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# ANGRY MEN AND CIVIC WOMEN? GENDERED EFFECTS OF CONFLICT ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN KOSOVO

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*Julie Litchfield, Elodie Douarin, and Fatlinda Gashi*

## ABSTRACT

This article studies the effect of the 1998–99 Kosovo war on current political participation, disaggregating the analysis by the type of conflict experience – namely death or injury to self or a family member or displacement – and by gender. The results show that experience of conflict is associated with more political participation but with important distinctions between genders by the form of participation and the type of conflict experience. Displacement is associated with more voting among women, but not among men, and with more demonstrating by men but weaker or no effects for women; death and injury are associated with higher political party membership for men but not women. While experiences of conflict increase levels of political participation, the form that this takes varies by gender, with effects on private, civic, action among women, and effects on direct, public, and more emotionally heightened engagement among men.

## KEYWORDS

Conflict, political participation, voting, gender, Kosovo

## HIGHLIGHTS

- The view that conflict victims are more politically active than non-victims needs nuancing.
- In Kosovo, women’s war displacement is only associated with an increase in voting.
- But men will join a political party (if injury or death in the family) or demonstrate (if displaced).
- This implies that victimization does not contribute to challenging gendered social norms.
- The accepted “post-traumatic growth” hypothesis is insufficient to explain these findings.

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## INTRODUCTION

The literature on the impacts of traumatic experiences suggests that victimization can lead to either political apathy or to an increased willingness to engage with political processes.<sup>1</sup> Empirical analyses focusing on conflict have overwhelmingly supported the latter: political participation is bolstered by war.<sup>2</sup> This effect is generally explained by post-traumatic growth (Blattman 2009) or an instrumentalization of victimization in political claims (Freitag, Kijewski, and Oppold 2019).

However, these findings seem disconnected from the broader literature on political participation that has emphasized important gender differences. Women have often been shown to participate less than men in voting, membership of political parties, and political positions (Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010; Paxton, Hughes, and Barnes 2021).

While most of the empirical literature is silent on the gendered effects of conflict on political participation (see, for example, the meta-analysis by Bauer et al. 2016), Dino Hadzic and Margit Tavits (2019) suggest that men's participation could increase post-conflict while that of women could, in fact, be reduced. They argue that the violence of the war itself can lead "people to perceive post-war politics as a more combative and aggressive realm" (2019, 676), which would then make women more inclined to reject political participation precisely due to its violent nature. In contrast, Patti Petesch (2018) suggests that conflict has the potential to shake gender norms and open new opportunities for women. This might arise if women fill spaces previously occupied by men in, for example, local, grass-roots projects and self-help groups during and after conflict (Bakken and Buhaug 2021).

With this in mind, we propose a gendered analysis of political participation in post-war Kosovo. We find that while men and women report equal incidences of conflict victimization, these experiences have different outcomes. We find that men with experiences of conflict have become more active in political parties and are more likely to take part in demonstrations. In contrast, for women, victimization is instead associated with an increased likelihood of voting. We frame these different outcomes as no less active than each other, but rather contrast the civic activities of voting with the more emotionally-charged or disruptive activities of demonstrating or political party activism. This is consistent with the way Hadzic and Tavits (2019) characterize masculine post-war political spaces, although with the nuance that far from being dissuaded from political participation, women are instead choosing different ways to express their political agency. In addition, while victimization, as being injured or having family members killed during the conflict, is driving the association with increased political party membership for men, it is victimization as being

displaced during the conflict that drives all of the other associations (that is, increased demonstration for men and increased voting for women).

We note that our results are robust to specification choices, including different location fixed effects and also, following Emily Oster (2019), to remain plausible after accounting for bias due to unobservables.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Conflict and political participation**

One of the paradoxes of conflict is that it can be both a destructive and a creative force for development. Conflict is often portrayed as “development in reverse,” destroying lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure (Collier et al. 2003; Gates et al. 2012). Yet conflict can also challenge economic, political, and social norms and create opportunities for change.<sup>3</sup> Some of these opportunities arise through negotiated peace-settlements that reform or create new democratic institutions, power sharing, and territorial representation. Although there is contested evidence from cross-country studies about the extent to which these contribute to peace (Caplan and Hoeffler 2017) or development (Stewart and Daga 2017), their success relies on the ability and willingness of ordinary citizens to engage and participate in them.

Several authors have suggested that conflict leads to higher levels of political participation, more collective action, more prosocial behavior, and higher degrees of altruism (see, in particular, the literature review and meta-analysis proposed by Bauer et al. 2016). These effects are nearly always explained by post-traumatic growth (Blattman 2009) or an instrumentalization of victimization in political claims (Freitag, Kijewski, and Oppold 2019). This implies that the experience of conflict leads citizens to want to take a more active and cooperative role in public affairs and simultaneously provides a way to legitimize taking a more active role.

In empirical research using household surveys and information on past victimization to assess the links between victimization and political participation, the evidence of an increased political participation post-conflict is strong. However, this literature is surprisingly silent on gender differences. We present a review in Table 1 where we have listed the key findings and information about whether a gendered analysis was conducted, and if so how, highlighting a clear gap.<sup>4</sup> Gender is often addressed by only a dummy variable, and only a handful of papers comment on the sign and significance of its coefficient. Very few studies discuss explicitly whether the effects of victimization differ by gender: Achyuta Adhvaryu and James Fenske (2013), who do not provide a rationale, and Omar Garcia-Ponce (2017), in line with pathways outlined by Ingrid Bakken and Halvard Buhaug (2021), suggests that the absence of men

created space for women to take on leadership roles in local and grass-roots organizations during conflict and this then led to an increase in women's political participation more generally.

### **Political participation, gender, and conflict**

Against this backdrop, we draw on the work of Hadzic and Tavits (2019) and Hadzic and Tavits (2021) on post-conflict political participation and representation in Bosnia to argue that the effects of violent conflict on political participation may be gendered. Hadzic and Tavits (2019) make an important contribution by providing a rare exploration of the gendered impact of conflict in political participation. In their theorization, they argue that conflict and violence may increase the perception among citizens that the political arena is violent, it is likely that women's political participation will be depressed, rather than raised, post-conflict. They provide evidence of this being the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina using an experimental approach that shows that when violence was made salient, women became less likely to report a willingness to engage in politics, while the opposite was true for men. This can be interpreted as an important nuancing of the "post traumatic growth" or legitimization narrative, we mentioned above, suggesting it may apply only to men.<sup>5</sup>

Women's political participation has lagged behind that of men in most countries (Inglehart and Norris 2003; Paxton, Hughes, and Barnes 2021), and explanations have often centered on differences in endowments or resources.<sup>6</sup> But gender norms might also play a role. Indeed, in their seminal work Sidney Verba, Nancy Burns, and Kay Schlozman (1997) noted that differences in political participation between men and women could not be explained solely through differences in resources (such as education) but also reflected differences in interest in politics, information, and efficacy – factors largely shaped by "the cues received by males and females that politics is a man's world" (1997, 1051). These "cues" are not necessarily static: Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris (2003) argue that cross-country differences in the gender gap in political participation are linked to modernization, with post-industrial societies displaying more gender-equal attitudes and smaller participation gaps. Industrial transformations that change gender norms around labor market participation, fertility choices may affect political participation. Furthermore, as discussed above, significant events such as war may also shape gender norms. The factors shaping gender norms should be seen as complex and fluid, opening space for a nuancing of the role of broad driving trends such as modernization.

Exploring further this gender gap, a more recent scholarship has evidenced a tendency for women to engage in voting (more frequently than men in some contexts) or in other forms of "private" political activism,

Table 1 Summary of the literature on conflict and collective action/political participation

<i>Paper</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Main data sources</i>	<i>Conflict victimization variable</i>	<i>Finding on impact of conflict</i>	<i>Gender treatment</i>	<i>Finding on gender</i>
Adhvaryu and Fenske (2013)	17 sub-African countries	Diverse	Locality-level battle deaths	Exposure to war decreases collective action for men, but increases interest in politics. However, the effects estimated are very small. No effects for women.	Analysis based on local-level measure of intensity, not own-experience, shows no effect for women on voting or collective action or interest in politics.	Different effects for men versus women are discussed with conflict having no effects on women's political participation and small effects on men.
Alacevich and Zejcirovic (2020)	Bosnian ethnic civil war 1992–1995	Voter turnout data 1990–2014 Household survey data 2006 (LITS1)	Municipality level measure of war intensity	Decreases voter turnout, caused by violence against civilians rather than against soldiers.	Not controlled for in municipality level analysis. Not reported in household level analysis.	n/a

(Continued).

