The Effect of U.S. Officials' Visits on Conflict

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Abstract

This paper examines the effect of the number of visits by U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of State to the country on civil conflict. To achieve our objective, we compile novel variables that indicate the number of official visits from 1960-2017 derived from the historical archives of the U.S. State Department. To deal with potential endogeneity, we introduce novel instrumental variables for the number of official visits variables, namely aviation safety and capital distance. The 2SLS estimations provide evidence that the visits by U.S. officials to the country have a statistically significant positive effect on the onset of conflict. This indicates that the visits by U.S. officials induce the insurgents to engage in armed conflict with the incumbent government that is perceived as a stooge of the United States.

1. Introduction

This paper examines the effect of the number of visits by U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of State to a country on the onset of conflict. In other words, we investigate whether the visits of U.S. officials instigate civil conflict in a country. This is the first attempt in the literature to consider the number of visits by U.S. Officials as a determinant of conflict.

The intuition of this paper is straightforward. The visits of U.S. officials are usually taken as a signal of moral support that the U.S. administration is giving to the country's governing regime against the insurgents, as a way of using the power of the United States to convince the international community of the legitimacy of the regime's cause against its adversaries, and as a chance for the regime to appeal for military support from the United States in terms of armaments procurement and training. Thus, we would expect that the visits by U.S. officials may act as a deterrent for the opposition as they signal the strength of a government that they will not be able to overthrow through an armed conflict.

On the other hand, welcoming a U.S. President or a Secretary of state can instigate conflict if it signals to the dissenters that their government is a stooge that only serves the strategic interests of the United States on the expense of the entire populace, or if the opposition is ideologically opposed to the United States and is willing to engage in conflict with governments friendly to the U.S. Thus, we should expect that the number of visits by U.S. officials to act as catalyst for conflict.

Given that the effect of the number of visits of U.S. officials to the country on conflict is inconclusive, an empirical analysis is warranted. To achieve its objective, the paper uses novel variables that indicate the number of visits by U.S. Presidents or Secretaries of state to the country. These variables are derived from the archives of the U.S. Department of State. The paper examines the effect of these variables on the onset of conflict. However, the key

difficulty in determining a causal effect is the issue of endogeneity. As much as the visits of U.S. officials can affect the likelihood of conflict, it is also possible that the occurrence of conflict in a country can entice U.S. officials to visit the country either to lend their diplomatic support for the government, to conclude agreements on weapon procurement or military training with the friendly government, to mediate between the dissident factions and the government, or to broker a peace accord between the parties embroiled in conflict.

To deal with potential endogeneity, we use novel instrumental variables. For the number of visits by U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of state, we use aviation safety and capital distance as instruments. The first instrument captures the number of aircraft accidents in the country, as U.S. officials are more likely to visit countries with a higher level of aviation safety. The second instrument captures the distance between Washington D.C. and the location of the Presidential residence of a country, as U.S. officials are more likely to visit countries that are closer to their capital.

The Two Stage Least Squares estimations show that the number of visits of U.S. Presidents, the number of visits of Secretaries of state, and the total number of visits of both U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of State have a statistically significant positive effect on the onset of conflict. The results are robust even after the inclusion of control variables and after using alternative samples. The Poisson regression estimation with endogenous regressors also confirms these findings.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: section 2 discusses the literature survey, section 3 includes the description of the data, section 4 includes the empirical estimation and the robustness tests, and section 5 concludes. References, tables and figures are included thereafter.

2. Literature

This paper contributes to the literature on the determinants of conflict. Studies in the literature focus on the effect of factors such as climate variability, abundance of natural wealth, diversity, and democratic governance.

There are several studies that attempt to examine the effect of climate change on conflict. Burke et al. (2015) find that deviations from temperature and precipitation patterns systematically increase the likelihood of conflict, including assault, Killings, demonstrations and civil war. Burke et al. (2013) show that deviations from precipitation and temperature patterns systematically increase the perilous prospect of human conflict, violence and crime, and political instability. Hsiang et al. (2011) argue that planetary-scale climate changes are associated with conflict. The authors also show that the probability of conflict throughout the tropics doubles during El Niño years relative to La Niña years. Miguel et al. (2004) find that lower growth, driven by declines in rainfall, is strongly negatively associated with the likelihood of conflict. In a subsequent article, Miguel and Satyanath (2011) reconfirm their results finding that adverse economic growth shocks, driven by declines in rainfall, increases the likelihood of conflict in sub-Saharan Africa. Iyigun et al. (2017) investigate the effects of cooling on conflict in Europe, North Africa, and the Near East from 1400 C.E.-1900 C.E. The authors show that cooling is associated with increased conflict, and that their estimates are strongest in areas that are suitable for the production of staples.

