Angry men and civic women? Gendered effects of conflict on political participation.

6th of June 2023

Julie Litchfield (Sussex), Elodie Douarin (UCL) and Fatlinda Gashi (Sussex)

e.douarin@ucl.ac.uk

7th European Workshop on Political Macroeconomics

BoFIT, Bank of Finland, Helsinki

Gendered effects of conflict on political participation

- Several recent empirical papers suggest that **conflict victimisation is associated with greater level of political participation** and collective action:
  - A post-conflict growth hypothesis.

- However, the **drivers and forms** of political participation have been shown to differ **across gender**, but so far the scholarship has been largely silent on possible gendered effects of victimisation.

- We propose to fill this gap by investigating the impact of conflict victimisation on political participation in today's Kosovo, 2 decades after the 1998-1999 Kosovo war.

- Using household survey data collected in 2015-16, we find evidence that victimisation has increased certain forms of political participation, but the effect is very different across gender.

Bauer et al. (2016) Meta-analysis JEP

Figure 1

Meta-Analysis Results, War Exposure, and Cooperation
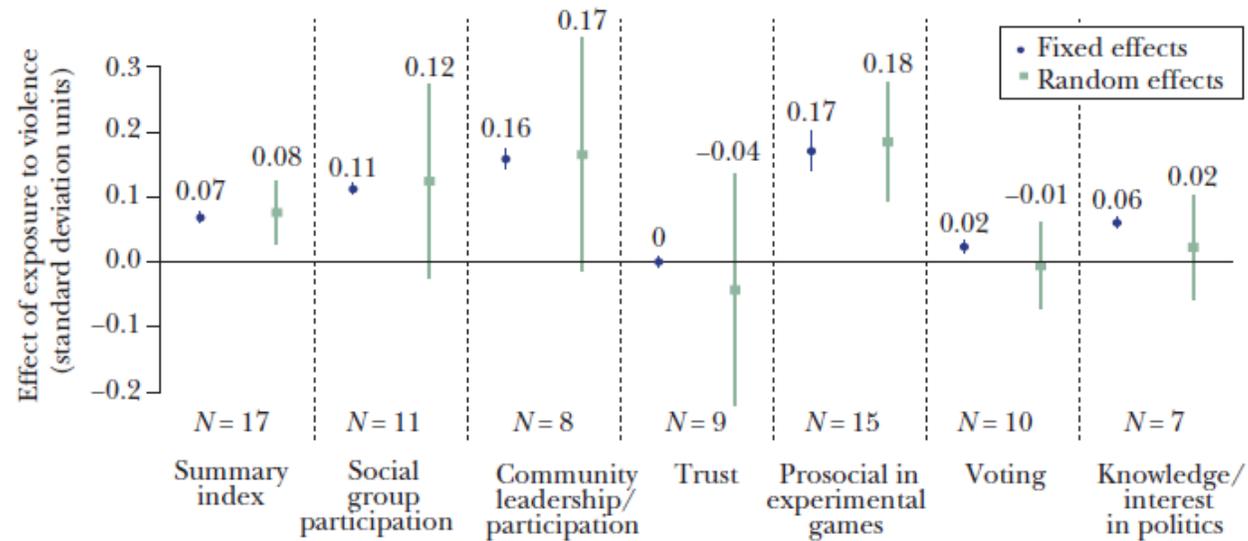
Notes: The figure plots the meta-analysis results reported in Table 2. The effect of exposure to violence on each outcome is estimated using fixed-effects (circles) and random-effects (squares) meta-analysis models. Results are reported in standard deviation units. The vertical lines denote 95 percent confidence intervals. N denotes the number of studies/games included in the meta-analysis for each outcome.

Possible effect of gender: violence and gender

- Hadzic and Tavits (2019) have suggested that men's participation could increase post conflict while that of women could in fact be reduced.

- This is because past violent episodes can lead "people to perceive post-war politics as a more combative and aggressive realm" (page 676), leading women to be more inclined to reject political participation precisely due to its violent nature.

- Hadzic and Tavits (2019) provides experimental evidence that conflict salience reduces women PP participation, but increases that of men.

- Hadzic and Tavits (2021) evidences that post conflict, women are less likely to win elections because voters prefer political agents with male personality traits

- **In short: rather than post-conflict growth, changing patterns in PP may be translating a masculinisation of the political arena post-conflict**

Case-study: Kosovo

- Kosovo had enjoyed an autonomous status within Yugoslavia until 1989, when this status was revoked, Kosovo Albanians established a set of parallel institutions, to bypass the discrimination imposed by the Serbian authority.

- In the 1990s, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) organised targeted attacks against the Serbian authority within Kosovo.

- The situation escalated in 1998, when the Serb engaged in indiscriminate violence akin to ethnic cleansing. NATO intervened in March to June 1999 with a bombing campaign with targets in Serbia and Kosovo.

"Large numbers of civilians were also deliberately targeted and killed because of their ethnicity. No-one, it seems, was immune, as people of all ages, including women and children, were killed in large numbers." (OSCE, 1999)

- During the conflict, it is estimated that 1.4 millions people were displaced internally or migrated abroad. But by 2011, only 5 or 6% of this displaced population had not returned.

