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Title: Historical and Geographical pathways of civil conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa: An exploration through growing season weather shock and slave trade

Civil conflict is a major obstacle to Sub-Saharan Africa's (SSA) development. Scholarly explorations on drivers of SSA's conflict differ mainly through institutional, geographical and historical channels. Appropriate identification of these drivers will assist in mitigating conflict and enhancing the livelihoods of the impoverished through development interventions. In this study, we argue that SSA's conflict is driven by its geographical variation and further exacerbated by its historical roots. Accordingly, our article investigates how historical slave trade and contemporary weather shocks jointly affect the likelihood of political violence. We construct a half-degree cell level disaggregated dataset of SSA countries over 1997-2014, including political violence, growing season weather shock, historical exposure to slave trade, and a set of pertinent control variables. Exploiting weather variation during the growing season of the locally dominant crop, we find that (i) growing season weather shock, instead of whole year weather shock, significantly increase the likelihood of conflict incidence, onset, and intensity; (ii) more importantly, the effect of growing season weather shock on the risk of civil conflict is substantially amplified by the exposure to slave trade. We further use the exogenous variation in the distance of each cell from its nearest seacoast to construct the instrumental variable for slave trade intensity. The interactive effect of weather shock and slave trade on conflict remains robust to the use of instrumental variable approach and extensive robustness checks. The first part of our results contributes to the debates on the climate-war relationship; suggesting agricultural income as a potential channel through which weather shocks trigger conflict. The second part of our results shed light on the mechanisms on how geographical variation (climate anomalies in this study) and historical events (slave trade here) jointly affect the current political outcome. While we verify the shock of climate on political violence, we also show that the legacy of slave trade may act as an economic shock multiplier. From this perspective, our work contributes to the debates between the "geography matters" and the "history matters" views on long-run development. Our policy discussion focuses on climate shock resilient agricultural development through strengthened local institutions in SSA.