Table 1 Continued

<i>Paper</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Main data sources</i>	<i>Conflict victimization variable</i>	<i>Finding on impact of conflict</i>	<i>Gender treatment</i>	<i>Finding on gender</i>
Bellows and Miguel (2009)	1991–2002 Sierra Leone Civil war	Household data collected in 2005 and 2007 Chiefdom level attacks and battles	Self-reported victimization of household members (index: based on HH members killed injured or displaced) Chiefdom conflict intensity	HH victimization increases likelihood of attending community meetings, being a member of a social or political group	Gender is controlled for in HH level analysis, and women are less politically active. In an analysis of heterogenous effects (not reported), an interaction term between gender and victimization is included and “not generally statistically significant.”	While women are as likely to be victim, they are less likely to be politically active after the conflict than men. The effect of conflict on men and women is stated not to be significantly different.
Blattman (2009)	Uganda		Ex-combatant	Increased political participation of ex-combatant (voted, community mobilizer, any community group membership)	The study focuses on men combatants only.	n/a

Cassar, Grosjean, and Whitt (2013)	1992–1996 Tajik Civil war	Experiments and HH survey fielded in 2010.	Self-reported victimization in the HH (injured or killed)	Reduces trust and willingness to exchange beyond kinIncreases participation in groups and community meetings.	Gender controlled for in trust regressions and group membership regressions.	Female respondents are as likely to report victimization, but gender is not a significant driver of trust. No exploration of gendered effects of conflict. Gender is controlled for but not reported in the group participation analysis.
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(Continued).



Table 1 Continued

<i>Paper</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Main data sources</i>	<i>Conflict victimization variable</i>	<i>Finding on impact of conflict</i>	<i>Gender treatment</i>	<i>Finding on gender</i>
Barclay Child and Nikolova (2020)	WW2 in Europe and more recent civil conflicts – 15 countries.	HH survey collected in 2010 (LITS2)	Self-reported (as injured or killed in the HH) and external source exposure (location-specific – 15 km radius)	While protest, party membership, voting and social capital increase with self-reported victimization, effects are negative or insignificant when an external source of data is used to measure objective conflict exposure.	Gender dummy	Men are more likely to protest and be a party member. No significant differences for voting or social capital. No exploration of gendered effects of conflict.
De Juan and Pierskalla (2016)	Civil war in Nepal 1996–2003	HH World Health Survey 2003 – with geo-location of each household	NGO-collected data on killings by rebel and government forces	Political trust (national government) decreases with exposure to conflict violence.	Gender dummy (significant)	No gender differences in political trust. No exploration of gendered effects of conflict.

De Luca and Verpoorten (2015a)	Protracted violence in Uganda 1996–2006	HH surveys (2000, 2005, 2008, 2012)	District-level LRA violent event days from ACLED	Increases civic participation (attend meeting) but not electoral participation (voting in presidential election) in communities affected by violence.	Gender is controlled for but not reported, and no analysis into heterogeneity by gender is reported.	n/a
De Luca and Verpoorten (2015b)	Uganda	HH surveys (2000, 2005, 2008, 2012)	District-level LRA violent event days from ACLED	Decreases association contemporaneously, but recovery in the medium term	Gender is controlled for but not reported, and no analysis into heterogeneity by gender is reported.	n/a
Freitag, Kijewski, and Oppold (2019)	1998–199 Kosovo war	HH survey 2010 (LiTS3)	Self-reported victimization in the HH (injured, killed or displaced) Use PCA to generate an indicator of victimization	War victimization increases the propensity of protest (demonstrating or striking) and to sign petitions, but no significant effects on voting or political party membership.	Gender dummy	Women less likely to protest or sign petitions, but no discussion of a possible differential effect of war across gender.

(Continued).

Table 1 Continued

<i>Paper</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Main data sources</i>	<i>Conflict victimization variable</i>	<i>Finding on impact of conflict</i>	<i>Gender treatment</i>	<i>Finding on gender</i>
Garcia-Ponce (2017)	1980–mid 1990s Shining Path insurgency, Peru	Election data in 1995 and 1998; HH survey data for 2008	Being born and raised in a conflict-affected municipality.	Conflict has a significant impact on women's participation but no effect for men.	Gender dummy and split sample.	Women exposed to violence in childhood more likely to be politically active but no effect for men; author suggests this is driven by behavioral response of women, specifically coping strategies involving grass roots, local organisation to cope with adverse effects of violence.

Gilligan, Pasquale, and Samii (2014)	1996–2006 Nepal civil war	Experiment fielded in 2009	Conflict-affected community (objective)	Affected community exhibit higher levels of political and community level mobilization, as well as higher trust and pro-sociality	Political and community mobilization only computed at community level.	n/a
Grosjean (2014)	WW2 in Europe and more recent civil conflicts	HH survey collected in 2010 (LITS)	Self-reported victims of WW2 in the family: parents, grandparents or self (injured or killed).Self-reported victims of civil wars in the HH (injured or killed)	Conflict spurs collective action: more group membership and political party membershipBut less general trust and less trust in institutions.	No control reported for gender.	n/a
Rohner, Thoenig, and Zilibotti (2013)	Ethnic conflict in Uganda 2002–2005	HH survey (Afrobarometer) 2000 and 2008, HH are georeferenced	County-level measure of exposure based on ACLED data of fighting events.	Intense fighting decreases general trust	Gender (dummy) controlled for but not reported	n/a

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(Continued).

Table 1 Continued

<i>Paper</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Main data sources</i>	<i>Conflict victimization variable</i>	<i>Finding on impact of conflict</i>	<i>Gender treatment</i>	<i>Finding on gender</i>
Voors and Bulte (2014)	Several periods of civil war in Burundi	HH and community surveys collected in 2007	HH-level victimization as death of a HH member, theft, ambush, forced labor, intimidation, destruction of assets. A community-level measure was then created by aggregating HH responses at the community level.	Cooperation increases with victimization measured at the village level, but not at the household level.No effect on generalized trust.	Gender dummy	No discussion of a possible differential effect of victimization across gender.

*Notes:* This table updates and builds on Bauer et al. (2016), reporting findings from analysis on the impact of conflict on individuals or households, but here we add details on gendered analysis and findings and focus on outcomes which are strictly about political participation (so voting, association, political party membership, community engagement, etc.) and we thus exclude articles about cooperation or trust games.

such as signing a petition, donating or raising funds, or boycotting specific goods, while men appeared more likely to engage in public collective action (for example, demonstrating) or direct contact activities (such as discussing politics in public forums, contacting politicians, or the media; Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010). This relative gender specialization can be posited to reflect differences in preferences or may align with social expectations if men and women gain social recognition from engaging in specific political activities differentially (Cruz and Tolentino 2019).

In Hadzic and Tavits (2019, 2021), the authors motivate their analyses by drawing together insights from psychology, political science, and political economy. Personality traits of decisiveness, dominance, and aggression are often associated with men and their roles as leaders and bread-winners, while women are associated with traits of care, sympathy, kindness, and affection in reproductive roles in households and communities (following ideas of role congruity developed and tested in Eagly and Karau (2002), Koenig et al. (2011); and Bauer [2015]). Post-war political actors are often rooted in, or associated with, the different sides of the violent conflict (Cederman, Skrede Gleditsche, and Hug 2013; Matanock 2017; Glaurdić and Lesschaeve 2021). Thus, if the post-war political environment replicates behaviors of combat and aggression, and both attract and reward traits associated with masculinity, then greater engagement in politics among men is to be expected and, in turn, lesser engagement among women who have less affinity with these traits (Hadzic and Tavits 2019). Simultaneously, these views on gender roles may also affect beliefs among voters that men, or perhaps political agents displaying male personality traits, are more able to manage crises and threats to peace, security, and safety (Koenig et al. 2011; Bauer 2015; Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister 2011, 2016; Barnes and O'Brien 2017; Bernhard 2022), leading to less success for women candidates, as shown by Hadzic and Tavits (2021) in Bosnia and eventually lower representation and participation as suggested by Lisa Kindervater and Shelia Meintjes (2018).

