

Political Responsiveness to Conflict Victims: Evidence from a Countrywide Audit Experiment in Colombia

Audit Experiment in Colombia

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2024/03/28

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01

**Research
background and
purpose**

Study on government response to victims of conflict

Government response to victims of the conflict

The study focuses on how politicians respond to victims' requests for help after the conflict is over.

Response rate analysis of local governments

The response rate of the government was calculated by comparing the responses to the request emails sent by conflict victims and non-conflict victims.

A Study on the Difference of Government Response


The study found that local officials had different response rates, friendliness and effectiveness for requests from different identities (conflict victims/non-conflict victims).

And local officials are more likely to respond to requests for help from victims than from ordinary citizens and return friendlier and more helpful responses.



02

**Detailed
explanation of
the original study**





Details of the original study

Main issues:

Do conflict victims have equal access to institutions and social services?

Are politicians less likely to be responsive to internally displaced individuals?

Does the identity of the victim's perpetrator influence whether politicians facilitate access to social services?

Do the ideological leanings of the party in power affect responsiveness toward victims?



Details of the original study

The experiment:

contacted every local authority in the 32 departamentos in Colombia, in total, 1,098 Alcaldías.

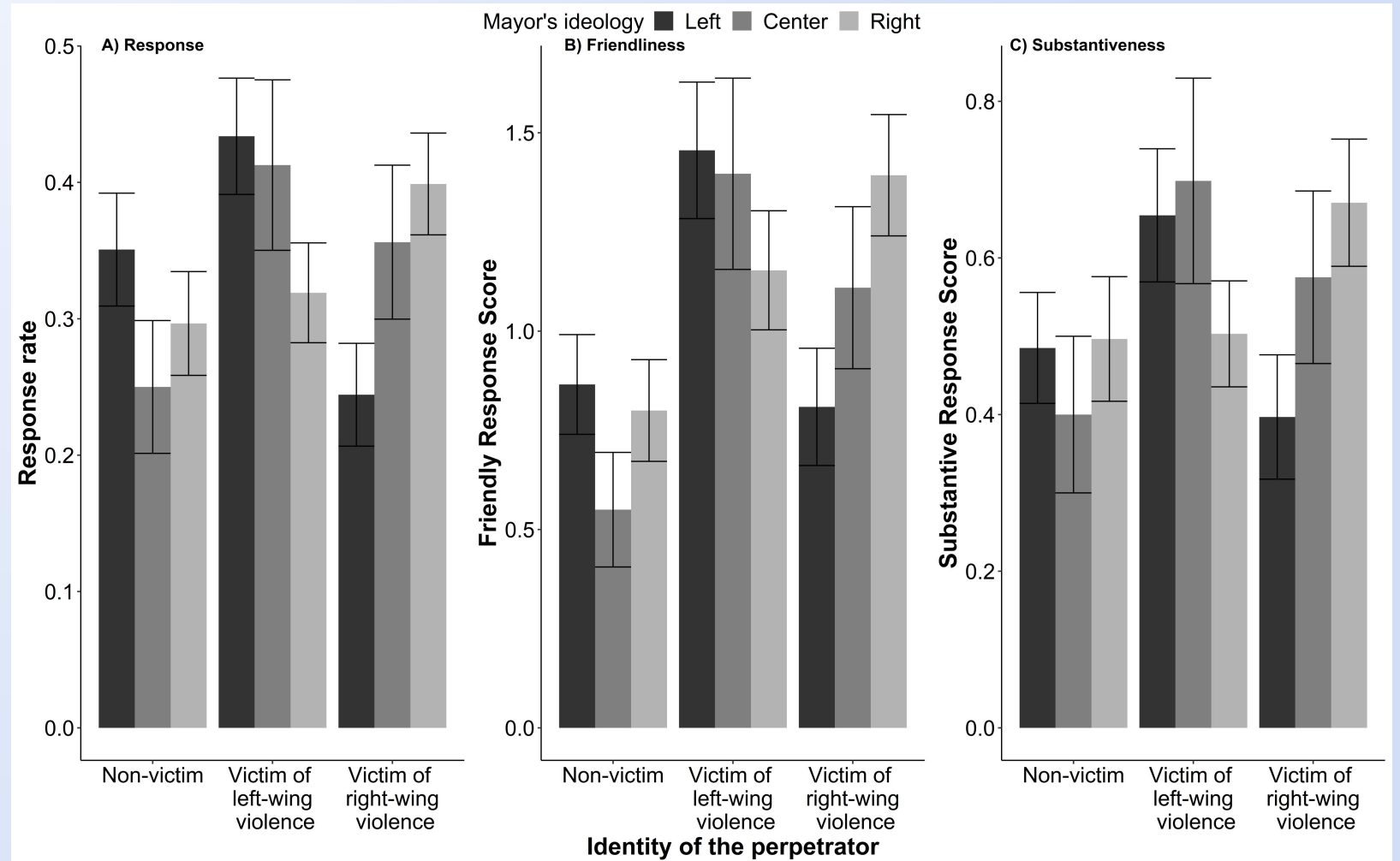
Act as a conflict victim/non-conflict victim, send an email seeking employment/housing assistance to the local government, and make statistics on the government's response rate, friendliness and effectiveness of the reply.

