

Chinese Aid and Africa's Pariah States

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Abstract: Chinese aid to Africa has been increasing, and is intentionally distinct from other ‘traditional’ (Western) donors due to its ‘non-interference policy’. China claims to avoid imposing political views, ideals, or principles onto recipient countries – reflected in the ‘unconditional’ nature of its support, making aid flows more fungible, with their use to be determined by regimes. How do these aid flows support state use of force and violent challengers' attraction to the state? Using newly available data mapping Chinese aid flows in Africa (Strange et al. 2014), the relationship between Chinese aid and political violence in Africa is investigated. Findings suggest political violence by the state increases with receipt of Chinese aid, compared to ‘traditional’ aid flows. ‘Traditional’ aid flows may impact conflict through fueling rebellion – making the ‘prize’ of rebellion more attractive to insurgents – but Chinese aid impacts conflict through promoting state repression. These effects are not a function of specific recipient characteristics making them more prone to violence (i.e., regime type, resource dependence, civil war, etc.) Though China isn’t specifically giving aid to ‘pariah states’, it is making states into pariahs through providing resources to state leaders who are unafraid to use repression as a means to quell competition.

As one of the continent's largest commercial partners, China exerts a great impact on African economies. Partnerships continue to develop as China increases its economic expansion in Sub-Saharan Africa (Adisu, Sharkey, and Okoroafo 2010; Kaplinsky, McCormick, and Morris 2007). China is also a significant aid donor across African states, with aggregated aid packages accounting for, on average, 10% of overall annual African aid since 2000. As its influence continues to grow, a persistent question has emerged amongst donors, academic and policy communities due to the perceived lack of 'conditionality' that characterizes Chinese support: will Chinese aid result in higher levels of political violence in Sub-Saharan Africa? If so, what types of violence are likely to emerge, at what level of intensity, and for what reasons? We address Chinese aid patterns and address questions on conflict risk below.

China is often accused of providing 'rogue aid' by entering into donor relationships with states with records of significant human rights abuses (Naim 2009). Scenes of African leaders courting China while being condemned by the West further upset traditional donors (e.g. Zimbabwean President Mugabe's visit to Beijing,¹ and Kenyan President Kenyatta's warm reception in 2014). The most significant difference between Chinese and more 'traditional' aid is that the latter often includes recipient conditions for disbursement including democratization, human rights adherence, transparency, and anti-corruption measures. Critics charge that China's motives are primarily resource extraction, and that China is using unconditional aid in exchange for favorable access. To such critics, China's aid packages provide funding for pariah states, yet also diminish the longer-term benefits from aid conditions that have been cultivated by traditional donors. China's relationship with other donor states is also marred by negative allegations regarding its own domestic policy. By cultivating closer ties with states accused of poor human rights records, China intends to bolster its league of international defenders through 'buying' support and sympathizers (Samy 2010).

However, recent research suggests that Chinese aid is not directed towards pariah cases, and that institutional quality or type has no bearing on its choices (Dreher and Fuchs 2011). Hence, acknowledged pariah status is not a pre-requisite for large Chinese aid packages. China chooses to send aid to many different institutional contexts: Ghana and South Africa receive some of the largest shares of Chinese aid, as do Sudan and Zimbabwe. Indeed, only Burkina Faso, Swaziland and the Gambia² did not receive Chinese aid from 2000-2011, owing to their stance in support of Taiwan.

¹ Upon his return from China, President Mugabe reportedly explained that he preferred Chinese aid as China does not insist that he 'support homosexuality' in order to access it (Thornycroft 2014).

² As of 2013, however, the Gambia has severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan (Al Jazeera 2013).

China insists that relationships with African states are forged for mutual benefit, and it emphatically does not seek to influence the domestic politics of recipient states. It refers to this principle as a ‘non-interference’ practice. Chinese donors have varied agendas that do not conform to mandates around institutional change (Dreher and Fuchs 2011). These agendas include accessing resources, creating new markets, and building international coalitions through creating closer ties with non-Western states, such as those in Africa (Tull 2006; Adisu et al. 2010); their aid packages reflect those interests and are intended to foster ‘mutual benefits’.

What role donors should play in fostering or supporting institutional change is an ongoing debate. Western donors spend significantly more in ‘good’ country cases in order to promote ongoing institutional change, compared to aid sent to countries with military dictatorships or rampant corruption. Accepting conditions for necessary change – and evidence of successful change – may be the minimum entry standard to access aid from traditional donors. Yet these changes often constitute a raised and inaccessible bar for African states. African leaders have often complained of the strict conditions and ‘interference’ found in Western aid packages, and appear to appreciate the lack of ulterior motives found in China’s distribution. Due to the lack of obvious conditionality, African leaders can use Chinese aid in the ways they see fit and suited to their political, economic, and social needs. In practice, Chinese aid directly supports the regimes of states.

In this article, we address the effects of Chinese aid on subsequent conflict rates within states. We do so through testing whether domestic, political violence rates by governments are affected by aid flows, and specifically addressing whether states that receive high rates of Chinese aid actively engage in more violence against their citizens and domestic opponents relative to states with more traditional aid profiles.