Post-conflict political landscape in Kosovo

- Current political parties mostly associated with Kosovan Liberation Army

- Quotas exist for women representatives at national and local legislatures but (Gashi, 2014)
  - Only recently achieved
  - Some evidence that quotas set up competition between male and female candidates
  - Little oversight of party campaign finances

6

Data and Method

- Life In Transition Survey 3 – household survey data collected in 34 countries between 2015-2016 by the EBRD/WB
  - We use only the data collected in Kosovo – 1,500 households
  - Main respondent: an adult picked at random in the household

- Determinants of political participation in Kosovo, including "conflict victimisation" and gender
  - Different forms of political participation: formal vs informal, public vs private
  - Conflict victimisation: Respondent or HH member was injured, killed or displaced

- Movers: over 80% of 2015-16 sample remained/returned to same municipality as at time of conflict; of those who have moved, we can identify place of residence at onset of conflict for over 75%

- Fixed effects: location at time of survey or onset of conflict? Tried both: report here the latter

- $PP_{ij} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 C_{ij} + \beta_2 X_{ij} + \beta_3 L_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$

- Identification
  - Measurement error
  - Selection on observables
  - Selection on unobservables (Oster, 2019)

Table 1: Political participation by gender

Outcomes	Women	Men	Difference
Voting (local)	**0.719**	**0.812**	**0.093***
Voting (parliament)	**0.658**	**0.751**	**0.093***
Political party member	**0.064**	**0.137**	**0.072***
Strike	**0.058**	**0.151**	**0.094***
Demonstration	**0.105**	**0.224**	**0.120***
Petition	**0.176**	**0.313**	**0.136***
Observations	765	735	1,500

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2: War experiences

Victimisation	Displaced		
	Yes	No	Total
Killed or injured			
Yes	237	112	349
No	202	949	1,151
Total	439	1,061	1,500

Empirical concerns?

- Studies looking into the consequences of war victimisation can be split into 2 groups:
  - Self reported victimisation
  - A measure of threat of victimisation used in reduced form regressions or as an instrument, generally based on location

- The choice of approach depends on the balance of concerns over:
  - Bias in reporting and Reverse causality on the one hand
  - And confidence in the information about location on the other

- What is the most serious threat to identification in the case of Kosovo?
  - Recall bias is likely to be minor + the questions asked relate to non-stigmatised victimisation
  - Reverse causality is unlikely: extensive attacks against Albanians + NATO bombing
  - Massive displacements at several key stages of the conflict

Table 3 Probability of conflict experience

- Women neither more/less likely to be victims of conflict (either/or/any) than men
- Older people, regions and ethnicities are the key determinants

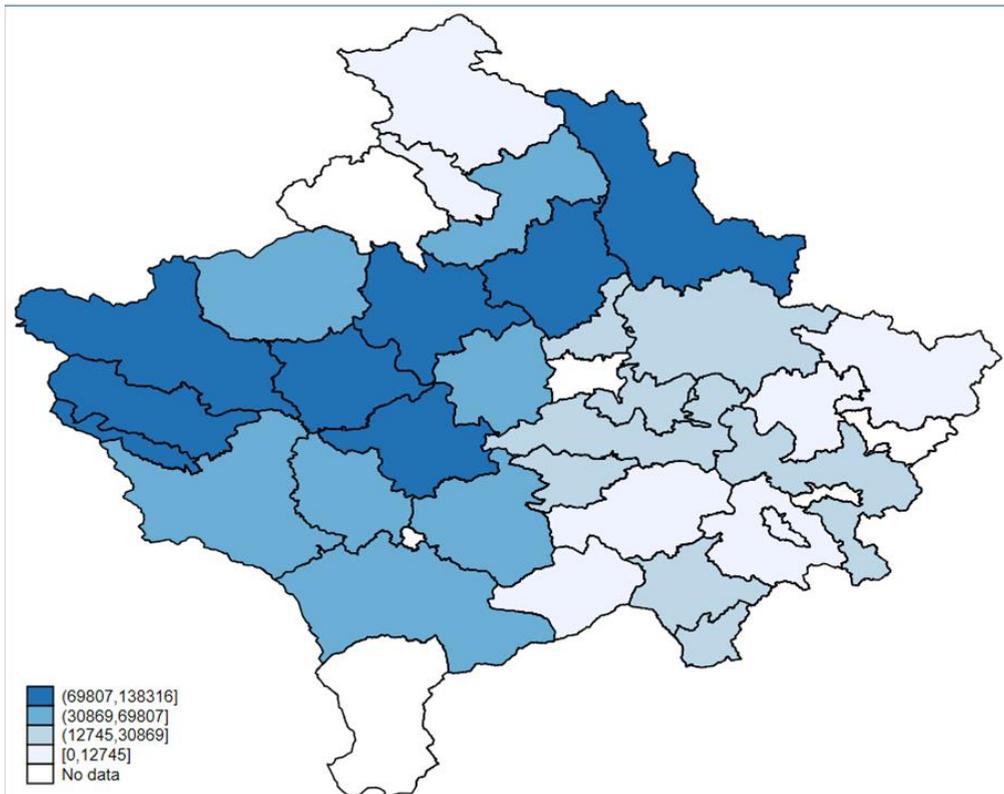| VARIABLES	(1) Conflict affected (any)	(2) Conflict affected (any)
Gender	-0.005	-0.005
	(0.024)	(0.028)
Age	0.002**	0.007*
	(0.001)	(0.004)
Age squared		-0.000
		(0.000)
Own Education (Secondary)		-0.047
		(0.044)
Own Education (Tertiary)		-0.043
		(0.053)
Father Education (Secondary)	-0.021	-0.025
	(0.036)	(0.042)
Father Education (Tertiary)	0.019	0.008
	(0.057)	(0.069)
Mother Education (Secondary)	-0.020	-0.017
	(0.040)	(0.045)
Mother Education (Tertiary)	-0.069	-0.041
	(0.068)	(0.076)
Constant	0.226***	0.149
	(0.082)	(0.125)
Observations	1,438	1,171
R-squared	0.101	0.113
region and ethnicity FE	Yes	Yes

