Organized Crime, Local Politicians, and State Capacity

Seung-hun Lee*

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

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Abstract

This paper investigates the impact of losing mayors to successful assassinations on local government capacity by leveraging the randomness in the outcome of assassination attempts against Mexican mayors. Tax collection falls by 27%, and primary service expenditures shift to construction investments in municipalities with successful assassinations compared to failed attempts. There is suggestive evidence that changes to the personnel capacity of local governments influence these outcomes. Productive municipal workers leave, and retaining them would require an 11% wage increase. In addition, more personnel are assigned to public security duties over the provision of public service. Non-political violence, economic activities, population changes, and the temporary rise in organized crime do not fully explain these outcomes. The results highlight how the void in leadership in violent environments stifles local state capacity.

Keywords: State capacity, local government, mayors, organized crime, assassinations

JEL Codes: D74, H11, H71, O17

*Contact: seunghunlee@ust.hk.

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1 Introduction

Political violence is a significant barrier to establishing capable local governments in many developing countries. In violent environments, political assassination by organized criminals is a serious threat to establishing local state capacity (Daniele 2019). Competent individuals may be deterred from political careers and electoral processes may be corrupted by illegitimate actors (Acemoglu et al. 2013). Furthermore, political assassinations remove decision-makers overseeing the bureaucratic functions of local government, such as managing public finances and recruiting bureaucrats (Finan et al. 2017). These functions are pivotal, accounting for 24% of public expenditures and 35% of public employment globally (OECD 2016). Moreover, these functions are being expanded through the decentralization of governments (Bardhan 2002). While the political effects of assassinations are well-documented at the national level (Jones and Olken 2009), much less is known about their impact on the capacity of local governments to perform their bureaucratic functions.

This paper investigates whether successful assassinations of leaders affect the capacity of local governments to maintain revenues, provide public services, and retain their personnel. I construct a dataset on local public finances, personnel, criminal groups, and political assassinations. The effects of losing local politicians to assassinations are identified by comparing local government effectiveness in places with successful assassination attempts against failed ones. The results provide new evidence that the absence of individual decision-makers affects the local government effectiveness in violent environments. The evidence ultimately shows that the impact of successful political assassinations reaches beyond the political dimensions of state capacity.

I study the effects of successful assassinations of leaders on local state capacity focusing on mayors in Mexico. Mayors have authority over the recruitment of personnel, provision of basic services, infrastructure projects, and tax collection (Dell 2015; Larreguy et al. 2020). They are under constant threat of political violence. According to ACLED, Mexico has the highest number of attacks against local politicians in the world.[1] No fewer than 85 out of more than 15,000 mayors have been assassinated since 2000.[2] They are at least 9 times more likely to be murdered than the general population (Calderón et al. (2019) and Figure 1). According to data and qualitative evidence, the perpetrators are

1. The statistics are obtained from the following online report: https://acleddata.com/2023/06/22/special-issue-violence-against-local-officials/ (Accessed on October 28th, 2023)

2. There are 2,471 municipalities in Mexico, including 16 boroughs in Mexico City. Each municipality has had 6-7 different mayors since 2000.

usually organized criminal groups (Grillo 2011; Trejo and Ley 2021). They seek to gain political influence and exploit local resources such as fiscal revenues, construction projects, and extortion (Trejo and Ley 2021).[3] Data shows that the assassination attempts are a product of criminal group presence and competition, rather than general levels of violence (Rios 2012).

My identification strategy isolates the effect of losing a mayor to an assassination on various local state capacity outcomes over time. I construct a novel panel dataset of assassination attempts, the presence of criminal groups, municipal public finance, and the local government workforce. Data on assassination attempts and their outcomes are obtained through text-scraping online newspaper articles. Using this data, I compare the state capacity of municipalities whose mayors were killed to those whose mayors survived an attempt unharmed, employing various event-study estimators. Excluding municipalities without assassination attempts minimizes the selection bias that arises from differences between locations with and without such attempts (Brodeur 2018; Jones and Olken 2009). The regression design nets out the effects of confounders such as political violence by making comparisons conditional on the occurrence of assassination attempts in both treated and control groups. I control for demographics, crime statistics, and municipality and year fixed effects. Thus, the treatment effects are identified by changes to the local state capacity among municipalities with successful and failed assassination attempts.

