

Violent Conflict and Academic Research: Evidence from the 2014 Conflict in Ukraine

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We estimate the effects of the 2014 Russian military intervention in Ukraine scientific research. Using publication data from the SCOPUS database, we create a panel of authors affiliated with Ukrainian universities. We apply a difference-in-differences event study framework to quantify the war's effects on research productivity and collaborations over the period 2015-2021, a sufficiently long period to capture changes in research output. Our treatment group comprises academics from the heavily disrupted regions of Donbas and Crimea in the year 2013, just prior to the start of the conflict. Our control group are scientists from other regions of Ukraine who were not directly affected.

Preliminary findings suggest a significant drop in research output in the affected regions. This research contributes to our understanding of the hidden, long-term costs of armed conflict, by rigorously examining the war's impact on innovation and research and development (R&D) within the academic sector of Ukraine. Academic productivity is a proxy for a country's innovative capacity, so it is important to understand how warfare affected knowledge generation and research capacities in Ukraine.

By focusing on academics – key agents in the generation and diffusion of knowledge – our findings offer a unique perspective on labor market disruptions induced by war. Our results can be scaled up to approximate the cost of a full-scale Russian aggression in 2022, data for which will become available only in a few years.