

Abstract

The focus on this research is to investigate if conflict reduces trust in formal institutions and to what extent they vary amongst the main institutions of police, courts, parliament and president. The African Afrobarometer Household Survey of 2014 to 2015 asked individuals their level of trust in these institutions. This study further analyses the how these people's trust change in the context of being exposed to conflict. The UCDP data for conflict from 1989 to 2017 provides the georeferenced locations of the conflict occurrences in Africa. These are then aligned with the Afrobarometer household surveys to generate the conflict dummy that varies at the district level. From the 17 African countries selected, 19,767 observations are used in this study.

To analyse the impact of conflict on trust in formal institutions, the Ordinary Least Square Method is used as the benchmark model. The control variables used include countries' present economic condition, individuals' economic condition, access to services, sociodemographic characteristics as well as near distance to conflict. To do further robustness checks, the Propensity Score Matching and the Rosenbaum Bound Sensitivity Analysis are used to adjust for systematic differences that comes with confounding factors in both the observable and unobservable factors.

The results from the analyses showed that people's trust in police significantly declines as compared to the decline of people's trust in courts of law, parliament, and the president. However, given the some of the results generated during the PSM and Sensitivity Analysis are not exact in some variables, the interpretations of the findings need to be done with caution.