

Foreign Aid and Targeted Political Violence

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- Foreign aid can increase incentives to use targeted violence to reduce political competition and secure access to aid resources.

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Theoretical Argument

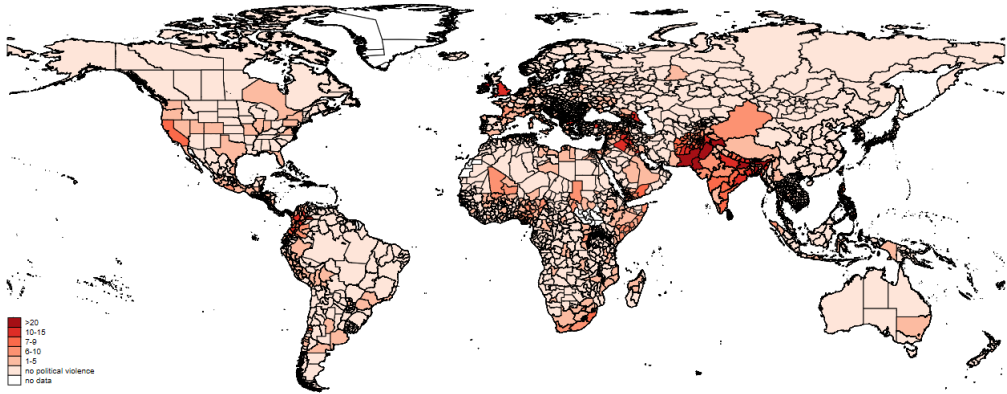
- Targeted violence as a strategy to reduce political competition and increase chances to get elected & access to aid resources:
- Strategies:
 - Targeted killings of political competitors.
 - Threats and coercion directed at the political competition.
 - Intimidation of opposition voters.
- Targeted violence more likely in weakly institutionalized contexts:
 - Higher stakes
 - Fewer deterrents

Research Design

$$\text{Targeted Violence}_{it} = \beta_1 \text{Aid}_{it-1} + \beta_2 \text{Pop}_{it-1} (+ \beta_3 \text{Conflict}_{it}) + \alpha_{ct} + \delta_i + \nu_{it}, \quad (1)$$

- Targeted violence in almost 30,000 ADM2 regions in 124 developing countries, 1990–2020.
- DV: Attacks on public officials (GTD)
- Explanatory variables:
 - Log of aid (Bomprezzi et al. 2025)
 - Political risk (ICRG)
 - Democracy (Cheibub et al. 2010)
 - Election year (DPI)
- Main specifications: OLS & 2SLS with country-year and region fixed effects, clustered standard errors (country).