11

Table A2: Determinants of victimisation

VARIABLES	(1) Conflict affected (any)	(2) Conflict affected (any)	(3) Injured or killed only	(4) Injured or killed (only)	(5) Displaced (only)	(6) Displaced (only)
Gender	-0.005	-0.005	-0.028	-0.034	-0.001	-0.007
	(0.024)	(0.028)	(0.021)	(0.028)	(0.022)	(0.027)
Age	0.002**	0.007*	0.002***	0.009**	0.000	0.005
	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.004)
Age squared		-0.000		-0.000*		-0.000
		(0.000)		(0.000)		(0.000)
Own Education (Secondary)		-0.047		-0.009		-0.042
		(0.044)		(0.029)		(0.047)
Own Education (Tertiary)		-0.043		0.005		-0.033
		(0.053)		(0.045)		(0.058)
Father Education (Secondary)	-0.021	-0.025	-0.023	-0.025	-0.030	-0.024
	(0.036)	(0.042)	(0.029)	(0.033)	(0.036)	(0.041)
Father Education (Tertiary)	0.019	0.008	0.025	0.027	0.020	0.038
	(0.057)	(0.069)	(0.049)	(0.058)	(0.055)	(0.062)
Mother Education (Secondary)	-0.020	-0.017	-0.002	0.001	-0.037	-0.058
	(0.040)	(0.045)	(0.036)	(0.042)	(0.035)	(0.039)
Mother Education (Tertiary)	-0.069	-0.041	-0.057	-0.014	-0.094	-0.114
	(0.068)	(0.076)	(0.051)	(0.067)	(0.063)	(0.074)
Constant	0.226***	0.149	0.166**	0.010	0.215***	0.150
	(0.082)	(0.125)	(0.074)	(0.118)	(0.078)	(0.107)
Observations	1,438	1,171	1,438	1,171	1,438	1,171
R-squared	0.101	0.113	0.058	0.067	0.111	0.130
region and ethnicity FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Housing Damage (EC, 1999)

■	(69807,138316]
■	(30869,69807]
■	(12745,30869]
□	[0,12745]
□	No data

Casualties (Trako, 2016)

War Casualty Rate

■	0.427 - 2.295
■	2.295 - 3.892
■	3.892 - 6.447
■	6.447 - 10.693
■	10.693 - 22.444
□	Kosovo municipalities 1999-2000

13
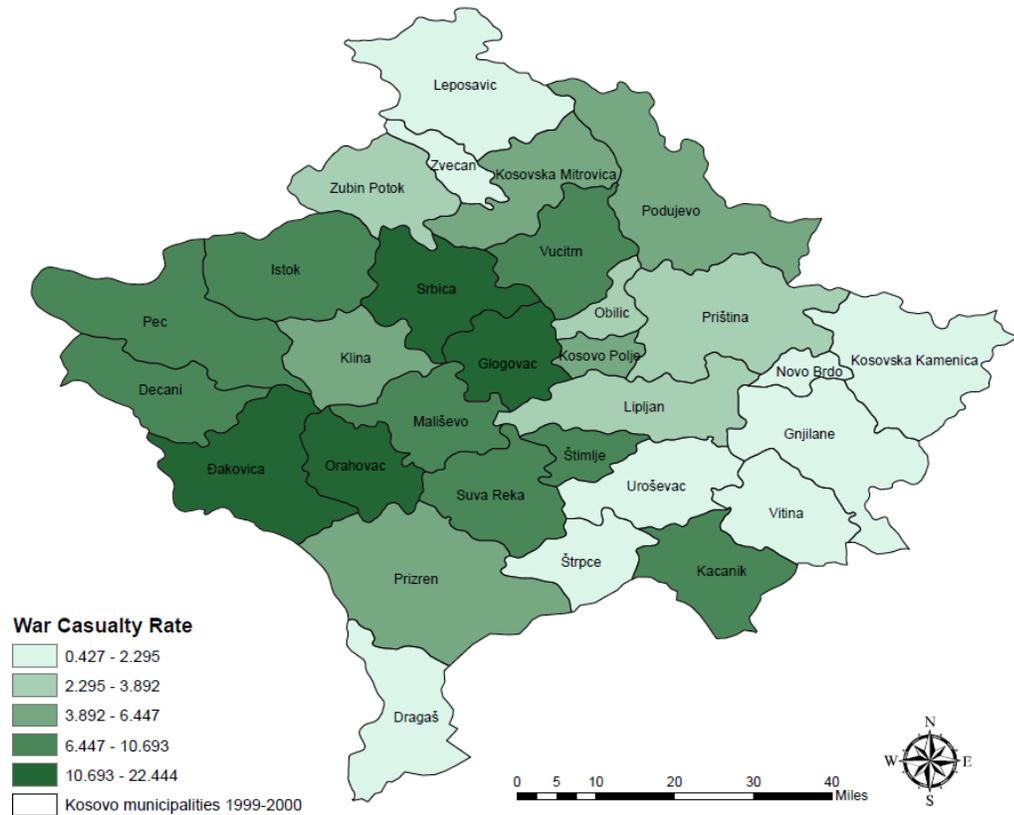
Figure 3 Strong correlation between self-reported victimisation and external estimates of extent of damage

Y axis: self reported victimisation aggregated at the municipality of residence during the conflict and weighted by the number of respondents (LITS3, 2016) ; X-axis damage estaimtes (EC, 1999)

