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The political economy of aid allocation: Aid and incumbency at the local level in Sub Saharan Africa.*

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Abstract

Aid allocation within countries is often thought of as a strategic action by the incumbent leaders to further their own goals. Theoretically, however, the effects of aid may be either positive or negative and the empirical evidence is limited. By matching geo-coded data on aid projects to 101 792 respondents in five waves of the Afrobarometer, we investigate the effects of aid on incumbency support using project fixed effects. We estimate the effects for World Bank aid and Chinese aid separately and find positive effects for the former and no robust effect for the latter. For neither project donor do we find effects on turnout and that aid is not targeting areas with previously higher incumbency support. We find little support for the notion that economic voting is driving the result as individuals self-perceived economic conditions are not affected. The positive effects for the World Bank aid projects seem to be mediated by trust in the politicians, whereas we find no effects of Chinese aid on trust.

Keywords: Aid; Africa; Politics; Development; Incumbency

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1 Introduction

The debate around whether foreign aid has overall positive or overall negative consequences has been labeled one of the most controversial in development economics (Qian, 2015). Critics point to the potential adverse effects of aid on institutions and corruption (e.g. Easterly 2006; Deaton 2013; Knack 2001). One line of argument suggests that politicians use aid to distribute patronage or to influence voting (Jablonski, 2014). Yet, there is little evidence on whether the voters actually respond by increasing their support for the incumbent leader. We test this question by merging survey data on political preferences with geocoded data on aid projects for a large number of African countries.

Most previous studies investigate the political effects of aid using cross-sectional data at the country level. This literature provides mixed evidence, which is perhaps not surprising given the myriad of factors that are likely to affect country level institutions over time and the difficulty of identifying causal effects in cross-country regressions. The question of strategic allocation of aid projects for political gains is, furthermore, an inherently local one. We therefore follow the recent and growing trend towards analyzing the effects at the local level that has been spurred by the availability of geocoded data on both aid and outcomes.¹

Several studies investigate the distribution of aid at the local level (Briggs, 2017; Dreher et al., 2016; Hodler and Raschky, 2014; Jablonski, 2014; Masaki, 2018; Nunnenkamp et al., 2017; Öhler and Nunnenkamp, 2014). In this study, we move beyond testing for biased aid allocation to an investigation of the political effects of targeting. Up until now, such studies have mostly been conducted using single countries (Briggs, 2012, 2014; Jablonski, 2014). A notable exception is Briggs, (2018), who finds that aid lowers the support for incumbent

¹See e.g. Kotsadam et al., (2018) on aid and infant mortality, Findley et al., (2011) on aid and conflict; Francken et al., (2012) on relief aid allocation in Madagascar; Powell and Findley, (2012) on donor coordination; Dionne et al. (2013) on aid allocation in Malawi; Dreher and Lohmann, (2015) on aid and growth at the regional level; Brazys et al., (2017) and Isaksson and Kotsadam, (2018a) on the effects of aid on corruption; Isaksson and Kotsadam, (2018b) on the effects of aid on unionization; and Berlin et al., (2017) on the effects of aid on gender outcomes in Malawi and Uganda.

presidents in a local level analysis of aid projects in three countries (Nigeria, Senegal, and Uganda). We add to this literature by conducting a study in many countries, using project level fixed effects, and by analyzing the effects of different donors.

The theoretical effects of aid on incumbency advantage are ex-ante ambiguous. Voters may reward incumbent leaders who strategically locate aid to their area, either if the leaders do it in order to please core supporters or to attract swing-voters. Incumbency support may also increase due to economic voting motives if aid is creating favorable economic conditions in the areas. Aid may also lead to lower support for the incumbent leader if it undermines the capacity and legitimacy of recipient governments (Knack, 2001) or reduces the political accountability (Ahmed, 2012). Furthermore, if aid has negative effects at the local level, or less positive effects than expected, it may also lower incumbency support.

To test for the effects of aid on incumbency support we use fixed effects for areas surrounding an aid project and investigate how the support changes when an aid project starts. We estimate the effects for World Bank aid and Chinese aid separately and find positive effects for the former and no robust effects for the latter. We find little indication of aid locations being selected based on previous incumbency support and we find no effects on overall electoral turnout. Furthermore, the effects of aid on incumbency support are not more positive when power is more contested, i.e. in countries and periods with higher political competition. A possible explanation for the differential impact of aid on incumbency support is that the effects are mediated by the effects on local living conditions. While such an explanation is compatible with previous research finding that economic conditions become better with World Bank aid (as measured by nighttime light) , while corruption (Isaksson and Kotsadam, 2018a) as well as favoritism (Dreher et al., 2016) increase with Chinese aid, we fail to corroborate this mechanism as we do not find that self-reported living conditions are differentially affected or that they seem to mediate the effects. Following Briggs (2018), we investigate the effects of aid on trust in Government and find that the positive effects for

the World Bank aid projects seem to be mediated by trust in the politicians while we find no effect of Chinese aid on trust.

2 Aid and incumbency advantage

A positive relationship between incumbent support and aid location may arise both in cases where incumbent leaders locate aid to their own supporters, and when voters reward the incumbent after receiving aid. In the context of sub-Saharan Africa, patronage and favoritism are often considered important factors in shaping electoral outcomes. Some scholars claim that aid provides leaders with additional financial resources to distribute patronage, buy off political support, and ultimately to consolidate power (e.g.

The empirical evidence on whether leaders allocate aid to please core supporters or to attract swing-voters is nevertheless still inconclusive. Hodler and Raschky, (2014) find that higher aid inflows are associated with more regional favoritism. Öhler and Nunnenkamp, (2014), find no evidence for the influence of favoritism in the location of World Bank projects in Africa. Likewise, Dreher et al., (2016) find no indications of favoritism in the location of World Bank projects in Africa, but they find evidence that regions where leaders were born receive more Chinese funded aid. Jablonski, (2014) observes a strong bias toward constituencies with high vote shares for the incumbent in the aid allocation in Kenya. In contrast to the Kenyan case, in a study of the distribution of aid projects in Zambia, Masaki, (2018) finds that fewer aid projects are allocated to districts where the ruling party enjoys greater popularity and suggest that aid in Zambia is used to attract swing-voters.

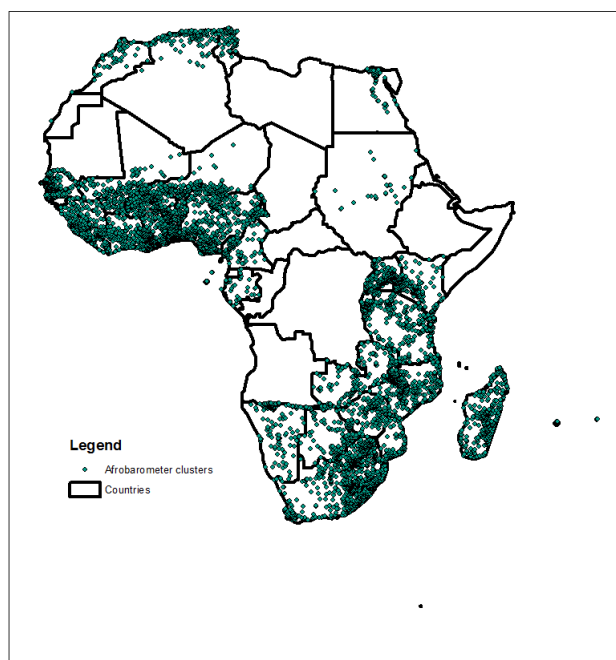
One potential mechanism for aid positively affecting voting is retrospective economic voting, i.e. the idea that voters reward incumbent leaders when the economic conditions are good (see Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2007 for a review). The correlation between economic conditions and incumbency advantage is robust and has been found also in studies taking advantage of exogenous shocks such as the Spanish Christmas lottery (Bagues and Esteve-

Volart, 2016), and variation in oil prices (Snowberg et al., 2007). Thus, those living close to an aid project may increase their support for the incumbent leader because their economic conditions are generally better, and they therefore prefer the status quo. The presence of economic voting hinges on aid having positive effects on economic well-being at the local level. The literature on this is, however, inconclusive. Using exogenous variation in Chinese aid supply following changes in Chinese steel production, Dreher et al., (2017) find that Chinese development assistance boosts economic growth in recipient sub-national regions. However, positive effects have not always been detected at the local level in studies using geocoded locations of aid projects. Isaksson and Kotsadam (2018) find that Chinese aid leads to increased corruption and has no effect on economic activity at the local level while aid from the World Bank increases economic activity.

