

Regime Preferences in Response to Conflict*

Souleymane Yameogo[†]

March 18, 2023

Abstract

This study investigates the ramifications of conflict for political institutions and regime change. We argue that conflict induces a radical shift in voters' preference regarding the domestic regime type, as they strive for security and desire to punish the current leadership for the lack thereof. Using 2016–2018 Afrobarometer data and a spatial difference-in-difference estimation approach, we find that, in flawed democracies, voters endorse authoritarian institutions in the face of conflict. However, in hybrid/authoritarian regimes, people reject authoritarianism and endorse democratic institutions when faced with conflict. Moreover, our findings show that fear mitigates the aforementioned effects. Our analysis illustrates that conflict can sometimes put democracy at risk but can also open a window for democratic change in authoritarian countries.

Keywords: Conflict, Political institutions, Emotions.

JEL Codes: D91, D74, O12

*The first title was "Conflict and Voters' preference for Authoritarianism in Developing Democracies: Toward a Regime-Shifting Behavior".

[†]KDI School of Public Policy and Management

1 Introduction

Non-democratic ideas are gaining popularity all over the world. Over one-third of the world's population lives under an authoritarian regime (Index, 2021). The struggle for democratic ideas, combined with the increasing appeal for authoritarian values and beliefs, threatens the Western model of democracy. China's authoritarian approach and economic success pose a challenge to modern democracy, which is struggling to meet citizens' basic needs. Citizens' anger and frustration are growing as their disillusionment with the Western model of democracy and development (particularly economic globalization) grows (e.g. Brexit, the Yellow Vest movement in France, etc.).

The reason, among others, is the rise of global crisis, mainly conflict that put democracy at risk (Merolla and Zechmeister, 2009a), although the net effect of conflict is ambiguous. Established studies in the political economy of conflict find that conflict negatively affects the economic outcome through the destruction of human and physical capital (Blattman and Miguel, 2010), inhibition of technological progress, and the reduction of the firm performance (Collier and Duponchel, 2012). Conversely, empirical evidence suggests that conflict boosts countries to implement qualitative institutional reforms (Silve and Verdier, 2018), increases political participation (Blattman, 2009), and induces prosocial behavior (Voors et al., 2012).

The literature on the political economy of violent conflicts is rich and has provided insights on the causes and legacies of conflict (Blattman and Miguel, 2010; Garfinkel and Skaperdas, 2008; Kolmar, 2005; Miguel et al., 2011). However, researchers agree that the micro-foundations and the legacies of conflicts are not widely investigated in the literature (see Blattman and Miguel, 2010; Verwimp et al., 2019). Most importantly, there is a dwarf of studies on a comparative political economy of regime change in a conflict-affected context, focusing on emotion (Winden, 2015).

The theoretical argument of this paper is that conflict pushes voters to prefer alternative (democratic vs authoritarian) political institutions, therefore putting pressure on the current leadership and increasing the likelihood and the nature of regime change. Fearful citizens,

because they are risk-averse and cautious, might avoid a regime change as it can bring political instability in a conflict context and worsen the existing situation.

The findings of this study help us understand how conflicts induce behavioral change among voters, how this change puts the stability of democratic institutions at risk, and, more importantly, how this political pressure represents an opportunity for democratization in an authoritarian regime. The latter argument is the main contribution of this paper.

We investigate these arguments through the following questions: How does conflict impact the likelihood of regime-shifting preference among voters in general and fearful voters in particular? This study examines how exposure to violent conflict (such as a civil war, insurgency, or terrorism) impacts voters' preference for political regimes, as well as whether citizens in conflict-affected areas are more or less likely to support democratic institutions and whether populist or authoritarian leaders are more or less appealing as a result of conflict?

First, to preview, the paper finds that voters in a conflict-affected context seek alternative political institutions, either democratic or authoritarian political institutions. This pressure on the current leadership might have a negative impact on public policy and economic development. These findings are consistent with existing studies. Indeed, studies in political psychology find that voters in modern democracies, so-called Western Educated Industrialized Rich and Democratic (WEIRD), are more likely to give up their civil liberties and rights for more authoritarian policies and leadership when there are conflicts, health threats, or natural disasters (Laustsen et al., 2015; Laustsen and Petersen, 2017; Laustsen, 2021; Vasilopoulos et al., 2018, 2019a, 2022; Merolla and Zechmeister, 2009b; Petersen and Laustsen, 2020). Laustsen (2021) and Petersen and Laustsen (2020)'s adaptive followership theory explained that conflicts boost voters to support dominant leadership and increase their willingness to sacrifice their civil liberties and rights. Indeed, after the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States and the terrorist attacks in France, many studies found a rise in authoritarianism and restrictions of civil liberties (Gadarian, 2010; Merolla and Zechmeister, 2009b; Vasilopoulos et al., 2018).

The voters in modern democracies shift their preference for authoritarian policies and leadership in times of conflict because they prefer aggressive or military responses to the conflict and their dispositions, such as emotion and ideology. Laustsen and Petersen (2017) find that conservatives and individuals high in socio-dominance orientation (SDO), individuals who see the world as competitive and aggressive, hold a strong preference for dominant leaders and authoritarian policies. In addition, they found that conflict pushes liberals to shift their preference from liberal leadership and policies to dominant leadership and authoritarian policies. Bonanno and Jost (2006) found evidence of a conservative-shift during threat (see also Jiménez et al., 2021; Jost et al., 2009; Schüller, 2015). They found that the exposure to the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States induced a shift in ideology from liberal to conservative policies and leadership.

Second, we find that fear reduces the likelihood of regime change in times of conflict. The implication of this finding is that the leadership, both democratic and authoritarian leaderships, can use oppression and repression or other means that frighten citizens to maintain the stability of their regime. This is because fears decrease the effect of conflicts on preference for alternative regimes (Vasilopoulos et al., 2022).

This paper by introducing emotions in this analysis combined knowledge from political psychology and the political economy of conflicts. Indeed, political psychology studies have found that emotions have an important effect on individual behavior, mainly their political behavior in times of conflicts (Marcus et al., 2019). Exploring the effect of emotions in a more systematic way in the political economy of conflicts, known as the behavioral political economy (Winden, 2015), helps us understand the change in individual behavior in the economy and how their disposition could mitigate, reverse or worsen the effect of conflicts on economic outcomes and political institutions.

Vasilopoulos et al. (2018) argued that the conservative shift observed among respondents exposed to conflict is explained by the respondents' emotional response to the threat. Thus, when individuals respond to disputes with anger – fight-related emotion - they are more

likely to prefer dominant leaders and authoritarian policies. In contrast, they reject dominant leadership when they respond to the conflict with fear or anxiety, called flight-related emotion.

Liberals, left-wing individuals who respond to crisis/conflict with fear and anxiety shift their preference from liberal leaders and policies to dominant leaders and authoritarian policies. They will trade democratic institutions, civil liberties and freedom for safety and aggressive response to threat (Petersen and Laustsen, 2020).

The critical role of emotion in decision-making and policy preference requires a focus of attention. Emotions matter in explaining individuals' decision-making process (Loewenstein and Lerner, 2003; Loewenstein et al., 2001; Rick and Loewenstein, 2012). Vasilopoulou and Wagner (2017) analyzed the impact of fear, anger and enthusiasm on Europeans' preference for European integration. They found that fearful individuals prefer renegotiation, while angry and enthusiastic individuals are less likely to support renegotiation. Fearful individuals were less likely to support the exit from the European Union; they were more cautious about the consequence of the exit.