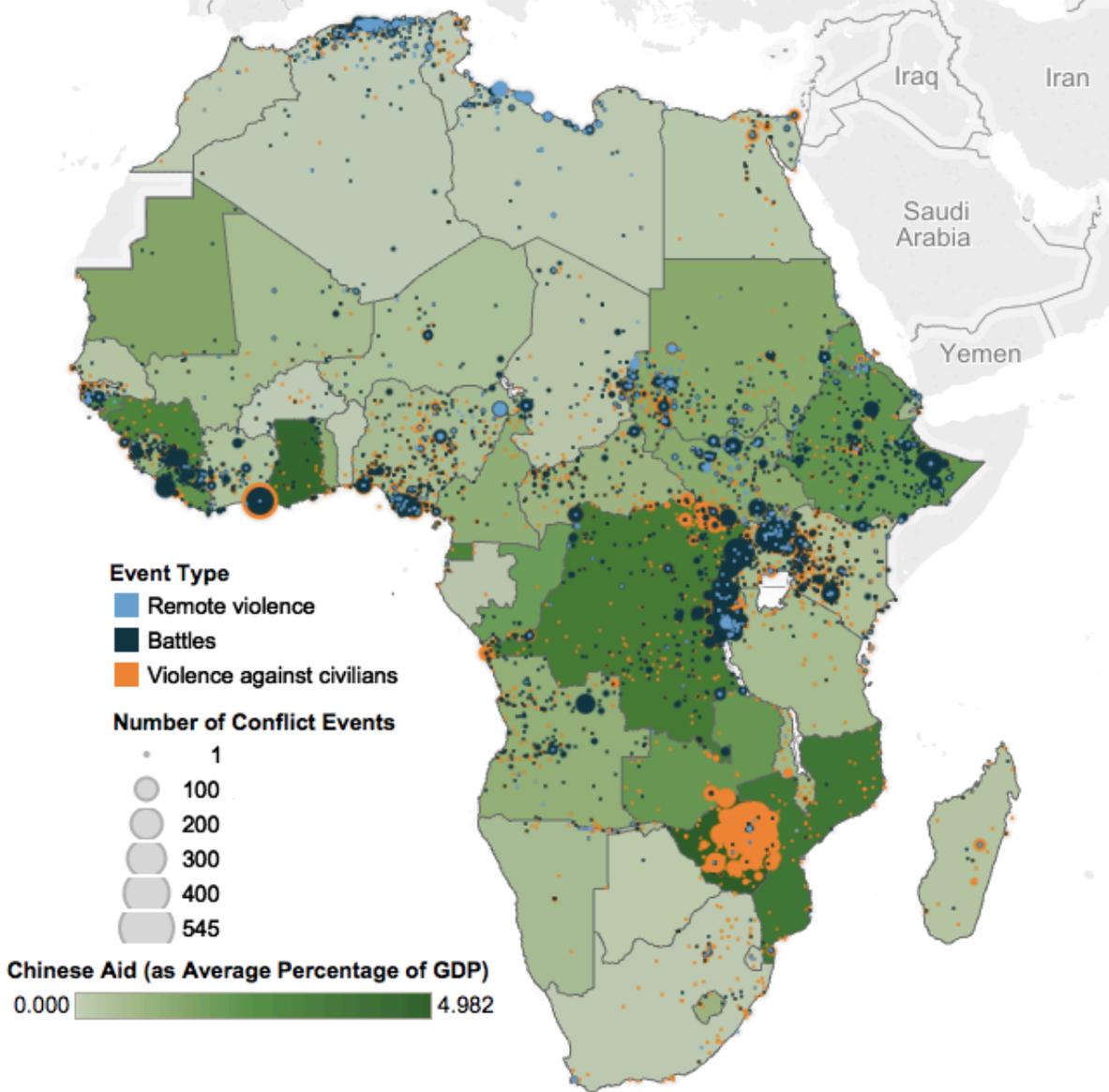
As Chinese aid is characterized by overt regime support, we contend that traditional explanations linking aid and violence would be even more relevant in cases where large and growing proportions of aid packages come without conditionality. Such funds should increase the attractiveness of holding state to opponents. We also suggest Chinese aid may influence political violence through bolstering the capacity of the central state to engage in repressive violence against competitors and civilians, in order to secure the regime’s dominance.

This article proceeds as follows: we begin by reviewing the relationship between aid and violence, and the mechanisms through which increased political violence is related to aid and changes in aid amounts. We then consider the similarities and differences between Chinese and traditional aid to African states, with a

focus on illustrating how aid from different donors may be used domestically. We then compare the rates of political violence, and distinguish between violence by the state, by non-state actors, and violence against civilians. Our period of interest is from 2000-2011, and this study is facilitated by new information on Chinese aid flows in Africa provided by AidData (Strange, Parks, Tierney, Fuchs, Dreher, and Ramachandran 2013).

Figure 1. Chinese Aid and Armed Conflict in Africa, 2000-2011

Chinese Aid and Armed Conflict in Africa, 2000-2011



We find that Chinese aid packages are correlated with significantly higher rates of violence by states, both against competitors and against civilians (see Figure 1). The effects of state violence against armed competitors and state violence against civilians are evident only when aid is from Chinese donors, when compared with aid flows from traditional donors and controlling for rates of resource exports and rule of law. We surmise this effect is due to the lack of conditionality, and high fungibility, associated with higher rates of Chinese aid. Hence, the effects of political violence should hold for any bilateral aid that comes without conditions as to its use. If the state has complete control over its budget, it will use its position to bolster its capacity to repress any potential opposition in order to secure its position. The final section concludes.

Links Between Aid and Political Violence

Research linking aid flows to political violence in recipient states suggests that high levels of foreign aid in recipient states increases the occurrence of civil war through its allocative and distributive effects (Grossman 1992). Using case studies of Sierra Leone, Angola and Mozambique, Findley, Powell, Strandow, and Tanner (2011) find that conflict is drawn to recipient states where fungible aid³ distribution is highest, and that civil wars within such states tend to occur in peripheral areas where distribution-related grievances are highest. Further case studies suggest that the Rwandan genocide (Uvin 1998) and the Kenyan 2007-2008 election violence (Wrong 2010) were ‘fueled’ by international aid.

Yet, De Ree and Nillesen (2009) find that aid reduces the duration of active civil conflicts, and exerts no effect on civil war onset rates; these findings are supported by Savun and Tirone (2011) for aid targeted towards democratic reform.

Some research has demonstrated that particular forms of aid affect conflict rates: Nunn and Qian (2014) find food aid increases the rate of civil conflict incidences, onset and duration, but when accounting for political contexts, this relationship is not evident (Huth and Backer 2014). Savun and Tirone (2012) argue that aid following economic shocks can decrease the risk of civil war onset, when countries are most vulnerable to political instability.

³ ‘Fungible’ aid refers to amounts that are not allocated directly to programs. The definition used by Findley et al. states that these flows relate to “money originally intended for development purposes but that can easily diverted to other purposes” (2011:1998). In other parlance, these are ‘state rents’.

The debate surrounding the utility and unintended consequences of aid has advanced from studies focusing on bilateral aid flows in Africa from traditional (i.e. Western) donors and a concentration on the onset or duration of civil war specifically. However, while the influence and amounts of aid may increase the attraction of the state to rebel competitors (Collier and Hoeffler 2002), it is equally plausible that bilateral aid increases the capacity of the state to repress competitors and civilian populations who may oppose the regime. The effect of aid on the presence of competitors and state opponents should be equally evident in and outside of civil war periods. Expanding on how the state may use aid to suppress opponents is largely understudied, as research has often focused on ‘rent capture’ arguments.

This increase in capacity and ability to repress should be especially evident when states can determine how aid is spent. Aid designed to support the state (i.e., aid intended for ‘statebuilding’, ‘institution building support’, or for public goods distribution) may directly impact the ability of a regime to control territory and manage internal violence effectively, while bolstering the dominance of the central state. The proposed linkages between aid distribution and conflict is hence partially explained by how aid is used. In former studies, bilateral aid functions as ‘state rent’, and ‘fungible’ aid can be reallocated based on the needs of the regime (for example, see Findley et al. 2011). The hoarding of aid benefits in select areas and communities, and the presumed use of aid to support regimes’ patronage networks (for example, see Mwenda and Tangri 2005), underlies the argument that state rents are attractive to potential rebels who seek to replace regimes through violence.

Aid from different donors may influence the extent to, and ease with which, the state is able to determine aid distribution and secure its regime, as a function of the degree of conditionalities imposed by differing donors. Both the role of state violence more generally in response to aid, as well as the varying effect of aid from different donors, is yet to be interrogated in this literature and is examined here.