Other studies found no clear association between climate change and conflict. For instance, Couttenier and Soubeyran (2014) find that rainfall, temperature and drought have no significant effect on conflict, and that countries that are more ethnically fractionalized and are less democratic, are more prone to conflict when hit by a drought than others. Ciccone (2011) argues that as rainfall shocks are transitory, low rainfall growth may reflect negative shocks or mean reversion following positive shocks. The author shows that lower rainfall levels and negative rainfall shocks do not increase the onset and incidence of conflict in sub-Saharan

Africa. In another article, Ciccone (2013) finds that positive rainfall shocks have positive but transitory effect on income. Using rainfall shocks as an instrument for transitory income shocks, the author concludes that negative transitory income shocks reduce the risk of conflict.

There are other studies that examine the effect of natural resource abundance and dependence on conflict. Rohner et al. (2017) find a positive effect of mining on conflict at the local level, that an increase in mineral prices increases the probability of conflict in producing areas, and that countries with less corrupt institutions, and with lower religious fractionalization or polarization, are less affected by mining-induced conflict. Rohner et al. (2015) find that country pairs where only one country has oil near the border are more likely to engage in conflict than country pairs with no oil, or where the oil is very far from the border, or when both countries have oil near the border. Rohner and Morelli (2015) compute an indicator of the unevenness of oil field distribution across ethnic groups, an Oil Gini coefficient. The authors find that this variable has a positive association with conflict, and that conflict is more likely to occur when the group out of power has an ethnic homeland that is abundant in oil. Brunnschweiler and Bulte (2009) find that the ratio of primary exports to Gross Domestic Product does not have a statistically significant effect on conflict, but that conflict increases dependence on resource extraction.

Lei and Michaels (2014) find that giant oilfield discoveries increase the incidence of internal armed conflict especially in countries that had experienced armed conflicts or coups in the decade prior to discovery. Tsui and Cotet (2013) find that the association between oil wealth and the onset of civil war onset disappears once country-specific factors are controlled for, that oil wealth is uncorrelated with coup attempts, and that oil wealth is significantly correlated with defense spending in nondemocratic countries.

Some studies examine the effect of diversity on conflict. Collier and Hoeffler (1998) find that higher ethnolinguistic fractionalization is a significant determinant of the duration and the likelihood of civil wars. The authors also find that the is non-monotonic such that highly heterogeneous societies are no more prone to war than highly homogeneous ones. Collier and Hoeffler (2004) find that ethnic fractionalization is weekly significant while religious fractionalization is insignificant in predicting the outbreak of civil war. Fearon and Laitin (2003) find that countries with high ethnic and religious fractionalization have been no more likely to experience civil violence. Fearon et al. (2007) examine whether countries face a higher likelihood of civil war when the state is controlled by an ethnic minority. The authors find that there is a weak and statistically insignificant tendency for states with ethnic minority leaders to have a higher likelihood of civil war.

Desmet et al. (2017) find that ethnic fractionalization has no predictive power on conflict, and that ethnic divisions matter for conflict and public goods when they are associated with cultural differences across ethnic groups. Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2010) show that ethnically polarized countries have to struggle with longer civil wars. Reynal-Querol (2002) shows that religious polarization is more important as a social cleavage that can develop into civil war than linguistic polarization.

Some studies examine the effect of democratic governance on the likelihood of conflict. For instance, Sunde and Cervellati (2014) find that democratization has an adverse effect on the incidence and the onset of conflict over the control of the government. The authors also find that peaceful transitions to democracy are more likely to decrease the occurrence of conflict and coups, unlike violent transitions ones. Collier and Rohner (2008) show that democracy makes rich countries safer whereas in rich countries, but increases proneness to political violence below an income threshold. Hegre (2014) find that pairs of democratic

states have a lower risk of interstate conflict than other pairs, and hat consolidated democracies have less conflict than semi-democracies.

