

Conflict and the Formation of Political Beliefs in Africa

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We test whether living through conflict in childhood changes political beliefs and engagement. We combine data on the location and intensity of conflicts since 1945 with nationally representative data on political attitudes and behaviors from 17 sub-Saharan African countries. Exposure from ages 0 to 14 has a very small standardized impact on later attitudes and behaviors. This finding is robust to migration and holds across a variety of definitions, specifications, and sources of data. Our results suggest that at the population level in Africa, conflict does not alter political beliefs, though the most exposed subpopulations may experience large, lasting effects.

[Complete paper](#) is also available