Chinese Aid

The international community often enforces constraints on governments to whom they give funds. One clear example is how Western donors began to enforce democratic reforms during and after the Cold War period; this ‘condition’ was largely regarded as effective in cultivating institutional reform (Dunning 2004; Goldsmith 2001). Despite the focus on how bilateral aid ‘forced’ or ‘encouraged’ democratic reforms at the end of the Cold War, there is little research that assesses the empirical results of aid conditions on positive governance changes within African states. Crawford (1997) notes that the general consensus after the Cold War is that aid conditions and restrictions were largely ineffective in contributing to meaningful political reforms in recipient countries, due to the weakness of imposed conditional measures rather than

by the strength of the recipient governments. In response to the aid quagmire, evidence of ‘good governance’ has become a precondition – rather than a goal – for particular Western aid packages, especially those emanating from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the United States (Nanda 2006). While there are few agreed upon indicators of ‘good governance’, the evidence of poor governance is well documented: De Maria (2008) reports that corruption costs African economies more than US 148 billion dollars a year.

Yet, the symbolic or economic effect of donor conditions or preconditions for accessing aid are stated reasons why Chinese aid is positively regarded across Africa (Economy and Monaghan 2006). In contrast to traditional donors, China practices a clear ‘non-interference’ policy with regard to its aid program – not requiring any specific governance conditions in order to receive aid. China’s recent history with Africa suggests that the aid relationship stems from a ‘South-South’ movement (Adisu et al. 2010:3); China’s early support surrounding independence displayed its “opposition to colonialism and imperialism” (Davies, Edinger, Tay, and Naidu 2008; Qiang 2007; Samy, 2010:78; Taylor 1998). More recently, China entered a ‘pragmatic’ period wherein China focused on domestic market-orientated reforms and its aid to Africa increased in line with ‘buying’ the support of international sympathizers (Samy 2010). During this period, support from the Chinese government allowed Chinese construction, mining, and oil extraction companies to move into African countries (Adisu et al. 2010; Broadman 2007; Mohan and Kale 2007). Since the turn of the century, with the establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), China’s aid behavior expanded beyond project-based aid, to include debt cancellation, technical co-operation, humanitarian aid, and training of personnel (Samy 2010). Yet, China’s domestic development strategy also plays an important role in shaping policy towards Africa (Adisu et al. 2010; Zweig and Jianhai 2005). Further, while Western donors tend to develop country assistance strategies, China’s aid programs are based on high-level discussions, which has the effect of feeding ‘prestige’ products and/or patronage flows, since it is not tied to specific outcomes to the degree other donors are (Brautigam 2011).

Chinese aid is therefore intentionally distinct from other donors. While the ‘Washington consensus’ may be seen as “a neo-liberal paradigm that takes into consideration democracy, good governance, and poverty reduction” (Adisu et al. 2010:4; Fine and Jomo 2005; Sautman and Hairong 2007), the ‘Beijing consensus’ “values the political and international relations concept of multilateralism, consensus and peaceful co-existence” (Adisu et al. 2010:4; Wenping 2007). Chinese emphasis on ‘South-South’ relations includes a ‘respect for sovereignty’, which is practiced as ‘non-interference’: “China is not imposing its political views, ideals nor principles onto recipient countries” (Davies et al. 2008:57). Examples of such a

policy in action include the Chinese government's silence on the role of the Sudanese government in Darfur, especially when indicating, "it was not interested in issues beyond its own economic interests" (Samy 2010:85).

Commonalities do exist between the 'Beijing' and 'Washington' consensuses. Aid is delivered in similar ways – including project support, technical assistance, food aid, debt relief, humanitarian assistance – and Chinese principles emphasize ownership, alignment with country priorities, and results – similar to the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (Brautigam 2011:9).

All donors give aid for a variety of reasons, not least important of which are political and strategic incentives (see Alesina and Dollar 2000; Berthelemy and Tichit 2004). Understanding donor intent in aid allocation is important, especially when ultimately interested in notions of aid efficacy. In comparison to other international donors, Chinese flows are smaller, and economic and commercial considerations are priorities (Dreher and Fuchs 2011). China's intention concerns energy security, new market and investment opportunities, symbolic diplomacy and development, and forging strategic partnerships – as well as seeking support of its 'one China' policy (Adisu et al. 2010; Alden 2005). China's need for natural resources to sustain economic growth remains imperative, and African countries (such as Angola, Congo, Nigeria, and Sudan) can offer long-term energy solutions for China (Samy 2010).⁴

While this aid can be beneficial to African countries through providing them with access to revenue, the danger of reinforcing resource dependent economies remains high (Samy 2010). As the Chinese seek to promote economic growth and their foreign policy interests, the threat of resource dependence is counter to their 'no strings attached' model (Adisu et al. 2010; Zafar 2007). As is commonly reported but countered by where Chinese support goes, China's objective is not solely access to resources (e.g., oil, bauxite), but to develop new markets through trade and investment (Adisu et al. 2010; Samy 2010).

African leaders and communities have a mixed reception to China as a main donor (Samy 2010:75). African leaders see Chinese aid in a largely positive light, citing "a new approach to development and increased potential for meaningful South–South cooperation" (Samy 2010:75) and "China as the ideal model for their countries and economies" (Adisu et al. 2010:7). This may be because the 'Chinese' model allows leaders to maintain a strong grip on political power (Brooks and Shin 2006). However, African

⁴ China does much to protect its access to oil and natural resources as well. For example, China has been seen transferring weapons to South Sudan in recent months, in part to protect South Sudan's oil infrastructure in which China heavily invests (Dörrie 2015).

civil society has warned of a growing neo-colonial relationship (De Lorenzo 2007; Samy 2010:86) and remains cautious and worried about “the possible negative repercussions on governance, the environment, human rights and overall economic development” (Samy 2010:75).

For African states, Chinese aid is an attractive source of funding because it allows for continued growth on a sustainable basis, relative to ‘traditional’ donor aid, which can be volatile and burdened with numerous conditions; Chinese aid surmounts the problems of aid volatility and unpredictability (Samy 2010). In general, the main benefit of Chinese aid is the ‘no strings attached’ model allowing support of initiatives not solved by Western investment, and the resulting lack of emphasis on meetings, reports, etc. which burden the overstretched capacities of many African states (Adisu et al. 2010:4; Brautigam 2011; Sautman and Hairong 2007). Chinese aid efforts have brought significant and needed improvements. It has assisted in creating relatively high economic growth in Africa, canceling debt, and building infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, dams); the Chinese have also built health and educational capacity through student exchanges in universities and training centers (Adisu et al. 2010).

