

The Economic Costs of Conflict in Africa

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Abstract

A growing literature on economic costs of conflict, while recognising high costs in general, has found considerable heterogeneity. This emphasises the value of more focussed analyses, such as regional and case studies. As a contribution to the debate, this paper considers the costs of civil conflict on the African continent – paying particular attention to fragile states. Using a growth-model framework and a panel of African countries covering the years 1960 to 2024, it estimates the impact of civil conflict and spillover effects on economic growth. It considers the difference in the magnitude of costs between fragile and non-fragile states, the consequences of changing strategic dynamics, and the impact of major disruptions to the international system such as COVID-19 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In addition, the paper revisits the operationalisation of “fragility” given that this classification in previous work was fixed to 2014.

Keywords: costs of conflict; spillovers; Africa

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