### **Conflict victimization as injured and killed versus displaced**

A second point of interest in the theorization of the impact of conflict exposure on political participation offered by Hadzic and Tavits (2019) relates to its violent nature. Because the experience of conflict is often complex, exposure to violence as belonging to a household in which a member has been injured or killed might have a different impact from experiencing conflict through displacement, which may be a less explicitly violent experience.

While some authors have considered conflict victimization as relating to either exposure to violence or displacement jointly (see Table 1), distinguishing the two might be important if the relevant factor in

post-conflict political participation is the perception of politics as violent or aggressive.

It is, indeed, possible that the experience and effect of displacement differs from other forms of victimization. Displaced people may return home with new values reflecting experiences they have had while away – as they may be exposed to more liberal sections of the domestic population (for example, in larger cities or in areas with greater population heterogeneity) or abroad. In the context of displacement abroad in particular, exposure to different institutions may explain changes in political participation, rather, or in addition to, the trauma of experiencing war. For example, outside the war context and relying on an extensive review of the literature, Artjoms Ivlevs (2021) argues that migrants who stay in more democratic host countries, acquire, and sometimes transmit to their peers back home, values that are more democratic. Therefore, we explore in our analysis the gendered impacts of conflict, distinguishing between the type of war experience as well as the gender of the respondent.

### CONFLICT IN KOSOVO

From the 1970s, Kosovo was a relatively autonomous region within Yugoslavia, but increasingly discriminatory and discretionary policies against the Albanian majority of Kosovo, fueled by the rise of Serbian nationalism (Carter 1993; Ogden 2000; Riivest Institute 2007), escalated to the Kosovo War of 1998–99.

Intense confrontations between the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) forces consisting of Serbia and Montenegro led to an eleven week North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air campaign in spring 1999 against Serbian forces, which in turn led a counter-insurgency against civilians before capitulating and withdrawing armed forces from Kosovo in June 1999, bringing the official end of the war and the creation of the United Nations administered province of Kosovo that same month (Independent International Commission on Kosovo 2000). In the lead up to the war, civil protests had become increasingly violent, and as recently as 2015–16 (the period of the survey data we use in this article), ongoing ethnic tensions could still erupt into violence.

Despite the brevity of the Kosovo war compared to the earlier Bosnian and Croatian Yugoslavian wars, its impact was severe, marked by attacks on civilians and massive movements of people (Alva, Murrugarra, and Paci 2002) and resulted in dramatic losses in physical, human, and social capital as well as insecurity over ownership of land and other assets (Smit 2006). Approximately 70 percent of the populated area was affected by the NATO air strike (European Commission 1999). Between 10,000 and 12,000 ethnic Albanians and over 3,000 Serbs lost their lives, mostly during confrontations

between the Yugoslav military, Serbian police, and Serbian paramilitary forces on one side and the KLA on the other (Sklias and Roukanas 2007). The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that half-a-million ethnic Albanians were displaced within Kosovo during the conflict and an additional 800,000 moved to neighboring countries (mostly Albania and North Macedonia), as well as in smaller numbers to Germany, the UK, or the US, from a pre-conflict population of 2 million (World Bank 2001: 15).

The immediate impact on citizens' lives and livelihoods was immense. Kate Ogden (2000) and Karen Westley and Valdimir Mikhalev (2002) document the severe constraints facing households while Elodie Douarin, Julie Litchfield, and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler (2012) show impacts on livelihood choices and household welfare. Evidence of victimization can be found in numerous reports. The United States Department of State (1999) summarizes evidence collected from extensive field interviews, noting the extent of violence and trauma experienced by the population overall.

Today, Kosovo is recognized as an independent country by 115 countries. It has a democratic parliamentary system consisting of 120 members with twenty seats reserved for minorities (ten for the Serbian minority and ten for other minorities). Elections are held every four years. Voter turnout in parliamentary elections has hovered around 42–48 percent since the early 2000s (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2021). Gender representation in parliament is secured through legislation that requires electoral lists and the overall parliament to have 30 percent women candidates, although in the recent 2021 elections, women won almost 40 percent of the seats. These quotas have been in place since 2000 and have led to a more inclusive representation of minorities and under-represented groups in decision-making. However, women's participation in grassroots activism and political actions remains low, much lower than that of men as we illustrate below, and low by regional or international standards (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development [EBRD] EBRD 2016). An important feature of Kosovo's political landscape today is that most parties have explicit or implicit links with the KLA. Two of the main parties, Kosovo Democratic Party (KDP) and Alliance for Future of Kosovo (AAK), are known to be derivatives of the KLA (International Crisis Group 2000), and a significant number of members of other parties were active in KLA during the war. In addition, the main political parties have been described as personality-driven patronage networks that secure loyalty in different ways (Briscoe and Price 2011). This implies that the political arena today continues to be strongly embedded in war legacies.

Although there is no official number, women's membership in the KLA at the time of the conflict was reportedly low, most likely less than 5 percent (DiGeorgio-Lutz and Gosbee 2016; Bartetzko 2021). This is thought to be a disadvantage for women today, both in terms of joining parties and gaining



official positions, as well as integration into valuable social networks. The political landscape and political debate are considerably masculinized, and this can be argued to have been inherited from the war.

While it is true that institutional change promoted by international organizations has led to the establishment of gender quotas and other policies to support women's representation,<sup>7</sup> women's representation in political parties and in leadership and decision-making positions remained low, both at the municipality and central level, until recently (Limani 2019). Some have argued that, regardless of the quotas, women continue not to be seen as potential leaders and are not provided with the same support as men when seeking representation. Anecdotal evidence even suggests that men have used quotas as an argument in their campaigns to sway voters in their favor, stating that women do not need the votes as they already have guaranteed seats (National Democratic Institute [NDI] 2015). Furthermore, political parties and civil society organizations reportedly fail to use women's turnout in elections to build strategies to educate the electorate about the importance of women's participation and to encourage women's candidature. Incumbents in political parties are mainly men, and they receive the main share of party financial support for their campaigns, therefore making it harder for women to develop proper electoral campaigns, especially those running for the first time (NDI 2015). Legislation on political party finance states that 10 percent of campaign funds should be allocated equally for each deputy. There is however no mechanism for monitoring this and female representatives declare that they rarely benefit from this fund (Gashi 2014).

Overall, this leads us to hypothesize that in Kosovo we should expect to see gendered differences in the effect of conflict experience on political participation, as arguably, external influence on quotas and other regulations, do not seem to have reduced negative biases against women in leadership positions, and is thus likely to have been insufficient in rolling back the deep masculinization of political parties in Kosovo. Additionally, we might expect experience of conflict to have different impacts on different types of political participation.

Following Hadzic and Tavits (2019), we argue that men who have experienced injuries and death in their household might be more likely to engage in aggressive confrontation and may find it easier to legitimize their participation based on their conflict experience. In this is the case, we expect to see an increase in activities such as political party membership, demonstrations, and strikes. This is less likely to be true for women who, as well as being constrained by gendered norms around behavior, may associate the combative nature of party politics with the violence of the war.

The effects of displacement might also vary by gender. If displacement does affect political participation through exposure to more progressive

gendered norms and behaviors, then we may see an impact among women on the forms of political participation where direct confrontation is less likely, such as voting or signing a petition, in the spirit of the post-traumatic growth hypothesis.<sup>8</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

### Empirical strategy

We examine the impact of war victimization during the Kosovo war in 1998–99 on individual levels of political participation in 2016. We use an empirical approach typical of the quantitative literature as summarized in Equation 1 (Bauer et al. 2016).

Specifically, we regress indicators of different forms of political participation ( $PP_{ij}$ ) against a set of respondents' characteristics ( $X_{ij}$ ), their self-reported war experience ( $C_{ij}$ ), and a set of ethnicity and location-specific fixed effects, reflecting either primary sampling units or municipalities ( $L_j$ ), as explained below. Departing from the extant literature, we split our sample between women and men respondents to discuss differential impacts along gender lines (see Equations 2 and 3, respectively).<sup>9</sup>

$$PP_{ij} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 C_{ij} + \beta_2 X_{ij} + \beta_3 L_j + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (1)$$

$$PP_{ij} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 C_{ij} + \beta_2 X_{ij} + \beta_3 L_j + \varepsilon_{ij} \text{ if gender} = F \quad (2)$$

$$PP_{ij} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 C_{ij} + \beta_2 X_{ij} + \beta_3 L_j + \varepsilon_{ij} \text{ if gender} = M \quad (3)$$

The survey data we use include a rich set of political behaviors, allowing us to investigate gender differences regarding voting, participating in different forms of protest or joining a political party. We are also able to measure conflict experience along several dimensions including being displaced during the conflict or having a family member killed or injured during the war.