There are arguably, however, a number of development drawbacks to Chinese aid. Some have claimed that the Chinese aid model has negatively impacted local African trade, commerce and labour. Increased competition has also been harmful to African enterprises and exports, both in internal markets for domestically oriented manufacturers as well as in external markets (Adisu et al. 2010; Alden 2005). Additionally, Chinese environmental and social standards have been cited as potentially problematic for Africa (Moss and Rose 2006; Samy 2010). ‘Traditional’ donors have arguably been more sensitive to social and cultural differences as well as power relations in Africa; China often “depend[s] on local governments to sort these things out,” which means they often are not resolved (Brautigam 2009; 2011:10).

More fundamental is its possible effects on political violence; multiple authors suggest that Chinese aid policies have propped up dictatorships and tyranny, citing Sudan, Chad, and Zimbabwe as examples (Askouri 2007; Samy 2010), especially as Chinese aid is easier to direct towards areas of a leader’s choosing, regardless of need (Dreher, Fuchs, Hodler, Parks, Raschky, and Tierney 2014). The traditional donor alliances in imposing economic and political conditions on recipients are actively undermined by Chinese aid unconditionality (Brautigam 2011). Some contend that this lack of conditionality has “emboldened the governments to limit their progress towards political and economic reform” (Adisu et al. 2010:5). Yet, given the win-win relationship between the Chinese and (especially authoritarian) African leaders, the Sino-African relationship is likely to endure.

The Effects of Chinese Aid on Conflict

Is there a clear difference in government behavior when the treatment of Chinese aid is applied to states? And if so, are the lack of pre-conditions the reason that Chinese aid may exert a positive impact on political violence? State leaders can use aid packages to bolster the capacity of the central regime; China's clear practice of promoting a 'pro-regime' stance allows for this. Yet, the relationship to higher state violence in countries with significant Chinese aid may be a function of the countries to which China gives aid: some evidence suggests that China chooses 'pariah cases' as recipients, and those with significant resources (and hence higher likelihoods of autocratic or corrupt rule) (Naim 2009). Yet Dreher and Fuchs (2011) do not find that China's pre-condition for aid is a history of 'bad governance'; indeed, there is no standard institutional form that China supports more than others.

We test whether, in line with previous studies, Chinese aid increases levels of all armed political violence, and specifically consider whether Chinese aid disproportionately increases state violence in comparison to other aid, as governments can use these monies to funnel into their military and paramilitary forces to 'assist' in repression. Furthermore, with higher levels of Chinese aid, governments will engage in more violent actions against both competitors and civilians. These avenues for increased violence are tested to differentiate between contexts where China may invest and assist more – such as those with resources for China's consumption, and cases where the mechanism of non-conditionality allow for states to use aid where they see fit. This is a key distinction: while a resource wealthy state – such as Sudan – may receive Chinese aid, we are interested in isolating how increases in the proportion of money received from China allows the state to be more pronounced in their use of repression and violence to reinforce the strength of the state relative to opponents and civilians. By testing this relationship at the state level, we suggest that the recipient state will make choices about how to distribute its aid in line with challenges and opportunities throughout its territory. There is no presumption that China would direct the subnational distribution or concentration of aid in a specific way to impact the location or target of increased violence; rather, it is assumed that aid to bolster the capacity of the state without conditions will likely result in increased violence against challengers.

This leads to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Chinese aid will lead to an increase in all levels of armed violence relative to aid from traditional donors.

Hypothesis 2A: Chinese aid will lead to an increase in all state violence specifically relative to aid from traditional donors.

Hypothesis 2B: Chinese aid will lead to an increase in state violence against civilians relative to aid from traditional donors.

Hypothesis 2C: Chinese aid will lead to an increase in state violence against armed competitors relative to aid from traditional donors.

Research Design

To test for the differences between Chinese and typical aid (Official Development Assistance, or ODA) flows, AidData recently released data on Chinese project aid to African states from 2000 to 2011 (Strange et al. 2013). These data represent a new frontier in aid studies, and capture ODA-like flows based on origin, intent, and recipient. Data are aggregated by country-year for all states in Africa, resulting in 757 units for analysis, across 48 countries. A ‘Chinese Aid Proportion’ variable is created to capture the amount of annual aid by China to a state as a proportion of each state’s annual GDP in a given year to capture the relative influence of the different flow amounts (see Table 1 for further information on variables).

Information on armed, organized conflict events is from ACLED – the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data program (Raleigh, Linke, Hegre, and Karlsen 2010). ACLED collects information on a range of political violence, mainly reported by media sources, and distinguished by event characteristics, type of group(s) participating, with geolocation information and date.⁵ These data are available from 1997 into real-time. Information from 1999-2012 are integrated into this analysis.

From the ACLED project, we extract violent events involving organized, armed participants⁶ (e.g. rebels, state forces, political militias, communal militias, external forces) and attacks of civilians, distinguishing by who attacked. We aggregate occurrence counts and the number of distinct armed agents engaged in violent activities by year.⁷ A lagged count of organized, armed events in total is included, as is a spatial lag

⁵ Extensive information regarding ACLED’s methodology and practices can be found at Acleddata.com/methodology

⁶ ACLED interaction codes are used to distinguish events based on actors involved. For all violent ‘state’ events against organized opposition, interactions codes 11, 12, 13, 14 and 18 are aggregated. For all state violence against civilians, entries with interaction code 17 are used. For all violent ‘rebel’ events, interactions with ‘2’ are compiled; for those acts by rebels specifically against civilians, events with code 27 are used.

⁷ We exclude ‘unidentified’ armed agents from this final count of total agents.

Table 1. List of Variables and Details

Variable	Description	Coverage	Mean/SD	Range	Source
<i>Chinese Aid Flows</i>	Total amount of Chinese aid received by a state in a given year (logged)	2000-2011	17.20 (2.27)	9.11-22.68	AidData; Strange et al. 2013
<i>Proportion Chinese Aid Flows</i>	Total amount of Chinese aid received by a state in a given year as a proportion of GDP	2000-2011	0.08% (0.23%)	0-36%	AidData; Strange et al. 2013
<i>ODA Flows</i>	Total amount of non-Chinese aid (ODA) received by a state in a given year (logged)	1960-2012	19.57 (1.26)	15.2-23.15	AidData; Tierney et al. 2011
<i>Proportion ODA Flows</i>	Total amount of non-Chinese aid (ODA) received by a state in a given year as a proportion of GDP	1960-2012	0.12% (0.17%)	0-147%*	AidData; Tierney et al. 2011
<i>GDP</i>	Annual gross domestic product of a state in a given year (logged)	1960-2013	22.68 (1.53)	19.14-26.98	World Bank Indicators
<i>Democracy</i>	Dummy variable capturing states with a Polity score of 6 or higher	1997-2013	No Dem: 545 Dem: 288 (35%)	0-1	Polity Project; Marshall and Jagger 2002
<i>Autocracy</i>	Dummy variable capturing states with a Polity score of -5 or lower	1997-2013	No Auto: 735 Auto: 147 (17%)	0-1	Polity Project; Marshall and Jagger 2002
<i>Population</i>	Total population of a state in a given year (logged)	1960-2013	16.04 (1.25)	13.06-19.97	World Bank Indicators
<i>Prior Armed Conflict</i>	Number of organized, armed conflict events that occurred in a given state in the previous year	1997-2015	77 (209)	0-2791	ACLED; Raleigh et al. 2010
<i>Prior Bordering Conflict</i>	Spatial lag variable capturing number of organized, armed conflict events that occurred in bordering states in the previous year	1997-2015	324 (431)	0-4334	ACLED; Raleigh et al. 2010
<i>Natural Resource Exports</i>	Natural resource rents (i.e., sum of oil, natural gas, coal [hard and soft], mineral, and forest rents) of a state in a given year as a proportion of GDP	1998-2010	16.72% (18.34%)	0-100%	World Bank Development Indicators