Yan et al. (2020), through the self-identification with a victim and the probability distortions hypotheses, predict that conflicts or threats that negatively affect individuals' emotions prompt risk-averse individuals to support any government policy, which tends to reduce the threat. Fearful(anxious) individuals are risk-averse and more likely to weigh high the probability of the risk occurring than angry and enthusiastic individuals (see also Koivuranta and Korhonen, 2021; Tarczynski et al., 2021; Wang and Young, 2020). Fear(anxiety) is associated with information processing behavior or optimizing behavior. Indeed "anxious citizens are ...more likely to seek out new information and process this carefully" (Vasilopoulou and Wagner, 2017, p.385), and this information-seeking behavior may cause people to pay attention to the options provided by opposing parties and their leaders. The influence of earlier political inclinations is lessened (see Marcus et al., 2019, for the affective intelligence theory).

Highly emotional events strongly impact individuals' policy preferences because they induce an emotional change and modify people's perception of risk. For instance, Yan et al. (2020) shows that fearful individuals are willing to pay insurance to prevent further loss due to the terrorist attack after 9/11 in the US and are more likely to support government policy. In contrast, angry individuals refuse to do so. Likewise, Perlaviciute et al. (2017) argue that individuals exposed to the earthquakes caused by the gas production in the province of Groningen in the Netherlands felt a stronger negative emotion, a higher risk assessment, and preferred the end of the gas production. In the same vein, Pepin-Neff and Wynter (2018) found that reducing the fear of sharks by reducing the perception of sharks as a threat shifted the policy preference of individuals in Australia, who became less likely to support the government's lethal policy response to shark bites, and more supportive of the "save the shark" movement.

In this study, the leadership in power and the opposing leadership have opposing policies, political views, and arguments. The study, therefore, provides evidence of the challenging dimension of authoritarian political institutions and democratic/liberal institutions in times of conflict.

Finally, the paper contributes to the political economy of conflicts and political psychology by providing a causal impact of conflicts on economic outcomes and political institutions, using a quasi-experimental analysis and micro-level data (Blattman and Miguel, 2010; Vasilopoulos et al., 2022). This paper uses a spatial difference-in-difference to account for the non-random distribution of conflicts within regions. We, therefore, address the empirical concerns in the field by providing a causal relationship between conflict and political behavior, with the moderating effect of emotion.

2 Conceptual Framework

The preference shift hypothesis constitutes the conceptual foundation of this study. Studies in political psychology provide ample evidence of a preference/behavioral shift in the face of an “unanticipated danger” (Vasilopoulos et al., 2019b; Marcus et al., 2019). More specifically, people are more prone to exhibit a preference for a different behavior, approach, or attitude in the aftermath of conflict or when conflict is imminent. This preference-shifting functions as a coping mechanism, allowing people to better deal with the overall ramifications of the conflict situation in question (Sweeny, 2008).



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Notes: (1) The conceptual argument is that voters observe the outcome of the leadership and decide whether to punish them or not. The outcome is either peace (or end of conflict) or conflict (onset or continuation). (2) Conflict signals a leadership failure, pushing voters to seek alternative leadership or political institutions. (3) Fear, because it induces risk-aversion, calls for cautiousness to avoid the aftermath of regime change (political instability).

Figure 1 summarizes the conceptual framework underlying our analysis. First, conflict induces a preference shift with respect to political institutions. Citizens pay attention to the ability of their leadership to avert conflict and provide them with more safety and security (Laustsen, 2021). Therefore, citizens’ response to conflict is to support political institutions that could secure these public goods for them.

Second, the occurrence and/or continuation of conflict might be associated with the current regime’s weakness, state failure, and lower capability to handle or prevent the conflicts (Silve and Verdier, 2018). Citizens (the principal) only observe the outcome of the leadership

on power(agent) and cannot observe the quality of choice made and whether the leadership is good or bad (Downs and Rocke, 1994). Voters only observe either peace or conflict; end of conflict or continuation of the conflict. Therefore, the leadership is evaluated based on these outcomes. Removal from office or power (or shift in preference or support) is the punishment for failure to prevent conflict or to end a harmful conflict.

Seeking alternative institutions signifies a loss of trust(loyalty) in the current institutions. The legacy of conflicts is a preference for authoritarian institutions (in the form of aggressive and military responses, a strong and dominant leader with conservative policies, etc...) in a democratic regime. In an authoritarian regime, citizens prefer more liberal reforms, more freedom and liberty, and negotiation or defense policies instead of deterrence or offensive policies.

Third, fear(emotion) does alter the preference shift. Indeed, depending on each regime-type frightening issue, fearful citizens are less likely to shift their political preferences. The reason is that fearful citizens are risk-averse(Kahneman and Tversky, 1979), more cautious, and information-seekers. They weigh high the probability of risk due to a regime change. A regime change is risky and uncertain. In times of conflict, a regime change could worsen the situation and increase the cost of conflicts. Being cautious means avoiding the risk of worsening the situation through a regime change. When conflict context induces people, on average, to seek alternative leadership, fearful people do not follow the trend and shift their preference for alternative choice as opposed to the average people's choice.

This study tests two keys hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Conflict induces a regime-shifting preference: Laustsen (2021) find that conflicts boost citizens to prefer dominant leadership as they seek a punitive, military response. In a conflict-affected context, and unlike democratic regimes, where voters are more likely to endorse authoritarian leadership and policies, voters in developing or hybrid/authoritarian regimes are more likely to support democratic institutions and governments. Although studies are lacking in an authoritarian regime, the Index (2021)'s report states that citizens in

hybrid/authoritarian regimes are more likely to endorse democratic institutions.

Hypothesis 2: Fear decreases the impact of conflict on preference for regime-shifting.

Vasilopoulos et al. (2022) find that fearful people are more likely to set aside their distrust toward their governments and increase their loyalty to their current leadership. Fear moderates in an opposite way, the relationship between governmental trust and support for their authoritarian policies during “unusual threatening events”. In the presence of terrorist threats, fearful individuals are warier about the “increased risk and turn to isolationism” (Vasilopoulou and Wagner, 2017, p.384). Fear induces an information seeking-behavior, that might weaken their prior preferences (Marcus et al., 2019).

3 Empirical Methodology

3.1 Data

To analyze the impact of conflict on preference for authoritarianism, we geographically matched data from Afrobarometer (round 7) (BenYishay et al., 2017) and ACLED data. The Afrobarometer data provides individual-level information, political behavior and attitude, and their geographical localization. The smaller geographical unit is the province. The merged data includes information for 30 countries¹, split into two sub-sample of democratic and hybrid/authoritarian countries using the Democracy Index classification (Index, 2021).

Five categories measure democracy in the Democracy Index classification: “electoral process and pluralism”, “functioning of government”, “political participation”, “political culture”, and “civil liberties”. Thus, *Full democracies* are countries with civil liberties, political freedom, and reinforcement of political culture. *Flawed democracies*² have fair and free elections and basic civil liberties, though there are some issues such as minor suppression of

¹Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Cote D’Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

²These countries represent 23.05% of African population: Capo Verde, Ghana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Senegal, and Tunisia.

political oppositions and critics, and low media freedom; on the other hand, *Hybrid regimes* have regular electoral frauds, unfair and no free democracies and *Authoritarian regime* prohibits political pluralism. The index score ranges from 0 to 10. Scores between 8 and 10 indicate full democracy, 6-7.99 represent flawed democracy, 4-5.99 reflect hybrid regimes, and 0–3.99 signify authoritarianism. In this study, we coded 0 for flawed/full democracy and 1 for a hybrid/authoritarian system (0–5.99). (6-10). According to these statistics, just 45.7% of the world’s population in 2021 resided in democracies, a considerable drop from 49.4% in 2020. While 37.1% of the world’s population reside in countries with authoritarian governments(Index, 2021).