14
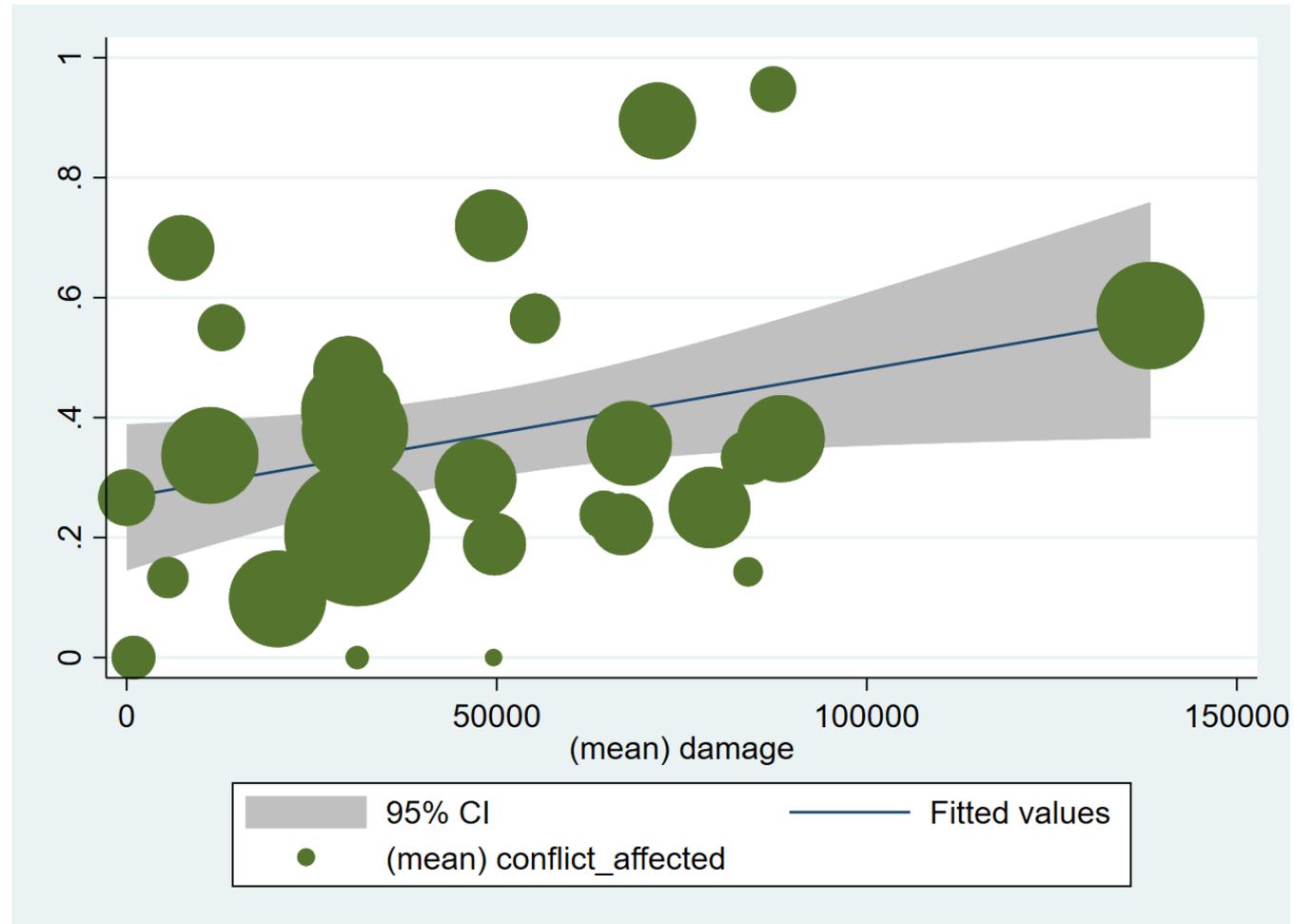
Empirical concerns?

- Is victimisation orthogonal to political participation?
  - We believe so, because violence was indiscriminate (within ethnic groups)
  - Because victimisation appears random in our sample once we control for ethnicity and region (no selection)

- Could there be measurement errors in the reporting of victimisation?
  - Yes, as self-reported, but non-trivial experiences
  - If victims report not being victims, then our estimates are lower bound effect
  - We show good correlation between victimisation and damage measured from an external source

- Are our results robust to omitted variable bias?
  - We employ Oster (2019) method and conclude that omitted variable bias cannot realistically explain our results away, when we do find an effect of victimisation.