* In 2008 and 2010, Liberia received a larger amount of non-Chinese aid (ODA) than its GDP (ODA was 147% the size of GDP in 2008, and 110% the size of GDP in 2010).

<i>Natural Resource Dependence</i>	Dummy variable capturing states with high levels of resource dependence (over 17% of a state's GDP being comprised of natural resource rents)	1997-2014	Not Res Dep: 459 Res Dep: 423 (48%)	0-1	World Bank Development Indicators
<i>Rule of Law</i>	"Captures perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence"	1998, 2000, 2002-2012	1.93 (.611)	.03-3.68	World Governance Indicators
<i>Armed Conflict Events</i>	Number of organized, armed conflict events that occurred in a given state in a given year	1997-2015	77 (209)	0-2791	ACLED; Raleigh et al. 2010
<i>State Conflict Events</i>	Number of organized, armed conflict events involving state forces that occurred in a given state in a given year	1997-2015	36 (104)	0-1286	ACLED; Raleigh et al. 2010
<i>State Violence Against Civilians</i>	Number of instances of violence against civilians perpetrated by state forces that occurred in a given state in a given year	1997-2015	6 (15)	0-200	ACLED; Raleigh et al. 2010
<i>State Battles Against Competitors</i>	Number of conflict battles involving state forces that occurred in a given state in a given year	1997-2015	30 (97)	0-1210	ACLED; Raleigh et al. 2010
<i>Rebel Conflict Events</i>	Number of conflict battles involving rebel groups (i.e., groups wanting to overthrow the state/regime) that occurred in a given state in a given year	1997-2015	29 (102)	0-1285	ACLED; Raleigh et al. 2010
<i>Number of Armed Actors Against the State</i>	Number of groups (i.e., rebel groups, political and communal militias) involved in organized, armed conflict against state forces that occurred in a given state in a given year	1997-2015	3 (4)	0-47	ACLED; Raleigh et al. 2010
<i>Civil War</i>	Dummy variable capturing the occurrence of a battle between state forces and a rebel group (i.e., a group wanting to overthrow the state/regime) in a given state in a given year	1997-2015	No Civil War: 661 Civil War: 172 (21%)	0-1	ACLED; Raleigh et al. 2010

variable measuring the number of organized, armed events occurring the previous year in bordering African states.⁸ Additionally, a dummy variable for whether a state was engaged in a domestic civil war was also included; this indicator is based on whether a majority of politically violent events are between state and rebel forces. We use several actor types in order to distinguish the goals of challengers relative to that of the state. The typical study of aid and ‘rent capture’ in conflict concentrates on civil wars. We isolate rebels in this study to consider the effects of Chinese aid on groups with a goal of state capture. Other armed, organized, violent groups – such as militias – are also considered as they now represent the most common form of conflict agent presently operating across Africa (Raleigh 2015). These groups are often supported and directed by political elites who seek to influence the distribution of power and state rents, without replacing the state. Political parties, state governors, traditional authorities, business leaders, etc. may engage militias to pressure other groups or the state, and therefore present a challenge for governments who seek a monopoly on violence. It is plausible that these non-state groups are most affected by the receipt of Chinese aid, as it builds the capacity of states to repress and eliminate challengers.

To those data, we join information on: AidData’s annual ODA totals from non-Chinese (i.e. ‘traditional’) sources (Tierney, Nielson, Hawkins, Roberts, Findley, Powers, Parks, Wilson, and Hicks 2011); annual GDP (to determine the proportions of Chinese versus ‘traditional’ aid sources to state GDP) and population counts (The World Bank 2015); and a ‘democratizing’ variable to consider whether a state has an annual Polity score above or equal to 6 (Marshall and Jaggers 2002). Aid totals, GDP, and population counts are logged to account for extreme values.

In order to test whether Chinese aid disproportionately goes to specific states, we first account for whether a high natural resource rate or specific indicators of governance impact where Chinese aid goes (relative to ‘traditional’ aid). A dummy variable was created to account for states with a higher than average natural resource dependence (i.e. if over 17% of a state’s GDP is comprised of natural resource exports –

⁸ For a robustness check, other spatial lag variables were also used here – e.g., number of all conflict events in bordering states the previous year, the number of civil wars (e.g., state forces versus rebel groups trying to overthrow the regime) occurring in bordering states the previous year, a dummy variable for whether or not a civil war occurred in a bordering state the previous year. Results held regardless of which version of the spatial lag variable was used.

the average seen in the dataset – it is categorized as ‘high’ dependence) (The World Bank 2015.⁹ Information on political institutions and quality are from the Worldwide Governance Indicators (Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi 2013); these tests use the ‘rule of law’ indicator, and are altered to range from 0-5 from its original state of -2.5 to +2.5. Again, see Table 1 for further information on variables.

All violence hypotheses are tested with negative binomial models with random effects.¹⁰ An initial test of whether Chinese aid is disproportionately distributed to ‘pariah’ or resource dependent economies (i.e., whether these states receive a larger rate of Chinese aid relative to their GDP’s) uses an ordinary least squares model with random effects.

Results

In line with the aid strategies of traditional donors, promoting ‘good governance’ and development, we find that being a democratic state and displaying strong rule of law results in increases to the proportion of aid received from traditional donors (see Table 2). Though we find a positive relationship between the proportions of a state’s GDP made up of natural resource exports versus Chinese aid, when testing if this relationship holds for states with higher than average natural resource rents, we find no support that China targets these states specifically. Chinese aid is not intended to impact recipient state’s governance or sovereignty. It is primarily intended to benefit China. We find support that states receive a higher proportion of Chinese aid when they exhibit weak rule of law, forging an environment in which Chinese economic initiatives can flourish without barriers. Contrary to notions that Chinese aid is used to actively support autocracies, we find no statistically significant effect that autocratic regimes receive a higher proportion of Chinese aid. The effect of democratizing states on receiving Chinese aid also does not hold across models, suggesting that the institutional framework of recipient states does not drive Chinese aid allocation. This is in line with findings by Dreher and Fuchs (2011).