Finally, we used data from the Armed Conflict Location Event Data Project (ACLED) for conflict locations in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Data contains information on all documented political violence and protest occurrences, including dates, actors, places, fatalities, and categories. This study focused on battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians, and their location and date of occurrence.

We extracted seven variables measuring voters’ preference for their political institutions. We used the interaction between the distance to the conflict area (50km) and the interview day after the first conflict as the independent variable. The dependent variable measures the voters’ preference for authoritarian policies or leadership. In addition, we use fear as a moderator of the relationship between conflict and voters’ preferences. Fear captures the effect of individuals’ disposition on their decision-making in times of conflict.

The main dependent variable, the main issue that captures institutional constraint and elite competition for the presidency, is (i) the unlimited presidential term and is measured in the Afrobarometer survey as follows: *“Question: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2 Statement 1: The Constitution should limit the president to serving a maximum of two terms in office. Statement 2: There should be no constitutional limit on how long the president can serve.”*

The other dependent variables measure the differences in democratic versus authoritarian political institutions. There are elections, presidential accountability (either before the citizens or the parliament), and the ruling party type (one party or military rule):

(ii) Choose leaders through elections vs other methods: *“Question: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2. Statement 1: We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open and honest elections. Statement 2: Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country’s leaders.”*

(iii) Government gets things done vs Government accountable to citizens: *“Question: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2. Statement 1: It is more important to have a government that can get things done, even if we have no influence over what it does. Statement 2: It is more important for citizens to be able to hold government accountable, even if that means it makes decisions more slowly.”*

(iv) President monitored by parliament vs free to act on own: *“Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2 Statement 1: Parliament should ensure that the President explains to it on a regular basis how his government spends taxpayers’ money. Statement 2: The President should be able to devote his full attention to developing the country rather than wasting time justifying his actions.”*

(v) President free to act vs obey the laws and courts: *“Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2. Statement 1: Since the President was elected to lead the country, he should not be bound by laws or court decisions that he thinks are wrong. Statement 2: The President must always obey the laws and the courts, even if he thinks they are wrong.”*

These dependent variables are a 5-point Likert-scale: from 1 “Agree very strongly with statement 1” 2 “Agree with statement 1” 3 “Agree with statement 2” 4 “Agree very strongly with statement 2” 5 “Agree with neither”. We coded 1 for answers 3 and 4 for authoritarianism and zero for answers 1, 2, and 5 for No-authoritarianism or democratic.

(vi) Reject one-party rule: *“Question: There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office?”*

(vii) Reject military rule: *“Question: There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: The army comes in to govern the country?”*¹ *“Strongly disapprove”*² *“Disapprove”*³ *“Neither approve nor disapprove”*⁴ *“Approve”*⁵ *“Strongly approve”*.

The dependent variables range from 1 “Strongly disapprove”² “Disapprove”³ “Neither approve nor disapprove”⁴ “Approve”⁵ “Strongly approve”. We coded 1 for answers 4 and 5 for authoritarianism and zero for answers 1, 2, and 3 for No authoritarianism or democratic.

The independent variable is the exposure to conflict. The paper uses geographical coordinates to locate individuals in the country and identify individuals directly exposed to conflicts (spatial treated individuals) and indirectly exposed individuals (spatial controlled individuals). Knutsen et al. (2017, p.328) identified the treatment arms within 50km of the buffer zone and argued that *“50 km cutoff distance is, admittedly, somewhat agnostic, but it seems appropriate considering practical commuting distances in the African context and balances potential attenuation biases that may ensue from too short and too long distances”*.

This paper uses 50km and exploits the timing of the first conflict to identify respondents who were temporally near at least one attack at the time of the survey.

The independent variable (the interaction Distance-Time) captures the exposure to conflict: the *Distance* variable identifies individuals located 50km around a terrorist attack zone. The *Post-conflict* captures whether a given respondent was interviewed after the attack; the difference between the survey day and the attack day gives positive numbers for survey dates after the attacks (coded 1) and negative numbers for days before the attack (coded 0).

Table 1 presents the merged data containing more than 35,000 respondents, of which 68 percent were interviewed after the first conflict in their area, and 57 percent were located within 50km of the conflict location. In addition, 19.51 percent were directly exposed to

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Respondents ID	35305			1	45110
Country	35305			1	373
Region	35305			1	30
Number of days	35225	127.306	241.042	-440	610
Treatment (Interviewed after the conflict)	35305	.671	.47	0	1
Distance to conflict centroid (within 50km)	35305	.587	.492	0	1
Dependent Variables					
Yes-One Party ruling the country	34333	.214	.41	0	1
Yes-Military to run the country	34204	.24	.427	0	1
Unlimited Presidential Term	33506	.219	.414	0	1
No-Election to choose leaders	34782	.235	.424	0	1
No-Accountability of the President	34618	.362	.481	0	1
No-Parliament Control of President	34410	.337	.473	0	1
No-Law Control (President free to act)	33272	.737	.44	0	1
Mean Opinion (authoritarian)	35234	.309	.179	0	1
Controls					
Age(Years/10)	35192	3.667	1.477	1.8	9.9
Female	34070	.499	.5	0	1
Employed	31835	.341	.474	0	1
Graduate	35092	.087	.281	0	1
Institutions performance (aggregate value)	34447	.5944	.3717	0	1
Emotions and Ideology					
Fear Crime in Neighborhood	35239	.333	.471	0	1
Fear Political Violence	34854	.515	.5	0	1
Fear Reporting Corruption	33814	.697	.46	0	1
Fear Violence in Neighborhood	34929	.32	.466	0	1
Fear Violence during Political Event	32444	.321	.467	0	1
Fear Violence during Public Protest	34379	.28	.449	0	1
Conservative Ideology	33784	.264	.441	0	1