Our paper's contribution is that it is the first attempt to examine the effects of the number of visits by U.S. officials on conflict. This complements our work on the effect of leader's trips on foreign investment in Kodila-Tedika and Khalifa (2020a), on foreign debt in Kodila-Tedika and Khalifa (2020b), on democracy in Kodila-Tedika and Khalifa (2020c), and on foreign aid in Kodila-Tedika and Khalifa (2020d).

3. Data

The countries included in the analysis are Taiwan, Canada, Liberia, Rwanda, Thailand, Czech Republic, Niger, Belize, USA, Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Costa Rica, Malta, Ethiopia, Lao PDR, Libya, China, Turkey, Mongolia, Latvia, Guatemala, Uruguay, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Greece, Burundi, Tanzania, Portugal, Malawi, Netherlands, Antigua and Barbuda, Macao, Gabon, Nigeria, Cuba, Swaziland, Tunisia, Bermuda, Mozambique, Oman, Bhutan, Nepal, Georgia, Angola, Armenia, Mali, Denmark, Burkina Faso, Papua New Guinea, Venezuela, Uganda, Comoros, Syria, Lebanon, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Equatorial Guinea, Pakistan, Brunei, Kuwait, Algeria, Congo, Bangladesh, Mauritius, Eritrea, Honduras, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Haiti, Suriname, Benin, Germany, Norway, Lesotho, Central African Republic, Bahamas, Azerbaijan, Sao Tome and Principe, Singapore, Yemen, Fiji, Korea, Timor-Leste, Colombia, Albania, Djibouti, Nicaragua, Belarus, Jamaica, Madagascar, Brazil, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ireland, Iran, France, Egypt, Turkmenistan, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Peru, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, New Zealand, Bahrain, Gambia, Zambia, El Salvador, Ukraine, Spain, Croatia, Iraq, Grenada, Jordan, Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Hong Kong, Russia, Belgium, Micronesia, Guinea-Bissau, Iceland, Dominica, Qatar, Luxembourg, Slovak Republic, Indonesia, Macedonia, Austria, Lithuania, Chad, Afghanistan, Slovenia, Tonga, Cameroon, Chile, Poland, Cyprus, Argentina,

Singapore, Romania, Sudan, Israel, Philippines, Ecuador, Barbados, Panama, Palau, Somalia, Seychelles, St. Lucia, Finland, Estonia, Cape Verde, Paraguay, Vanuatu, United Kingdom, Australia, Italy, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, Cambodia, Kiribati, Guatemala, Guinea, Japan. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for all the variables used in the analysis.

The dependent variable in our analysis is an indicator of civil conflict derived from UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, covering the 1960–2017. In this dataset, an armed conflict is defined as "a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a calendar year." We follow Arbatli et al. (forthcoming) in defining conflict as "an internal armed conflict between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition group(s), without any interference from other states as independent actors or intervention from other states to support either side of the conflict." The conflict variable used is the log number of new PRIO25 civil conflict onsets per year during the 1960–2017 time period. The detailed description of the variables is included in Arbatli et al. (forthcoming).

The variables of interest are the number of visits by U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of state to the country, during the period 1960-2017. This data is derived from the Office of the Historian, which is affiliated to the Department of Sate of the United States of America.[1] Figures 1 and 2 show world maps of the number of visits of U.S. Presidents to each country, and the number of visits of U.S. Secretaries of state to each country, respectively.

We include some control variables that are identified by the literature as critical determinants of conflict. The first is the ethnic fractionalization indicator derived from Alesina et al. (2003). Fractionalization measures the probability that two randomly selected

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[1] https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory.

individuals from a country are from different ethnic groups. We also include the average level of the Terrain Ruggedness Index of Nunn and Puga (2012). We use the fraction of years under democracy, defined as the fraction of years during the 1960–2017 time period that a country spent as a democracy and as an autocracy, respectively. We include oil or gas discovery reserve which is a time-invariant dummy for the presence of at least one petroleum (oil or gas) reserve. This variable is derived from Arbatli et al. (forthcoming). We also include a dummy variable indicating if the land is a "small island" or a "very small island" as reported in the World Countries geographical dataset. Finally, we include the level of development measured by Gross Domestic Product per capita, PPP (constant 2011 international $) which is derived from the World Development Indicators.

