Syllabus: Empirical Analysis of Conflict and Development (Master Seminar)

M.WIWI-VWL.0184

Winter Semester 2026/27

As of September 10, 2026

Prof. Dr. Sarah Langlotz
Phone: 0551-39-28312
Email: sarah.langlotz@uni-goettingen.de
Website: https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/617614.html
External Website: https://sites.google.com/view/sarah-langlotz
Room: Oeconomicum, Raum 2.208
Office hours: By appointment

1. General Information

1.1 Course content

The course provides an overview over the most recent literature on conflict and development. Students are introduced to state-of-the-art empirical methods used in this field. They will learn how to critically reflect on data quality and methods. The seminar analyzes the determinants and consequences of conflict, mostly from a micro-level perspective. This term, we aim at understanding the interplay of health and conflict. Students will test the same pre-defined general hypotheses, though each student does so for a different country. In particular, each student will make use of subnational georeferenced data to test the respective relationship. Students will elaborate on the extent of measurement bias by applying methods as suggested in the recent literature in order to critically reflect upon data quality. Each student tests one additional hypothesis of their own interest, related to the conflict in the assigned country. Students will practice to work with data in Stata (and R) by running regression models at a subnational level including fixed-effects and difference-in-difference approaches. The results of their regression analyses will be used to confirm or falsify the pre-defined hypotheses. The term paper consists of presenting these findings and discussing them with respect to the recent literature. Students will also learn how to critically assess the regression models they used and discuss which methods would be more appropriate to identify causal effects.

1.2 Course goals

The aims of this seminar are to

- deepen the knowledge of participants on conflict and development more broadly and the role of health in particular
- train participants to review the relevant literature, to critically reflect on it, and to undertake their own complementary empirical research
- train participants to work with georeferenced data
- train participants to carry out regression analyses in Stata
- prepare a well-argued piece of research, well written and consistent in format
- present the outcome of this research in class and to engage in a discussion with other students and the teaching staff
- critically reflect on the research papers by other students.

1.3 Prerequisites

There are no formal requirements but prior knowledge in the following areas is highly recommended: econometrics, microeconomics, macroeconomics, and development economics.

I recommend that students gather first experiences in working with geospatial data**, either* using the free software QGIS or R. ***I also strongly advise against participation without some basic understanding of econometrics. We recommend that students take the following class in preparation or as complement to the seminar: "M.WIWI-QMW.0004 Econometrics I." It is further recommended that students have passed "M.WIWI-VWL.0008 Development Economics I."

1.4 Credit points

6 ECTS-LP

1.5 Registration

The number of participants is restricted to 12. To ensure that every student can participate in at least one seminar each semester, the sign-up is centralized. The link to the sign-up form will be shared via the Economics-Newsletter and published here at the beginning of the sign-up period. Seminar slots will be allocated according to preferences and contested slots will be allocated in a lottery. In case of any questions about the process, please contact counseling-devecon@uni-goettingen.de. You will be informed about the result in the week prior to the semester start. Students can register from mid-September until two weeks prior to the lecture start.

If you have obtained a slot, please send an email to sarah.langlotz@uni-goettingen.de and share your favorite three country cases for analysis (see below 2.4 for more details) until November 6, 2026. In case you have not obtained a slot, you may attend the introductory meeting. In case a student drops out, you can take the slot. The final assignment of countries for analysis will be organized in class.

2. Course overview

2.1 Description of the teaching and learning methods

The seminar meetings are supplemented by self-study based on the provided materials and literature. The lecture presents the state of the art of research on conflict and development. By writing an empirical term paper on the link of conflict and health on one exemplary country, students demonstrate their ability to master empirical analyses in Stata (or R) and apply econometric methods to the study of conflict and development. By presenting the term paper, students demonstrate their ability to defend, but also to critically reflect upon empirical research. Knowledge of academic writing and econometric methods are prerequisites for this course. Students will have the possibility to discuss problems and share experiences with their ongoing term project in a mid-term session. **The course language is English.**

2.2 Scheduling

Please register for the course on Stud.IP so that you receive all pertinent information in due time.

