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Violence, Selection and Infant Mortality in Congo*

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Abstract

This paper documents the effects of the recent civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo on mortality both in utero and during the first year of life. It instruments for conflict intensity using a mineral price index, which exploits the exogenous variation in the potential value of mineral resources generated by changes in world mineral prices to predict the geographic distribution of the conflict. Using estimates of civil war exposure on mortality across male and female newborn to assess their relative health, it provides evidence of culling effect (in utero selection) as a consequence of in utero shocks.

Keywords: civil war, culling effect, selection, infant mortality.

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