We adopt three strategies to address issues relating to endogeneity, exploring selection on observables, measurement error in the war experience variables, and possible omitted variable bias using the method suggested by Oster (2019), described below.

### Data and key variables

We use the third round of the Life in Transition Survey (LiTS3), a large household survey fielded between 2015 and 2016 by EBRD and the World Bank in thirty-four countries. The Kosovan sample includes 1,500

households randomly selected within seventy-five Primary Sampling Units (PSUs), by means of stratified sampling clustered by region and level of urbanity. These PSUs are small and “are electoral districts, polling station territories, census enumeration districts or geo-administrative divisions” (Barclay Child and Nikolova 2020: 4). Small rural municipalities will typically include one PSU, while larger urban municipalities might include more than one.

In each household, a primary respondent was selected randomly among the eligible adults (18 years old or more). This selection criterium is conveniently also appropriate for a study focusing on political participation, as all respondents are legally eligible to vote in Kosovo.

### *Political participation variables*

The survey includes six questions capturing political participation: two of which might be considered “private” in the typology suggested by Hilde Coffé and Catherine Bolzendahl (2010), namely voting in local and in parliamentary elections, and a set of more visible, possibly more emotionally charged, collective “public” forms of participation, namely membership of a political party, taking part in a strike, signing a petition, and joining a lawful demonstration.

Whether the respondent is a member of a political party, has voted in the more recent local elections or has voted in the most recent national (that is, parliamentary) elections are coded simply as yes/no binary dummies.

For the other three questions, respondents were asked if they would take part (hypothetically), have taken part, or would never take part. Because the responses to these questions capture both actual and hypothetical actions, we construct two dummies for each. The first dummy groups actual participation and a stated willingness to participate, with the reference being would never take part, thus capturing willingness to participate (hypothetical or real) versus unwillingness (called *strike1*, *petition1*, and *demonstration1* in Table 2). The second set captures actual participation versus non-participation, regardless of whether the respondent says they hypothetically might take part (called *strike2*, *petition2*, and *demonstration2* in Table 2). We use this more explicit definition of actual participation (that is, *strike2*, *petition2*, and *demonstration2*) in our main analysis, and we test the robustness of our results using the broader “willingness” definition.

We summarize these variables by gender in Table 2. We note that for all forms of political participation, women participate significantly less than men, with relatively smaller gaps found in voting. The differences between men and women are smaller for the more explicit definition of

Table 2 Political participation by gender

<i>Variables</i>	<i>(1)</i> <i>Women</i>	<i>(2)</i> <i>Men</i>	<i>(3)</i> <i>Difference</i>
Voting (local)	0.719 (0.450)	0.812 (0.391)	0.093*** (0.000)
Voting (parliament)	0.658 (0.475)	0.751 (0.432)	0.093*** (0.001)
Political party member	0.064 (0.246)	0.137 (0.344)	0.072*** (0.000)
Strike1 (yes and willing)	0.431 (0.496)	0.649 (0.478)	0.218*** (0.000)
Strike2 (yes only)	0.058 (0.233)	0.151 (0.358)	0.094*** (0.000)
Demonstration1 (yes and willing)	0.515 (0.500)	0.728 (0.445)	0.213*** (0.000)
Demonstration2 (yes only)	0.105 (0.306)	0.224 (0.418)	0.120*** (0.000)
Petition1 (yes and willing)	0.614 (0.487)	0.805 (0.396)	0.191*** (0.000)
Petition2 (yes only)	0.176 (0.381)	0.313 (0.464)	0.136*** (0.000)
Observations	765	735	1,500

*Notes:* Strike1, demonstration1, and petition1 are defined such that actual participation in the past or a willingness to participate in the future are coded as 1, 0 otherwise; whereas strike2, demonstration2, and strike2 are defined such that only actual past participation are coded as 1, 0 otherwise. Robust standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\*, \*\*, \* denote statistical significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels, respectively.

participation in strikes, petitions, and demonstrations, providing a more rigorous test of gender differences.

#### *War experience variables*

The LiTS3 survey asks respondents about their experience of the war with three questions: (i) whether or not the respondent or a family member was injured during the conflict, (ii) if a family member was killed, or (iii) whether the family was displaced during the conflict.<sup>10</sup> These questions are in line with those used elsewhere in the literature to construct measures of conflict victimization (for example, Blattman 2009; Cassar, Grosjean, and Whitt 2013).

As we have argued, it is possible that the experience and effect of displacement differs from other forms of victimization. Rather than create a

Table 3 War experiences

<i>Victimization</i>	<i>Displaced</i>		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Killed or injured</i>			
Yes	237	112	349
No	202	949	1,151
Total	439	1,061	1,500

single variable capturing any war experience, we explore the separate effect of these two forms of victimization (see Table 3).<sup>11</sup>

### Controls

We present two models, one with arguably only exogenous variables that should not have been affected by the conflict, namely age, gender and ethnicity, parental education,<sup>12</sup> and a second that includes the respondent's own education, noting that this might have been affected by the war for some of the respondents. These models are presented by way of a robustness check.

### *Descriptive statistics*

Further descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4. (A correlation table can also be found in the Online Appendix, Table A1). Nearly as many women as men were interviewed in the LiTS3 survey in Kosovo. Respondents are on average 43 years old. About 50 percent of the respondents have reached secondary education, just under 20 percent have some tertiary education. Women are less educated than men, and similarly the reported education of the mothers of respondents is lower than that of their fathers. Women's employment rates are lower than men's, illustrating the fairly conservative and traditional values prevalent in Kosovo.

Importantly, the level of victimization does not differ significantly across gender: men and women are as likely to report having a household member that was killed or injured during the conflict, and as likely to have been displaced. However, as already noted, their experience of the conflict is likely to have been very different, with victimization likely to trigger differing responses.

### *Location-specific fixed effects and dealing with movers*

Our specifications differ in terms of sample and fixed effects. Specifications 1 and 2 are based on the full sample of respondents (excluding only

Table 4 Descriptive statistics

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Samplemean</i>	<i>Samplest. dev.</i>	<i>Womenmean</i>	<i>Menmean</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Conflict affected (any)	0.367	0.482	0.370	0.365	-0.005
Killed or injured	0.233	0.423	0.242	0.223	-0.019
Displaced	0.292	0.455	0.294	0.291	-0.003
Gender (male = 1)	0.490	0.500			
Age	43.161	16.235	42.784	43.554	0.769
Employment	0.527	0.499	0.302	0.761	0.459***
Own education (Secondary)	0.512	0.500	0.435	0.592	0.157***
Own education (Tertiary)	0.185	0.388	0.135	0.237	0.102***
Household income (ln)	4.642	0.737	4.629	4.655	0.026
Father education (Secondary)	0.308	0.462	0.315	0.302	-0.013
Father education (Tertiary)	0.084	0.277	0.076	0.093	0.017
Mother education (Secondary)	0.177	0.382	0.184	0.170	-0.013
Mother education (Tertiary)	0.27	0.162	0.022	0.033	0.011

*Notes:* \*\*\* indicates that the difference in means between men and women is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

those with missing data) and include fixed effects for the municipality of residence at the time at which they took the survey. Some of the largest municipalities include several PSU, so specifications 3 and 4 disaggregate these fixed effects and include PSU dummies instead. These regressions control for the local context in which current political participation is taking place and are shown in columns 1–4 of each table.

Because the conflict finished eighteen years before the survey data was collected, several respondents had relocated and did not live, at the time of the survey, where they had lived when the conflict started (independent of whether or not they were also displaced during the conflict). In the survey, 1,227 people out of 1,500 report living today where they were living at the onset of the conflict. Among the remaining 273 respondents, the questionnaire allowed us to establish that 209 (150 of whom are women) had relocated to their current place of residence after the conflict had finished and had reported having moved from their place of birth. Hence, we were able to establish the place of residence at the onset of the conflict for 1,436 respondents, as being their place of birth or their current place of residence. Therefore, in specifications 5 and 6, we restrict our sample to the non-movers, that is, those who at the time of the survey lived in the same location as during the conflict: this sample is smaller and excludes

a disproportionately large number of women. But in these specifications, the PSU-level fixed effects absorb both information pertaining to the local conflict intensity and the context in which respondents are currently politically active.