Figure 4: Estimated coefficients: local voting

16
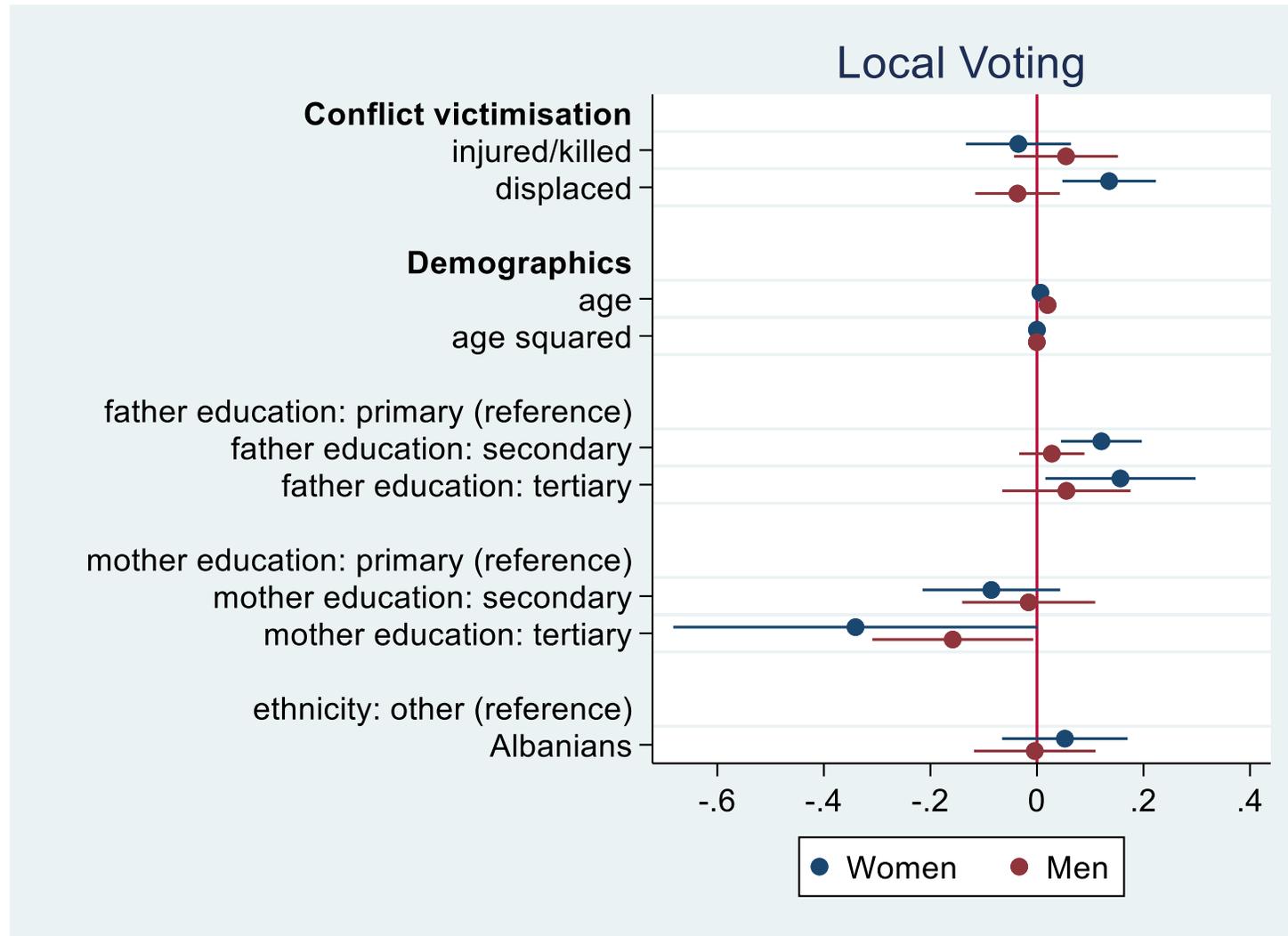
Figure 5: Estimated coefficients: Parliamentary voting
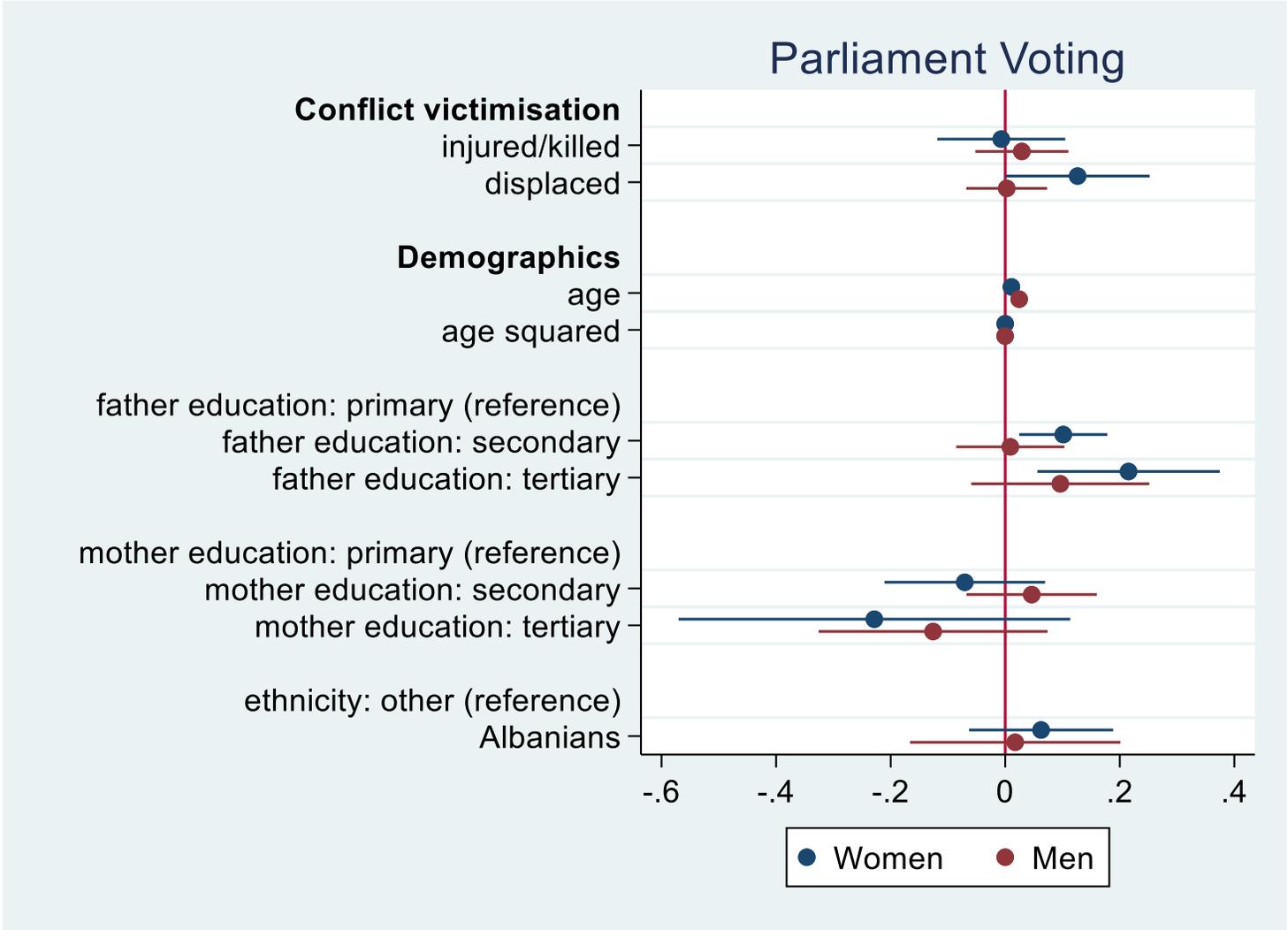
Figure 6: Estimated coefficients: Political Party Membership
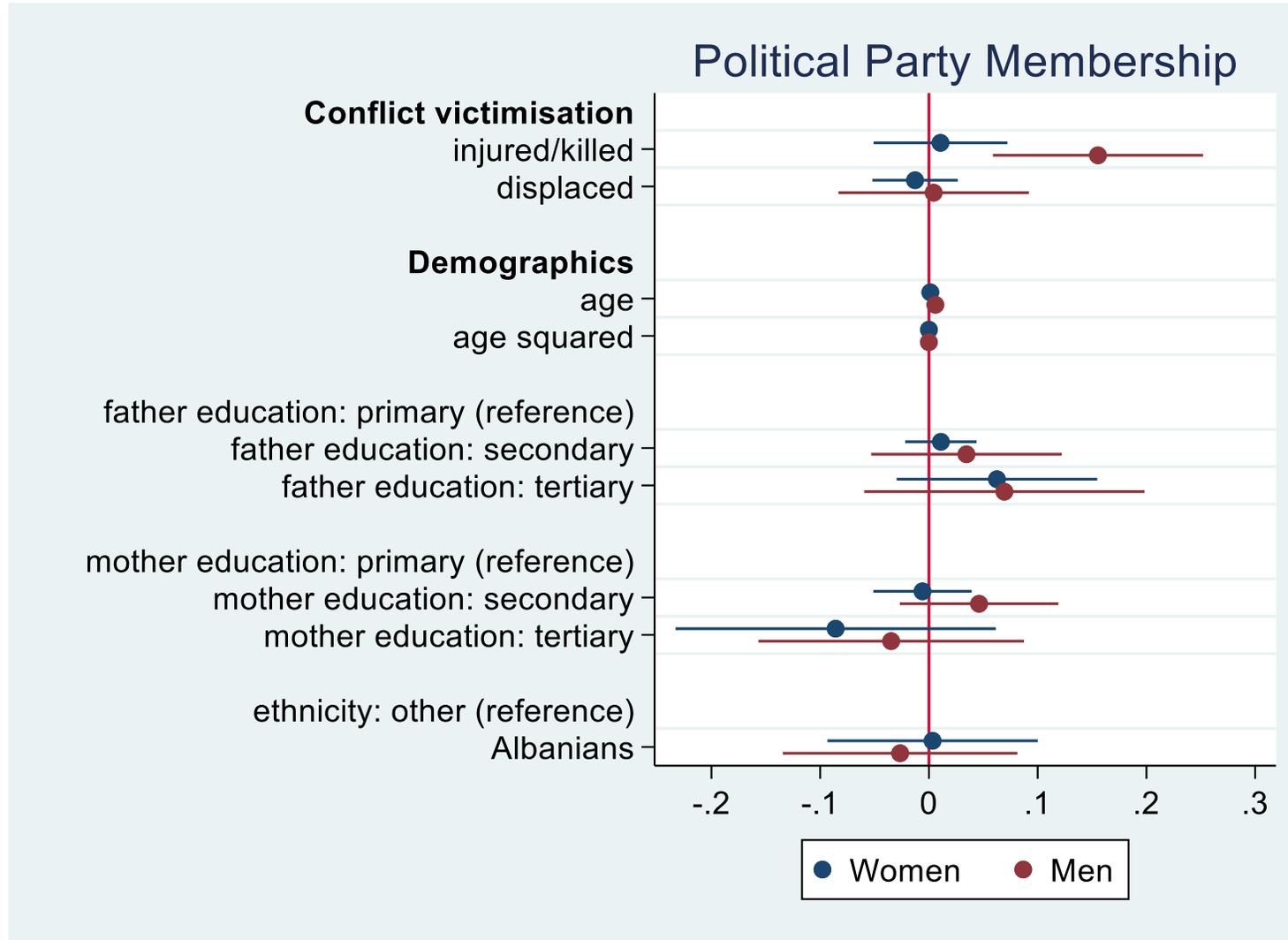