The first set of results explores the effects of successful assassinations on the capacity of local governments to collect taxes and deliver public services. Municipalities with mayor assassinations lose their capacity to raise revenues. Total tax revenue decreases by around 27% over the 6 years after assassinations. Per capita tax revenue falls by around 80 Pesos, or a 22% decrease relative to the pre-assassination averages. In addition, intergovernmental grants that partially depend on local tax revenues fall by 10%. Revenues from other sources not linked to taxation remain unaffected. These estimates are robust to different choices of event-study estimators. Overall, affected municipalities lose their ability to collect taxes and obtain resources for their operations.

Furthermore, public expenditures are diverted away from essential services to investment in construction. The share of public investment expenditure on construction projects rises by 5 percentage

3. There are numerous incidences reported on the news where organized criminal groups exploited local revenues and forced municipal governments to grant public works projects to companies with ties to criminals. For instance, see https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2023/05/11/mexicos-gangs-are-becoming-criminal-conglomerates and https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/17/opinion/sunday/why-cartels-are-killing-mexicos-mayors.html (accessed on September 5th, 2023)

points, or 25% increase in terms of volumes. This comes at the expense of downsizing resources that fund basic local government functions, poverty reduction, and economic development. The share of expenses to basic local government operations and allowances to municipal institutions providing essential services falls by 1.5 and 1 percentage points, respectively. In volumes, these fall by about 45% and 40% each. Thus, the capacity to provide public services deteriorates through crowd-out of funds for primary services towards construction by illegitimate entities, consistent with other such incidences and evidence reported in Grillo (2011), Liu and Mikesell (2014), and Mauro (1998).[4,5]

Then, I explore how successful assassinations affect the personnel capacity behind local government operations. First, I develop a framework exploring how assassinations affect the allocation of local government workers. This framework implies that assassinations decrease the supply of workers and increase the cost of retaining workers, particularly those with better outside options. Then, I examine this hypothesis empirically using workers at the peak of private sector earnings capacity according to a nationwide labor survey - those in their 30s and 40s. The proportion of these workers in the affected municipalities decreases by 13 percentage points. Using the wage elasticity of labor supply from Dal Bó et al. (2013), I show that an 11% increase in wages would be needed to retain these workers. In addition, there is also suggestive evidence that more municipal workers are assigned to active public security operations over public service. Therefore, the loss of mayors hurts the capacity of local governments by increasing difficulty in retaining young and productive workers and shifting the type of tasks workers are assigned to (Akhtari et al. 2022).

In the next part of the paper, I conduct several exercises to rule out alternative mechanisms. First, I test the influence of confounders - non-political violence, economic activities, and population characteristics. An upsurge in violence may discourage economic activities and induce outmigration from that municipality, thereby affecting tax collection, the composition of the government workforce, and the demand for public services irrespective of assassinations. Thus, assessing the changes in these factors after successful assassinations is important for ruling out possible alternate channels. I find no statistically significant changes in crime rates, nightlight intensities, individual-level economic activities, population composition, or outmigration, and rule out these alternative channels.

Next, I check whether the differential presence of organized criminal groups across treated and control municipalities explains the outcomes. There is a temporary increase in the presence of these

4. Liu and Mikesell (2014) and Mauro (1998) finds that corrupt politicians distort the allocation of government resources towards sectors with high rent-seeking potential, including construction, over social welfare.

5. In my dataset, the funds are aggregated at the municipal level without specifying the recipient of government funds.

groups in treated municipalities, but this change fades away in the long run. The number and the presence of new organized criminal groups rise only in the year of a successful assassination attempt. These results indicate that organized criminal groups take advantage of the void in leadership in the short run but do not fully explain the persistent decay in local state capacity.

Last, I reaffirm that the presence of mayors after assassination attempts drives the results by incorporating mayors injured due to assassination attempts and nonviolent deaths. If the presence of mayors explains the outcomes, then treatment effects should decline with the inclusion of absent mayors in the control group. I confirm this by replicating the main regression equation and triple-difference specification with control groups involving mayors with different reasons for prolonged absence, such as health reasons and accidents.

