

PhD Defense: Camille Laville

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Pôle Tertiaire - Site La Rotonde - 26 avenue Léon Blum - 63000 Clermont-Ferrand

Room 210

Les causes structurelles des conflits internes dans les pays
à revenus faibles à intermédiaires. D'une analyse
holistique à l'analyse des particularités

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JURY

Martial Foucault, Professor, Science-Po Paris

[Grégoire Rota-Grasiozi](https://cerdi.uca.fr/version-francaise/unite/lequipe/annuaire/m-gregoire-rota-graziozi)(<https://cerdi.uca.fr/version-francaise/unite/lequipe/annuaire/m-gregoire-rota-graziozi>), Professor, Université Clermont Auvergne

[Thomas Cantens](https://cerdi.uca.fr/version-francaise/unite/lequipe/annuaire/m-thomas-cantens)(<https://cerdi.uca.fr/version-francaise/unite/lequipe/annuaire/m-thomas-cantens>), Chief economist, World Customs Organization

Vincent Pons, Associate Professor, Harvard Business School

Mathieu Couttenier, Professor, Université de Lyon

ABSTRACT

The structural causes of conflict are their root causes embedded in the economic, political and social system of a region, country or society. This PhD work consists of three studies on the identification of these mechanisms and their (often heterogeneous) effects on specific forms of recurrent conflict affecting low- and middle-income countries.

Chapter 2 is a review of the empirical literature on the root causes of civil conflict. The main contribution of this work is to provide a detailed analysis of the theoretical and methodological advances made possible by the use of disaggregated data for understanding the causes of civil conflicts. This chapter shows that evolution of statistical tools has led to a better understanding of the local role of factors such as poverty and

natural resources, while at the same time providing promising research perspectives on contemporary and controversial issues such as climate change. However, accuracy gains from disaggregated data should not blind us to regional and global drivers of civil conflict. For example, issues of trade and social cohesion still need to be explored in greater depth because they are explained at the level of groups whose size is poorly understood.

Chapter 3 examines how shocks to the politicization of religious identities influence the risk of political conflict over time. The politico-religious shocks studied in this chapter are the emblematic international trips of Pope John Paul II (between 1979 and 2003). How do the Pope's travels affect the risk of political conflict according to the religious diversity of the countries visited? The results suggest that Pope John Paul II's travels reduce the risk of political conflict by about 9-20% in the host countries over a 4-year horizon. Nevertheless, this effect is heterogeneous depending on the religious structure of the countries visited. The decrease in risk occurs mainly in countries where Catholics represent a very small share of the population. When the level of religious polarization and the proportion of Catholics are high, papal visits increase the risk of political conflict by up to 19.5% after two years. These results show that religious polarization structurally exposes countries to brief episodes of political tension following political and religious events.

Chapter 4 focuses on the contemporary economic and geographic causes of conflicts between transhumant herders and sedentary farmers in Nigeria. Is competition for the scarce Nigerian grassland a factor of violence between nomadic herders from Niger and Nigerian farmers? This article analyses the security implications of cross-border transhumance between Niger and Nigeria at the scale of 0.5x0.5 degree cells between 2006 and 2016. Using spatial panel techniques and satellite data on land cover, it questions the importance of grassland grabbing strategies as a cause of the recent herder-farmer conflicts in Nigeria. The obtained results are not very consistent with the idea that the monopolization of the last grazing resources is the main reason for these conflicts. We also find a significant negative geographical spillover effect of pasture on the risk of herder-farmer conflict in neighboring cells. Thus, it appears that it is more the absence of pasture in the surrounding area than its presence where the herder is that affects the opportunity cost of herders to enter into conflict.

KEYWORDS

Internal conflicts, low-income countries, middle-income countries, opportunity cost, politicization, scarce resources.

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[Camille Laville\(https://www.linkedin.com/in/camille-laville-4b874985/?originalSubdomain=fr\)](https://www.linkedin.com/in/camille-laville-4b874985/?originalSubdomain=fr)

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