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

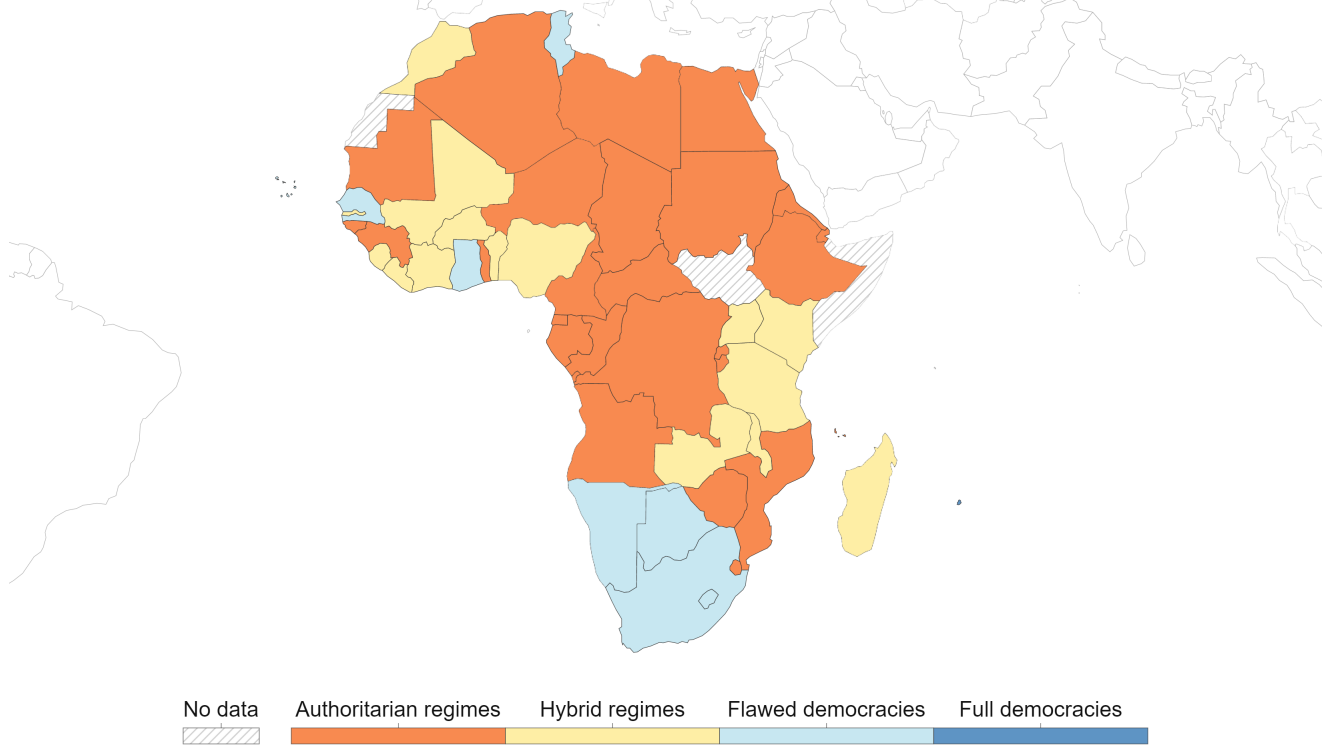
Notes: (1) We restricted our data to four (4) types of violence: battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians. (2) 19.51 percent were directly exposed to battles, 1.42 percent to explosions/remote violence, 43.40 percent to riots, and 35.67 percent to violence against civilians. Riots and violence against civilians are the events that affect most of the respondents in Africa (80 percent).

battles, 1.42 percent to explosions/remote violence, 43.40 percent to riots, and 35.67 percent to violence against civilians. Riots and violence against civilians are the events that affect most of the respondents in Africa (80 percent).

On average, 70 percent of respondents reject authoritarian political institutions, against 30 percent who endorse authoritarianism(seven countries out of 30). This trend reflects the Index (2021)'s report. However, in a hybrid/authoritarian regime, citizens prefer democracy, although 74 percent of respondents endorse a president as free to act without being bound by law.

Political regime, 2018

Based on the expert assessments and classification by the Economist Intelligence Unit (2023).



Source: Economist Intelligence Unit (2023)

OurWorldInData.org/democracy • CC BY

Note: The Chart tab uses numeric values, ranging from 3 for full democracies to 0 for authoritarian regimes.

Figure 2: Political Regime in Africa.

Notes: Most African countries are authoritarian/hybrid regimes. The average score for Africa is below 6, making Africa an authoritarian/hybrid regime.

The moderating variable is fear. We used fear as the moderating variable of the relationship between exposure to conflict and preference. Unlike most studies, fears are not induced by the threat as in laboratory studies, but self-reported (Laustsen and Petersen, 2017). Respondents self-report their fears about different political events, such as reporting corruption (69.7 percent), political violence (51.5 percent), crime in their neighborhood (33.3 percent), violence during a political event (32.1 percent), violence in their neighborhood (32 percent) and fear of violence during a public protest (28 percent). Thus, retaliation after reporting corruption and political violence are the major events that induce higher fear among respondents.

This study focuses on the moderating effect of fear of reporting corruption as the main finding because corruption is a major problem in developing societies. Voter’s preference for a particular regime may be strongly affected by how they evaluate their current regime’s ability to fight corruption (Carothers, 2022) and how much fear they display when reporting corrupted bureaucrats. The other type of fear is used for robustness checks.

The variable *Conservatism* (26 percent) captures the opinion of individuals endorsing the idea that children should be physically disciplined and wives be beaten, so-call social conservatism (see Johnston and Wronski, 2015, for their work that distinguish the type of conservatism based on issues). Marcus et al. (2019) used a similar measure of conservatism in their previous studies. For a robustness check, this study investigates ideology’s moderating effect on regime preference.

3.2 Empirical Model

Providing causal inference of the impact of conflicts on political and economic outcomes is a big concern for political economists (Blattman and Miguel, 2010; Verwimp et al., 2019) and political psychologists (Vasilopoulos et al., 2022).

In line with this empirical concern, this paper designs a natural experiment using a spatial-temporal estimation approach known as the spatial-temporal difference-in-difference. Indeed, the paper exploits respondents’ spatial and temporal proximity to conflicts to address the issue of selection bias and endogeneity by setting up a quasi-experiment design (Isaksson and Kotsadam, 2018; Knutsen et al., 2017; Chung and Rhee, 2022). Since specific people and sub-national areas with particular characteristics may be the targets of conflicts, the distribution of conflicts within countries is not random. Consequently, it is difficult to infer a causal relationship between conflict and individual political preference from a simple mean comparison between those close to a region or area of conflict and those far from the conflict zone. Therefore, by exploiting the random distribution of individuals around the conflict date, this study can provide an exogenous measure of conflict exposure that captures time

trends and region specificity.

The study conducts separate analyses in both regime types and captures voters' post-conflict behavior in each political institution based on their level of democratization.

In addition, we conducted a triple spatial difference-in-difference to account for the moderating effect of voters' emotions on respondents' regime-shifting preference in times of conflict. Considering the spatial and temporal distance of the respondents to the conflict's locations, the spatial-temporal difference-in-difference model is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Regime-Shifting}_{irjt} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Post} - \text{conflict}_{irjt} + \beta_2 \text{Distance}_{irjt} + \beta_3 \text{fear}_{irjt} + \beta_4 \text{Post} - \\ & \text{conflict}_{irjt} \times \text{Distance}_{irjt} + \beta_5 \text{Post} - \text{conflict}_{irjt} \times \text{fear}_{irjt} + \beta_6 \text{Distance}_{irjt} \times \text{fear}_{irjt} + \\ & \beta_7 \text{Post} - \text{conflict}_{irjt} \times \text{Distance}_{irjt} \times \text{fear}_{irjt} + \beta_{ik} X_{ikjt} + \gamma_t + \delta_j + \varepsilon_{it} \end{aligned}$$

The dependent variable, *Regime-Shifting*, measures the self-reported support for alternative regimes (authoritarian vs democratic institutions) for individual (i) in a political regime (r) and region (j) at a time (t). The regime-shifting measures whether a given city in a particular regime prefers the current regime or shifts its preference for an alternative regime as a consequence of conflicts. For instance, in a democratic regime, a voter who prefers democratic institutions is expected to adhere to democratic political institutions and reject authoritarian political institutions. In order to facilitate the interpretation of the results, the dependent variable is coded 1 for preference for authoritarian political institutions, which should be preferred or not by citizens in different political regimes. Therefore, in the case of preference for democratic institutions in a democratic regime, the regime-shifting preference outcome will be negatively related to conflicts for no preference shift, while a preference shift will be positively associated with conflict onset. The opposing pattern is expected to hold in an authoritarian regime.

The fixed effects, γ_t and δ_j , account for years and region fixed effects, rule out potential unobserved variables that vary across time and region, and might confound the relationship between exposure to conflict and voters' political behavior.