18
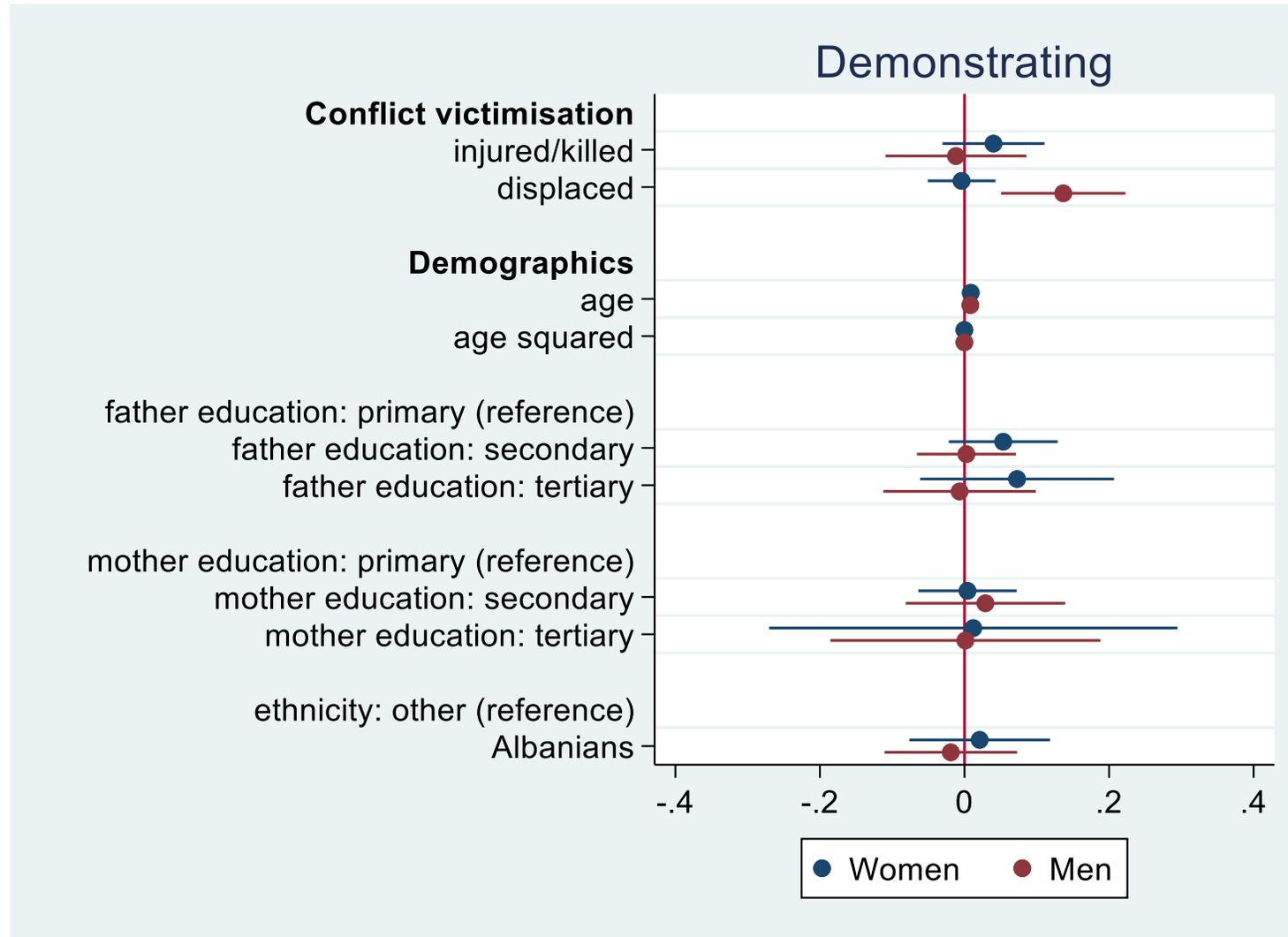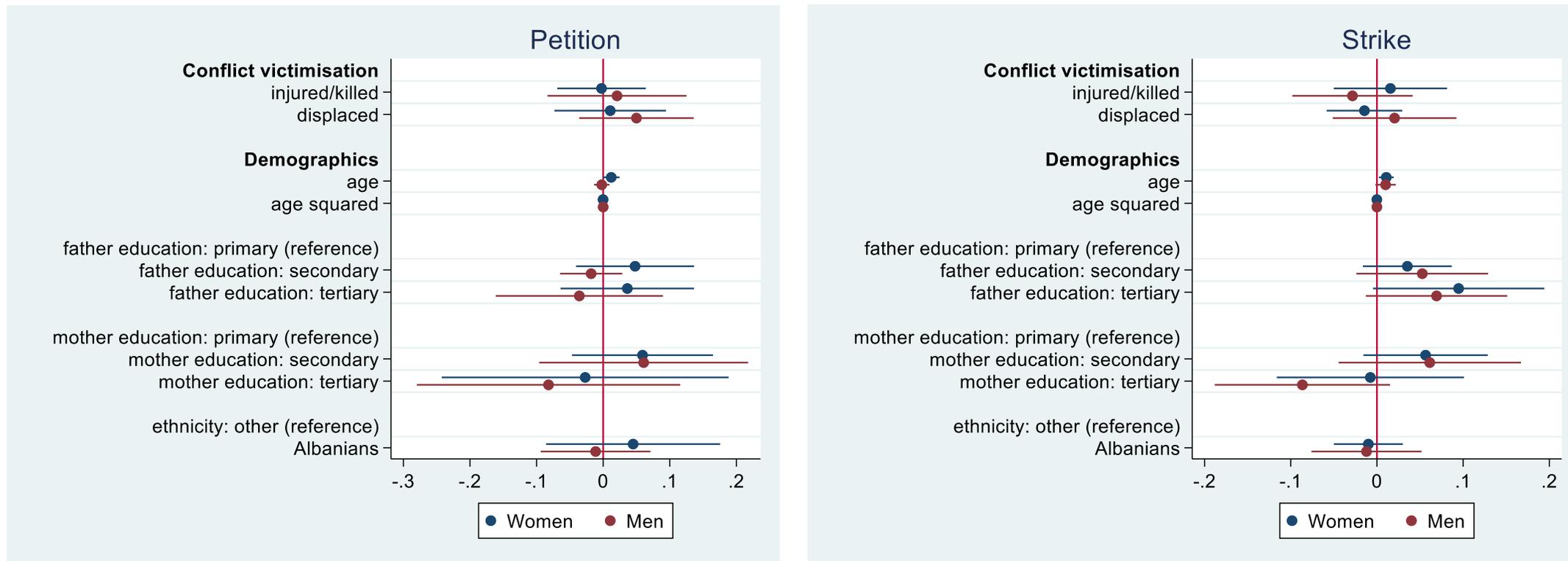
Figure 7: Estimated coefficients: Demonstrating