The results of the count models confirm that there are clear differences in the correlations between traditional and Chinese aid flows (i.e., aid with and without conditions) and conflict rates, specifically in increasing the rate of violent behavior by the state. Table 3 presents the negative binomial model results for the various measures of conflict and violence as shaped by aid flows from various donors.

⁹ Another dummy variable was also created to measure natural resource dependence using what Collier and Hoeffler (2002) regard as excessively high levels of resource dependence (over 30% of a state’s GDP being comprised of natural resource exports) as a robustness check; results hold constant for both variables.

¹⁰ Random effects models over fixed effects models are advised after a Hausmann’s test.

In support of Hypothesis 1, Chinese aid leads to a (higher) increase in all levels of armed violence relative to aid from traditional donors. Model 1 in Table 3 reports a statistically significant and positive relationship between an increase in the proportion of Chinese aid, relative to a state's GDP, and the number of organized, armed conflict events the following year. Model 2 suggests that this effect is absent when solely considering aid from traditional donors.

Table 2. Determinants of Who Receives Aid

	(1) Chinese aid (as proportion of GDP)	(2) Traditional Aid (as proportion of GDP)	(3) Chinese aid (as proportion of GDP)	(4) Traditional Aid (as proportion of GDP)
Natural Resource Exports (as proportion of GDP)	0.000192* (9.97e-05)	0.000423 (0.000412)		
Natural Resource Dependence			-0.0011368 (0.0031606)	0.0093528 (0.0095979)
Population	0.000723 (0.00143)	-0.0125 (0.0100)	0.0004966 (0.0013222)	-0.2040878 (0.014737)
Rule of Law	-0.00713** (0.00345)	0.0289* (0.0152)	-0.0093959** (0.0031564)	0.036071** (0.0156018)
Democracy	0.00680* (0.00412)	0.0333** (0.0136)	0.0062939 (0.0038713)	0.0360477*** (0.0137529)
Autocracy	-0.000934 (0.00486)	-0.00700 (0.0166)	-0.0004876 (0.0044963)	-0.003008 (0.0169609)
Constant	0.00856 (0.0247)	0.226 (0.165)	0.0197529 (0.0222647)	0.3637483 (0.2393188)
Number of Observations	569	566	616	626
Number of Groups	48	48	48	49

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Models 3 through 12 explore Hypotheses 2A, 2B, and 2C, and confirm the conflict inducing relationship between levels of Chinese aid, and increased conflict by the state and the number of armed, organized actors operating against the state. Chinese aid does not influence the likelihood of non-state events. Model 3 confirms Hypothesis 2A: state leaders can use aid packages without conditions to bolster the capacity of the central regime, and the number of armed conflict events involving the state rises in tandem

Table 3. Effect of Aid on Organized, Armed Conflict

	Armed Conflict Events		State Conflict Events		State Violence Against Civilians		State Battles against Competitors		Rebel Conflict Events		Number of Armed Actors against the State	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Chinese Aid (as proportion of GDP)	1.626*		2.908***		1.839*		2.890***		1.226		1.171	
	(0.890)		(0.904)		(1.025)		(1.094)		(1.883)		(0.720)	
Traditional Aid (as proportion of GDP)		0.333		-0.272		-0.360		0.147		0.333		0.302
		(0.246)		(0.270)		(0.329)		(0.283)		(0.329)		(0.278)
Democracy	-0.163	-0.216**	-0.282**	-0.266**	-0.405***	-0.393***	-0.169	-0.204	-0.336*	-0.416**	-0.380***	-0.403***
	(0.100)	(0.101)	(0.115)	(0.117)	(0.140)	(0.141)	(0.137)	(0.138)	(0.184)	(0.184)	(0.110)	(0.111)
Population	0.225***	0.225***	0.230***	0.212***	0.266***	0.260***	0.363***	0.357***	0.430***	0.432***	0.399***	0.416***
	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.051)	(0.052)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.089)	(0.091)	(0.062)	(0.062)
Prior Armed Conflict	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***	0.001***	0.001***
	(1.55e-04)	(1.18e-04)	(1.71e-04)	(1.39e-04)	(2.24e-04)	(1.70e-04)	(1.91e-04)	(1.50e-04)	(2.46e-04)	(1.78e-04)	(1.69e-04)	(1.08e-04)
Prior Bordering Conflict	1.96e-04**	2.45e-04**	2.16e-04**	2.53e-04**	2.45e-04**	2.71e-04**	3.17e-04***	3.42e-04***	1.76e-04	1.61e-04	2.68e-04***	2.55e-04***
	(9.91e-05)	(9.81e-05)	(1.08e-04)	(1.08e-04)	(1.20e-04)	(1.19e-04)	(1.13e-04)	(1.14e-04)	(1.54e-04)	(1.56e-04)	(7.74e-05)	(7.90e-05)
Constant	-4.010***	-4.000***	-4.373***	-4.022***	-4.963***	-4.803***	-7.001***	-6.871***	-8.384***	-8.376***	-4.902***	-5.226***
	(0.776)	(0.786)	(0.826)	(0.850)	(0.926)	(0.957)	(0.953)	(0.977)	(1.470)	(1.513)	(0.984)	(0.979)
Number of Observations	757	770	757	770	757	770	757	770	757	770	757	770
Number of Groups	48	49	48	49	48	49	48	49	48	49	48	49

Standard errors in parentheses

***p<0.001, **p<0.05, *p<0.1

with increasing levels of Chinese aid. Model 4 reports that state conflict events are not affected by traditional aid flows, however, suggesting that using aid money to strengthen the central regime is more difficult with conditional aid flows.

State violence allows a central regime to reinforce its authority by crushing opposition, competitors, and civilians who may support competitors. Model 5 finds support for Hypothesis 2B – that an increase in the proportion of Chinese aid will lead to an increase in instances of violence against civilians by the state; Models 7 through 12 provide evidence in support of Hypothesis 2C: Chinese aid will lead to increases in state violence against armed competitors relative to aid from traditional donors. We find that the number of battles pitting the state against armed competitors (e.g., rebel groups, militias) increases (Model 7) with an increase in the proportion of Chinese aid.¹¹

Model 6 suggests that civilian targeting by the state does not increase with higher levels or proportions of traditional aid flows, again suggesting that the lack of conditions with Chinese aid flows allows states to strengthen their regime through repressing opposition support. Model 8 does not confirm the variation in increased state violence is influenced by traditional aid flows.

The findings of state violence are more significant in light of the lack of influence Chinese or traditional aid exerts on non-state actors and levels of violence. There is neither a statistically significant effect on the number of conflict events involving rebel groups (Model 9) nor on the number of conflict actors taking up arms against the state (Model 11) with an increase in the proportion of Chinese aid. The same is true of traditional aid flows (Models 10 and 12, respectively).