The coefficient (β_4) measures the average or direct effect of exposure to conflict on voters' regime-shifting preference. The coefficient is expected to be positive in a democratic regime, meaning that citizens in a democratic regime prefer authoritarian political institutions. In contrast, we expect a negative coefficient in an authoritarian regime, where conflict induces a regime-shifting preference.

The coefficient (β_7) measures the moderating effect of fear. Fear is expected to affect the relationship between conflicts and regime-shifting preference in an opposite way and decreases the effect of conflict on the likelihood of regime change (Vasilopoulos et al., 2022). In a democratic regime, we expect the coefficient of fear to be negative (as the coefficient of conflict is positive). We expect a positive coefficient in an authoritarian regime for the same reason.

Finally, the sum ($\beta_4+\beta_7$) measures the total effect of conflict on voters' preference for authoritarianism, accounting for the effect of emotion. A smaller sum ($\beta_4+\beta_7$) compared to (β_3) means a decreasing effect of conflict on preference for the regime-shifting as a result of fear.

The coefficients are estimated using the Limited Probability(LPM-OLS estimation) consistent quasi-experiment model (Caudill et al., 1988; Deke, 2014). The standard errors are clustered using the region level for accounting for potential spatial correlation in the error term (see Adhvaryu et al., 2021).

The paper conducts different robustness checks. The following section presents the key findings of this article.

4 Empirical Results & Discussion

4.1 Results

Table 2 presents the findings of this study and provides empirical evidence of a regime-shifting preference in a conflict-affected context. Equation 1 presents the main results with

the moderating effect of fear. The key idea of this study is that conflict drives a regime-shifting preference, while fear reduces the effect of conflict on an individual's likelihood to support an alternative regime.

	(1) No- Term Limit	(2) Yes- One Party	(3) Yes- Military	(4) No- Election	(5) No- Account	(6) No-Parliament Control	(7) No- Law Control
Panel A. Democratic Regime							
Post # D(-)50km	0.1684* (0.0821)	0.0627 (0.0785)	-0.0968 (0.0687)	0.0245 (0.0800)	-0.0109 (0.0705)	0.1523* (0.0834)	0.0293 (0.0646)
Post # D(-)50km # Fear	-0.1313 (0.0970)	-0.1805* (0.0982)	0.0419 (0.1083)	0.0370 (0.0675)	-0.1630 (0.1019)	-0.1716* (0.0650)	0.0777 (0.0967)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years-Region Fixed Effect	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	7455	7457	7400	7466	7434	7443	7438
R ²	0.057	0.125	0.072	0.082	0.104	0.102	0.066
Panel B. Authoritarian Regime							
Post # D(-)50km	-0.0982*** (0.0293)	-0.0563* (0.0286)	-0.0223 (0.0272)	-0.0009 (0.0250)	-0.0764* (0.0357)	0.0079 (0.0332)	-0.0223 (0.0317)
Post # D(-)50km # Fear	0.0935*** (0.0263)	0.0623* (0.0320)	0.0224 (0.0309)	0.0183 (0.0271)	0.0699* (0.0371)	-0.0332 (0.0388)	0.0483 (0.0322)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years-Region Fixed Effect	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	19668	20523	20463	20820	20719	20595	19476
R ²	0.092	0.083	0.118	0.080	0.082	0.075	0.071
Panel C. Full Sample (Africa): Authoritarian Regime							
Post # D(-)50km	-0.0860** (0.0276)	-0.0479* (0.0261)	-0.0359 (0.0230)	-0.0142 (0.0224)	-0.0719* (0.0303)	0.0184 (0.0279)	-0.0035 (0.0277)
Post # D(-)50km # Fear	0.0883*** (0.0239)	0.0550* (0.0279)	0.0266 (0.0263)	0.0393 (0.0244)	0.0650* (0.0314)	-0.0314 (0.0335)	0.0340 (0.0288)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years-Region Fixed Effect	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	27123	27980	27863	28286	28153	28038	26914
R ²	0.087	0.093	0.104	0.080	0.088	0.082	0.068

Clustered-Standard errors in parentheses / + p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 2: Impact of conflict on regime-shifting preference, with the moderating effect of fear.

(1) The control variables include age, education level, employment status, gender, and institutional performance (President, Member of the parliament, the elected local government, the traditional leaders, and the mayor). (2) Equations 2-7 use other political institutions for robustness checks, proving that conflicts boost voters to prefer alternative political institutions. Fear of reporting corruption is the most fearful event ever experienced by respondents. (3) The regression in all models used an OLS estimator. The results are robust and consistent when I use logistic regression.

First, focusing the analysis on the democratic regime in sub-Saharan Africa (Panel A), the paper finds that conflict pushes citizens in democratic regimes to look for authoritarian leadership and policies. In panel A, citizens in the democratic regime are more likely to endorse authoritarian ideas, leadership, and policies. Indeed, for the statistically significant issues, the coefficients are positive.

For instance, respondents in democratic regimes endorse having an unlimited presiden-

tial term (+16.84 percent) and not having the parliament scrutinize the president's actions (+15.23 percent). These findings suggest that conflict boosts respondents to support no executive constraint to the president and no elite competition for the president position. In addition, they prefer the president be free to act without being controlled by the parliament, and the presidential term should not be limited in time.

These findings are similar to the mainstream view in political psychology and support the adaptive followership of Laustsen (2021) in a democratic regime. The mainstream view supports that citizens exposed to conflict expect an aggressive response to the conflict. They believe that strong leadership is necessary to end or win the conflict (Laustsen et al., 2015; Laustsen and Petersen, 2017; Laustsen, 2021; Vasilopoulos et al., 2018, 2019a, 2022). Additionally, the democratic Index (2021)'s report claim that frustration with western democracies pushes citizens in democratic countries to seek an alternative regime. Therefore, citizens in democratic regimes shift their preference for authoritarian leadership and policies in times of conflict.

Second, citizens in authoritarian regimes prefer democratic institutions when they experience conflict (Panel B). In panel B, the coefficient estimate is negative for all the institutions with statistically significant coefficients. These findings suggest that individuals exposed to authoritarian/hybrid regimes are less likely to support an unlimited presidential term (-9.82 percent), one party ruling their country (-5.63 percent), and the government not being accountable for their actions (-7.64 percent). Here again, we find a shift in preference for democratic political institutions in the authoritarian regime as a consequence of conflict.

Citizens in developing democracies are well-placed to know the negative effect of authoritarianism. Indeed, conflicts have always been associated with strong leadership and authoritarianism in developing democracies that deny fair elite competition to the presidency and are known to hold unfair election that leads to electoral violence Blattman and Miguel (2010). Voters in developing countries could then connect, cognitively, the occurrence of conflicts or risk of threat with "hybrid/authoritarian regimes" in which 76.95 percent of

African reside (Unit, 2016; Index, 2021, for Democracy Index classification of 167 countries).

In panel C, we use the full sample of African countries. Africa is an authoritarian regime with an average score of around 4. The result in the full sample is similar to the findings in the sub-sample of authoritarian countries. The results are then consistent for an authoritarian regime. The findings suggest that, on average, Africans are less likely to support authoritarian leadership and institutions due to conflict. There is a clear political regime-shifting preference among citizens in Africa. This result is also consistent with the data analysis where 76 percent of citizens live in an authoritarian regime in Africa, with around 70 percent of Africans who prefer a democratic regime over their current political institutions. Combining these data with the long history of conflict in Africa, we better understand the respondent preference shift in light of our findings.