Figure 8: Estimated coefficients: Singing petitions and strikes
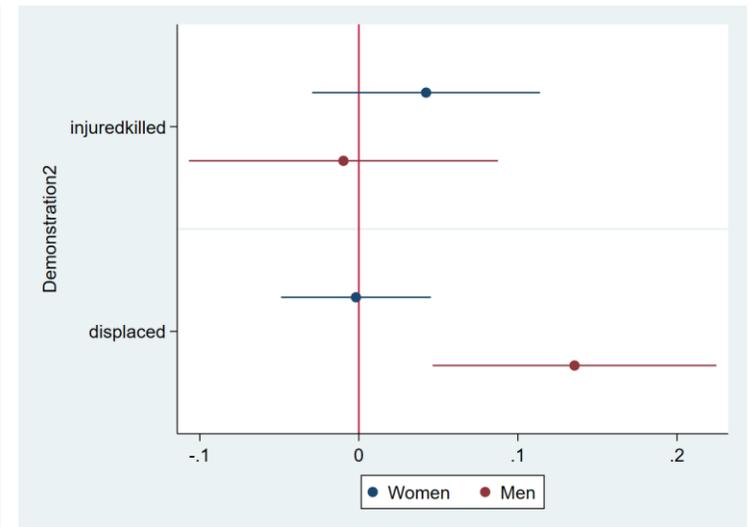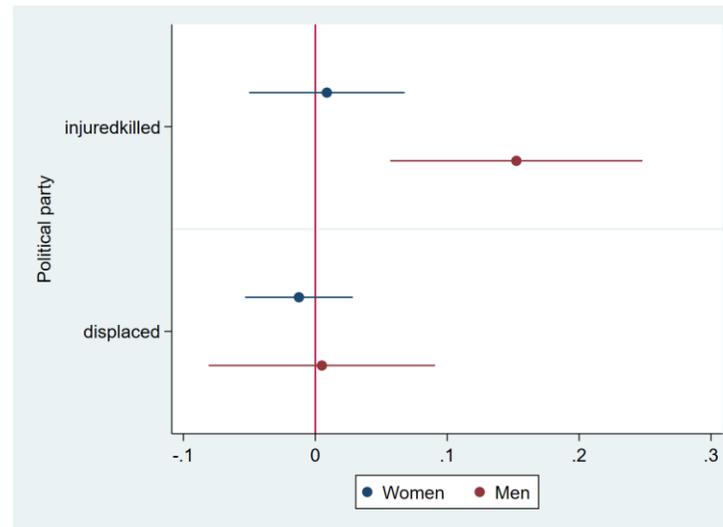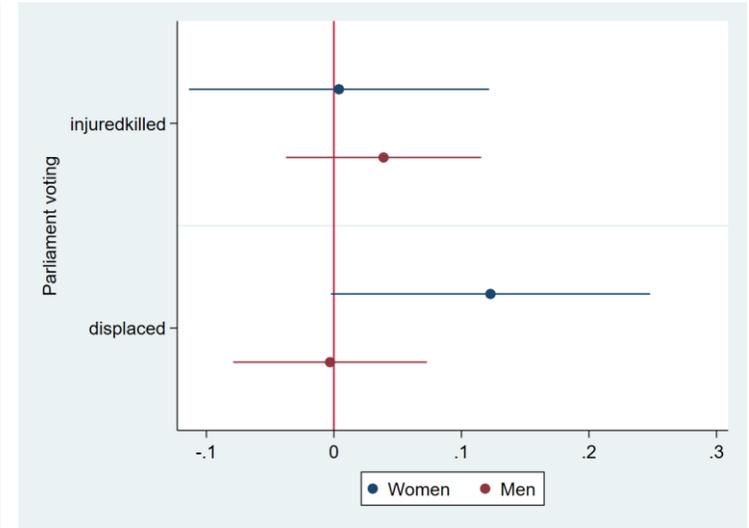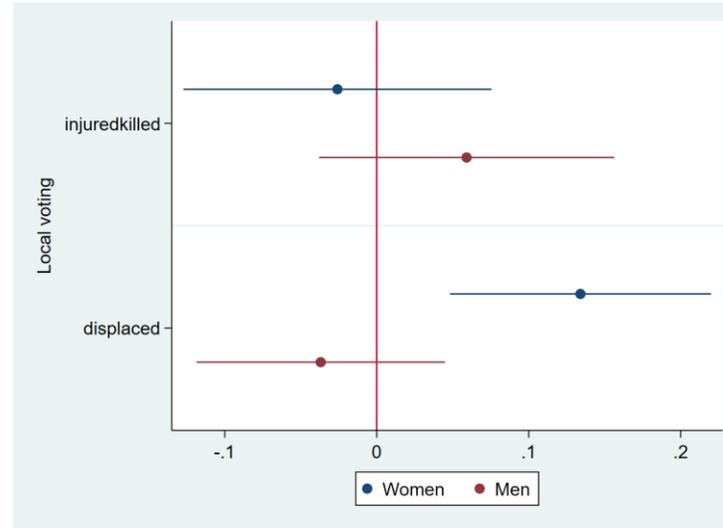
Summary findings