Introductory Meeting (Thursday, October 29, 2026, 9:00-11:00, online: link see Stud.IP)

- Explanation of the class
- Explanation of the data
- Organizational questions

Lecture 1 (Thursday, November 12, 2026, 14:00-17:30, VG1.101)

- Introduction into the general literature on conflict and development

Lecture 2 (Friday, November 13, 2026, 09:00-13:30, Oec 1.164)

- Introduction into the literature on conflict and health
- Introduction into conflict data

Deadline for draft outline and introduction (Friday, November 27, 2026, 23:55)

Please upload an electronic version of your draft outline and introduction (about 1.5 pages of introduction including outline, plus first maps of main variables of interest) in a pdf format on Stud.IP CloCked. The draft outline and introduction of all participants will be available on Stud.IP, so that each participant can prepare discussions of other draft outlines and introductions. Please prepare short critical reviews of the two draft outlines and introductions that are assigned to you for the mid-term meeting (no written version required).

Mid-term meeting (Friday, December 11, 2026, 09:00-15:00, online: link see Stud.IP)

Each seminar participant presents slides (not more than five). Each seminar participant comments on two draft outlines and introductions from his/her colleagues. No slides are required for the discussion of other drafts. Discussions of other draft outlines and introductions should not exceed 2 minutes. A maximum of 10 minutes is allotted for the following open Q&A session and feedback per outline. After the meeting, there are optional bilateral Q&As.

Student presentations day 1 and day 2 (Thursday, February 18, 2027, 09:00-18:00, *and* Friday, February 19, 2027, 09:00-13:00, Oec 1.164)

Each seminar participant presents his or her research paper. Please prepare slides for your paper presentation. Presentations should take 15-20 minutes. 15 minutes are allotted for the following Q&A session and feedback on presentations.

Deadline for final paper (Friday, March 12, 2027, 23:55)

Please upload on Stud.IP an electronic version of your final paper (see guidelines below in Section 3; use pdf format; add word count), your Stata files (do, dta, log) or R code (If you cannot upload the data files on Stud.IP you may use GWDG owncloud). The research papers will be available on Stud.IP.

2.3 Examination and grading of the module

The grading consists of three components:

- Term paper [70%]
- Presentation of term paper [30%]
- Furthermore, in order to pass the course, participants must
  - comment on two papers at the mid-term meeting
  - be present and actively participate during all seminar dates
  - submit all written requirements (draft outline and introduction, research paper) on time

2.4 Countries for analysis

Students will test the same pre-defined hypotheses, though students do so for different countries. This term multiple students will be assigned the same country due to data availability. Please share your three favorite country settings from the list with me via email by 6 November. This list will be shared at the first meeting. Every student will be assigned one of his/her preferred countries according to a preference ranking.

2.4 Course materials

Key readings—required:

Amberg, Felix et al. (2023). Examining the relationship between armed conflict and coverage of maternal and child health services in 35 countries in sub-Saharan Africa: a geospatial analysis. *The Lancet Global Health*, *11*(6), e843-e853.

Bundervoet, Tom, Verwimp, Philip, and Richard Akresh (2009). Health and civil war in rural Burundi. *Journal of Human Resources*, *44*(2), 536-563.

Kotsadam, Aandreas and Gudrun Østby (2019). Armed conflict and maternal mortality: a micro-level analysis of sub-Saharan Africa, 1989–2013. *Social Science & Medicine*, *239*, 112526.

Tsujimoto, Takahiro and Yoko Kijima (2020). Effects of conflict on child health: Evidence from the 1990–1994 Northern Mali Conflict. *Health Economics*, 29(11), 1456–1474.

Examples of further papers on conflict and health:

Iqbal, Zaryab (2006). Health and human security: The public health impact of violent conflict. *International Studies Quarterly*, *50*(3), 631-649.

Le, Kien and My Nguyen (2023). The impacts of armed conflict on child health: Evidence from 56 developing countries. *Journal of Peace Research*, 60(2), 243–257.

Østby, Gudrun et al. (2018). Organized Violence and Institutional Child Delivery: Micro-Level Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa, 1989-2014. *Demography*, 55(4), 1295–1316.

Svallfors, Signe et al. (2025). Armed conflict and birthweight: The role of organized violence and anti-coca fumigation in Colombia. *Social Science & Medicine*, 381, 118285.

Research papers on conflict and development—examples:

Bazzi, Samuel et al. (2022). The promise and pitfalls of conflict prediction: Evidence from Colombia and Indonesia. *Review of Economics and Statistics* 104(4), 764-779.

Berman, Nicolas and Mathieu Couttenier (2015). External shocks, internal shots: The geography of civil conflicts. *Review of Economics and Statistics 97* (4), 758–776.

Berman, Nicolas et al. (2017). This mine is mine! How minerals fuel conflicts in Africa. *American Economic Review 107* (6), 1564–1610.