Finally, specifications 7 and 8 include the additional 209 respondents (three-quarters of whom are women) who moved after the conflict but for whom we can identify their place of residence at the onset of the conflict only at the municipality level, capturing respondent's exposure to conflict intensity at the municipality level (which we refer to as "location" in the tables). Finally, in all cases standard errors are clustered at the PSU-level (at current location).<sup>13</sup>

### *Endogeneity*

To be able to argue that we are estimating a causal effect of victimization, we need war experiences to be randomly distributed across the population. We address this issue by examining selection on observables, measurement error in the war experience variables, and selection on unobservables. This discussion allows us to shed light on potential threats to identification and helps build reasonable confidence in the results presented, but we remain cautious and discuss our results as associations.

### *Selection on observables*

In Kosovo, conflict violence was reported to be indiscriminate, as the Serbs engaged in violence against civilians purely based on their ethnicity. According to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, "No-one, it seems, was immune, as people of all ages, including women and children, were killed in large numbers" (OSCE 1999: 73). Similarly, during the NATO air-strike, the extent of the bombing and the small size of the country led to extensive and broadly distributed damage, with civilian casualties arising "by mistakes" rather than through any form of targeting (). Overall, this supports the idea that within ethnic groups and within locations of residence during the war, victimization should be orthogonal to pre-conflict political participation. However, there is some evidence in other contexts that displacement is not random (Engel and Ibáñez 2007; Ibáñez et al. 2019). it is possible that displacement reflects a weighing up of the expected economic, social, and psychic costs of moving versus staying.

We assess the likelihood of selection into victimization by estimating models using the controls and fixed effects described above. The results are shown in Table A2 and suggest that selection on observables is not an issue: none of our controls are significant beyond age once we control for ethnicity and location fixed effects. We note that it is reasonable for older respondents to be more frequently found among the war victims. Indeed,

whether we look at the determinants of (i) being displaced, (ii) reporting a household member as injured or killed during the conflict, or (iii) both, there is no sign of selection on observables. We can also emphasize that the regressions in Table A2 show that gender is not significant in explaining victimization, either through injuries and death or through displacement or both jointly – that is to say, men and women are equally likely to have been victims in all cases.

#### *Measurement error*

Another concern regarding causality is that victimization is “self-reported” and potentially subject to reporting biases. We however analyse victimization within narrowly defined PSU or (slightly larger) municipalities. As data on objective measures of conflict intensity can only be aggregated at the municipality level, the effects that we will report are finer-grained, and imply that any effect identified for victimization is measured *given* the objective level of exposure to conflict intensity experienced within a small locality, in other words: we are measuring the effect of being personally directly affected by the conflict rather than exposed to a certain contextual intensity of violence. Implicitly, we are assuming that any noise in measurement is orthogonal to political participation today, in keeping with the majority of the literature (Bellows and Miguel 2009; Cassar, Grosjean, and Whitt 2013).

Nevertheless, we illustrate the reliability of the self-reported measure of victimization. Figure 1 plots the correlation between self-reported victimization aggregated at the municipality of residence during conflict and a measure of conflict intensity derived from the Housing Damage Assessment Survey (European Commission 1999), an exercise conducted between February and July 1999 to evaluate the extent of damage inflicted on towns and villages during the war.<sup>14</sup> We use weights reflecting the number of respondents by location to account for the likely lower precision of the aggregate in areas where few respondents were interviewed. We find that municipality-level victimization is significantly and positively correlated with damage.

#### *Selection on unobservables*

We use Oster (2019) to assess whether unobservable variables could explain some of the effect of conflict victimization on specific forms of political participation, and so discuss the robustness of our findings to potential omitted variable bias. For example, it is plausible that prior political activity increases the likelihood of conflict victimization, although the literature for Kosovo suggests otherwise. Oster (2019) provides a statistical method whereby a reasonable threshold of explanatory power (R-max) is set and



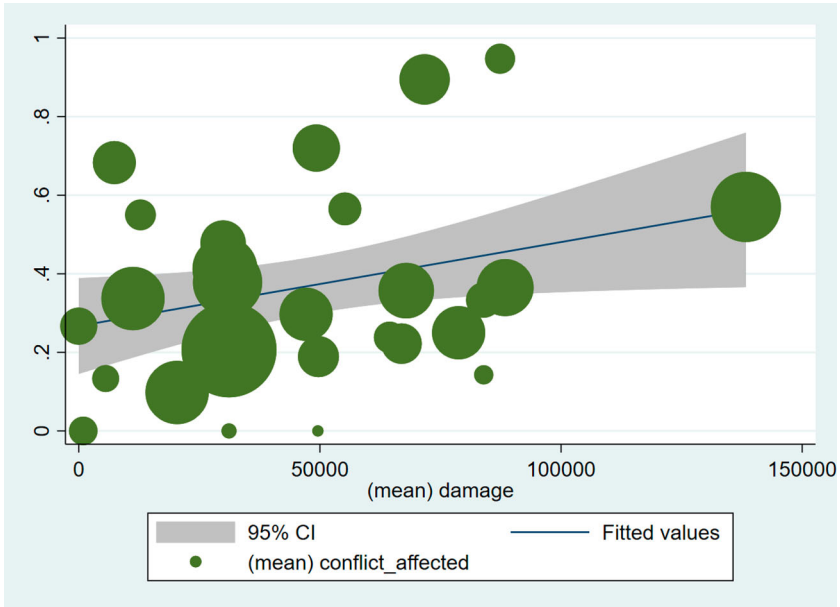


Figure 1 Correlation between self-reported victimization aggregated at the municipality of residence during the conflict and weighted by the number of respondents (LiTS3) and the extent of damage (EC 1999)

then asks, given that threshold, how large the effects of unobservables would need to be in order for the confidence interval of the coefficient of interest to contain zero. Oster recommends  $R\text{-max}$  to be set at  $1.3 \cdot R$ , where  $R$  is the  $R$ -square of the specification of interest. For completeness, we also present results for a more conservative thresholds of  $2 \cdot R$ . We show the results of this analysis below.

To err on the side of caution, we still interpret our results as correlations or associations rather than causal relations.

## RESULTS

### Voting and victimization

We first present our results regarding voting in local and parliamentary elections. Table 5 presents the determinants of voting in local elections for the whole sample of respondents (men and women) with conflict victimization being captured through two indicators, one for displacement and one for reporting someone was killed or injured in the household. In the odd-numbered specifications, we keep our controls to pre-war controls only and include age, age-squared, gender, education of the father and

Table 5 Voting in local election – full sample

<i>Variables</i>	<i>(1)</i> <i>Local</i>	<i>(2)</i> <i>Local</i>	<i>(3)</i> <i>Local</i>	<i>(4)</i> <i>Local</i>	<i>(5)</i> <i>Local</i>	<i>(6)</i> <i>Local</i>	<i>(7)</i> <i>Local</i>	<i>(8)</i> <i>Local</i>
Killed or injured	0.024 (0.031)	0.023 (0.030)	0.041 (0.035)	0.039 (0.035)	0.023 (0.040)	0.023 (0.040)	0.032 (0.033)	0.031 (0.033)
Displaced	0.054* (0.029)	0.052* (0.029)	0.014 (0.040)	0.015 (0.040)	0.029 (0.040)	0.030 (0.040)	0.046 (0.029)	0.046 (0.028)
Age	0.016*** (0.004)	0.015*** (0.004)	0.017*** (0.005)	0.016*** (0.004)	0.018*** (0.005)	0.017*** (0.005)	0.015*** (0.004)	0.014*** (0.004)
Age squared	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
Gender	0.078*** (0.022)	0.064*** (0.023)	0.077*** (0.024)	0.056** (0.026)	0.096*** (0.027)	0.078*** (0.028)	0.083*** (0.021)	0.069*** (0.022)
Own education (Secondary)		0.022 (0.022)		0.050* (0.027)		0.043 (0.030)		0.023 (0.021)
Own education (Tertiary)		0.106** (0.039)		0.133*** (0.039)		0.101** (0.043)		0.101*** (0.037)
Father education (Secondary)	0.074*** (0.020)	0.057** (0.022)	0.076** (0.032)	0.055 (0.033)	0.062* (0.036)	0.047 (0.037)	0.076*** (0.021)	0.059** (0.023)
Father education (Tertiary)	0.122*** (0.040)	0.093* (0.045)	0.119** (0.047)	0.086* (0.049)	0.121** (0.052)	0.095* (0.055)	0.109*** (0.037)	0.081* (0.042)
Mother education (Secondary)	-0.056 (0.057)	-0.065 (0.058)	-0.052 (0.045)	-0.060 (0.045)	-0.064 (0.050)	-0.067 (0.050)	-0.038 (0.051)	-0.046 (0.052)
Mother education (Tertiary)	-0.229*** (0.081)	-0.244*** (0.080)	-0.207** (0.093)	-0.223** (0.092)	-0.211** (0.104)	-0.220** (0.102)	-0.244** (0.092)	-0.256*** (0.090)

(Continued).

