

# Bombing in Vietnam – War and Development

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- Harvard Professor of Economics
- Recipient of Clark Medal
- Economic growth and political economy
  - Poverty
  - Trade-induced job loss on crime
  - U.S. foreign intervention
  - Weather on economic growth

## Bombing strategy in Vietnam

- Discontinuities in U.S. strategies employed during the Vietnam War to estimate their causal impacts.
- Rounding thresholds in an algorithm used to target air strikes
- Bombing increased the military and political activities of the communist insurgency, weakened local governance, and reduced noncommunist civic engagement.
- Spatial discontinuity across neighboring military regions that pursued different counterinsurgency strategies.
- A strategy emphasizing overwhelming firepower plausibly increased insurgent attacks and worsened attitudes toward the U.S. and South Vietnamese government, relative to a more hearts-and-minds-oriented approach.

## Thoughts for evaluation

- Natural experiments
- Causal identification strategies
- Regression discontinuity

## References

- Dell M, Querubin P. Nation Building Through Foreign Intervention: Evidence from Discontinuities in Military Strategies. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 2018;133:701–64. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjx037>.