Blair, Graeme, Darin Christensen, and Aaron Rudkin (2021). Do commodity price shocks cause armed conflict? A meta-analysis of natural experiments. *American Political Science Review 115* (1), 1-8.

Blattman, Christopher and Edward Miguel (2010). Civil War. *Journal of Economic Literature 48* (1), 3–57.

Bluhm, Richard, Martin Gassebner, Sarah Langlotz and Paul Schaudt (2020). Fueling conflict? (De)escalation and bilateral aid. *Journal of Applied Econometrics*.

Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler (1998). On economic causes of civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers 50* (4), 563–573.

Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler (2004): Greed and grievance in civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers 56* (4), 563–595.

Esteban, Joan and Debraj Ray (2008). Polarization, fractionalization and conflict. *Journal of Peace Research 45* (2), 163–182.

Fearon, James D., David D. Laitin (2003). Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war. *American Political Science Review 97* (1), 75–90.

Gehring, Kai, Sarah Langlotz, and Stefan Kienberger (2023). Stimulant or depressant? Resource-related income shocks and conflict. *Review of Economics and Statistics.*

Hegre, Håvard and Nicholas Sambanis (2006). Sensitivity analysis of empirical results on civil war onset. *Journal of Conflict Resolution 50* (4): 508–535.

Miguel, Edward, Shanker Satyanath, and Ernest Sergenti (2004). Economic shocks and civil conflict: An instrumental variables approach. *Journal of political Economy 112* (4), 725–753.

Nunn, Nathan and Nancy Qian (2014). US food aid and civil conflict. *American Economic Review 104* (6), 1630–1666.

Recommended textbooks for those who need to build up Stata skills are:

Cameron, Colin A. and Pravin K. Trivedi (2010). *Microeconometrics Using Stata* (revised edition). Stata Press.

Kohler, Ulrich and Frauke Kreuter (2016). *Datenanalyse mit Stata: allgemeine Konzepte der Datenanalyse und ihre praktische Anwendung* (5th edition). Walter de Gruyter.

3. Research paper requirements

The length of the term paper must not exceed 15 pages. Main tables and main figures factor into the page count. The cover sheet, table of contents, list of figures, list of tables, bibliography and the appendix are excluded from the page count. Please use the following formatting: Font size: 12 pt, line spacing: 1.5 times, alignment: justification, margin (right, left, top and bottom margin): 2.5 cm each. Appendices may provide details of the empirical approach, data sources, or some background tables and figures. Tables and figures that are essential for the research paper need to be included in the main text. Please make sure that you are consistent in your referencing and bibliography.

Every idea, statement or fact taken from the literature or any other sources must be appropriately cited. Quotes need to be indicated as such. Plagiarism is sanctioned with the grade 5 (failed). The general rules of the Faculty of Business and Economics apply. A signed declaration must be attached to each scientific work: "I hereby declare that I wrote this thesis paper independently, without assistance from external parties, and without use of other resources than those indicated. All information taken from other publications or sources in text or in meaning are duly acknowledged in the text. I give my consent to have this thesis checked by plagiarism software."

Use a referencing style that is in line with basic conventions in the economics literature. Always quote within a work using the same method. The Chair recommends the in-text author-year citation style (see, for example, information sheet "Citation according to the Harvard system"). All sources that you have cited in the text must appear in the reference list. Everything that you have only read but not cited in the text must NOT appear in the reference list.

A good research paper implies a clear initial presentation of the research question. Relevant concepts and theoretical approaches need to be adequately discussed. If applicable, the methodological choices need to be justified. The analysis needs to focus on the research question. The paper should end with a well-argued synthesis that supports the conclusions. A good research paper is also fluently written and is consistent in its form. Term papers need to be written in English. The work must be done independently by the student; the supervisor only provides advice on the outline and specific issues of the paper.

A complete set of Stata files consists of .dta, .do, and .log files. The Stata files you hand in should include a folder containing any original datasets you have downloaded and the final merged dataset as .dta files. There should also be a single .do file that describes how your data sources were merged and how your output (tables, regression results, graphs, descriptive statistics etc.) was derived from the original data. Please make sure that your .do file can be executed outside your own computer without further adjustments to the code (e.g., by using relative file paths). Add comments to specify which part of the code corresponds to which part of your paper. Finally, include the corresponding log-file in plain text format. If you cannot upload the data files on Stud.IP you may use GWDG owncloud.