There are both empirical and theoretical reasons to believe that aid can also lower the support for incumbent politicians. The first one is that aid may have negative consequences at the local level and that the incumbent politicians are punished for this. Another possible mechanism is that aid may alienate citizens from national politics and undermine the capacity and legitimacy of recipient governments (Knack, 2001). Even though this is plausible, there is very little empirical evidence pointing in this direction. For example, Blair and Roessler, (2018) find no indications that Chinese aid has diminished state legitimacy. Similarly, Dietrich and Winters, (2015) do not find an effect of individuals learning that a health project is foreign-funded in a survey experiment in India. Briggs (2018) is the only study to date that has investigated local level effects on incumbency support in several countries. He follows a similar strategy as in this paper but without project fixed effects and he only investigates the effects in a sample of three countries: Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda. Interestingly he finds that aid lowers the support for incumbent presidents. He further finds that aid leads to mistrust and favors a mechanism whereby aid fails to meet the expectations of the citizens.

3 Data

In order to analyze the effects of aid on incumbency support we spatially merge geocoded data on aid with geocoded data from the Afrobarometer, geocoded by BenYishay et al. (2017). The locations of the local areas are shown in Figure 3.



We present descriptive statistics for our main variables of interest in Table 1. The samples in this table are based on the baseline regressions which most importantly implies that they only include observations within 50 kilometers from an aid project.

Our measure of incumbency comes from the Afrobarometer and is available in rounds 2-6, albeit with a slightly different coding in round 2. In rounds 3-6 of the Afrobarometer survey the question asked is "If an election was held tomorrow which president (party) would you vote for?". In addition to the different candidates, the respondents can also answer that they would not vote, that they do not know or that they would have voted for another candidate. In round 2 the question was "Do you feel close to any particular political party or political organization? If so, which party or organization is that?".

Table 1: Descriptive statistics.

	World Bank		China	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<i>Dependent variables: Variants of incumbency advantage</i>				
Incumbent	0.526	(0.499)	0.467	(0.499)
Incumbent 2	0.404	(0.491)	0.348	(0.476)
Incumbent 3	0.548	(0.498)	0.490	(0.500)
<i>Aid variables</i>				
Distance (km)	14.769	(12.683)	16.128	(15.237)
Active 50 km	0.908	(0.290)	0.662	(0.473)
Future aid 50 km	0.092	(0.290)	0.338	(0.473)
Active 25 km	0.702	(0.457)	0.507	(0.500)
Future aid 25 km	0.088	(0.283)	0.197	(0.398)
<i>Control variables</i>				
Urban	0.446	(0.497)	0.668	(0.471)
Age	36.189	(14.405)	35.665	(14.313)
Female	0.486	(0.500)	0.488	(0.500)
<i>Other variables</i>				
Electoral competition	40.867	(9.953)	41.123	(9.933)
Electoral democracy index	0.580	(0.140)	0.617	(0.153)
Turnout	0.806	(0.396)	0.773	(0.419)
Living conditions	-0.098	(1.003)	-0.021	(1.002)
<i>N</i>	40621		14983	

Notes: The samples are based on the baseline regressions (columns 1 in Tables 2 and 3) except for the variables Incumbent 2 and Incumbent 3 which are based on their corresponding baseline regressions.

We always code all instances where the respondent answers the name of the incumbent president or party as one.² We define our dependent variable in three different ways to ensure that the results are not sensitive to how we define the missing and zero category in the dependent variable. In the baseline regressions we put zero on those that would vote for other parties than the incumbent and those that respond that they would not have voted in an election. We see that around 53 percent vote for the incumbent in the World Bank aid sample and 47 percent in the Chinese aid sample. In addition, we try two alternative definitions, measuring the incumbent’s support at the extensive and the intensive margin. First, we include also those that respond that they do not know or do not want to respond as zeroes (Incumbent 2). Second, we look at the support at the intensive margin, by including those that would not vote in the missing category (Incumbent 3). This naturally increases the share of incumbency voters. The former is to be interpreted as the incumbent’s support among those that answered, while the latter is to be interpreted as the support for the incumbent leader among those stating what they would have voted.

The data on Chinese aid projects is obtained from georeferenced project-level data of version 1.1 of AidData’s Chinese Official Finance to Africa dataset, introduced by Strange et al., (2017) and geocoded by Dreher et al. (2016) (see Strange et al. (2013 and 2017) for a detailed description of the data collection methodology). Since this paper focuses on local effects of aid projects we focus on projects with recorded locations coded as corresponding to an exact location or as ‘near’, in the ‘area’ of, or up to 25 km away from an exact location (precision categories 1 and 2 in Strandow et al. 2011). We follow Isaksson and Kotsadam (2018a, 2018b) and limit our analysis to the Chinese aid projects that have been classified as official development assistance. The location of the Chinese aid projects are shown in Figure 1a.

²We manually coded the names of the incumbents in all countries in the Afrobarometer and used the Afrobarometer codebooks for the various countries to match the answers.

The World Bank data is obtained from AidData (World Bank IBRD-IDA, Level 1, Version 1.4.1). We again limit the sample to projects with precise geocodes and information about start year, giving us 4,245 project locations. The location of the World Bank aid projects are shown in Figure 1b.

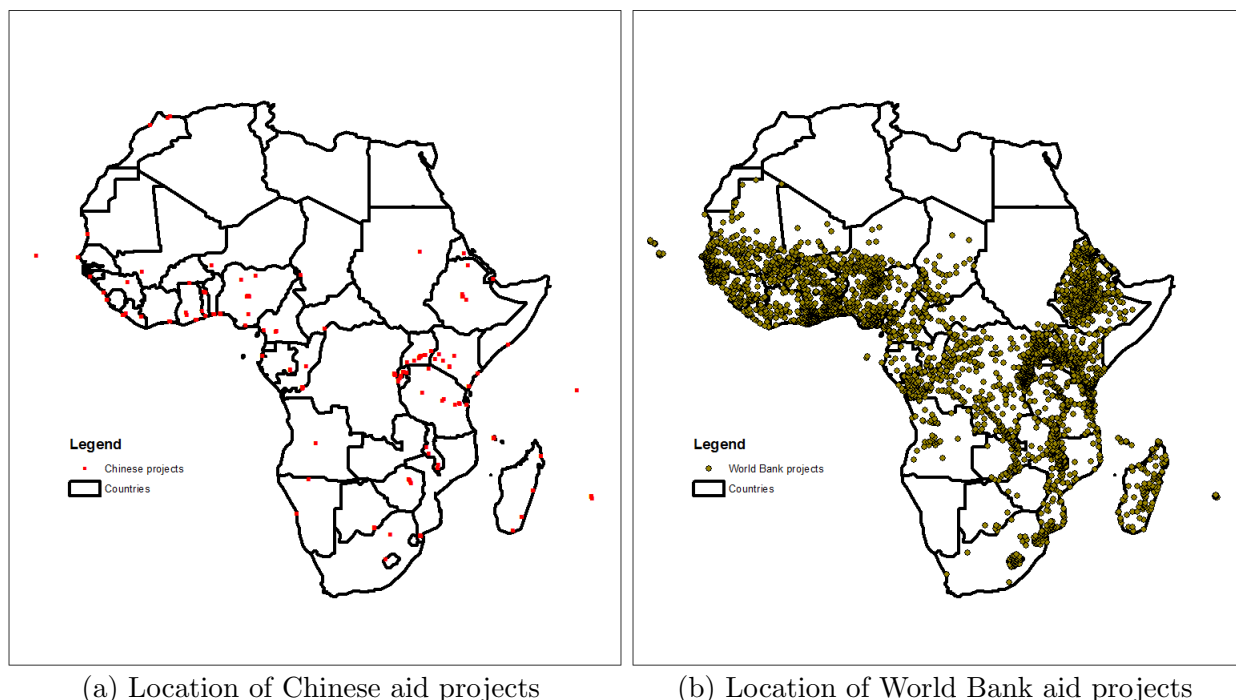


Figure 1: Location of aid projects

In Table 1 we see that the average distance to a World Bank aid project is 15 kilometers and 16 kilometers to a Chinese aid project. Note again that the sample is restricted to individuals already having or that will get an aid project within 50 km.³ For the World Bank sample we see that around 91 percent of the observations have an active project within 50 kilometers while this number is 66 percent for Chinese aid. In the table we also present summary statistics for the control variables. These are a dummy variable for living in an urban area, a continuous variable for age, and a dummy variable for being female. We create