Measuring Responsiveness:

The friendliness of a response was measured as the sum of four independent indicators: name use (0-1), warm greetings (0-1), offer to follow-up (0-1), and a qualitative indicator of friendliness (0-3). Measured helpful responses based on a qualitative assessment of whether the response included useful and meaningful information on a 0-4 scale

Main output result (replicated)

Left-wing governments respond more and more kindly to victims of left-wing violence. Right-wing governments respond more to victims of right-wing violence, and their responses are kinder and more helpful.





Main output result (replicated)

The Interaction Effects of Mayor' s Ideology and the Identity of the Perpetrator									
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>								
	response			friendliness			substantive		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
victim_of_left	0.190*** (0.058)	0.173*** (0.056)	0.147** (0.059)	0.647*** (0.233)	0.567** (0.227)	0.513** (0.239)	0.257** (0.119)	0.212* (0.116)	0.170 (0.120)
center	0.112 (0.070)	0.094 (0.068)	0.102 (0.070)	0.300 (0.278)	0.220 (0.275)	0.249 (0.284)	0.178 (0.142)	0.136 (0.140)	0.115 (0.142)
right	0.155*** (0.055)	0.142*** (0.054)	0.156*** (0.056)	0.584*** (0.220)	0.517** (0.218)	0.578** (0.229)	0.274** (0.112)	0.250** (0.111)	0.263** (0.115)
victim_of_left:center	-0.133 (0.101)	-0.079 (0.097)	-0.081 (0.098)	-0.359 (0.402)	-0.189 (0.391)	-0.243 (0.401)	-0.134 (0.205)	-0.015 (0.199)	-0.023 (0.201)
victim_of_left:right	-0.269*** (0.078)	-0.270*** (0.075)	-0.248*** (0.077)	-0.886*** (0.312)	-0.850*** (0.304)	-0.822*** (0.316)	-0.425*** (0.159)	-0.406*** (0.155)	-0.358** (0.158)
Constant	0.244*** (0.042)	0.125 (0.455)	0.871 (0.625)	0.809*** (0.166)	0.232 (1.837)	2.349 (2.548)	0.397*** (0.085)	0.208 (0.934)	2.410* (1.277)
Observations	739	739	698	739	739	698	739	739	698
<i>Note:</i>				*p<0. 1; **p<0. 05; ***p<0. 01					

“left-leaning elected officials were more likely to respond to victims of left-wing armed groups in contrast to victims of the state or paramilitary groups.