4. Estimation

4.1. OLS Results

We conduct an empirical estimation of the effect of the number of official visits by U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of state to the country on the onset of conflict during the period 1960-2017. To explore this relationship we use the following equation

$$Conflict_i = \theta + \delta_i OfficialVisits_i + \aleph_i \gamma + \mu_i \quad (1)$$

Conflict$_i$ is our measure of civil conflict in country i. OfficialVisits$_i$ is the number of visits by U.S. Presidents or Secretaries of state to country i. $\aleph_i$ is a vector of control variables and μ_i is the error term. The vector of control variables includes those commonly identified in the literature as determinants of conflict. Thus, we control for the logarithm of GDP per capita as the country's level of economic development is likely to determine the likelihood of conflict. Countries that enjoy higher living standards are less likely to engage in conflict that will cause deterioration in living conditions. We also control for ethnic fractionalization, the fraction of years under democracy and an indicator of oil and gas discoveries. In our literature review, we have identified several studies that concluded that diversity, democratic

governance and the abundance of natural wealth are factors that can determine the likelihood of conflict. The study is a cross-country analysis and applies the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimation technique since our variable of interest is only available in cross-section.

The results are shown in table 2. Columns 1-4 show the OLS and 2SLS estimation results when our variable of interest is the number of visits of U.S. presidents. Columns 5-8 show the OLS and 2SLS estimation results when our variable of interest is the number of visits of Secretaries of state.

The Ordinary Least Squares estimations show that neither the number of visits of U.S. Presidents nor the visits of U.S. Secretaries of state has a significant effect on conflict. This is the case even after the inclusion of the control variables. The OLS results also show that the only significant conflict predictors are the logarithm of GDP per capita and the dummy for oil and gas discovery.

4.2. 2SLS Results

The OLS estimation assumes that the official visits are exogenous to conflict. However, the problem of endogeneity cannot be ignored. First, the association may be spurious due to the failure to account for an unobserved factor which is affecting both the onset of conflict and official visits. Second, as much as the visits of U.S. officials can affect the likelihood of conflict, it is also possible that the occurrence of conflict in a country can entice U.S. officials to visit the country either to lend their support for the government or to mediate between the parties engaged in conflict.

To deal with potential endogeneity, we need a source of exogenous variation in the number of official visits by using an instrumental variable approach. We propose two instrumental variables in our analysis. The first is aviation safety which is the number of aircraft accidents that occurred in the country from 1960 to 2017. We collected the raw data[2]

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[2] https://aviation-safety.net/database/country/.

and aggregated the data for each country. We use another instrument called capital distance, which is the distance in km from Washington D.C. to the official place of presidential residence in every country around the world. We use the site https://www.movable-type.co.uk/scripts/latlong.html for the distance calculations. For reasons of robustness or reliability, we use others site to check the conformity of the calculated distance. These include: https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/gccalc.shtml, and https://gps-coordinates.org/distance-between-coordinates.php.

This identification strategy is based on the intuition that U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of state are more likely to visit countries if the trip is sufficiently safe to undertake, and are more likely to visit countries whose capital cities are closer to that of the United States, which is their place of residence. In this context, the first stage of the Two Stage Least Squares estimation is described as follows

$$OfficialVisits_i = \theta + \delta_i Distance_i + \sigma_i Safety + e_i \qquad (2)$$

Where $Distance_i$ is the distance between the presidential residence in country i and Washington D.C.,while $Safety_i$ is the aviation safety record in country i. Table 2 shows the effect of official visits on conflict, corrected for endogeneity using the instrumental variables. The 2SLS show that the number of visits of U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of state has a statistically significant positive effect on conflict.

Table 3 includes the results considering the summation of the number of visits of U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of state. The first stage of the estimation suggests that the aviation safety instrument is valid, while the capital distance instrument seems to be insignificant. Columns 1 and 2 show the OLS results, while columns 3 and 4 show the 2SLS results. The OLS results show that the coefficient of the total visits by U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of state is insignificant. However, the 2SLS results show that the total visits variable has a statistically significant positive effect.

Table 4 includes the 2SLS results of a sample of Developing countries only. Column 1 includes the effect of the number of visits of U.S. Presidents. Column 2 includes the effect of the number of visits of U.S. Secretaries of State. Column 3 includes the effect of the total number of visits of both U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of State. The results show that all the official visits variables has a statistically significant positive coefficient.