³We discuss in Section 7 how this sample restriction affects the external validity of our results.

a dummy variable for turnout (from the question "Did you vote in the last election?") and a variable for self-reported living conditions from the question "In general, how do you rate your living conditions compared to those of other [people from the same country]" (ranging from Much worse (-2) via Same (0) to Much better (2)).

We also include country/year level measures of two other variables in order to explore mechanisms. We use the percent of votes received by the non-incumbent parties (Vanhanen, 2016), as a proxy for political competition. As a proxy for democratic elections we use the Electoral democracy index, from the V-dem dataset. This index is a weighted average of indices measuring freedom of expression, freedom of association and clean elections.

4 Empirical Strategy

To estimate the effect of aid projects on support for the incumbent leader, we match the GPS coordinates from the five Afrobarometer waves and the location of aid projects from AidData. We follow a similar strategy as the one in Knutsen et al. (2017) and Isaksson and Kotsadam (2018) by distinguishing between sites where an aid project is under implementation and sites where the project has yet to be implemented at the time of the Afrobarometer survey. We exclude respondents who live in areas where the implementation of a project has already been completed. Even though the Afrobarometer does not have a panel structure, it happens to revisit some places both before and after aid projects start in the area, and we are therefore able to use a fixed effects estimation strategy. We construct the geographical units by matching the geo-coordinates of aid projects to Afrobarometer clusters so that a respondent gets an indicator variable Active if an individual lives within 25 or 50 kilometers from an aid project.

The baseline regression connects the Afrobarometer respondents and location and timing of aid in the following way:

$$Incumbent_{it} = \beta_1 Active_{it} + \gamma_t + \alpha_i + \delta_1 X_{it} + \epsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

The dependent variable is a dummy equal to 1 for individuals who report that they would vote for the incumbent leader at the time of the survey. Active indicates whether the individual lives within 50 or 25 kilometers of an active aid project at the time of the survey. If there are several projects nearby we code an area as soon as the first project starts.

To control for the average support for the incumbent across areas and across time, we include year, γ , and project area fixed effects α , in addition we also control for country fixed effects since the areas sometimes cross borders. We include a vector (X) of individual level controls from the Afrobarometer, these are gender, age, age-squared and a dummy for urban residence. These variables are included to control for compositional changes in the areas. We only include variables that are unlikely to be affected by aid. However, aid projects may change the composition of areas so we also present results without including these variables and the results are very similar (see Appendix Tables A2 and A3). The standard errors are clustered at the area level.

Without the area fixed effects, in order for β to have a causal interpretation we would need to assume that the introduction of an aid project is not correlated with the previous level of support for the incumbent leader or any other omitted variable that is correlated with both aid and voter preferences. This is a very strong assumption given that one of the mechanisms that we are testing for is that of strategic aid location, i.e. that the incumbent leader gives aid projects to his supporters in return for votes. With area fixed effects, however, we are able to control for previous levels of support as well as all other factors that are stable over time. The area fixed effects imply that identification comes solely from areas that are observed both before and after projects. As we discuss in Section 7, this has implications for the external validity of the results. A remaining identifying assumption is that there are no

time varying omitted variables. One particular worry would be that there are trends in e.g. aid distribution and other political variables such as reforms or investments. To some extent we control for this with the inclusion of country and year fixed effects. Any such time varying variable would then have to evolve differently within countries and years. By comparing two different donors we would also be more worried if the results are very similar for them. If they are not, it would imply that the potential time varying factors differ across donors. Furthermore, we are able to test for selection of aid projects to areas where the support for the incumbent leader is high by excluding the area fixed effects and regressing Incumbent on Future, a dummy equal to one if the respondent lives in an area where there will be an aid project in the future. In addition, we also estimate regressions where we interact the year dummies with the country fixed effects and investigate if the effects are different.

To supplement the baseline regression, we explore theoretical mechanisms. First, we investigate whether the effect is different in countries where political competition is higher to understand whether the observed effect is due to aid being used deliberately as a tool to increase the support for the incumbent leader. The idea is that the incumbent leader is more interested in swing-voters when there exists some uncertainty regarding the electoral outcome. To explore an additional dimension of the electoral channel we examine whether the effect is more prevalent in countries with more democratic compared to less democratic elections.

5 Effects of aid on support for incumbents

We start by analyzing the effects of World Bank aid and in Table 2 we show the baseline results. Since we include area fixed effects, the coefficient for active can be interpreted directly as the increase in the support for the incumbent leader when an aid project starts. We estimate this for individuals living close to aid projects and start by following the previous literature and use a 50 km cutoff in column 1. We see that the probability of supporting

the incumbent politician increases by 5.5 percentage points in areas with active aid projects as compared to the same areas before the aid project had started. This effect is large and implies an increase of over 10 % from the mean. In Appendix Figure A1 we show that the effect seems to positive across the distances within 50 kilometers. In column 2 of Table 2 we present regression results with a 25 kilometers cutoff and the results are very similar (note that the sample is smaller as we are now restricting it to only contain individuals living within 25 km of an aid project).

A possible mechanism for the observed effect could be that the incumbent leaders give aid projects to areas that support them, and as a result they increase their support for them even more. In column 3 we test whether there is a selection in aid location by regressing support for incumbent on a dummy equal to 1 if the respondent lives in an area that will receive an aid project in the future. These regressions are run without the area fixed effects so that we can compare the support with a control group that is further away. This implies that the sample is larger and now includes respondents living further away. We also include a dummy variable for Active 50 km so that the Future 50 km coefficient only compares incumbency support in areas that will eventually get aid projects with areas that are further away than 50 kilometers to an aid project. We find no support for selection based on incumbency support as the coefficient on Future 50 km is imprecisely estimated and not significant.

Investigating the role of electoral competition shows that the coefficient on the interaction term Active*Electoral competition is negative and significant at the 10 percent level, implying that the effect of aid on support for the incumbent is weaker in countries with more political competition. This indicates that the incumbent effect does not seem to be driven by politicians locating aid projects to attract swing-voters.⁴ Adding the Electoral democracy index to the regression in (5) indicates that the effect is not larger in democratic countries as

⁴It is important to note that the sample is halved as the electoral competition variable is missing for some countries throughout the period and some countries in particular years. However, we show in columns 1 and 2 of Table A4 that the baseline effects are larger in these samples.

the coefficient on Active*Electoral democracy is not statistically significant. The coefficients on electoral competition and democracy are standardized with mean zero and standard deviation equal to 1 so that their size can be interpreted as the change in the dependent variable from a standard deviation increase in the regressors. Finally, we show that the effects of aid are not running via increased turnout in general (column 6), rather it seems to shift the support of the local electorate.