Third, fear decreases the impact of conflicts on voters' preference for authoritarian political institutions in times of conflict (Panel A). Indeed, as suggested by Vasilopoulos et al. (2022), fear induces a preference shift for political institutions and policies due to the threat. In our study, fear affects the relationship conflict-preference for the current regime in an opposite way. In a democratic regime, fear is statistically significant (5 percent level) and negative for parliament control over the president's actions and one party ruling the country (10 percent level of significance). Fearful respondents are 17.16 percent less likely to adhere to the idea of having a president not controlled by the parliament and 18.05 percent less likely to support one party ruling in a conflict context. Experiencing fear boosts respondents to reject one party of power. This interactive coefficient (moderating effect) has an opposing effect on preference, reducing the impact of conflict on preference for the current regime.

The same pattern is observed for respondents in a hybrid/authoritarian regime (Panel B). While conflict negatively affects voters' preference for authoritarian institutions, fear decreases the impact of conflicts on their preference for the alternative regime. Fearful citizens are 9.35 percent more likely to endorse an unlimited presidential term, 6.23 percent more likely to adhere to one party ruling the country, and 6.99 percent chance to support a leader-

ship not accountable before the citizens for their actions. We observe the same pattern when we use the entire sample of African countries. Fear induces a shifting preference as suggested by previous studies Marcus et al. (2019); Pepin-Neff and Wynter (2018); Vasilopoulos et al. (2022).

In sum, while conflict induces a preference shift, fear decreases voters' likelihood of shifting preference.

4.2 Discussion

Combining the results from the Democratic regime (Panel A) and hybrid/authoritarian regime (Panel B) and the full sample of African countries (Panel C), we find that conflict drives citizens to shift their preference for alternative political institutions. Moreover, fear decreases the relationship between conflict and preference for an alternative political institution.

The argument proposed in the article is that voters care more about the efficiency of policies implemented during crises. The success or failure of these policies is then associated with regime failure. The regime failure induces a loss of trust(loyalty) in current institutions and leadership and disrupts the social contract between the citizens and their leaders(Verwimp, 2003). As a result, people no longer identify with the current regime and seek by all means (riots, public protests, rebellion, or election) an alternative government with alternative policies and strategies.

Since the fear variable used in this study is fear of reporting corruption, increasing loyalty to the current regime among fearful citizens may have a different explanation in each regime. Carothers (2022) finds that the support for authoritarian leaders is sometimes justified by the fact that they are known for effectively battling corruption. Therefore, one can conclude that the citizens expect the ruling elite to constrain the bureaucracy and the local government(Moustafa, 2014), particularly in times of threat where the leadership needs citizens' loyalty for successful policy implementation. This paper adds that the fear of repres-

sion drives citizens' loyalty to the current regime by the ruling elite. Furthermore, studies show that authoritarian regime uses threat and oppression to maintain voters' loyalty (Verwimp, 2003). In a democratic regime, the rejection of authoritarian policies and institutions among fearful citizens might be explained by the fear of political instability, worsening the existing situation. Sub-Saharan Africa has a long history of political instability and conflicts; therefore, previous studies on emotions suggest that fearful citizens are wary about the consequence of a regime shift and the high risk inherent to change (Marcus et al., 2019; Vasilopoulos et al., 2019a).

We also investigate the role played by ideology on individual post-conflict preference for authoritarianism (see appendix). Previous studies find a liberal shift toward support for more authoritarianism. This article finds both a liberal shift and a conservative shift depending on the issues in democratic and authoritarian regimes. These findings are consistent with the conservative-shift hypothesis (see Johnston and Wronski, 2015).

Johnston and Wronski (2015) divided issues into hard and easy issues and showed that depending on the type of issues, an individual might have a more or less conservative/liberal view. The "normal voting behavior" or the partisan loyalty approach may depend on the type of issue to be voted on in the conflict-affected context.

Toward a regime-shifting preference

In Panel A, B, and C, we observe that in both democratic and hybrid/authoritarian regimes, there is one political institution "limiting the presidential term", which is statistically significant.

The central role played by the presidential term in democracy is provided by Hartmann (2022). Hartmann (2022) finds that a "limited presidential term" serves as both an institutionalization of executive constraints and a foundation for elite political competition and access to the presidency. Therefore, the "limited presidential term" is a good measure of regime type. First, constraining the executive motivates a will to respect the rule of law and to be accountable to citizens. Indeed, since the president can be prosecuted and jailed for

bad governance after the presidential term, we can expect good governance from the executive. Also, they might not be reelected if they don't behave properly, known as electoral accountability. Second, promoting political competition for the presidency enables citizens' high participation in political engagement(De Juan and Pierskalla, 2016).

Therefore, the "limited presidential term" better measures the regime type. While the presidential term limitation is promoted and effective in democratic regimes, it is denied and removed or constantly modified in authoritarian/hybrid regimes' constitutions (Hartmann, 2022). Therefore, the regime-shifting preference is strong and consistent when observing the same institutions in both regimes for more realistic comparative analysis. The findings in panels A-B and column 1 show that citizens in democratic regimes are induced by conflict to reject the "limited presidential term". In contrast, citizens in authoritarian/hybrid regimes support the "limited presidential term" in the same conflict context.

Citizens exposed to conflicts in democratic regimes were 17 percent more likely to adhere to an unlimited presidential term and 10 percent less likely to support it when fearful(although the coefficient is not statistically significant). In a hybrid/authoritarian regime, conflict boosts citizens to endorse a limited presidential term and reject an unlimited one (around -10%). In contrast, fearful citizens reject the limited presidential term and support an unlimited presidential term(with around a 9% chance).

The regime-shifting preference hypothesis suggests that any time citizens lose trust in their current regime or institutions' ability to respond adequately to the threat or conflicts, they will look for a government leadership that can handle it. However, they feel fearful, become wary about the consequence of political instability, and are less likely to shift their preference in a conflict context. Fearful citizens rather support the current regime, although they are not performing well in tackling the source of conflicts or threats.

The mitigating effect of fear on voters' regime-shifting preference in times of conflict posits a real threat to citizens' rights and freedom. Indeed, the different regimes could use fear to maintain the status quo and protect their regime from regime change. The preference

for an alternative regime pressures the authoritarian regime's stability. Therefore, using fear, repression, and oppression could be the best response for the current leadership who seek to remain or increase their power (Verwimp, 2003). Verwimp (2003) showed that the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 was the political response of the current leadership, who lost the citizens' loyalty due to the economic crisis (drop in the coffee's price).

Implication for the Political Economy of Conflict

The political institutions analyzed in this study are democratic or liberal, and authoritarian political institutions. Each regime differs in whether the power is diffuse or concentrated under the hand of one (tyranny) or a leader with some bureaucratic elites (Boix, 2009).

When analyzed from the political economy perspective, this study has implications for public policy and economic development. The analysis of conflict helps us understand the elite struggle to control the scarce resource and increase their power (Garfinkel and Skaperdas, 2008; Kolmar, 2005). This struggle could have an adverse impact on policy continuity and long-term economic development.

Conflict, voters, and institutional building. The findings of this study suggest that conflict contributes to political institution building through voters' preferences and behavioral change in times of conflict. Conflict or the risk of disputes predicts the institutional choice and the nature of the regime change (Aguirre, 2016). Aguirre (2016) argued that conflict could produce institutions where power is concentrated in elite hands. Thus, more elitist, authoritarian leadership could emerge due to conflicts. Silve and Verdier (2018), in a comparative regional conflict theory, argue that, although conflicts could have an adverse effect on the quality of institutions, conflict could induce and improve the creation of new and good political institutions as a means to mitigate the impact of conflicts. Therefore, conflict could facilitate democratization or promote authoritarianism, e.g. conflicts can lower or raise executive constraints. Our findings suggest that democracy is at risk in times of conflict in democratic regimes, while there is hope for democratization in authoritarian regimes. Conflict is either a risk or an opportunity for building up good institutions.