These results imply that these visits of U.S. officials reaffirm the view held by the opposition or by rebels that the incumbent government is a puppet of the United States. This justifies their decision to engage in armed conflict with the regime.

4.3. Poisson Regression

We also conduct a Poisson regression which assumes the conflict variable has a Poisson distribution, and assumes the logarithm of its expected value can be modeled by a linear combination of unknown parameters. A Poisson regression model is sometimes known as a log-linear model. The estimation equation is as follows

$$\log(Conflict_i | X_i) = \theta + \delta_i X_i + \mu_i$$

Where X_i is a vector of independent variables which include the number of visits by U.S. officials. In table 5, we start with a Negative binomial regression which is a generalization of the Poisson regression as it loosens the highly restrictive assumption of the Poisson model that the variance is equal to the mean. Columns 1-3 of table 5 include the results of the Negative binomial regression which show that the three visits variables have insignificant coefficients.

To address the issue of endoegeneity, we estimate a Poisson regression with endogenous regressors, which estimates the parameters of a Poisson regression model in which some of the regressors are endogenous. The results in columns 4-6 in table 5 show that

the three visits variables, instrumented by safety aviation and capital distance, have statistically significant positive coefficients. This confirms our previous findings.

5. Conclusion

This paper examines the effect on conflict of the number of visits by U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of State to the country. To deal with potential endogeneity, we introduce novel instrumental variables for the three official visits variables, namely aviation safety, and capital distance. The 2SLS estimations provide evidence that the visits by the U.S. officials to the country have a statistically significant positive effect on the onset of conflict. This indicates that these visits of U.S. officials induce the opposition to engage in armed conflict with an incumbent government that is perceived as a stooge of the United States.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Capital Distance	191	8899.076	3743.188	0	16360
Visits of U.S. President	195	3.112821	6.149142	0	38
Visits of U.S. Secretary of State	157	16.36943	26.63266	0	153
Aviation Safety	181	21.1989	40.49025	0	392
GDP per capita	150	7.698125	1.476714	5.100214	10.63008
Democracy	149	.3921772	.3776692	0	1
Africa	168	.2797619	.4502241	0	1
North Americas	168	.083871	.2780927	0	1
Asia	168	.2559524	.4376998	0	1
Europa	168	.2261905	.4196146	0	1
Oceania	168	.0654762	.2481037	0	1
South Americas	168	.0774194	.268122	0	1
Visits of U.S. Secretary of State + Visits of U.S. President	134	22.5	33.90605	0	184
Island	155	.0516129	.2219614	0	1
Ethnic fractionalization	154	.4683199	.2561933	.001998	.930175
Oil or gas reserve discovery	151	.6688742	.4721843	0	1
Number of new PRIO25 civil conflict onsets per year	155	.0223534	.0312124	0	.1896552
Total count of new PRIO25 civil conflict onsets	150	1.14	1.6013	0	11
Ruggedness	155	126.3238	124.5955	3.605	747.207

Table 2. Number of U.S. Official's Visits and Onset of Civil Conflict 1960-2017

	OLS		2SLS		OLS		2SLS	
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Visits of U.S. Presidents	-0.007	0.029	0.158*	0.178**				
	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.090)	(0.086)				
Visits of U.S. Secretaries of State					0.003	0.010**	0.072**	0.071***
					(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.035)	(0.026)
Ruggedness		-0.001	-0.001	-0.001		-0.001	-0.001	-0.001
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Island nation dummy		-0.455	-0.486	-0.747		-0.166	0.337	0.453
		(0.362)	(0.457)	(0.628)		(0.327)	(0.548)	(0.647)
Ethnic fractionalization		0.145	0.672	0.918		0.340	1.271	1.497
		(0.437)	(0.635)	(0.682)		(0.487)	(0.869)	(0.967)
Log GDP per capita, 1960--2017 average		-0.531***	-0.755***	-0.817***		-0.555***	-0.932***	-1.024***
		(0.117)	(0.247)	(0.248)		(0.131)	(0.322)	(0.337)
Oil or gas reserve discovery		1.036***	0.808**	0.673*		0.918***	0.342	0.202
		(0.265)	(0.325)	(0.390)		(0.287)	(0.520)	(0.550)
Fraction of years under democracy, 1960--2017			0.030	0.348			0.213	-0.104
			(0.678)	(0.884)			(0.850)	(1.138)
Continental dummy	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Cons	1.176***	4.477***	5.569***	6.409***	1.082***	4.665***	6.302***	7.917***
	(0.138)	(0.980)	(1.583)	(1.987)	(0.151)	(1.134)	(2.158)	(2.739)
Number of observations	149	149	143	143	130	130	128	128
R2	0.001	0.235	0.010	-0.023	0.003	0.247	-0.691	-0.618
Hansen J statistic (p-value)			0.3960	0.1572			0.8728	0.134
Cragg-Donald Wald F statistic)			23.390	26.410			4.628	7.416
Kleibergen-Paap rk LM statistic			12.363	11.934			5.004	5.870