The results seem robust to various choices and definitions. We perform the same regressions using alternative missing categories, that is including those that do not know as 0 and excluding those that do not know or would not have voted (see Appendix Tables A6 and A7). The results are qualitatively similar to those in the baseline specification. We also test if the results are different in countries where the incumbent is not changing over the period and countries where they do.⁵ Creating a dummy variable for being in a country without incumbency change and interacting active with this variable show that there is no statistically significant difference in the effects (Appendix Table A5). The samples are unfortunately too small to conduct meaningful analysis in single countries. We also test to add country times year fixed effects in Appendix Table A8 and note that the results point in the same direction. It seems, however, as if this is demanding too much of our data and the standard errors become larger. We cannot reject that the results are the same with and without these controls but neither is the effect statistically significant.

The results of the baseline regressions using Chinese aid projects as the independent variable are shown in Table 3. The main samples are now restricted to individuals living close to Chinese projects and Active in regressions 1-5 indicates that the respondent lives within 50 (1) or 25 (2) kilometers of an active aid project financed by China. The coefficient on Active now has the opposite sign, but the effect is only statistically significant in the

⁵The countries without changes in incumbency are: Algeria, Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gabon, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Table 2: World Bank aid and incumbency.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Incumbent	Incumbent	Incumbent	Incumbent	Incumbent	Turnout
Active 50 km	0.055** (0.028)			0.099* (0.053)	0.11*** (0.031)	-0.010 (0.019)
Future aid 50 km			0.0097 (0.015)			
Active 25 km		0.048 (0.031)				
Electoral competition				0.045 (0.052)		
Active*Electoral competition				-0.095* (0.051)		
Electoral democracy index					0.23*** (0.058)	
Active*Electoral democracy					0.020 (0.031)	
Mean dep. var	0.53	0.50	0.54	0.51	0.52	0.79
No. of observations	40621	29306	64373	19052	30504	47301
R-squared	0.18	0.20	0.10	0.23	0.20	0.16
Project FE	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: All regressions control for country and year fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. Column three includes active 50 km as a control. Robust SE clustered at the project level in parentheses.

25 km sample. It should be noted that the effects of Chinese aid are identified based on only 46 projects and as such the precision is lower. Despite this we are, however, able to reject that the effects are more positive than 0.02 using an equivalence testing approach with two one-sided t-tests (TOST). We therefore conclude that the effects of Chinese aid seem different than the effects of World Bank aid, but they are less precisely estimated. In Appendix Figure A2 we further show that there is no clear relationship between the effects of Chinese aid and distance to the project. In addition Chinese aid seems to be located in areas where the incumbent leader already had less support before the initiation of an aid project (column 3). Adding proxies for political competition and democracy do not seem to alter the results substantially. The coefficient on Active drops when controlling for political competition, but it is too imprecisely estimated to draw any conclusions. Note that we are left with only around 7,000 observations in this regression and as seen in column 3 of Table

Table 3: Chinese aid and incumbency.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Incumbent	Incumbent	Incumbent	Incumbent	Incumbent	Turnout
Active 50 km	-0.074 (0.057)			-0.023 (0.063)	-0.12** (0.062)	-0.018 (0.027)
Future aid 50 km			-0.037*** (0.014)			
Active 25 km		-0.096*** (0.034)				
Electoral competition				-0.037 (0.046)		
Active*Electoral competition				-0.022 (0.059)		
Electoral democracy index					0.30** (0.13)	
Active*Electoral democracy					0.013 (0.055)	
Mean dep. var	0.47	0.44	0.54	0.45	0.46	0.76
No. of observations	14983	10496	64823	7161	11626	16707
R-squared	0.13	0.11	0.11	0.20	0.14	0.18
Project FE	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: All regressions control for country, year, and project fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. Column three includes active 50 km as a control. Robust SE clustered at the project level in parentheses.

A4, the baseline regression is not statistically significant in this sample either.⁶

6 Potential mechanisms for the different results across donors

One mechanism for the different results may be that Chinese and World Bank aid have differential impacts at the local level. Previous studies have indeed found differences whereby local economic conditions are improved more in areas receiving World Bank aid, and increased corruption as well as trade union memberships going down in areas with Chinese aid (Isaksson and Kotsadam, 2018a,b). One way to test this mechanism is to test whether there is a differential impact on peoples self-perceived economic conditions. In Table 4 we show that neither World Bank (column 1) nor Chinese aid (column 3) seem to affect how voters perceive their economic conditions. We also see that the results remain more or less

⁶Appendix Tables A3, A9, A10, and column 2 of Table A5 show the same robustness checks for Chinese aid as those discussed for World Bank aid.

Table 4: Aid, self-reported living conditions, and incumbency.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Living conditions	Incumbent	Living conditions	Incumbent
Active 50 km	0.072 (0.068)	0.058** (0.029)	-0.019 (0.11)	-0.085 (0.065)
Living conditions		0.034*** (0.0034)		0.035*** (0.0060)
Mean dep. var	-0.10	0.52	-0.02	0.47
No. of observations	32524	32524	12217	12217
R-squared	0.11	0.20	0.05	0.13
Project donor	World Bank	World Bank	China	China

Notes: All regressions control for project, country and year fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. Robust SE clustered at the project level in parentheses.

the same if we control for such perceptions and that perceptions themselves are positively correlated with incumbency support.

Another mechanism may be that aid affects trust in politicians and this may increase incumbent's support. We see in Table 5 that World Bank aid increases trust in the President, the parliament, and the ruling party, but not the trust in the opposition party. Chinese aid has no statistically significant effect on trust in politicians. We further see in Table 6 that trust in the president may actually mediate the positive World Bank results.⁷ The mediation results should be interpreted with care, however, as we do not control for all factors that are correlated with the mediator and aid onset.

⁷In Appendix Tables A11 and A12 we show the same type of mediation analysis for the variables Trust Parliament and Trust ruling Party. We note that these variables also seem to mediate the effects of World Bank aid, but not completely.

Table 5: Aid and trust in politicians.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	president	president	parliament	parliament	ruling	ruling	opposition	opposition
Active 50 km	0.26*** (0.072)	0.052 (0.13)	0.12** (0.054)	0.059 (0.095)	0.16** (0.061)	0.047 (0.10)	-0.053 (0.048)	0.066 (0.087)
Mean dep. var	1.83	1.68	1.61	1.49	1.58	1.43	1.18	1.17
No. of observations	39608	14624	38656	14467	39182	14606	38733	14431
R-squared	0.22	0.14	0.19	0.12	0.19	0.13	0.12	0.08
Project donor	World Bank	China	World Bank	China	World Bank	China	World Bank	China

Notes: All regressions control for project, country and year fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. Robust SE clustered at the project level in parentheses.

Table 6: Aid, trust in president, and incumbency.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Trust president	Incumbent	Trust president	Incumbent
Active 50 km	0.26*** (0.072)	0.020 (0.024)	0.052 (0.13)	-0.074 (0.046)
Trust president		0.15*** (0.0056)		0.17*** (0.011)
Mean dep. var	1.83	0.53	1.68	0.47
No. of observations	39608	39608	14624	14624
R-squared	0.22	0.27	0.14	0.26
Project donor	World Bank	World Bank	China	China

Notes: All regressions control for project, country and year fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. Robust SE clustered at the project level in parentheses.

7 External validity

Our sample restrictions imply that we are only capturing a subset of the Chinese and World Bank aid projects. In particular, we restrict the projects to having precise geocodes and to have observations in the Afrobarometer both before and after project start. While the restrictions are described in the Data section, in this section we describe the effects of these restrictions on our final sample and discuss the implications this has for the external validity of our results.

Starting with the Chinese aid projects, we follow Isaksson and Kotsadam (2018a, 2018b) and limit the analysis to only ODA-like projects. This reduces the number of projects in the data from 1,955 to 1,272. Limiting the precision of the recorded project location to an exact location or as 'near', in the 'area' of, or up to 25 km away from an exact location (precision categories 1 and 2 in Strandow et al. 2011) reduces the number of projects to 491. As noted in Dreher and Lohmann (2015) and Isaksson and Kotsadam (2018a), the geographical coding precision is related to the sectoral composition of aid. We also restrict the projects to the ones having an actual start data, which reduces the number of projects to 227. Finally, restricting the projects to the ones that are driving identification in our design, i.e. the first project that opens in an area where we have observations both before and after project start, we are down to 46 projects.

