

PhD Defence: Dadie Michel Eric Dago

Published on December 5, 2019 – Updated on January 15, 2020

Date

Le 20 January 2020 De 14:00 à 16:30

Location

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

Room Pascal - 313

Civil Conflict and Human Capital in Developing Countries

JURY

Rémi Bazillier, Professor, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

Delphine Boutin, Associate Professor, l'Université de Bordeaux

Zié Ballo, Professeur, Université Félix-Houphouet Boigny

Simone Bertoli, Professeur, Université Clermont-Auvergne (CERDI)

Catherine Araujo-Bonjean, Chargée de recherche CNRS, Université Clermont-Auvergne, CERDI

Florent Bresson, Maître de Conférence, Université Clermont-Auvergne, CERDI

SUMMARY

Given the importance of their negative effects on economic growth, civil wars are described as the “development in reverse” (Collier et al., 2003). This is especially true for developing countries because of their economic vulnerability. Conflict impacts are particularly significant and protracted when they affect the process of human capital accumulation, a key driver of long-run economic development. According to international assessments, countries affected by civil conflict are those that regularly rank at the bottom of the list in terms of educational progress. Despite the progress made in recent years, Africa faces enormous challenges in the field of education due to the high prevalence of civil conflict in this part of the world. The second Millennium Development Goal (MDG), universal primary education, in terms of both enrollment and school performances, is often derailed when countries are affected by internal armed

conflicts. The latter worsen existing poverty and reduce the civilian populations' abilities to adapt to the civil conflict situation. The objective of this thesis is to determine the consequences of civil conflicts on human capital formation on the one hand and to evaluate the effectiveness of a public transfer policy on capital formation in post-conflict situation on the other. It is organized around three chapters. The first chapter deals with the effect of civil conflict on the children's time allocation of school-age children (aged 10-14) in the case of Côte d'Ivoire. Specifically, it is to understand how households affected by civil conflict make choices about schooling and child labor. The data used here come from the 2008 household standard of living survey conducted by the National Statistical Institute (NSI) and the World Bank. Using an econometric approach that considers the interdependence of the two forms of time allocation (schooling and child labor), results of this chapter reveal that school-age children's time is mainly allocated to work at the expense of schooling if they are living in a household affected by civil conflict. Our results also point out that these choices are linked to gender and place of residence. Indeed, male children are more likely to be involved in work outside the household than female children. The latter are more involved in domestic tasks within the household. Finally, children living in urban areas contribute more to child labor than their rural counterparts. The main conclusion of this chapter is that in situations of violent conflict, the allocation of children's time is subject to a high degree of a trade-off between school and work. The second chapter investigates the consequences of civil conflicts on school performances in the case of Côte d'Ivoire. Using the same data and considering the victim status of the household, the objective of this chapter is to assess the level of education attained by individuals of compulsory school age. Using the same data and taking into account the victim status of the household, the objective of this chapter is to assess the level of education attained by children of compulsory school age. Through a difference-in-difference specification, we find that the average level of education attained by children of compulsory school age at the time of the conflict decreases compared to their counterparts of the same age but not affected by the civil conflict. In addition, this decline is more significant for male individuals, individuals living in rural areas and those living in poor households. The last chapter of this thesis analyzes in the case of Liberia, the impact of a social transfer policy on human capital formation. This is to understand how a school feeding program similar to a public transfer policy can help to reduce the use of child labor. The data used in this chapter come from the 2007 Liberia Core Welfare Indicators Survey. Using propensity score matching techniques, we find that the school feeding program in Liberia reduces the incentive for child labor. This program is particularly effective in reducing the work of male children, children living in war-displaced households, and children living in literate households. The main finding of this study is that, public social transfers can help to mitigate the adverse effect of civil conflicts on human capital formation.

KEYWORDS

Civil conflict, Civil war, Human capital, Education, Child labor, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sub-Saharan Africa.

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