Overall, the results show that successful assassinations of mayors negatively affect the local state capacity beyond the political outcomes. The capacity to collect taxes and allocate public resources is hampered. There is suggestive evidence that increases in costs of retaining capable workers and changes to the types of tasks performed by the personnel explain these outcomes. These are not linked to non-political violence, economic activity, or population changes. These results highlight how the loss of local politicians to violence by criminal groups shapes the effectiveness of local public organizations. In addition, the results demonstrate that successful political violence has effects on non-political dimensions of state capacity such as the effectiveness of bureaucratic tasks and retention of personnel. Last, the findings highlight the vulnerabilities that decentralized governments may face in environments dominated by illegitimate actors.

The findings in this research contribute to three strands of literature. First, this paper speaks to the literature on the formation of the capacity of local governments. Origins of state capacity at the national level have been widely studied across many disciplines (Acemoglu 2005; Besley and Persson 2009, 2010; Finan et al. 2017; Tilly 1985). Recent works began analyzing the effectiveness of subnational public institutions (Akhtari et al. 2022; Best et al. 2023; Dal Bó et al. 2013; Fenizia 2022; Marx et al. 2024). There are several studies investigating the effects of exogenous shocks and monitoring mechanisms on the capabilities of local politicians (Daniele and Dipoppa 2017; Daniele 2019; De Feo and De Luca 2017; Larreguy et al. 2020; Vannutelli 2022). These works are silent on the measures of local state capacity besides electoral outcomes and the characteristics of the local politicians. I use novel local-level data on public finance, government workers, and political violence to study the development of the bureaucratic capacity of local governments such as collecting taxes,

allocating public goods, and recruiting personnel. In doing so, I examine the additional elements that affect the effectiveness of decentralized governments in developing countries.

Second, this paper adds to the literature on the developmental costs of political violence. The economic consequences of violence are well-documented (Brodeur 2018; Dell 2015; Pinotti 2015; Sviatschi 2022; Velásquez 2020). Political violence leads to situations in which formal authorities are being contested by non-state actors (Alesina et al. 2019; Acemoglu et al. 2013; Blattman and Miguel 2010; Blattman et al. 2024; Dal Bó and Di Tella 2003; Dal Bó et al. 2006; Sánchez de la Sierra 2020). These works use variations in violent incidences that occur nationally or regionally. As many violent events occur at a local level, the scope of their impacts may not be accurately captured. I build on these works by leveraging the impacts of the direct attacks on local politicians. I also disentangle the influence of political and non-political violence using data on the local presence of organized criminal groups and other types of crimes across municipalities over long periods. Furthermore, the results highlight that the non-political dimensions of state capacity can be hampered by political violence.

Last, this paper contributes to the literature on the influence of decision-making personnel on organizational performance. Past works have used changes in national leadership from unexpected transitions (Blakeslee 2018; Iqbal and Zorn 2008; Jones and Olken 2005, 2009; Rommel and Schaudt 2020). Similar approaches have been applied to investigate the role of decision-makers on firm performance (Becker and Hvide 2022; Bennedsen et al. 2020; Fahlenbrach et al. 2017; Jaravel et al. 2018). These works use aggregate outcome variables such as macroeconomic growth, firm profits, and institutional policy decisions. Recent works focus more on the performance of personnel in local institutions using data on procurement (Best et al. 2023; Spenkuch et al. 2023). I expand this literature by using disaggregated measures of state capacity beyond procurement and leveraging variation in the presence of decision-makers induced by local political violence. Furthermore, I corroborate the significance of the individual decision-makers at local public institutions by providing evidence that their absence hurts the capacity of these institutions.

The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 provides an overview of the role of the municipal government and the political violence in Mexico. Section 3 describes the data and descriptive statistics. I provide explanations on the empirical strategy in Section 4. Section 5 reports key findings on the effects of losing leaders to successful assassinations on local fiscal capacity. In Section 6, I analyze whether local governments lose their capacity to retain productive personnel after successful assassinations. I establish the channel explaining the outcomes in Section 7. Section 8 concludes.

2 Background: Municipal governments and political violence in Mexico

Municipal governments in Mexico offer an ideal context to examine the impact of successful assassinations on local state capacity. Mayors lead municipal governments and have the final say on tax collection, public goods provision, and recruitment of personnel. Since the mid-2000s, they are increasingly vulnerable to assassinations. The culprits are usually criminal groups trying to extort local resources vital to their operations. Data show that mayors in municipalities with a high presence of organized crime are more likely to be targeted and killed, irrespective of non-political violence. In this section, I provide an overview of municipal governments and organized crime in Mexico.