We show the sectoral composition of Chinese aid in Table 7, for the full sample (Panel A) and our effective sample (Panel B) separately. We see that the three largest specified sectors for Chinese aid are "Government and Civil Society", "Education", and "Health". For the projects included in our effective sample the composition is different. While health is still a large sector, it's importance is actually even larger, we see that "Transportation and storage" accounts for around 30 percent of the project. Transportation projects account for less than 5 percent of the total Chinese aid.

The restrictions seem to have similar consequences for the representativeness of the World Bank projects. There are 1,702 projects in Africa without any restrictions and this reduces to 688 after restrictions on having precise geocodes. When restricting the projects to the ones in our effective sample we are left with 168 projects. We show the sectoral composition of World Bank aid in Table 7 and we note that we again clearly lose projects that relate to "Public Administration, Law, and Justice". As for the Chinese projects, the sector with most projects in the effective sample is "Transportation". In all, we note that the aid projects are not representative for aid projects overall.

In addition to examining the representativeness of the aid projects we can also investigate how representative our sample of *individuals* in the Afrobarometer are across samples. In investigating this we use the whole sample for which there are observations on incumbency and we create a dummy variable for being in our effective sample. In Table 9 we show how the individuals in the effective World Bank sample differ from the rest of the individuals. We see that there are few differences, and once we control for country and year fixed effects there is only a difference whereby individuals in the effective sample are less likely to live in an urban area. For Chinese aid, however, we see in Table 10 that there are more differences. Individuals in the effective Chinese aid sample show less support for the incumbent, are younger, and more likely to live in urban areas than individuals in the total sample when country and year fixed effects are controlled for. Hence, we conclude that individuals in the

Table 7: Sectoral division of Chinese aid projects

Panel A: All Chinese ODA-like aid projects		
Sector	Freq.	Percent
Action relating to debt	59	4.64
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	82	6.45
Banking and financial services	4	0.31
Business and other services	2	0.16
Communications	45	3.54
Developmental food aid	20	1.57
Education	146	11.48
Emergency response	72	5.66
Energy generation and supply	27	2.12
General budget support	3	0.24
Government and civil society	187	14.70
Health	186	14.62
Industry, Mining, Construction	11	0.86
Non-food commodity assistance	1	0.08
Other multisector	45	3.54
Other social infrastructure	58	4.56
Population policies programmes	11	0.86
Support to NGO	2	0.16
Trade and tourism	7	0.55
Transport and storage	63	4.95
Unspecified	211	16.59
Water supply and sanitation	24	1.89
Women in development	6	0.47
Total	1,272	100.00
Panel B: Projects in the effective sample		
Sector	Freq.	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	2	4.35
Education	4	8.70
Government and Civil Society	1	2.17
Health	14	30.43
Other multisector	2	4.35
Other social infrastructure	6	13.04
Transport and storage	14	30.43
Water supply and sanitation	2	4.35
Women in development	1	2.17
Total	46	100.00

Table 8: Sectoral division of World Bank aid projects

Panel A: All World Bank aid projects		
Sector	Freq.	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	159	9.34
Education	141	8.28
Energy and mining	131	7.70
Finance	54	3.17
Health and other social services	284	16.69
Industry and trade	70	4.11
Information and communications	26	1.53
Public Administration, Law, and Justice	548	32.20
Transportation	167	9.81
Water, sanitation and flood protection	122	7.17
Total	1,702	100.00

Panel B: Projects in the effective sample		
Sector	Freq.	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	21	12.50
Education	1	0.60
Energy and mining	52	30.95
Health and other social services	8	4.76
Industry and trade	7	4.17
Information and communications	4	2.38
Public Administration, Law, and Justice	8	4.76
Transportation	54	32.14
Water, sanitation and flood protection	13	7.74
Total	168	100.00

Chinese effective sample are different from the overall population. If these differences imply that there are effects in other areas or whether part of the differences are actually driven by aid is, however, difficult to know. In any case, it is important to note that the external validity of our results is limited.

Table 9: Comparing individuals in the effective sample to individuals in the total sample. World Bank aid.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Incumbent	Incumbent	Age	Age	Female	Female	Urban	Urban
Effective sample	-0.0053 (0.0065)	0.010 (0.0067)	-0.44** (0.19)	-0.027 (0.20)	0.0015 (0.0065)	-0.0015 (0.0071)	-0.0078 (0.0065)	-0.041*** (0.0067)
No. of observations	68663	68663	68663	68663	68663	68663	68663	68663
R-squared	0.00	0.09	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.11
Country and Year FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Table 10: Comparing individuals in the effective sample to individuals in the total sample. Chinese aid.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Incumbent	Incumbent	Age	Age	Female	Female	Urban	Urban
Effective sample	-0.089*** (0.0051)	-0.058*** (0.0054)	-0.85*** (0.15)	-0.70*** (0.16)	0.0017 (0.0051)	-0.0016 (0.0057)	0.19*** (0.0051)	0.19*** (0.0053)
No. of observations	68663	68663	68663	68663	68663	68663	68663	68663
R-squared	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.13
Country and Year FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

8 Conclusion

Aid allocation within countries is often thought of as a strategic action by the incumbent leaders to further their own goals. Theoretically, however, the effects of aid on incumbency support may be either positive or negative and the empirical evidence is limited.

In this paper we merge survey data on political preferences with geocoded data on aid projects for a large number of African countries. Using project fixed effects, we can compare incumbency support in the same communities close to projects before and after aid projects start and find that World Bank aid increases incumbent’s support, whereas Chinese aid has no robust effect on this. In addition, we compare communities close to aid projects before they actually start with communities further away to test for selection of aid into incumbent-supporting areas. According to our results, aid is not targeting areas that had higher incumbency support before the aid project is initiated. There is no relationship between World Bank aid and initial incumbency support and Chinese aid is more likely to appear in areas with lower incumbency support.

Furthermore, we explore potential mechanisms mediating the positive effect on incumbent's support for World Bank aid. We find little support for the notion that economic voting is driving the result as individuals self-perceived economic conditions are not affected. For neither project donor do we find effects on turnout. The positive effects for the World Bank aid projects seem to be mediated by trust in the politicians, but we find no effects of Chinese aid on trust.

While we believe that our results have strong internal validity, this comes at the cost of potentially lower external validity. First of all, we do not know whether the findings of World Bank and Chinese projects generalize to other donors. Furthermore, using geocoded data for these two donors implies that not all of their aid is analyzed. To the extent that the effects of aid differ across sectors and across projects with and without precise geocodes we may not be able to speak to the effects of aid in general. Furthermore, by using project fixed effects we are leveraging variation from areas which we observe both before and after aid projects are implemented. We hope that future studies use similar methods as we do when more data becomes available. Future research could also use African Development Bank data to compare the effects of yet another multilateral donor in addition to the World Bank. For instance, following the work of Briggs, (2019) who analyses aid project success across donors, researchers could analyze several outcomes so that we would reach a more generalized knowledge about the effects of aid.

