
A. Arrobbio†, M. Maellberg†, P. Jaupart†, S. Henn‡

(† World Bank, ‡ University of Chicago)

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• Recent increase of violence & fragility in Sahel region.
• By 2030, >50% of world’s poorest population in FCV countries (WBG, 2020 est.).
• Governments & donors seek to strengthen capacity to address fragility.
• Limited local state presence & public service access cited as causes fueling FCV.
• Little empirical evidence in FCV settings if state deployment defined as LG human, material, and financial resources reduces conflict & improves trust in institutions.
What this paper is about

• Address this knowledge gap & linked with Niger & Sahel engagement.

• Study if higher capacity Nigerien LG experience lower levels of conflict using both municipality & individual-level information.

• Estimate correlation between LG capacity and: i) service delivery; ii) violent events; iii) citizens’ perception & attitudes towards the state.

• Our results: higher local state presence associated with higher citizen satisfaction with the government & lower levels of experienced violence.
Highly interesting and relevant case to study.

- Ongoing decentralization & transfers of competences to LGs.
- Elected LGs responsible for education, health, & water services.
- In general, LGs have limited human, financial & material resources.
- Significant disparities in extent of state deployment across & within regions.
The Nigerien context in brief - violence and insecurity

- Violence & insecurity have deteriorated in recent years in Niger.
- Instability concentrated in Lake Chad region & South-West border - ‘Spill-over’ from conflicts in neighboring countries.
- Long-lasting tensions between local ethnic communities: competition over natural resources, limited access to services, grievances from past conflicts.

Violence and protests events in Niger
Analysis based on three fine-grained datasets:

- **Local government capacity census.**
  - Conducted by WB in 2018
  - Information on municipalities, including administration capacity aspects & service delivery.

- **Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).**
  - Geocoded violence & protests events.
  - Merged with municipality census.

- **Afrobarometer measures of citizen perceptions & behaviors.**
  - 7th round conducted in 2018.
  - 1,200 individuals with location information.
  - Nationally representative.
Empirical analysis conducted at two levels:

1. **Municipality level analysis**
   - Estimate correlation between LG capacity and:
     - Service delivery
     - Violence

2. **Individual level analysis**
   - Estimate correlation between LG capacity and:
     - Government performance evaluation
     - Trust in government institutions
     - Experienced violence
Municipality-level analysis: methodology

• Analysis exploits cross-sectional variation.
• Model estimated:

\[ y_c = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot LG_{capacity}_c + X'_c \cdot \beta_2 + \eta_r + \varepsilon_c \]  

(1)

• Outcome \( y_c \) : indicators of service delivery or instability in LG \( c \).
• The vector \( X_c \) : LG characteristics likely to matter in explaining observed patterns. Region fixed effects \( \eta_r \) capture region-specific factors affecting outcomes.
• OLS estimate Equation 1 & heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors reported.
• Identification of a valid instrumental variable unsuccessful so far.
Municipality-level analysis: results

LG capacity and service delivery:
• Higher local civil service and fiscal capacity associated with higher access to public services and infrastructure.

LG capacity and stability:
• State deployment: consistently negatively correlated w/protests, riots, & fatalities.
• Coefficients are not significant at conventional levels.
• Given endogeneity concerns, findings suggest state deployment can reduce violence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1) Z-score education</th>
<th>(2) Z-score health</th>
<th>(3) Z-score infrastructure</th>
<th>(4) Protests 2019</th>
<th>(5) Riots 2019</th>
<th>(6) Fatalities 2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Z-score civil service</td>
<td>-0.0902 (0.119)</td>
<td>0.0577 (0.0718)</td>
<td>0.206*** (0.0614)</td>
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<td>Z-score fiscal</td>
<td>0.0164 (0.0244)</td>
<td>0.0402* (0.0230)</td>
<td>0.0165 (0.0429)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Z-score state deployment</td>
<td>0.0164 (0.0244)</td>
<td>0.0402* (0.0230)</td>
<td>0.0165 (0.0429)</td>
<td>-0.0672 (0.103)</td>
<td>-0.0286 (0.0323)</td>
<td>-2.126 (2.598)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>243</td>
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<td>256</td>
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<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.308</td>
<td>0.378</td>
<td>0.526</td>
<td>0.435</td>
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</table>

Covariates: population (log), commune area (log), urban municipality dummy, transport costs to Niamey (log), mining dummy, violent events between 2010-2014.
Individual-level analysis: methodology

Does local state deployment translate into improved citizens’ attitudes?

- Analysis links individual answers with LG capacity.

\[
y_{i,j} = \beta \cdot LG\_capacity_{j} + \gamma \cdot C_{i,j} + AdminUnit + \varepsilon_{i,j} \quad (2)
\]

- \(y_{i,j}\) : answers of respondent \(i\) from village \(j\) on trust in government institutions, performance, & experienced violence.

- Both Afrobarometer and LG census measures of LG capacity.

- \(C_{i,j}\) : vector of location & individual control variables. \(AdminUnit\) : village or region fixed effects.

- OLS & standard errors clustered at the village reported.
Individual-level analysis: results

Using both state capacity indicator from the LG census or Afrobarometer:

- Respondents in locations w/higher state capacity evaluate Gov. performance as more positive.
- Correlated with lower levels of feared & experienced violence.
- Suggestive evidence that greater local state presence can foster stability, in particular law & order institutions.

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<td>0.103**</td>
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<td>R^2</td>
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Notes: OLS Estimates. Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Afrobarometer and LG census data. Covariates include population (log), urban municipality dummy, respondent age and age squared, respondent gender dummy, Niamey transport costs (log).
• We show that greater local state presence associated w/lower probability of unrest & higher citizen satisfaction with Gov. performance.

• Findings have important policy implications for Niger & fragile states:

• Building core institutions & deploying state resources at local level can be instrumental in reducing violence and fostering trust in institutions.

• Findings contribute to the literatures on decentralization, state capacity building, security-development nexus, and conflict.

• This paper is the first output of a broader Sahel research agenda that also informs operational work.