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**Abstract**

**Impact of War and Military Service on Transitions to  
Adulthood and Long-term Socioeconomic Achievement: The Case of  
Young Men in Northern Vietnam**

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Based on the Vietnam Longitudinal Survey, this paper uses the demographic life course approach to examine the impact of war on transitions to adulthood and long-term socioeconomic outcomes –comparing the generations who lived through wars with the younger cohorts who came of age out of the shadow of war. I found that war reordered the Vietnamese society and left profound imprints on the life course of men who grew up during the 1960s and 1970s. Transitions to adulthood of the wartime cohort are unmatched by the generations coming of age before or after them. At least three quarters of all men were drafted; many of them spent their entire early adult years in the military. Evidence also shows that while war and military service rarely interrupted the process of educational attainment, it transformed the transitions to marriage and parenthood among the wartime generation. For many men, the previous norms of early marriage and childbearing were postponed into their 30s. Not only did military service alter men's early life course but it also had significant effects on their long-term socioeconomic achievement. While military service during wartime appears to be negatively associated with subsequent earnings of workers in the formal wage sector, findings indicate that there are income premiums for wartime military service in the newly developed non-farm enterprise sector.