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Appendix Figures

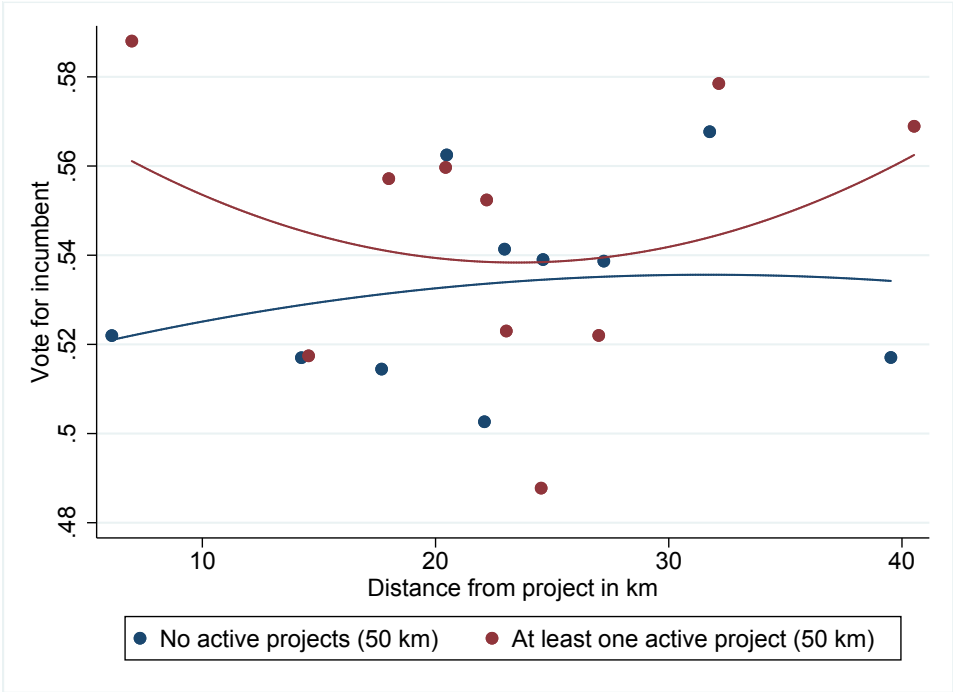


Figure A1: Distance to project and voting for incumbent. World Bank aid.

Notes: The figure shows a binned scatterplot by active status where the dots represent equal sized bins. The estimates are residualised for country, year, and project fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. The sample only includes areas that are already having or that will get an aid project within 50 km and excludes areas where aid has been suspended.

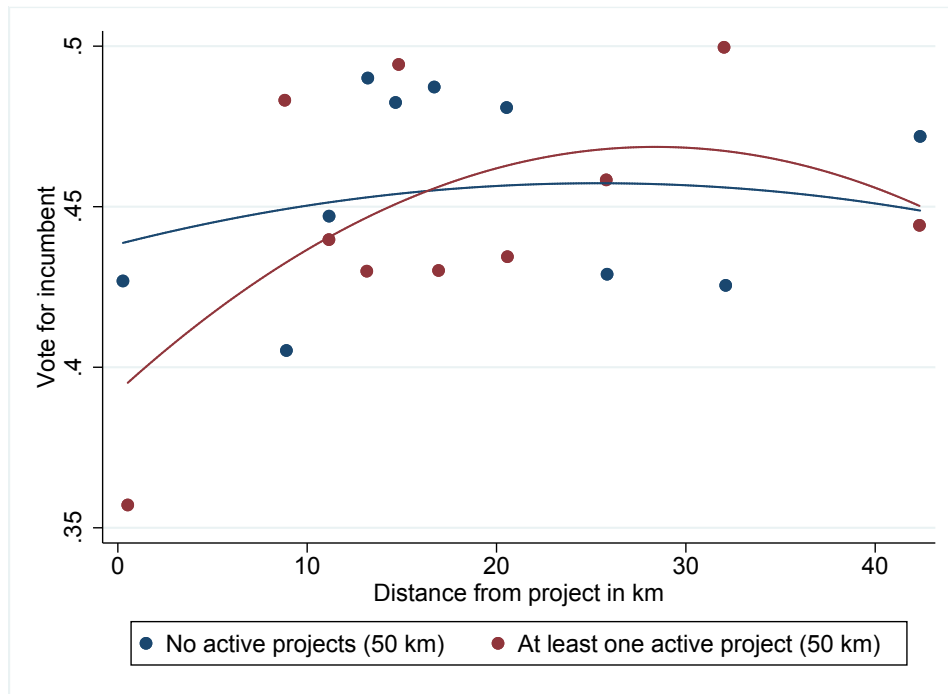


Figure A2: Distance to project and voting for incumbent. Chinese aid.

Notes: The figure shows a binned scatterplot by active status where the dots represent equal sized bins. The estimates are residualised for country, year, and project fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. The sample only includes areas that are already having or that will get an aid project within 50 km and excludes areas where aid has been suspended.

Appendix Tables

Table A1: Variable descriptions		
Variable	Description	Data Source
$Incumbent_i$	The main outcome variable: A dummy equal to 1 for individuals who report that they would vote for the incumbent leader at the time of the survey and 0 for those that reported support to other candidates or did not want to vote. Otherwise missing	Afrobarometer
$Incumbent2_i$	Voting on the extensive margin: Different from <i>incumbent</i> in that also those refusing to answer the question and those that do not know are given the value 0.	Afrobarometer
$Incumbent3_i$	Voting on the intensive margin: Different from <i>incumbent</i> in that those not voting, refusing to answer or who do not know are given missing.	Afrobarometer
$Active_i$	A dummy equal to 1 if the respondent lives within 50 or 25 kilometers of an active aid project at the time of the Afrobarometer survey. Observations that have a completed project within the distance are excluded.	AidData
$Future_i$	Dummy equal to one if respondent lives in area that will receive an aid project in the future. Observations that have a completed project within the distance are excluded.	AidData
α_i	Project area fixed effect.	AidData

$Rural_i$	Dummy equal to one if respondent lives in a urban area as defined by the Afrobarometer	Afrobarometer
Electoral competition	A measure of electoral success of smaller parties. The variable is calculated by subtracting from 100 the percentage of votes won by the largest party (the party which wins most votes) in parliamentary elections or by the party of the successful candidate in presidential elections.	Varhanen(2016)
Electoral Democracy	An index which is a weighted average of indices measuring freedom of expression, freedom of association and clean elections.	V-dem dataset
Turnout	An indicator variable taking the value 1 if the respondent reports to have voted in the last election.	Afrobarometer
Economic conditions	Self-reported living conditions as reported in the response to the question: "In general, how do you rate your living conditions compared to those of other [people from the same country]" (ranging from Much worse(-2) via Same(0) to Much better(2)).	Afrobarometer
Trust	Answer to the question: "How much do you trust each of the following [institution]?" (ranging from Not at all(0) via Just a little(1) , Somewhat(2) to A lot(3))	Afrobarometer

Table A2: Robustness without controls.

	(1)	(2)
	Incumbent	Incumbent
Active 50 km	-0.079 (0.058)	
Active 25 km		-0.097 (0.084)
Mean dep. var	0.47	0.44
No. of observations	15083	10545
R-squared	0.12	0.10
Project FE	Yes	Yes

Notes: All regressions control for country, year, and mine fixed effects. Robust SE clustered at the Afrobarometer cluster level in parentheses.

Table A3: Robustness without controls: Chinese aid.

	(1)	(2)
	Incumbent	Incumbent
Active 50 km	-0.079 (0.058)	
Active 25 km		-0.097*** (0.033)
Mean dep. var	0.47	0.44
No. of observations	15083	10545
R-squared	0.12	0.10
Project FE	Yes	Yes

Notes: All regressions control for country, year, and project fixed effects. Robust SE clustered at the Afrobarometer cluster level in parentheses.

Table A4: Different samples for the interaction analysis.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Incumbent WB	Incumbent WB	Incumbent China	Incumbent China
Active 50 km	0.14*** (0.049)	0.12*** (0.031)	-0.033 (0.055)	-0.089 (0.063)
Mean dep. var	0.51	0.52	0.45	0.46
No. of observations	19052	30504	7161	11626
R-squared	0.23	0.19	0.20	0.13
Project FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: All regressions control for country, year, and project fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. Robust SE clustered at the Afrobarometer cluster level in parentheses. Columns 1 and two show results for world bank aid whereas columns 3 and 4 show results for Chinese aid.

Table A5: Different effects on countries with stable incumbents.

	(1)	(2)
	Incumbent	Incumbent
Active 50 km	0.073* (0.041)	-0.086 (0.067)
Countries without change in incumbency	0.16 (0.21)	0.24*** (0.063)
Active*No change in incumbency	-0.034 (0.043)	0.040 (0.069)
Mean dep. var	0.53	0.47
No. of observations	40621	14983
R-squared	0.18	0.13
Project donor	World Bank	China

Notes: All regressions control for country, year, and project fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. Robust SE clustered at the Afrobarometer cluster level in parentheses. Column 1 and two show results for world bank aid whereas columns 2 shows results for Chinese aid.