2.1 The authority and characteristics of municipal governments

Mayors are the heads of municipal governments with various responsibilities. There are 2,471 municipalities in 32 states, including the 16 boroughs in Mexico City. Each mayor serves a 3-year term and has been eligible for reelection since 2018.[6] Mayors are elected with the vice mayor (*alcalde suplente*), one or two attorney generals (*sindicos*), and several community representatives (*regidors*) as running mates. The municipal government is responsible for delivering public goods and services, and recruiting personnel to execute its operations (Dell 2015; Larreguy et al. 2020). In the case of a permanent vacancy by a mayor, an alternate mayor takes over until the next election.[7]

Municipalities in Mexico collect taxes on local properties and grants from the central government to finance their operations. Municipal governments gained fiscal autonomy in the middle of the 1990s (Careaga and Weingast 2003; Larreguy et al. 2020). Since then, tax collection from their jurisdictions primarily through property tax increased (Careaga and Weingast 2003).[8] However, grants from the central government still take up a significant share of the municipal government revenue (Careaga and Weingast 2003; INEGI 2016). Part of the funds are earmarked (*aportaciones*), and the others are non-earmarked portions (*participaciones*)(INEGI 2016). The latter partly depends on the taxes collected at the municipal level and takes up roughly one-third of the municipal revenues (Timmons and Broid 2013; INEGI 2016).[9] Further details are in Appendix A.1.

6. Before 2018, mayors could not seek reelection (Larreguy et al. 2020). This ban was lifted as a result of the electoral reform in 2014 but only came into practice in 2018 due to the timing of election cycles (Enríquez 2022).

7. This is usually the vice mayors, but there are also exceptions (Esparza and Mancera 2018).

8. Article 115 in the Mexican Constitution states that it is the municipal government's responsibility to oversee taxes from properties. Other forms of taxation, such as income taxes, are levied by the federal or state government.

9. The nonconditional portion of the funds from the higher levels of government is a function of the population, poverty levels, municipal tax collection, and previous *participaciones* (Timmons and Broid 2013). Part of the rationale for incorpo-

Municipalities spend heavily on personnel payments, public investments, provision of public services, and allowances to internal institutions responsible for health and education (INEGI 2016). These spending are directed towards water, waste management, construction projects, health and educational services, and roads (Larreguy et al. 2020). Municipality governments mostly finance the majority of these services from local taxes and central government grants (Chong et al. 2015). As such, decreases in various sources of funds are expected to negatively impact the delivery of public goods and services (Careaga and Weingast 2003). I confirm this by showing that municipal revenues drop after successful assassinations, leading to reduced spending on various public services in Section 5.

In financing and executing these operations, the personnel of the municipal government recruited by mayors play a crucial role. The heads of key institutions that execute policies are designated by mayors (Dell 2015; Grillo 2011). Mayors also have the final say in recruiting bureaucrats who carry out basic tasks (Dal Bó et al. 2013). Municipal bureaucrats make up about 21% of public sector jobs in Mexico and handle public goods and services, security, local finances, and economic development (INEGI 2022). The absence of mayors after assassinations can hinder recruitment and undermine local government capacity. In Section 6, I provide a conceptual framework explaining how local capacity could be affected through changes in available public workers following assassinations. Then, I verify this empirically using data on different types of municipal government workers.

2.2 Organized criminals and the attacks on local officials

Organized criminal groups in Mexico were not always in conflict with local politicians. Before the mid-2000s, there was less violence against local politicians because criminal groups benefited more from cooperating with corrupt officials than from targeting them (Lessing 2015). Parts of Mexico, particularly the regions bordering the United States, have been a corridor for illicit drugs in the 1980s and 1990s (Grillo 2011). Organized criminal groups engaged in inter-cartel wars to win control over key trade routes (Dell 2015; Trejo and Ley 2021). They bribed corrupt local government officials for cooperation in securing routes and gaining an advantage over rival groups (Trejo and Ley 2019).[10]

However, organized criminals in Mexico have increasingly targeted high-profile local officials

rating tax collection into the intergovernmental transfers is to incentivize the subnational governments to internalize local economic prosperity and to allow them to retain a higher share of revenues raised from growth (Weingast 2009). Further discussion will be included in the Appendix A.1.