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

Table 3. Total U.S. Official's Visits and Onset of Civil Conflict 1960-2017

	OLS		2SLS	
	I	II	III	IV
Visits of U.S. Secretaries of State + Visits of U.S. Presidents	0.002	0.009**	0.050*	0.052**
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.026)	(0.021)
Ruggedness		-0.001	-0.001	-0.001
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Island nation dummy		-0.182	0.152	0.217
		(0.328)	(0.483)	(0.609)
Ethnic fractionalization		0.356	1.170	1.430
		(0.484)	(0.791)	(0.893)
Log GDP per capita		-0.559***	-0.884***	-0.980***
		(0.132)	(0.304)	(0.321)
Oil or gas reserve discovery		0.923***	0.480	0.302
		(0.286)	(0.463)	(0.524)
Fraction of years under democracy			0.180	-0.002
			(0.800)	(1.068)
Continental dummy	No	No	No	Yes
Cons	1.097***	4.675***	6.094***	7.555***
	(0.153)	(1.138)	(1.982)	(2.562)
Number of observations	130	130	128	128
R2	0,001	0,246	-0,342	-0,388
Hansen J statistic (p-value)			0.9411	0.9456
Cragg-Donald Wald F statistic)			7.178	10.209
Kleibergen-Paap rk LM statistic)			5.851	6.407

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

Table 4. 2SLS with a sample of Developing countries only.

	I	II	III
Visits of U.S. Presidents	0.343***		
	(0.069)		
Visits of the U.S. Secretaries of State		0.077***	
		(0.026)	
Visits of U.S. Secretaries of State + Visits of U.S. Presidents			0.068***
			(0.018)
Ruggedness	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Island nation dummy	-0.764	0.561	0.433
	(0.877)	(0.671)	(0.721)
Ethnic fractionalization	0.788	1.532	1.540
	(0.728)	(1.093)	(1.070)
Log GDP per capita	-0.642***	-0.847***	-0.824***
	(0.202)	(0.326)	(0.318)
Oil or gas reserve discovery	1.044**	0.791	0.809
	(0.428)	(0.584)	(0.575)
Fraction of years under democracy	0.534	0.412	0.414
	(0.854)	(1.383)	(1.316)
Continental dummy	0.165	-0.288	-0.305
_cons	4.253***	5.531**	5.372**
	(1.302)	(2.298)	(2.217)
Number of observations	115	100	100
R2	0,185	-0,236	-0,166
Kleibergen-Paap rk LM statistic)	2.683	4.355	4.204
Cragg-Donald Wald F statistic)	44.535	7.784	9.950
Sargan statistic (p-value)	0.6320	0.0439	0.1020