Table A6: Aid and incumbency 2: World Bank aid.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	incumbent2	incumbent2	incumbent2	incumbent2	incumbent2
Active 50 km	0.070*** (0.025)			0.099* (0.053)	0.11*** (0.029)
Future aid 50 km			-0.010 (0.014)		
Active 25 km		0.060** (0.027)			
Electoral competition				0.045 (0.052)	
Active*Electoral competition				-0.095* (0.051)	
Electoral democracy index					0.20*** (0.047)
Active*Electoral democracy					0.048 (0.030)
Mean dep. var	0.40	0.38	0.42	0.51	0.52
No. of observations	52917	38308	83864	19052	38884
R-squared	0.14	0.15	0.08	0.23	0.15
Project FE	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Notes: All regressions control for country and year fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. Column three includes active 50 km as a control. Robust SE clustered at the Afrobarometer cluster level in parentheses.

Table A7: Aid and incumbency 3: World Bank aid.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	incumbent3	incumbent3	incumbent3	incumbent3	incumbent3
Active 50 km	0.066** (0.029)			0.099* (0.053)	0.13*** (0.032)
Future aid 50 km			0.0098 (0.016)		
Active 25 km		0.062* (0.032)			
Electoral competition				0.045 (0.052)	
Active*Electoral competition				-0.095* (0.051)	
Electoral democracy index					0.22*** (0.059)
Active*Electoral democracy					0.047 (0.031)
Mean dep. var	0.55	0.52	0.57	0.53	0.55
No. of observations	38988	28029	61580	19052	29056
R-squared	0.19	0.21	0.10	0.23	0.21
Project FE	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Notes: All regressions control for country, year, and project fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. Column three includes active 50 km as a control. Robust SE clustered at the Afrobarometer cluster level in parentheses.

Table A8: Aid and incumbency with country specific year fixed effects: World Bank aid.

	(1)
	Incumbent
Active 50 km	0.014 (0.031)
Mean dep. var	0.53
No. of observations	40621
R-squared	0.22
Project FE	Yes
Country*Year FE	Yes

Notes: The regression controls for country times year fixed effects in addition to project fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. Robust SE clustered at the Afrobarometer cluster level in parentheses.

Table A9: Aid and incumbency 2: Chinese aid.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	incumbent2	incumbent2	incumbent2	incumbent2	incumbent2
Active 50 km	-0.020 (0.049)			-0.012 (0.059)	-0.065 (0.057)
Future aid 50 km			-0.037*** (0.013)		
Active 25 km		-0.031 (0.031)			
Electoral competition				-0.029 (0.038)	
Active*Electoral competition				-0.013 (0.055)	
Electoral democracy index					0.25** (0.11)
Active*Electoral democracy					0.0068 (0.047)
Mean dep. var	0.35	0.32	0.41	0.45	0.46
No. of observations	20094	14504	85069	8588	14983
R-squared	0.09	0.07	0.09	0.17	0.11
Project FE	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Notes: All regressions control for country, year, and project fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. Column three includes active 50 km as a control. Robust SE clustered at the Afrobarometer cluster level in parentheses.

Table A10: Aid and incumbency 3: Chinese aid.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	incumbent3	incumbent3	incumbent3	incumbent3	incumbent3
Active 50 km	-0.060 (0.065)			-0.023 (0.063)	-0.11 (0.071)
Future aid 50 km			-0.038*** (0.014)		
Active 25 km		-0.084** (0.036)			
Electoral competition				-0.037 (0.046)	
Active*Electoral competition				-0.022 (0.059)	
Electoral democracy index					0.33** (0.13)
Active*Electoral democracy					0.014 (0.063)
Mean dep. var	0.49	0.47	0.56	0.47	0.49
No. of observations	14300	9978	62104	7161	10979
R-squared	0.13	0.11	0.10	0.20	0.14
Project FE	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Notes: All regressions control for country, year, and project fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. Column three includes active 50 km as a control. Robust SE clustered at the Afrobarometer cluster level in parentheses.

Table A11: Aid, trust in parliament, and incumbency.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Trust president	Incumbent	Trust president	Incumbent
Active 50 km	0.12** (0.054)	0.044* (0.026)	0.059 (0.095)	-0.077 (0.057)
Trust parliament		0.098*** (0.0041)		0.10*** (0.011)
Mean dep. var	1.61	0.53	1.49	0.47
No. of observations	38656	38656	14467	14467
R-squared	0.19	0.22	0.12	0.16
Project donor	World Bank	World Bank	China	China

Notes: All regressions control for project, country and year fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. Robust SE clustered at the Afrobarometer cluster level in parentheses.

Table A12: Aid, trust in ruling party, and incumbency.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Trust president	Incumbent	Trust president	Incumbent
Active 50 km	0.16** (0.061)	0.036 (0.023)	0.047 (0.10)	-0.072 (0.048)
Trust ruling party		0.14*** (0.0053)		0.16*** (0.015)
Mean dep. var	1.58	0.53	1.43	0.47
No. of observations	39182	39182	14606	14606
R-squared	0.19	0.26	0.13	0.24
Project donor	World Bank	World Bank	China	China

Notes: All regressions control for project, country and year fixed effects, age, age squared, gender, and urban. Robust SE clustered at the Afrobarometer cluster level in parentheses.

Coding of incumbency

Round	Country	Q type ⁸	Year of survey	Incumbent
5	Algeria	2	2013	National Liberation Front (FLN)
6	Algeria	2	2015	FLN
3	Benin	2	2005	Kerekou
4	Benin	2	2008	Independent
5	Benin	2	2011	Boni
6	Benin	2	2014	Boni
2	Botswana	4	2003	Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)
3	Botswana	2	2005	BDP
4	Botswana	2	2008	BDP
5	Botswana	2	2012	BDP
6	Botswana	2	2014	BDP
4	Burkina Faso	2	2008	Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP)
5	Burkina Faso	2	2012	CDP
6	Burkina Faso	2	2015	
5	Burundi	2	2012	National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD)

⁸Question asked in survey: 1. What did you vote? 2. What would you vote in presidential election? 3. What would you vote in a national election (president and prime minister)? [In Lesotho only prime minister]. 4. Do you feel close to any political part, if so which?

6	Burundi	2	2014	CNDD-FDD
5	Cameroon	2	2013	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (RDPC)
6	Cameroon	2	2015	RDPC
2	Cape Verde	4	2002	African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV)
3	Cape Verde	2	2005	PAICV
4	Capo Verde	3	2008	PAICV
5	Capo Verde	2	2011	Movement for Democracy (MpD)
6	Capo Verde	2	2014	MpD
5	Côte d'Ivoire	2	2013	Rally of the Republicans (RDR)
6	Côte d'Ivoire	2	2014	RDR
5	Egypt	2	2013	Freedom and Justice Party (FJP)
6	Egypt	2	2015	
5	Ethiopia	3	2013	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)
6	Gabon	2	2015	Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG)
2	Ghana	4	2002	New Patriotic Party (NPP)
3	Ghana	2	2005	NPP

4	Ghana	2	2008	NPP
5	Ghana	2	2012	National Democratic Congress (NDC)
6	Ghana	2	2014	NDC
5	Guinea	2	2013	Guinean People's Assembly (RPG)
6	Guinea	2	2015	RPG
2	Kenya	4	2003	National Rainbow Coalition/ Liberal Democratic Party (NARC/LDP)
3	Kenya	2	2005	NARC
4	Kenya	2	2008	Party of National Unity (PNU)
5	Kenya	2	2011	PNU
6	Kenya	2	2014	The National Alliance (TNA)
2	Lesotho	4	2003	Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD)
3	Lesotho	3	2005	LCD
4	Lesotho	3	2008	LCD
5	Lesotho	2	2012	LCD
6	Lesotho	2	2014	All Basotho Convention (ABC)
4	Liberia	2	2008	Unity Party (UP)
5	Liberia	2	2012	UP