10. There were many incidences of local police and even politicians being arrested for corruption and/or having an illegal connection with organized criminals, particularly in the years of President Salinas (1988-1994) (Grillo 2011)

since the mid-2000s, shown in Figure 1. This is driven in part by the increasing involvement of the federal government and the military following the "War on Drugs" since 2006. The federal government increased crackdowns on drugs and dismantling of major organized criminal groups (Grillo 2011).[11] These unintentionally led to a larger number of smaller criminal groups fighting over scarce opportunities for drug trafficking. Inter-cartel wars became more intense, making it difficult for remaining criminal groups to rely solely on drug trade (Trejo and Ley 2019).

These changes incentivized organized criminal groups to target local politicians. The difficulty of maintaining drug trafficking led these groups to seek alternative revenue sources such as ransoms, extortions, local fiscal revenues, and construction projects (Grillo 2011). Organized criminal groups often threaten mayors to access property tax registry and knowledge on construction projects, attacking those who are not cooperative (Lessing 2015; Trejo and Ley 2019). In other cases, criminals attack mayors to influence the electoral process to facilitate access to this information (Magaloni et al. 2020).

This qualitative evidence corresponds with the descriptive results from the data. Mayors are the most vulnerable at the beginning and the end of their terms, coinciding with the election cycle (Appendix Figure B1). As attacks around elections facilitate involvement by illegitimate groups, this evidence aligns with the political motives of organized criminal groups seeking local resources (Enríquez 2022). In addition, mayors in locations with multiple criminal groups are retaliated for siding with rival groups or not cooperating at all (Lessing 2015). I explore this in the next section.

2.3 Which municipalities are more vulnerable?

This section studies whether the level of criminal group presence is associated with assassinations, rather than non-political violence. If municipalities with assassinations also have high non-political crime rates, the effects of successful assassination on local state capacity could be entangled with non-political violence. To cleanly attribute the effects of successful assassinations to political violence committed by organized criminal groups, the incidence of assassinations should not be correlated with non-political violence. To verify this, I use the following descriptive regression to estimate the correlation of assassination to organized crime (β_{OCG}) and non-political violence (β_{hom}).

11. The "War on Drugs", declared by President Felipe Calderón to combat organized crime, involved the deployment of the federal military throughout Mexico's most contested regions. The strategies utilized by the military involved confrontation with the organized criminals and targeting their leadership (Magaloni et al. 2020; Trejo and Ley 2021). Despite some success in breaking down notable organized criminals such as the Beltrán-Leyva organization, others such as La Familia expanded their influence by retaliating against local politicians (Trejo and Ley 2019, 2021)

$$y_{mt} = \alpha + \beta_{\text{OCG}}\text{OCG}_{mt} + \beta_{\text{hom}}\text{Homicide}_{mt} + \phi X_{mt} + \gamma_m + \delta_t + \epsilon_{mt} \quad (1)$$

The goal is to see if assassinations are only related to the presence of organized criminal groups and not the non-political violence ($\beta_{\text{OCG}} > 0, \beta_{\text{hom}} = 0$). y_{mt} is the dummy variable for assassinations. OCG_{mt} refers to the organized criminal presence from Coscia and Rios (2012), Osorio and Beltran (2020), and ACLED. Homicide_{mt} is the homicide rate proxying for non-political violence from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI).[12,13] X_{mt} is the set of municipal-level demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. I include municipality (γ_m) and year fixed effects (δ_t). The error is clustered at the municipal level. Further explanations of the data are found in Section 3.

The results in Table 1 show that assassinations are correlated with the presence of criminal groups, not non-political violence.[14] When considering all of Mexico, the presence of an additional criminal group is associated with a 0.2%-0.3% increase in the likelihood of assassinations. A new criminal group is associated with a 0.3 percentage point increase in assassinations. These relationships remain qualitatively the same when the sample is narrowed to municipalities with assassination attempts. Homicide rates are unrelated to mayoral assassinations throughout. Thus, the incidence of assassinations is associated with organized criminal presence. The results also align with qualitative evidence that mayors are attacked for siding with rival groups or not cooperating.

3 Data

I construct a novel municipality-level panel dataset on assassination attempts against mayors and municipality-level state capacity indicators. I collect cases of assassination attempts by gathering information from online newspaper archives using text-scraping methods. I combine this with municipal fiscal indicators, local government personnel data, and other economic, criminal, and demographic variables gathered from various sources. These features allow me to leverage variation in the outcome of assassination attempts and measure local government effectiveness across municipalities over time. I provide a detailed explanation of the steps of constructing the dataset.