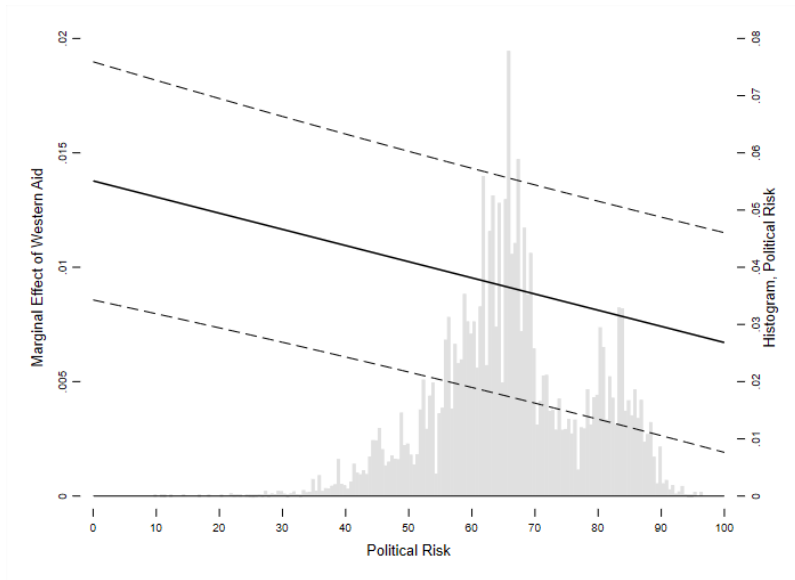
Targeted Violence



Main Results

	(1) OLS	(2) CFA	(3) CFA	(4) OLS	(5) CFA	(6) CFA
(log) Aid (t-1)	-0.00004 (0.29)	0.0094*** (3.28)	0.1579*** (3.28)	0.0044*** (4.28)	0.0138*** (4.35)	0.2080*** (4.05)
Western aid*risk				- 0.0001*** (4.53)	- 0.0001*** (4.33)	- 0.0007*** (4.08)
(log) Population, t-1	-0.0007 (1.17)	- 0.0031*** (3.40)	- 0.0038*** (3.56)	-0.0005 (0.61)	- 0.0028*** (2.79)	- 0.0037*** (3.10)
First year	1991	1991	1991	1991	1991	1991
Last year	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
Aid	disb.	disb.	dummy	disb.	disb.	dummy
Exogeneity (p-value)		0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00
Kleibergen-Paap F-stat		44.20	44.20		44.20	44.20
Number of countries	121	121	121	91	91	91
Number of regions	29308	29308	29308	27144	27144	27144
Number of observations	822468	822468	822468	756858	756858	756858

Are the Effects Stronger in Weakly Institutionalized Systems?



Other Tests & Robustness

- Effect of aid stronger during election years.
- Alternative indicators using DECO, ACLED, ECAV
- Facets of armed clientelism
- Additional control variables (broad-scale conflict, etc)
- Alternative model specification
- Donor- and sector-specific dynamics

Targeted Violence in Mexico

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(log) Aid (t-1)	0.22*** (2.76)	0.28*** (3.24)	0.01*** (4.83)	0.02*** (5.47)
Aid*Prosecutor offices		-1.06 (1.58)		-0.05** (2.57)
Prosecutor offices	0.72 (0.55)	1.14 (0.89)	-0.02 (0.55)	-0.00 (0.10)
Drug-related murder rate	0.27*** (3.80)	0.27*** (3.79)	0.06*** (8.85)	0.06*** (8.84)
Fiscal revenue	0.03** (2.17)	0.03** (2.18)	0.00* (1.87)	0.00* (1.82)
Mun. alternation	-0.04 (0.24)	-0.04 (0.26)	-0.00 (0.82)	-0.00 (0.81)
St. alternation	-0.08 (0.39)	-0.08 (0.37)	0.00 (0.17)	0.00 (0.10)
Mun. electoral competition	-0.48*** (3.57)	-0.49*** (3.63)	-0.01*** (3.41)	-0.01*** (3.45)
St. electoral competition	0.73*** (2.60)	0.74*** (2.64)	0.02*** (2.76)	0.02*** (2.81)
Method	NBREG	NBREG	OLS	OLS
Kleibergen-Paap F-stat	44.20	44.20	44.20	44.20
Number of regions	1753	1753	1753	1753
Number of observations	8789	8789	8789	8789

Discussion

- **Foreign aid increases the prevalence of targeted violence.**
- **Politics of foreign aid** (e.g. Jablonski 2014, Ahmed 2012, Guiteras and Mobarak 2015, Cruz and Schneider 2017, Baldwin and Winters 2020; Dietrich et al 2018).
- **Foreign aid and conflict** (e.g. Azam 1995, Grossman 1992, Arcand and Chauvet 2001, Besley and Persson 2011, Collier 2004, Regan and Norton 2005, Dreher and Kreibbaum 2016, Hunziker and Cederman 2017).
- **Election violence** (e.g., Robinson and Torvik 2009, Collier and Vicente 2012, Acemoglu et al. 2013, Hafner-Burton et al. 2014, Staniland 2014, Daniele and Geys 2015, Daniele and Dipoppa 2017, Rauschenbach and Paula 2019, Fjelde 2020, Birch et al. 2020, Birch 2020, Wahman and Goldring 2020, Trejo and Ley 2021).

Thank you!