6	Liberia	2	2015	UP
3	Madagascar	2	2005	Tiako I Madagasikara (TIM)
4	Madagascar	2	2008	TIM
5	Madagascar	2	2013	TIM
6	Madagascar	2	2014/2015	New Forces for Madagascar (HVM)
2	Malawi	4	2002	United Democratic Front (UDF)
3	Malawi	2	2005	UDF
4	Malawi	2	2008	Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)
5	Malawi	2	2012	People's Party (PP)
6	Malawi	2	2014	PP
2	Mali	4	2002	Touré/Mouvement
3	Mali	2	2005	Touré/Mouvement
4	Mali	2	2008	
5	Mali		2012	
6	Mali	2	2014	Rally for Mali (RPM)
5	Mauritius	3	2012	Labour
6	Mauritius	2	2014	Labour
5	Morocco	3	2013	Justice and Development Party (PJD)
6	Morocco	2	2015	PJD

2	Mozambique	4	2002	The Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO)
3	Mozambique	2	2005	FRELIMO
4	Mozambique	3	2008	FRELIMO
5	Mozambique	2	2012	FRELIMO
6	Mozambique	2	2015	FRELIMO
2	Namibia	4	2003	South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO)
3	Namibia	2	2006	SWAPO
4	Namibia	2	2008	SWAPO
5	Namibia	2	2012	SWAPO
6	Namibia	2	2014	SWAPO
5	Niger	2	2013	Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism (PNDS)
6	Niger	2	2014	PNDS
2	Nigeria	4	2003	PDP
3	Nigeria	2	2005	PDP
4	Nigeria	2	2008	PDP
6	Nigeria	2	2014	PDP
5	Nigeria	2	2012	PDP
6	Sao Tome and Principe	2	2015	Independent Democratic Action (ADI)
2	Senegal	4	2002	Senegalese Democratic Party PDS
4	Senegal	2	2008	PDS

5	Senegal	2	2013	Alliance for the Republic (APR)
6	Senegal	2	2014	APR
3	Senegal	2	2005	PDS
5	Sierra Leone	2	2012	All People's Congress (APC)
6	Sierra Leone	2	2015	APC
2	South africa	4	2002	African National Congress (ANC)
3	South Africa	3	2006	ANC
4	South Africa	2	2008	ANC
5	South Africa	3	2011	ANC
6	South Africa	2	2015	ANC
5	Sudan	2	2013	National Congress (NC)
6	Sudan	2	2015	NC
5	Swaziland	2	2013	
6	Swaziland	2	2015	
2	Tanzania	4	2003	Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM)
3	Tanzania	2	2005	CCM
4	Tanzania	2	2008	CCM
5	Tanzania	2	2012	CCM
6	Tanzania	2	2015	CCM
5	Togo	2	2012	Union for the Republic (UNIR)

6	Togo	2	2014	UNIR
5	Tunisia	2	2013	Congress for the Republic (CPR)
6	Tunisia	2	2015	Nidaa Tounes
2	Uganda	4	2002	National Resistance Movement (NRM)
3	Uganda	2	2005	NRM
4	Uganda	2	2008	NRM
5	Uganda	2	2011/2012	NRM
6	Uganda	2	2015	NRM
2	Zambia	4	2003	Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD)
3	Zambia	2	2005	MMD
4	Zambia	2	2009	MMD
5	Zambia	2	2013	Patriotic Front (PF)
6	Zambia	2	2014	PF
2	Zimbabwe	4	2004	The Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF)
3	Zimbabwe	2	2005	ZANU-PF
4	Zimbabwe	2	2009	ZANU-PF
5	Zimbabwe	2	2012	ZANU-PF
6	Zimbabwe	2	2014	ZANU-PF

Notes by Country

Below are country specific comments on choices made when coding *Incumbent*.

Benin: The president between 2006 and 2011, Boni, was an independent candidate. In the 2007 parliamentary elections, Boni supported a coalition called FCBE, which got the largest share of votes. Therefore, we consider FCBE as the incumbent party.

Burkina Faso: President Blaise Compaoré faced a coup in October 2014. The Afrobarometer carried out a survey in the following year. In 2015, Burkina Faso was ruled by a transitional president, Michel Kafando. He was not from a political party. Therefore, respondents from Burkina Faso in the sixth round of the survey have missing on all the incumbent variables.

Cape Verde: Is a semi-presidential representative democracy where the president appoints the prime minister. From 2011 to 2015, the prime minister and the president were from different parties. Until round four, the Afrobarometer asked about prime minister in Cape Verde, while in round five and six, they asked about the president. Therefore, we consider the president as the incumbent in round five and six, and the party of the prime minister as the incumbent in the prior rounds. Cape Verde had an election in August 2011, the same year as the fifth round was carried out. In this election, Movement for Democracy's (MpD) candidate won against the candidate from the incumbent party. As the Afrobarometer carried out the survey in December 2011, we consider MpD the incumbent party in round five.

Egypt: Muhammed Mursi was removed in a coup in July 2013. Afrobarometer carried out the fifth survey round in March 2013. Therefore, Mursi was still incumbent at the time of the survey. In 2015, the year of the sixth round, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi was the sitting president. He had no party affiliation, and was not a response option in the Afrobarometer. Therefore, we give respondents from Egypt the value missing on the incumbent variables in

this round

Ethiopia: Afrobarometer carried out a survey in Ethiopia only in 2013. However, Afrobarometer raises questions on the comparability of Ethiopian results with those from other surveyed countries, in particular with regard to attitudes toward democracy. Therefore, Ethiopia is not included in the multi-country dataset. We also do not include Ethiopia.

Kenya: Kenya African National Union (KANU) had held the presidency uninterrupted since Kenyan independence. In 2002, The National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), a coalition consisting of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and National Alliance Party of Kenya (NAK) among others, won the presidential election. Their presidential candidate was Mwai Kibaki, from Democratic Party which was now a part of NAK. The coalition dissolved in 2005 due to a disagreement regarding the division of power between the president and the prime minister. The disagreement led to a vote on a proposed change to the constitution. While, Kibaki and NAK led the yes-campaign, LDP led the no-campaign. The yes-campaign later established the new party Party of National Unity (PNU), while the no-campaigners created Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). Thus, we consider NARC and LDP to be the incumbent up until 2005. As LDP broke out of the coalition in 2005, we do not consider LDP to be incumbent in 2005. The other parties that joined NARC in 2002 are not separate response alternatives. In the election in 2007, Kibaki, now in PNU and this time supported by KANU, ran against Odinga and ODM. Kibaki claimed victory, but the result was contested and violence broke out in Kenya. Kibaki and Odinga achieved a diplomatic solution in 2008, forming a coalition government with Kibaki as president and Odinga as the prime minister. As the Afrobarometer in Kenya does ask about presidential candidate, we consider PNU and Kibaki as the incumbent president in this time period. The coalition between PNU and ODM held power until 2013 when Uhuru Kenyatta won the election, this time as the leader of The National Alliance (and later the Jubilee alliance).

Malawi: President Mutharika (Democratic Progressive Party) died suddenly in 2012.

Joyce Banda (People's Party) succeeded him and took office the in April. The fifth round of the Afrobarometer survey was carried out in June/July 2012, so Banda was incumbent at the time of the survey. In May 2014, the year of round six, Malawi had an election. Due to the election result, People's Party (PP) handed power to Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Nevertheless, PP was still in power when Afrobarometer surveyed Malawi before in April/March.

Mali: In June 2002, the year of the second round of the Afrobarometer, Mali had a change in president. As Mali was surveyed in November and December, the new president, Touré, was the incumbent leader at the time of the survey. He ran as an independent candidate, but was supported by a coalition called Movement citoyen. In the spring of 2012, the year of round five, Mali had two different presidents due to a coup in March where the incumbent president agreed to resign. In the Afrobarometer, the overthrown president is not a response option (Touré). Therefore, we give respondents in Mali the value missing for incumbent in this round.

Swaziland: Is not a part of the analysis in this paper, as the survey has been conducted multiple rounds without asking respondents about voting.