At the same time, right-leaning elected officials were more likely to respond to state or paramilitary victims, as opposed to victims of left-wing violence. We argue and show through qualitative evidence that this unequal responsiveness may plausibly occur because elected officials perceive that victims of violent groups on their own ideological side might particularly distrust them”



03

My contribution





My contribution

1 Put forward an alternative hypothesis

In the original study, the government's more friendly and effective responses to help seekers from other factions did not mean that they actually expressed more goodwill, but simply because they responded to more texts. According to the original study's evaluation criteria for the friendliness and helpfulness of reply content, replies with more words tend to show more kindness and helpfulness.

My contribution

2 Correlation test

First, test the correlation coefficient between $\log(\text{words_response}+1)$ and friendliness /substantive. There is a significant positive correlation between the two groups.

```
data: log(audit$words_responses + 1) and audit$friendliness
t = 59.899, df = 1096, p-value < 2.2e-16
alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0
95 percent confidence interval:
 0.8606202 0.8883808
sample estimates:
      cor 
0.8752192
```

```
data: log(audit$words_responses + 1) and audit$substantive
t = 59.642, df = 1096, p-value < 2.2e-16
alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0
95 percent confidence interval:
 0.8596410 0.8875849
sample estimates:
      cor 
0.8743356
```

My contribution

3 Regression with words as control variable

After introducing the word number log (words_response+1) as a control variable, the regression results are as follows. It can be found that log(words_responses + 1) in the regression is still significantly related to friendliness and substantive, but victim_of_left and victim_of_left:right are no longer significantly related to friendliness and substantive. In other words, under the condition of controlling the number of words, the effect found in the original study no longer exists.

The Interaction Effects of Mayor' s Ideology and the Identity of the Perpetrator

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	substantive			friendliness		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
victim_of_left	-0.053 (0.058)	-0.065 (0.059)	-0.058 (0.062)	0.026 (0.108)	0.012 (0.109)	0.047 (0.116)
center	-0.019 (0.069)	-0.031 (0.071)	-0.066 (0.074)	-0.094 (0.128)	-0.115 (0.132)	-0.119 (0.137)
log(words_responses + 1)	0.387*** (0.008)	0.387*** (0.009)	0.387*** (0.009)	0.774*** (0.015)	0.778*** (0.016)	0.791*** (0.017)
right	-0.011 (0.055)	-0.008 (0.057)	-0.019 (0.060)	0.015 (0.102)	-0.002 (0.105)	0.002 (0.111)
victim_of_left:center	0.031 (0.100)	0.049 (0.101)	0.054 (0.104)	-0.029 (0.185)	-0.059 (0.187)	-0.086 (0.194)
victim_of_left:right	0.009 (0.078)	0.023 (0.079)	0.027 (0.083)	-0.019 (0.144)	0.011 (0.147)	-0.037 (0.154)
Constant	-0.005 (0.042)	-0.005 (0.476)	0.424 (0.663)	0.005 (0.078)	-0.195 (0.879)	-1.705 (1.235)



My contribution

4

Conclusion

The original study states: left-leaning elected officials were more likely to respond to victims of left-wing armed groups in contrast to victims of the state or paramilitary groups. At the same time, right-leaning elected officials were more likely to respond to state or paramilitary victims, as opposed to victims of left-wing violence.

However, upon further examination, this conclusion does not appear to be tenable. In my opinion, the government only provided more word-length replies to those seeking help from other factions, but did not provide more friendliness and help. Since the original article's evaluation criteria for the friendliness and usefulness of the reply content were inappropriate, the original study mistakenly considered the higher friendliness and effectiveness scores resulting from an increase in the number of words to be objective differences caused by the government's attitude.



04

Extension





Extension

Use more efficient language analysis methods

This repeated study cannot effectively deny the correctness of the original research hypothesis. In order to further analyze whether the ideological tendency of the ruling party affects responsiveness to victims, more advanced and scientific methods can be used to evaluate the friendliness and helpfulness scores in text messages. In particular, it is necessary to control the correlation between scores and text length.

Current AI technology may be able to provide better help in this regard.

The background features several overlapping circles in various shades of blue and white. Some circles are solid, while others are semi-transparent, creating a layered, geometric effect. The circles are scattered across the frame, with some appearing larger and more prominent than others.

THANKS