Table 5 Continued

<i>Variables</i>	<i>(1)</i> <i>Local</i>	<i>(2)</i> <i>Local</i>	<i>(3)</i> <i>Local</i>	<i>(4)</i> <i>Local</i>	<i>(5)</i> <i>Local</i>	<i>(6)</i> <i>Local</i>	<i>(7)</i> <i>Local</i>	<i>(8)</i> <i>Local</i>
Constant	0.174** (0.072)	0.123 (0.080)	0.203* (0.112)	0.182 (0.112)	0.188 (0.113)	0.178 (0.113)	-0.257** (0.126)	-0.254* (0.133)
Observations	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,142	1,142	1,339	1,339
R-squared	0.122	0.127	0.200	0.207	0.217	0.221	0.151	0.157
municipality and ethnicity FE	Yes	Yes						
location and ethnicity FE							Yes	Yes
psu and ethnicity FE			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\*, \*\*, \* denote statistical significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels, respectively.

education of the mother, and ethnicity (note that the coefficients estimated for ethnicity are not reported in the tables due to space limitations). In the even numbered specifications, we add the respondent's own level of education, as it is usually an important driver of political participation, recognizing that own education is a "dirty control" for at least some of the respondents.

Table 5 reveals that local voting is driven by parental education, with increasing levels of education of the father being associated with a greater propensity to vote, men are significantly more likely to vote, and voting propensity has an inverted-U shape relationship with age.

Conflict victimization seems only weakly relevant to voting, with our two conflict victimization dummies being positively associated with voting in all specifications, but only displacement having any statistically significant effect, and that at only the 10 percent level, and in only two specifications (namely 1 and 2). While this small and weakly significant effect is in line with the literature (see the meta-analysis by Bauer et al. 2016), it is intriguing, however, that it is present here only in the specifications that include a larger number of women respondents.

Next, we reestimate these models, but for 2 distinct sub-groups: women respondents only and men respondents only (in line with Equation 2 and Equation 3 above). These results are presented in table format in the Online Appendix for the interested readers (Tables A2 and A3), but we will focus our discussion here on Figure 2 below. This illustrates the estimates based on our preferred specification for men and women respondents, a specification with pre-conflict controls only and location fixed effects based on municipality of residence during the conflict (that is, reflecting specification 7 in our result tables).

In Figure 2, the point estimate for each variable in our specification is represented by a dot on a segment of a line representing the 95 percent confidence interval; this representation thus allows us to visualize both the point estimate and its precision: if the confidence interval crosses the vertical line set at 0, the estimate is not significant at the 5 percent level. The superposition of our estimates for the male and female samples on one unique graph allows for a direct comparison of the drivers of political participation by gender. The relative importance of each variable in explaining political participation can also be assessed visually by comparing the relative position of the point estimates. For example, we can see from Figure 2 that women who have been displaced during the conflict are nearly 20 percentage points more likely to vote in local elections. This association between women voting and displacement is of a comparable magnitude to that of having a father with tertiary education (where primary education or less is the reference).

Without presenting an overly detailed discussion of the controls in this figure, we note that the drivers of local voting are different for men and

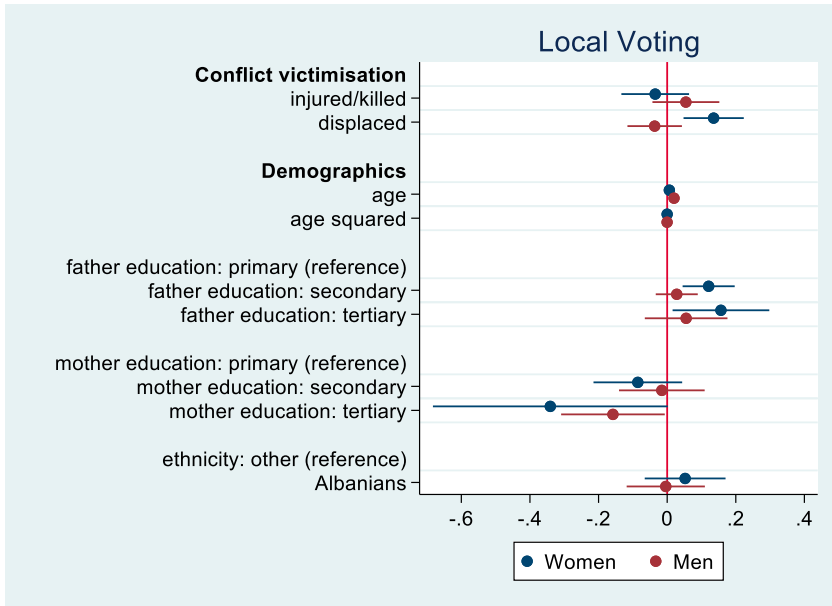


Figure 2 Estimated coefficients: Local voting

women, if not in the direction of their association, in their magnitude (see, in particular, the variables relating to education), emphasizing the importance of recognizing the distinctly gendered prisms through which decisions regarding political participation are taken (Cruz and Tolentino 2019).

In addition to this, conflict victimization is, in fact, only relevant for women, with a large and more precisely estimated effect of displacement for women and much weaker, less precise, and less robust results for male respondents.<sup>15</sup>

We repeat the analyses for parliamentary voting. For conciseness, the relevant table in the Online Appendix is abridged, as we report only our key coefficients of interest, that is, those pertaining to reporting a household member as killed or injured or being displaced during the conflict (see Table A5 in the Online Appendix). Here, we will focus our discussion on Figure 3 below, which is again based on our preferred specification (that is, specification 7).

The results in Figure 3 regarding parliamentary voting show similar patterns to those reported for voting in local election: we find consistently positive effects of displacement on voting for women respondents, although these are only weakly significant in our preferred specification (and not consistently significant depending on the location fixed effects used,

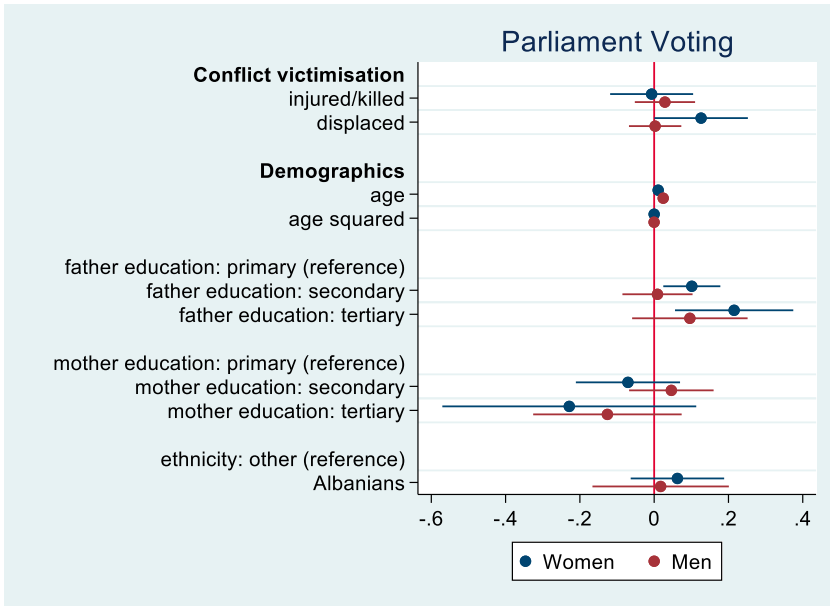


Figure 3 Estimated coefficients: Parliamentary voting

see Online Appendix Table A5. Displacement is significant only in the specifications with larger female representation: see discussion on “dealing with movers” earlier in this article).

