"Nonviolent Interference in Civic Life during Civil War: Rebel Service Provision and Postwar Norms of Interpersonal Trustworthiness in Sri Lanka"

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Abstract:
While previous studies focus most of their attention on the impact of civil war violence on postwar norms of interpersonal trustworthiness, they overlook the importance of political actors’ nonviolent interference in civic life. This paper investigates the relationship between wartime provision of public services and postwar trustworthiness norms among civilians. Using original survey data collected from Sri Lanka, the empirical analysis suggests that postwar norms of interpersonal trustworthiness tend to weaken if individuals experience higher amounts of service provision by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. To build their own apparatus to provide efficient services, the rebels deeply intervene in and alter local institutions. Such transformation of local institutions dissolves existing social groups and associations that previously tied residents together. Efforts of post-civil-war community development would be ill equipped if these institutions were to be treated as nonexistent. Postwar development programs need to provide new, effective local institutions to replace those established in wartime.