Political institutions and economic growth. Alongside the literature on the impact of political institutions on economic growth (Adam et al., 2011; Alexandre et al., 2022; Colagrossi et al., 2020; Przeworski and Limongi, 1993; Sima and Huang, 2023), the paper provides a causal mechanism explaining the impact of conflict on long-term economic development through a change in political institutions. The article predicts that conflict could improve or deter economic growth through its implications on institutional choice and regime change. Indeed, while most studies find that democracy is good for economic growth, Przeworski and Limongi (1993) and Sima and Huang (2023) argue that countries with a lower level of democracy are associated with economic growth. The underlying idea is that the impact of political institutions and elites on economic growth depends on the level of development (Boschini, 2006). We believe that, although there is no clear consensus on which regime is pro-growth, our findings suggest that the conflict will disrupt economic growth in democratic countries where liberal reforms are needed and slow down economic development in authoritarian/hybrid regimes, where a need for less democracy might be required at an early stage of development. Policies should be customized to fit each country's context.

5 Conclusion

This paper has presented the legacy of conflict on voters' preference for political institutions, using a comparative analysis. To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to analyze the citizens' preference shifts in times of conflict in democratic and authoritarian regimes. By using the same data from African countries and dividing the sample into two sub-samples of democratic and authoritarian regimes, this comparative analysis provides a unique setting to analyze in a more systematic and consistent way the citizens' political preferences when they are exposed to conflict.

The study of voters' preference shift in conflict-affected context is crucial, although few studies attempted to investigate this preference in the non-democratic regime, especially in Africa (Harding and Nwokolo, 2022), as compared with the abundant studies in democratic countries. This study combined literature from the political economy of conflicts (Verwimp et al., 2019; Verwimp, 2003; Blattman, 2022) and the political psychology (Laustsen, 2021; Vasilopoulos et al., 2019a) to investigate the political and economic legacies of conflict in both democratic and authoritarian regimes in Africa. The empirical findings show that the voters' behavior in times of conflict is similar across regimes: they shift their preference for alternative political institutions as a consequence of conflict. For instance, citizens in democratic regimes shift their preference for authoritarian political institutions, whereas voters in authoritarian regimes do prefer democratic political institutions in times of conflict.

These results have important implications. While conflict put democracy at risk in democratic regimes (Merolla and Zechmeister, 2009a; Laustsen, 2021), it creates an opportunity for democratization in authoritarian political regimes. The reasons behind this preference shift lie in voters' expectations or preferences when they elect a political leader. One of the citizens' preferences is safety and security. The onset or continuation of conflict reveals a state failure and the current leadership's incapacity to efficiently prevent or end a conflict.

In addition, this study finds that fear reduces the impact of conflict on preference shift, maintaining a status quo. Fearful citizens do not shift their preference for alternative political

regimes in times of conflict. The reason is that fear is associated with risk aversion, and cautiousness. Therefore, a regime shift in times of conflict might be seen as too risky for fearful citizens who will prefer the status quo to political instability. Another plausible explanation might be a fear of repression by the current elite. The implication of this finding is that the current leadership could use fear to maintain or increase their power when their regime is at risk. Therefore, citizens' liberties and freedom in times of conflict might be limited or restricted, whether they want it or not.

The paper offers theoretical and empirical contributions to the field of political psychology and the political economy of conflict literature. Theoretically, the article offers the regime-shifting preference hypothesis as a legacy of conflict. It helps us to understand that conflict negatively affects the stability of the current regime (democratic or authoritarian). Therefore, by affecting voters' preferences, conflict could either deter democracy in democratic regimes or be an opportunity for democratization in authoritarian regimes as citizens seek alternative regimes. Fear, because inducing risk-aversion, pushes citizens to avoid a regime change in a conflict context, therefore, reducing the effect of conflict on preference for alternative regimes. Second, empirically, this paper designs a natural experiment using a spatial difference-in-difference for causal inference with high external validity and complements laboratory experiment studies widely used in the field.

As with any study, there is still much work to be done despite the arguments presented in this one helping to elucidate the role conflicts play in influencing voters' preference for authoritarianism. The primary motivation for alternative regimes in a conflict-affected context appears to be the loss of regime trust or loyalty. However, less is known about whether voters are able to turn their preference into regime change or how the leadership will respond to this change in preference. Therefore, researchers should examine the causal mechanisms underpinning the choice of alternative regimes and the current leadership's strategic behavioral response in a conflict-affected context.

References

- Adam, A., Delis, M. D., and Kammass, P. (2011). Are democratic governments more efficient ? *European Journal of Political Economy*, 27:75–86.
- Adhvaryu, A., Fenske, J., Khanna, G., and Nyshadham, A. (2021). Resources, conflict, and economic development in Africa. *Journal of Development Economics*, 149(July 2019):102598.
- Aguirre, A. (2016). The risk of civil conflicts as a determinant of political institutions. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 42.
- Alexandre, F., Bação, P., and José, F. (2022). The political economy of productivity growth. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 75(102185).
- BenYishay, A., Rotberg, R., Wells, J., Lv, Z., Goodman, S., Kovacevic, L., and Runfola, D. (2017). Geocoding Afrobarometer Rounds 1-6: Methodology & Data Quality. AidData.
- Blattman, C. (2009). From violence to voting: War and political participation in uganda. *American political Science review*, 103(2):231–247.
- Blattman, C. (2022). *Why We Fight: The Roots of War and the Paths to Peace*. Penguin Publishing Group.
- Blattman, C. and Miguel, E. (2010). Civil war. *Journal of Economic literature*, 48(1):3–57.
- Boix, C. (2009). Authoritarian regimes and political institutions. *The Political Economy of Democracy*, Fundacion BBVA.
- Bonanno, G. A. and Jost, J. T. (2006). Conservative shift among high-exposure survivors of the september 11th terrorist attacks. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 28(4):311–323.
- Boschini, A. D. (2006). The political economy of industrialisation. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 22(4):887–907.
- Carothers, C. (2022). Taking authoritarian anti-corruption reform seriously. *Perspectives on Politics*, 20(1):69–85.
- Caudill, S. B. et al. (1988). An advantage of the linear probability model over probit or logit. *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 50(4):425–427.
- Chung, E. and Rhee, I. (2022). Disasters and intergroup peace in sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Peace Research*, 59(1):58–72.
- Colagrossi, M., Rossignoli, D., and Maggioni, M. A. (2020). Does democracy cause growth ? A meta-analysis (of 2000 regressions). *European Journal of Political Economy*, 61(November 2019):101824.
- Collier, P. and Duponchel, M. (2012). *The Economic Legacy of Civil War: Firm Level Evidence from Sierra Leone*.
- De Juan, A. and Pierskalla, J. H. (2016). Civil war violence and political trust: Microlevel evidence from Nepal. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 33(1):67–88.
- Deke, J. (2014). Using the Linear Probability Model to Estimate Impacts on Binary Outcomes in Randomized Controlled Trials. (December):1–5.
- Downs, G. W. and Rocke, D. M. (1994). Conflict, agency, and gambling for resurrection: The principal-agent problem goes to war. *American journal of political science*, pages 362–380.
- Gadarian, S. K. (2010). The politics of threat: How terrorism news shapes foreign policy attitudes. *Journal of Politics*, 72(2):469–483.
- Garfinkel, M. and Skaperdas, S. (2008). The political economy of conflict and appropriation. Technical report, Cambridge University Press.
- Harding, R. and Nwokolo, A. (2022). Terrorism, trust, and identity: Evidence from a natural experiment in nigeria. *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Hartmann, C. (2022). Authoritarian origins of term limit trajectories in Africa. *Democratization*, 29(1).
- Index, D. (2021). the china challenge. *Economist Intelligence*.
- Isaksson, A. S. and Kotsadam, A. (2018). Chinese aid and local corruption. *Journal of Public Economics*, 159(July 2017):146–159.
- Jiménez, Á. V., Flitton, A., and Mesoudi, A. (2021). When do people prefer dominant over prestigious political leaders? *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 3.
- Johnston, C. D. and Wronski, J. (2015). Personality dispositions and political preferences across hard and easy issues. *Political Psychology*, 36(1):35–53.
- Jost, J. T., Krochik, M., Gaucher, D., and Hennes, E. P. (2009). Can a psychological theory of ideological differences explain contextual variability in the contents of political attitudes? *Psychological Inquiry*,

