

# **The Effects of Civil Conflicts on Women's Labor Force Participation: A Causal Mechanism Approach**

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## *Abstract*

This essay investigates how civil conflict affects women's labor force participation and provides evidence that part of this effect is through the mechanism of domestic violence exposure. Psychologists have done most of the work on the relationship between civil violence exposure and domestic violence, whereas economists have focused on the causes and consequences of civil violence exposure. However, there is no evidence in the economics literature on how domestic violence may operate as a causal mechanism between civil conflict and women's labor force participation. To investigate this relationship I apply the methodology developed in Flores and Flores-Lagunes (2011), which allows the identification of causal mechanisms and net effects under some unconfoundedness assumption. I use a representative sample of Peru's female population between 15 and 49 years of age (Demographic and Health Survey 2005-2008) to construct a sample of 6,691 women. I find that the exposure to the civil conflict between 1980 and 2000 increased the probability of urban women working by 0.0454 (eight percent) and that about 73 percent of this increase is net of the effect through domestic violence. I argue that the deteriorating economic conditions during the post-conflict period in affected areas may have forced women to enter the labor market in order to contribute to household income.

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