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

Table 5. Official Visits and the Onset of Civil Conflict

	Negative binomial regression/ Poisson regression			Poisson regression with endogenous regressors - Control function estimator for multiplicative model					
	I	**II**	**III**	**IV**		**V**		**IX**	
				Sd stage	First-stage	Sd stage	First-stage	Sed stage	First-stage
Visits of U.S. Presidents	0.017			0.072**					
	(0.019)			(0.034)					
Visits of U.S.Secretaries of State		0.006*				0.054**			
		(0.003)				(0.024)			
Visits of U.S.Secretaries of State + Travel Visits of U.S. Presidents			0.005					0.032***	
			(0.003)					(0.011)	
Ruggedness	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	0.000	-0.002	0.001	-0.004	0.001	-0.006
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.018)	(0.002)	(0.020)
Island nation dummy	-0.718	-0.232	-0.249	-1.062	0.257	-0.276	-10.617*	-0.563	-10.541*
	(0.478)	(0.492)	(0.491)	(0.714)	(1.511)	(0.907)	(5.644)	(0.867)	(6.346)
Ethnic fractionalization	0.295	0.395	0.396	0.827	-5.931***	1.907*	-20.435	1.596*	-26.968*
	(0.358)	(0.395)	(0.395)	(0.669)	(2.141)	(1.054)	(12.704)	(0.890)	(14.540)
Log GDP per capita	-0.562***	-0.605***	-0.604***	-0.799***	1.377***	-1.134***	6.217***	-1.029***	7.682***
	(0.115)	(0.129)	(0.130)	(0.168)	(0.381)	(0.294)	(1.888)	(0.238)	(2.184)
Oil or gas reserve discovery	1.076***	1.182***	1.181***	0.717**	1.095	0.241	8.474*	0.436	9.621*
	(0.215)	(0.253)	(0.253)	(0.347)	(0.991)	(0.534)	(4.345)	(0.456)	(5.210)
Fraction of years under democracy	0.287	0.285	0.281	-0.721	2.456	-1.674*	13.203	-1.366**	15.676
	(0.581)	(0.606)	(0.607)	(0.497)	(1.710)	(0.859)	(9.955)	(0.632)	(11.086)
Continental dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Capital Distance					-0.010		0.066		0.055
					(0.008)		(0.070)		(0.076)
Aviation Safety					0.076***		0.195***		0.272***
					(0.022)		(0.047)		(0.067)

Cons	-1.214	-1.155	-1.156	-0.380	-11.775***	1.978	-58.299***	1.136	-70.685***
	(0.950)	(1.057)	(1.066)	(1.331)	(3.189)	(2.260)	(20.203)	(1.754)	(21.933)
Number of observations	148	130	130	143		128		128	

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

Figure 1. World Map of the number of Visits of U.S. Presidents

Legend:
- [0,0]
- (0,2]
- (2,5]
- (5,38]
- No data

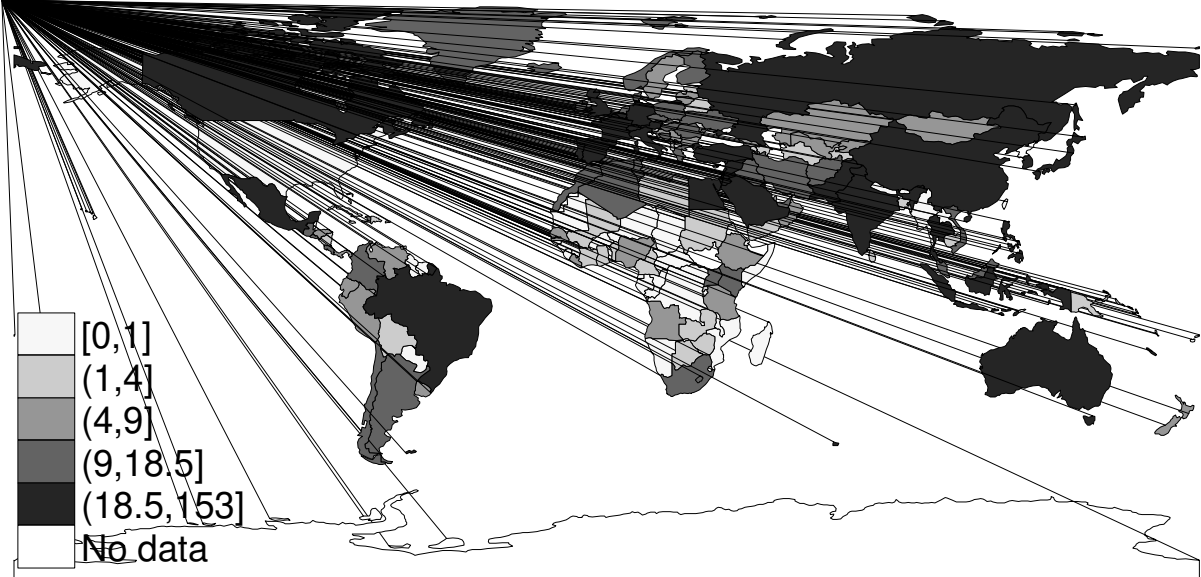**Figure 2. World Map of the number of Visits of U.S. Secretaries of State**

Figure 3. Relationship between Official Visits and Civil Conflits