### Party membership, strikes, petitions, and demonstrations

Regarding political party membership (Figure 4), war victimization seems to have bolstered this type of political engagement. However, in contrast to the more private and civic acts of voting, the effect is due this time to experiencing death and injuries in the household and is borne entirely from the male sample: men experiencing a war death or an injury in the family are between 10 and 15 percentage points more likely to be party members than men who did not, and this is precisely estimated across all specifications. No effect is identified on the female sample. These results are stronger in our preferred specification as illustrated in Figure 4 but hold true in all specifications (see Table A6 in the Online Appendix).

For participating in demonstrations, we find that men who have been displaced are more likely to demonstrate. This effect is strongest in our preferred specification (Figure 5), but the increased likelihood being of about 15 percentage points, and significant at least at the 5 percent level

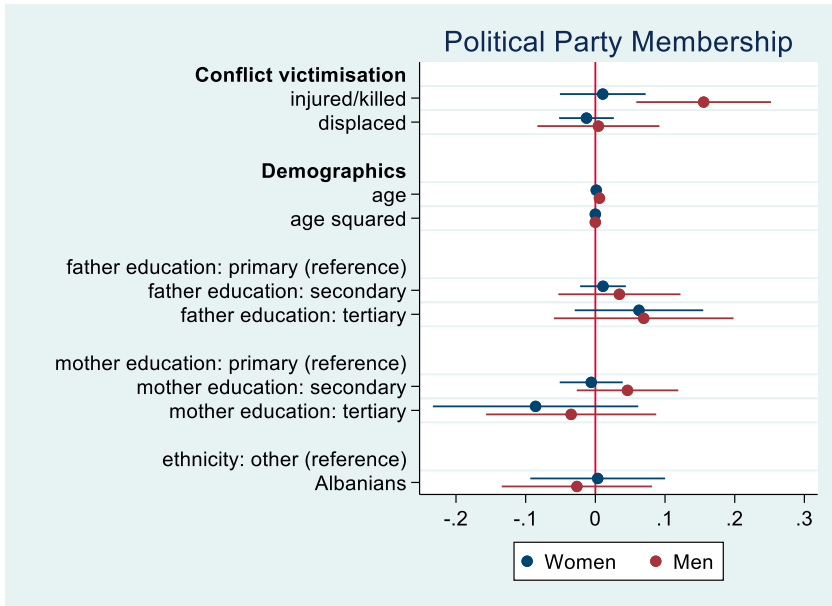


Figure 4 Estimated coefficients: Political party membership

in all specifications presented (see Table A7 in the Online Appendix). No significant effect is detected for women.

Two other forms of political participation were also analyzed, namely taking part in a strike or signing a petition, and the results are presented in Table A8 and Table A9 in the Online Appendix, respectively. They are presented in Figure 6 below, but we will limit our discussion of these to saying that we find either no impact of conflict victimization or impacts that are weak and not robust across specifications.<sup>16</sup>

**Robustness to omitted variable/unobservable bias**

Using our preferred specification again (that is, specification 7 in the tables in the Online Appendix), we also implement Oster’s method to investigate the degree to which unobservables can credibly threaten to overturn our results. The results are presented in Table 6. The first line of results focuses on the estimated effect of displacement on local voting on our sample of women only, and we see that unobservables would need to have a nearly five-time greater explanatory power as our observables overall to explain away the positive effect we find for displacement on voting, using Oster’s preferred threshold of  $R_{max} = 1.3 \cdot R$ . Results for the higher threshold of  $2 \cdot R$  are consistent and show that unobservables would need to be 1.6 times

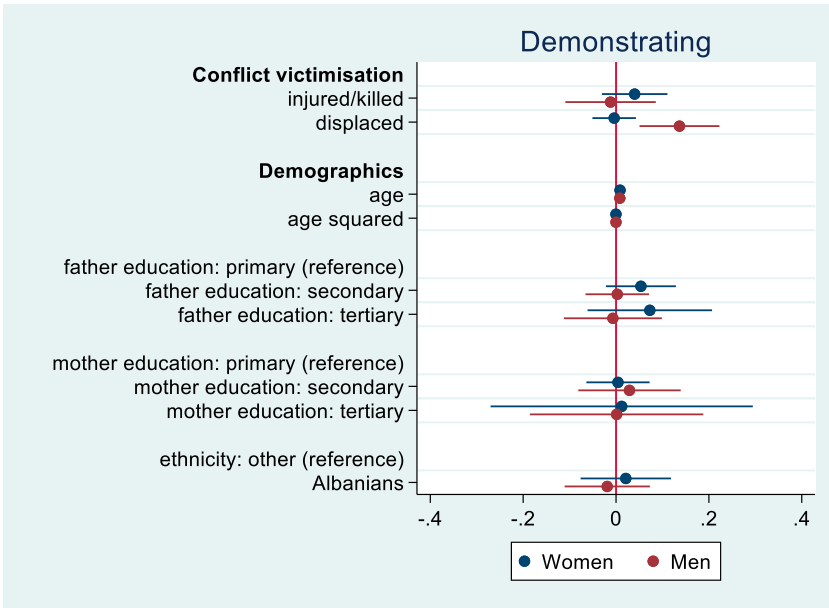


Figure 5 Estimated coefficients: Demonstrating

Table 6 Omitted variable bias: Thresholds on importance of unobservables relative to observables to explain away the key coefficients in Figure 3

<i>Coefficient tested</i>	<i>Threshold: Rmax = 1.5R</i>	<i>Threshold Rmax = 2R</i>
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

Notes: Authors’ calculations based on Oster (2019).

more important than observables. We see similarly large and implausible values for the effect of conflict on other outcomes for women and for men. We can, thus, be confident that our results are robust to omitted variable biases, with the role of displacement on local voting and demonstration by women being particularly strong.



ANGRY MEN AND CIVIC WOMEN?