In short, Chinese aid increases the ability of the state to repress domestic competition, opposition and civilians. Compared to traditional aid, the effect is limited to state forces and goals.

Conclusion

Our findings support our hypotheses that Chinese aid impacts conflict in Africa, specifically by increasing the ability of the state to engage in violence. We find a statistically significant and positive effect of Chinese aid flows on state conflict events: an increase in Chinese aid, normalized as a proportion of a state's GDP, leads to increased state violence against civilians and to a larger number of battles between

¹¹ We also find that battles involving the state become more expansive with an increase in the proportion of Chinese aid (i.e., these battles occur in a higher number of locations across a state). See the Appendix for further details regarding this finding.

state forces and competitors. We do not see a similar statistically significant effect when examining ‘traditional’ aid flows. Furthermore, we find no statistically significant support for an effect of Chinese aid flows when rebel behavior is isolated from general political armed violence or considering the number of conflict actors taking up arms against the state (see Table 3).

While the literature on ‘traditional’ aid flows contends that aid impacts conflict through fueling rebellion – making the ‘prize’ of state rents more attractive to insurgents – we find that the effect of Chinese aid is not through the attraction of ‘state capture’. Chinese aid impacts state violence as a function of its unconditionality, which make aid flows highly fungible; it is typically directed towards bolstering the central state, and regimes can use these aid resources to repress competition. This is arguably more difficult to do with ‘traditional’ and conditional aid flows. State violence against challengers and civilians increases as regimes seek to secure their authority. Increased actions against civilians and militias operating throughout the state do not constitute large conflict operations, but these actors overwhelmingly experience repression and abuses by the state. States that receive high and increasing levels of Chinese aid may falter on a democratizing and human rights agenda. Yet, these effects may be both direct and indirect, as states may balance the effects of traditional and Chinese aid in their actions.

Consider the case of Ethiopia: this state has been criticized for human rights abuses and the forced migration of people living in the Eastern area where it intends on developing large infrastructure for solar, wind and water energy projects which will position it as a major power producer. Aid from traditional donors often involves specific conditions on the movement of communities and environmental/social assessments before assistance is forthcoming. Chinese aid does not require that the state report or engage in these activities. As a result, a higher rate of violence against civilians may be reported in areas where the Ethiopian state has directed its Chinese aid over traditional aid packages, even if the aid package was not earmarked for this purpose originally.

Another example is Zimbabwe, which has long upset traditional donors. President Mugabe and his support base in the ZANU-PF political party have long been accused of human rights abuses against opposition supporters, and have engaged in a corrupt land transfer program. In response, Mugabe lambasts Western governments, while he seeks support from alternative donors like the Chinese.

Finally, consider Uganda: when faced with a revolt of traditional donors over scandals relating to the use of aid and legalization outlawing homosexuality, Uganda began to focus more on encouraging Chinese aid.¹²

These cases illustrate two critical components of our argument: China supports many forms of African regimes, and their direct and indirect effects on political violence vary depending on country specific circumstances. Only rarely do we observe an increase in more organized forms of conflict – such as rebel events – in line with Chinese support. Far more often, it is smaller and dispersed events that underscore the need to the state to assert authority and control. States have fewer constraints in engaging in these acts when Chinese (unconditional) aid is forthcoming, over traditional (conditional) aid.

These effects are not a function of specific characteristics of recipient states that may make them more prone to violence: both the political institutions and economic characteristics of states are considered as possible alternative explanations or biased cases. China's agenda of non-interference and unconditionality is confirmed given that Chinese aid targets are not preconditioned by the recipient state. Rather, aid is directed to states where it will produce the most economic and political benefits for the Chinese. This agenda is much more amenable to African leaders who seek to remain in power, especially through repressing competition. The increased appeal of China over 'traditional' donors by African leaders is symbolic of this growing trend and influence of China in the region. Though China isn't specifically giving aid to 'pariah states', it is making states into pariahs through providing resources to state leaders who are not afraid to use repression as a means to quell competition.

¹² Many traditional donors have suggested that bilateral aid will be diverted to NGOs in the wake of the anti-gay legislation (see Richards 2014).

Appendix

Several additional models to test hypotheses and multiple robustness tests performed reinforce the strength of the reported results.

Conflict Locations

Using the number of discrete conflict locations (cities/towns/villages) where conflict occurred during the year tests whether state forces extended their reach of violence over the study period. Locations are distinguished by name and latitude/longitude (with two degrees in detail). The number of battles and the discrete number of battle *locations* are highly correlated.

Appendix Table 1 notes the additional results for Hypothesis 2C: did the state extend its violence in more places due to a high proportion of Chinese aid (Model 1) versus traditional aid (Model 2). The results point to a significant increase in the expansiveness of battles when Chinese aid is significantly large. This same effect is not evident with traditional aid.

Appendix Table 1. Locations of Armed Interactions

	Expansiveness of State Battles	
	(1)	(2)
Chinese Aid (as proportion of GDP)	1.909* (1.017)	
Traditional Aid (as proportion of GDP)		-0.00902 (0.310)
Democracy	-0.281** (0.139)	-0.312** (0.141)
Population	0.339*** (0.0643)	0.342*** (0.0660)
Prior Armed Conflict	0.00209*** (0.000181)	0.00169*** (0.000145)
Constant	-5.980*** (1.063)	-5.968*** (1.099)
Number of Observations	757	770
Number of Groups	48	49

Standard errors in parentheses

***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.1

Alternative Conflict Data

Robustness tests using UCDP-GED data (Sundberg and Mellander 2013) for African states from 2000-2011 are aggregated and tested to determine if alternatively coded conflict information displays similar patterns. ACLED and UCDP-GED differ in significant ways, including what types of conflict are covered, the coverage period, the event unit and the definition of what constitutes an event. This information for ACLED is reviewed here: www.acleddata.com/methodology. When considering events perpetrated by armed and organized groups, the values still differ (see Appendix Figure 1 for a comparison using a subset of years). Additional details regarding the differences between the two datasets are available at: <http://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Dataset-Typology-Overview.pdf>.

