Public Policy Discussion Papers (EOPP)* No. 53, The London School of Economics and Political Science, Suntory and Toyota International Centres for Economics and Related Disciplines, London.
- b. Crost, B., Felter, J. H., & Johnston, P. B. (2016): Conditional cash transfers, civil conflict and insurgent influence: Experimental evidence from the Philippines, *Journal of Development Economics*, 118, 171-182.

## 3. Conflict and political participation

- a. Blattman, C. (2009): From violence to voting: War and political participation in Uganda, *American Political Science Review*, 103(2), 231-247.
- b. Collier, P. & Vicente, P.C. (2013): Votes and violence: Evidence from a field experiment in Nigeria, *Economic Journal*, 124(574), F327-F355.

## 4. Post-conflict reconciliation

- a. Cilliers, J., Dube, O., & Siddiqi, B. (2016): Reconciling after civil conflict increases social capital but decreases individual well-being, *Science*, 352(6287), 787-794.

– Note: We denoted empirically more challenging papers with a \*; these are also doable but are better suited for more ambitious students.