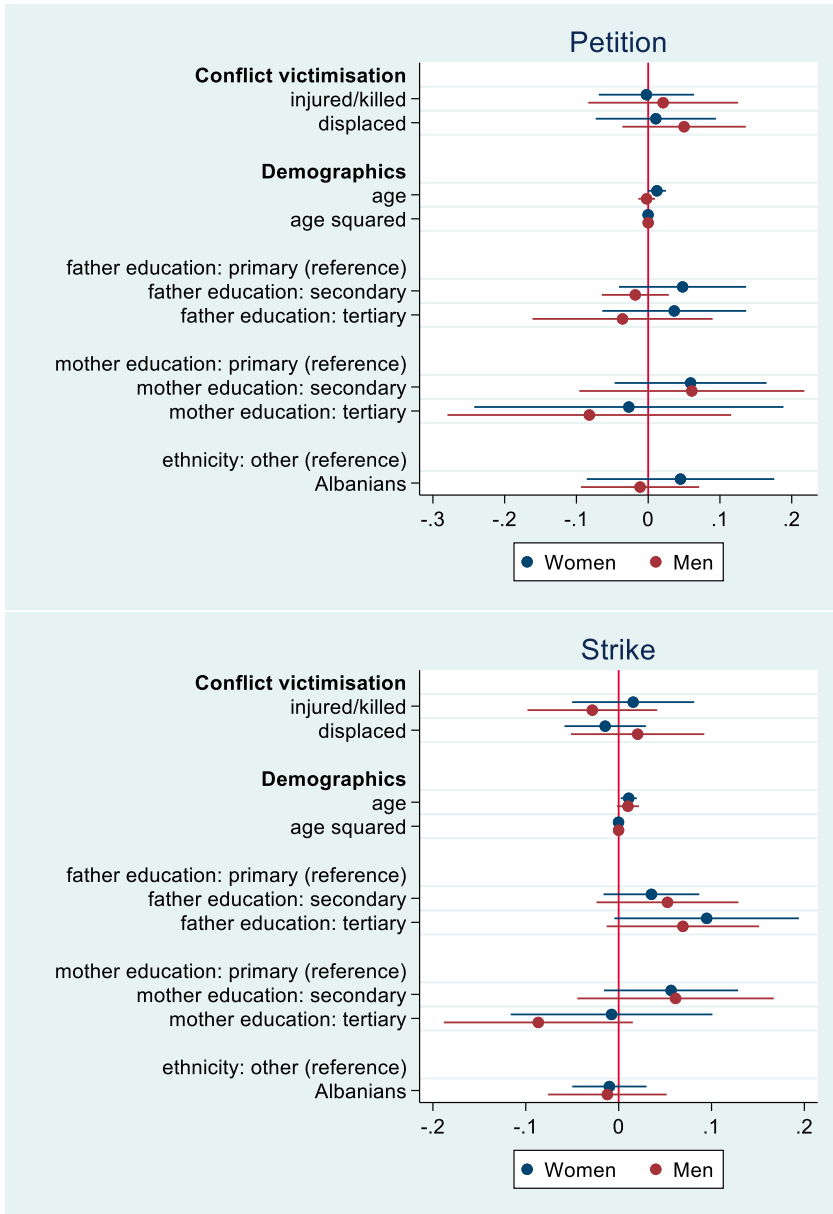


Figure 6 Estimating coefficients: Signing petitions and strikes

## DISCUSSION

Our study makes an important contribution to the literature on the effects of conflict on political participation by providing a gendered analysis of the effects of different forms of conflict victimization. Our analysis reveals effects that, overall, are in line with the results reported elsewhere in the literature. In particular, the coefficients we have estimated for our mixed gender sample are fairly compatible with the average results in this literature, as reported in Bauer et al. (2016). But our gendered analysis allows us to nuance these findings in important ways.

Regarding voting we find that war victimization is associated with a greater propensity to vote, but this effect is due to an increase among women only. In contrast, the increase in demonstrating and in political party membership is exclusively driven by men. Hence, at least as recently as 2015–16, conflict victimization played out differently across men and women in line with the broader literature on political participation and gender. We can also note that we detect no differences in exposure to conflict experiences by gender; hence, any differences in outcomes are more likely to be due to differences in the impact of victimization rather than differences in incidence.

Illustrating these distinctions is very important for our understanding of the link between victimization and political participation. If conflict is to change the status quo, then it would seem that it needs to change traditional patterns of gendered specialization in political engagement. The effect of conflict on women's political participation appears to have been channeled into civic actions of voting, which while these are far from passive acts, they are arguably less emotionally charged or disruptive than demonstrating and joining political parties. This suggests that while victimization can bolster political participation, in the case of Kosovo, it does not appear to have been in a way that has challenged gender norms. This is compatible with the overall theorization expressed in Hadzic and Tavits (2019, 2021) that direct experience of conflict violence in contexts where political parties have emerged from former fighters' groups can lead to increasing the perception that politics is violent and might dissuade women from being directly and actively engaged. Previous work had suggested a "growth mindset" as a credible mechanism linking victimization to increased political participation (Blattman 2009). This mechanism would not imply a gendered impact of victimization. Instead, if victimization is instrumentalized in political participation as suggested by Freitag, Kijewski, and Oppold (2019), then a gendered narrative around heroes and victims could lead to a gendered impact on political participation. Similarly, personality traits and an inherited perception that politics is violent could also lead the effect of victimization to confirm social norms on gender roles.

In addition, our results reveal marked differences in the effect of victimization as explicitly experiencing violence (that is, injured and killed) versus victimization as experiencing displacement. Indeed, the positive association between increased participation in voting and victimization for women only holds among those displaced during the conflict, while displaced men are more likely to demonstrate.

Kosovo since the end of the conflict has been characterized by a high level of institutional change, often spurred or overseen by international organization, be it NATO in the early years or the European Union through the mechanism for accession in more recent years. This has contributed to a specific state-building pathway and peace settlement in the country. Importantly, gender quotas are also a war legacy and seem to have led to better women's representation. They may also be associated with a rise in women's voter turnout, particularly those women with conflict experiences. However, our results suggest that victimization did not strengthen the effect of quotas by encouraging more women to join parties, a precursor to standing for election. Hence, we suggest that the relatively high representation of women in parliament today might be largely due to the gender quotas rather than a hypothesized post-conflict personal growth. Indeed, at least in 2016 there was still no sign of a surge in women's membership of political parties, as could have been expected from the "post-traumatic growth" hypothesis for conflict victims.

Building a broader comparative view of the effect of war victimization on gendered patterns of political participation is a worthy research agenda. Future empirical research might usefully explore the extent to which displacement of women, along with children and the elderly, as seen in Ukraine, might frame women as needing protection and men as heroes and defenders, and in turn present a barrier to participation of women in political parties post-conflict. Richer data on war-time experiences and on beliefs and values about gender norms would enable a deeper analysis of the nuances of what experiences are more likely to lead to increased political participation and for whom. In addition, it would be interesting to explore gendered voting patterns further to understand to what extent increases in women's representation in legislative bodies are due to quotas or to increased women's turnout and how this interplays with the conflict experiences of both candidates and voters.

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## ARTICLE

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See Bateson (2012) for analysis based on an exhaustive set of data sources and focusing on crime victimization.
- <sup>2</sup> See Bauer et al. (2016) for a recent review of the field focusing specifically on violent conflict victimization.
- <sup>3</sup> War has been credited for building strong states in modern Europe (Tilly and Ardant 1975; Tilly 1985).
- <sup>4</sup> We also indicate whether victimization was self-reported or measured from an external source and note that victimization seems more often associated with positive change in political participation when it is measured as individual-level, self-reported victimization, credibly implying that it is personal experience that matters rather than exposure to contextual conflict.
- <sup>5</sup> There are few other examples of experimental approaches that explore the impact of conflict on gender. Cassar, Grosjean, and Whitt (2013) finds no evidence of gender differences in the case of Tajikistan; Gilligan, Pasquale, and Samii (2014) in their study of Nepal do not control for gender.
- <sup>6</sup> See for example the paper by Schlozman, Burns, and Verba (1994) highlighting the role of income in explaining part of the gender differences in engagement in the US.
- <sup>7</sup> This is particularly the case now that the European Union has officially recognized Kosovo as a potential candidate country for accession.
- <sup>8</sup> According to the “Electoral Democracy Index” of V-Dem, immediately prior to (and during) the conflict Serbia (and then Kosovo) ranked lower than neighboring countries of Albania and North Macedonia, which hosted large proportions of those displaced from Kosovo (V-Dem 2022).
- <sup>9</sup> We note that we have also run fully interacted models as robustness checks. The results obtained were consistent with those presented here. Split sample regressions were chosen over interacted models for ease of presentation.
- <sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, the survey data does not record where the respondent was displaced to or for how long, which means we cannot explore the extent to which any effects of displacement on political participation might be due to exposure to stronger democratic regimes and more progressive gendered norms.
- <sup>11</sup> The survey includes separate questions relating to having a household member injured versus killed during the conflict; this would, thus, allow us theoretically to investigate these two forms of victimizations separately. Twenty-one percent of the respondents report having experienced injuries, and 11 percent have experienced the killing of a family member, but 78 percent of those reporting a killing have also experienced injuries. We, thus, investigate these two forms of victimization jointly. In regressions conducted with separate indicators for killed and injured, our findings appeared to be carried by the experience of injuries. At the suggestion of a reviewer, we also tested a model with an interaction term between injured/killed and displacement to explore if there was any attenuating or strengthening effect of having experienced both types of victimization. The coefficient of the interaction was not statistically significant in any specification.
- <sup>12</sup> These are the odd numbered regressions in our tables.
- <sup>13</sup> Estimations with region-level fixed effects are available upon request.

- <sup>14</sup> Douarin, Litchfield, and Sabates-Wheeler (2012) use this data to build an index capturing the degree of damage at the municipality level to relate conflict intensity to livelihood choices after the war.
- <sup>15</sup> We note that this is true over all specifications presented Tables A3 and A4 in the Online Appendix.
- <sup>16</sup> Regarding strikes, demonstration, and signing a petition, we reproduced the analysis but with an indicator equal to 1 if the respondents had participated or would consider participating in these actions and 0 if they had never done so (see discussion in the data section). Results are available upon request.

## SUPPLEMENTAL DATA

Supplemental data for this article can be accessed <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2024.2323657>.

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