Illustrating the gendered impact of victimisation on PP

We illustrate the main coefficient of interest only.

The full regression includes a complete set of pre-conflict drivers and municipality-FE (using location at the onset of the conflict)

Summary of results

- Respondents who report being war-victims are
  - more likely to take part in voting (local and parliamentary elections)
    - But looking more closely it is only true for women
    - And driven by Displacement not injured/killed
  - more likely to be party members
    - But only if male
    - Results driven by injury of death not displacement
  - More likely to take part in demonstrations
    - But only if male
    - Result drive by displacement

- Results are robust to choice of fixed effects and inclusion or not of (post-conflict) movers

Table 4. Omitted variable bias: thresholds on importance of unobservables relative to observables to explain away the key coefficients

Coefficient tested	Threshold: $R_{max}=1.3R$	Threshold: $R_{max}=2R$
Effect of displacement on Local voting (women only)	4.975	1.697
Effect of displacement on Parliamentary voting (women only)	3.027	0.989
Effect of "Injured or killed" on Political party membership (men only)	3.068	1.25
Effect of displacement on Demonstration (women only)	4.695	1.47

Note: Authors' calculations based on Oster (2019).

Discussion

- Conflict victims are more politically active in Kosovo, but strongly gendered patterns

- Displacement may challenge gender norms about importance of political participation: exposure to more progressive democracies, greater female representation (Ivlevs, 2021).
  - For women this has effect of encouraging participation in voting
  - Possible indirect effect via displaced men encouraging/allowing(?) women family members/relatives to vote

- For men, conflict experience increases likelihood of joining demonstrations (if displaced) and of joining a party (if injured/killed)
  - combative and masculine nature of current political arena in Kosovo

- Relatively high female representation in parliament today more likely due to quotas rather than changes in gender norms around active, public political participation.

- Kosova war thus seems to have increased political participation but without substantially challenging traditional gender norms

24

What is next?

Our work highlighted some very specific issues which are still under-investigated in the field:

- Conflict and post-conflict displacement is often inadequately considered:
  - Surveys do not capture displacement fully, and we do not know exactly where the respondents were during the conflict. This weakens identification strategies based on intensity of conflict or proximity of boarders (of course, trade-offs of using such identification differ depending on contexts).
  - Special issues for women in traditional societies where wives relocate in their husbands' villages. This leads to a disproportionate dropping of female respondents in estimations.

- Victimisation measures may be too crude:
  - Given the strongly different impact of displacement versus killed/injured, maybe more disaggregation is needed.
  - In particular, less often investigated forms of victimisation may be more important: e.g. sexual violence.
  - If we recognise a masculinisation of politics post-conflict, we probably need to understand the distinction between victims, actors and heroes of wars and the gender dimension of these labels.

- More work is needed to understand the underlying mechanisms linking victimisation to PP:
  - is it a masculinisation of the political arena ? Or a broder strengthening of gender inequal norms?
  - If it is about masculinisation of the political arena, are women excluded or segregated/relegated to a more limited set of forums?

Thank you for your attention

e.douarin@ucl.ac.uk

@d_douarin