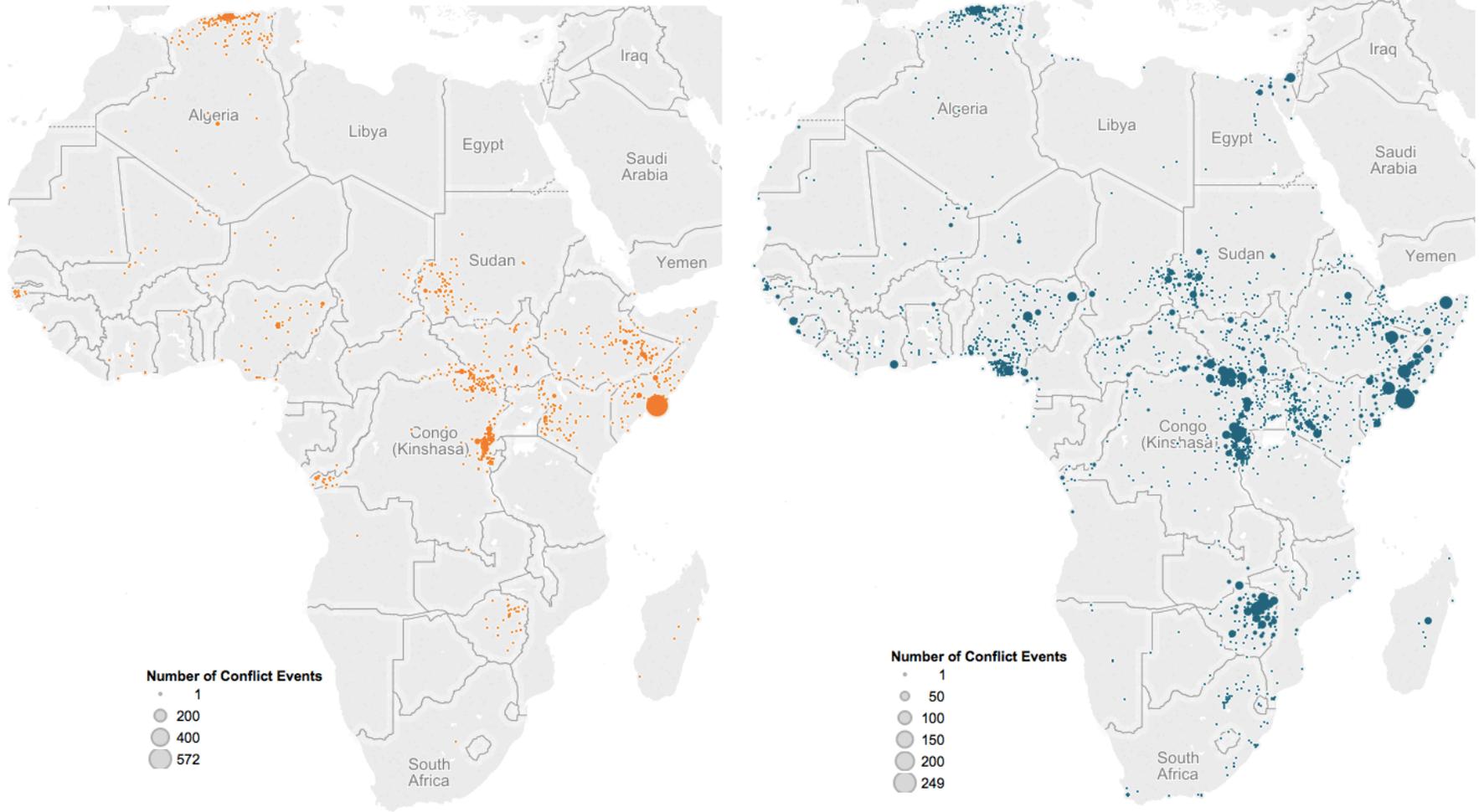
A significant difference between the datasets is the coding of political violence outside of defined ‘civil war’ periods. There are fewer records for states not in an active civil war in the UCDP-GED set. For example, there is less coverage of state violence in Kenya and Zimbabwe, or attacks in Nigeria, Sudan and Ethiopia, under UCDP-GED coding rules.

In addition, ACLED codes events ‘atomically’ meaning that an event (ACLED has 9 types of events) occurs on a specific day in a specific location involving named actors. If a battle extends for more than one day, each day the battle is reported to have occurred is coded separately. Hence, each event has a source that notes the day(s) of an event. UCDP-GED has a number of ‘campaign’ and ‘summary’ events for which a single battle may occur for any number of days (from the beginning to the end point), but it cannot be assumed that the same battle occurred on each day. In fact, UCDP-GED notes that for these types of events there is no exact disaggregated information available; “in other words, it is unclear how many battles took place during the time period specified” (Sundberg, Lindgren, and Padsokocimaite 2010:6). If these campaigns (i.e. conflict events coded for months or more) are artificially disaggregated to mirror ACLED’s atomic modelling, the result is hundreds of assumed events occurring.

The initial point regarding coding in and outside of ‘civil wars’ is evident in the results table below. Appendix Table 2 shows the differences when observations are distinguished by civil war. Due to poor coverage of violent incidences by UCDP-GED outside of civil war periods, only country-years during civil war periods return positive and significant influences of Chinese aid on state violence and the number of armed actors against the state. UCDP-GED mainly records rebel agents, despite a significantly high number of non-state, non-rebels active within and outside of civil war periods.

Appendix Figure 1. Comparison of Organized, Armed Conflict Event Numbers and Locations

Organized Armed Conflict, 2008-2010: UCDP-GED (left) versus ACLED (right)



Appendix Table 2. Effect of Aid on Organized, Armed Conflict: Comparison Models Using UCDP-GED data

	Armed Conflict Events				State Conflict Events				Number of Armed Actors against the State			
	No Civil War		Civil War		No Civil War		Civil War		No Civil War		Civil War	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Chinese Aid (as proportion of GDP)	1.310 (2.910)		2.377 (1.873)		-9.181 (7.642)		3.604** (1.798)		-7.480 (7.295)		2.986** (1.301)	
Traditional Aid (as proportion of GDP)		1.790*** (0.662)		-0.373 (0.331)	-0.321 (0.369)	-0.517 (0.942)		-1.491*** (0.498)		1.279 (1.501)		-0.705* (0.402)
Democracy	-0.436* (0.225)	-0.524** (0.227)	-0.391 (0.297)	-0.452 (0.297)	-0.073 (0.129)	-0.317 (0.368)	-0.247 (0.319)	-0.218 (0.324)	-0.611 (0.429)	-0.625 (0.425)	-0.630* (0.335)	-0.599* (0.323)
Population	0.339*** (0.092)	0.373*** (0.094)	-0.0838 (0.0812)	-0.097 (0.079)	-0.073 (0.129)	-0.060 (0.132)	-0.287** (0.123)	-0.303** (0.121)	-0.055 (0.223)	-0.015 (0.223)	-0.079 (0.117)	-0.066 (0.097)
Prior Armed Conflict	0.018*** (0.003)	0.019*** (0.002)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.021*** (0.004)	0.021*** (0.004)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.022*** (0.005)	0.023*** (0.005)	0.003*** (0.001)	0.003*** (0.001)
Constant	-7.287*** (1.527)	-7.939*** (1.552)	0.410 (1.357)	0.747 (1.342)	-0.841 (2.083)	-1.106 (2.155)	3.804* (2.117)	4.270** (2.103)	16.304 (546.209)	14.800 (504.494)	15.430 (313.802)	16.824 (922.683)
Number of Observations	617	621	140	149	617	621	140	149	617	621	140	149
Number of Groups	45	46	22	23	45	46	22	23	45	46	22	23

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.001, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

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