- 20(2-3):183–188.
- Kahneman, D. and Tversky, A. (1979). Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk. *Econometrica*, 47(2):263–292.
- Knutsen, C. H., Kotsadam, A., Olsen, E. H., and Wig, T. (2017). Mining and Local Corruption in Africa. *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(2):320–334.
- Koivuranta, M. and Korhonen, M. (2021). Changes in risk preferences: Evidence from Swedish harness horse racing data. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 187:16–32.
- Kolmar, M. (2005). The contribution of herchel i. grossman to political economy. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 21(4):802–814.
- Laustsen, L. (2021). Candidate Evaluations Through the Lens of Adaptive Followership Psychology: How and Why Voters Prefer Leaders Based on Character Traits. *Political Psychology*, 42(S1):109–148.
- Laustsen, L. and Petersen, M. B. (2017). Perceived Conflict and Leader Dominance : Individual and Contextual Factors Behind Preferences for Dominant Leaders. *Political Psychology*, 38(6):1083–1101.
- Laustsen, L., Petersen, M. B., and Klofstad, C. A. (2015). Vote choice, ideology, and social dominance orientation influence preferences for lower pitched voices in political candidates. *Evolutionary Psychology*, 13(3):1–13.
- Loewenstein, G. and Lerner, S. J. (2003). The role of affect in decision making. *handbook of affective sciences*, 202:619–642.
- Loewenstein, G., Webber, E., Hsee, C., and Welch, N. (2001). Risk As Feelings. *Psychological Bulletin*, 127(2):267–268.
- Marcus, G. E., Valentino, N. A., Vasilopoulos, P., and Foucault, M. (2019). Applying the Theory of Affective Intelligence to Support for Authoritarian Policies and Parties. *Political Psychology*, 40(S1):109–139.
- Merolla, J. L. and Zechmeister, E. J. (2009a). Democracy at risk. In *Democracy at Risk*. University of Chicago Press.
- Merolla, J. L. and Zechmeister, E. J. (2009b). Terrorist threat, leadership, and the vote: Evidence from three experiments. *Political Behavior*, 31(4):575–601.
- Miguel, E., Saiegh, S. M., and Satyanath, S. (2011). Civil war exposure and violence. *Economics and Politics*, 23(1):59–73.
- Moustafa, T. (2014). Law and courts in authoritarian regimes. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 10:281–299.
- Pepin-Neff, C. L. and Wynter, T. (2018). Reducing fear to influence policy preferences: An experiment with sharks and beach safety policy options. *Marine Policy*, 88(December 2017):222–229.
- Perlaviciute, G., Steg, L., Hoekstra, E. J., and Vrieling, L. (2017). Perceived risks, emotions, and policy preferences: A longitudinal survey among the local population on gas quakes in the Netherlands. *Energy Research and Social Science*, 29(April):1–11.
- Petersen, M. B. and Laustsen, L. (2020). Dominant leaders and the political psychology of followership. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 33:136–141.
- Przeworski, A. and Limongi, F. (1993). Political regimes and economic growth. *Journal of economic perspectives*, 7(3):51–69.
- Rick, S. and Loewenstein, G. F. (2012). The Role of Emotion in Economic Behavior. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, pages 1–35.
- Schüller, S. (2015). The 9/11 conservative shift. *Economics Letters*, 135:80–84.
- Silve, A. and Verdier, T. (2018). A theory of regional conflict complexes. *Journal of Development Economics*, 133(March 2017):434–447.
- Sima, D. and Huang, F. (2023). Is democracy good for growth ? Development at political transition time matters. *European Journal of Political Economy*.
- Sweeny, K. (2008). Crisis Decision Theory: Decisions in the Face of Negative Events. *Psychological Bulletin*, 134(1):61–76.
- Tarczynski, W., Mentel, U., Mentel, G., and Shahzad, U. (2021). The Influence of Investors ’ Mood on the Stock Prices : Evidence from Energy Firms in Warsaw Stock Exchange , Poland. *Energies*, 14(7396).
- Unit, E. I. (2016). Democracy index 2015: Democracy in an age of anxiety. *Economist Intelligence*.
- Vasilopoulos, P., Marcus, G. E., and Foucault, M. (2018). Emotional Responses to the Charlie Hebdo Attacks: Addressing the Authoritarianism Puzzle. *Political Psychology*, 39(3):557–575.
- Vasilopoulos, P., Marcus, G. E., Valentino, N. A., and Foucault, M. (2019a). Fear, Anger, and Voting

- for the Far Right: Evidence From the November 13, 2015 Paris Terror Attacks. *Political Psychology*, 40(4):679–704.
- Vasilopoulos, P., Marcus, G. E., Valentino, N. A., and Foucault, M. (2019b). Fear, anger, and voting for the far right: Evidence from the november 13, 2015 paris terror attacks. *Political Psychology*, 40(4):679–704.
- Vasilopoulos, P., McAvay, H., Brouard, S., and Foucault, M. (2022). Emotions, governmental trust and support for the restriction of civil liberties during the covid-19 pandemic. *European Journal of Political Research*.
- Vasilopoulou, S. and Wagner, M. (2017). Fear, anger and enthusiasm about the European Union: Effects of emotional reactions on public preferences towards European integration. *European Union Politics*, 18(3):382–405.
- Verwimp, P. (2003). The political economy of coffee, dictatorship, and genocide. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 19(2):161–181.
- Verwimp, P., Justino, P., and Brück, T. (2019). The microeconomics of violent conflict. *Journal of Development Economics*, 141:102297.
- Voors, M. J., Nillesen, E. E. M., Verwimp, P., Bulte, E. H., Lensink, R., and Soest, D. P. V. (2012). Violent conflict and behavior: a field experiment in burundi. *American Economic Review*, 102(2):941–964.
- Wang, A. Y. and Young, M. (2020). Terrorist attacks and investor risk preference: Evidence from mutual fund flows. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 137(2):491–514.
- Winden, F. V. (2015). Political economy with affect: On the role of emotions and relationships in political economics. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 40:298–311.
- Yan, J., Kniffin, K. M., Kunreuther, H. C., and Schulze, W. D. (2020). The roles of reason and emotion in private and public responses to terrorism. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 180:778–796.

Tables

Figures

Appendix A. Placeholder