12. INEGI stands for *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía*
13. Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System (SESNSP) include other non-political violence from 2011 onwards. Thus, I choose homicide rates as a proxy for non-political violence since they provide more statistical power.
14. Conclusions are similar if I use the incidence of attacks for an outcome variable instead of assassinations. The results are in Appendix Table B1.

3.1 Assassination attempts against mayors: Sources and collection procedure

I use two types of sources for assassination attempts against mayors. First, I collect relevant newspaper articles documenting attacks against mayors found in online newspaper archives such as *Newsbank* and *Proquest*. Second, I complement these articles with existing databases of events. I gather the information on the name of the mayor, the municipality that the attacked mayor represents, and the date and the result of the attack from these sources.

The collection procedure using online newspaper archives can be summarized as follows. I create a program script that inputs specific key phrases into the search box of the news archives and executes an online search. Then, I filter the articles that appear in the results based on timeframe and publisher.[15] The script then gathers the name of the publisher, date, title, and the full text of each article that remains after filtering. Afterward, I discard articles that do not address attacks on mayors based on the contents of each article. Last, I extract information on the name of the attacked mayor, the municipality, the date of the incident, and the outcome of the assassination attempt. Further technical explanations will be included in Appendix A.2.

I also refer to other databases that document events highlighted in various news sources and previously published reports to complement the results from the online newspaper archives. The Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone (GDELT), Data Cívica, and the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) are primarily used. I also refer to reports written by Magar (2018) and Esparza and Mancera (2018), which list mayors who died from assassinations and non-violent reasons.

I categorize the outcome of the assassination attempts on mayors as follows. A successful attack is defined as one that leads to the death of a mayor immediately or within days. These cases constitute the treatment group. An attack on the mayor is considered a failure if the mayor, municipal office, or mayoral residence is targeted without killing the mayor. Failed attempts can be disaggregated into the cases where the mayor was unharmed and injured. I classify the assassination attempt into the former if the article explicitly states that the mayor was not at the site of the attack or unharmed. If the article mentions injuries or hospitalizations, I classify such cases in the latter category. I include unharmed cases in the control group, with injured cases included as a robustness check in Section 7. I explain the rationale for this design in Section 4.

There are other types of political violence targeting mayors that are not included in the regression.

15. I include articles from nationwide sources such as *El Universal*, *La Jornada* and *Reforma* but also regional newspapers.

For instance, kidnappings that do not lead to the death of a mayor and death threats are excluded. I discard them since these types of violence may seek to frighten, but not necessarily eliminate the presence of mayors by murder. The same logic can be applied to attacks targeting family members of mayors and attacks at public ceremonies in which the mayor was attending.[16] Dropping these cases ensures that the treatment assignment exploits variations in the success of assassination attempts seeking to violently and permanently eliminate mayors.

There are a total of 163 assassination attempts from these sources, with the earliest incident dating back to 2002. Out of these, 85 were successful attempts and 69 were failed attempts. The failed attempts can be disaggregated into 25 cases with injuries and 44 with no injuries. These occurred in 138 municipalities.[17] Figure 2 shows the geographical and temporal distribution of these events. The full lists of mayors targeted by assassination attempts are in Appendix A.3. (Tables A1 - A3)

3.2 Data on municipal fiscal effectiveness and local government personnel

To capture various measures of fiscal capacity and the composition of the municipal government personnel, I utilize various datasets from INEGI. I use the yearly panel of municipal fiscal revenues and expenditures (EFIPEM[18]) to quantify the fiscal capacity of each municipality. As for the data on personnel, I draw on the biennial census on municipal governments (CNGMD) and quarterly National Survey of Occupation and Employment (ENOE).[19]

The EFIPEM data includes various categories of revenues and expenditures. I use tax revenues to capture the fiscal capacity of municipal governments, reflecting standard practice in state capacity literature (Besley and Persson 2009, 2010). I also use intergovernmental grants, revenues from public service provision, and other funds such as fines. The data also includes public expenditure spent on providing basic public goods, investing in construction projects, and transfers and allowances to municipal institutions and local entities. I use these to trace how the provision of various services by the municipal governments is affected. I use the data dating back to 1995, when local governments gained more fiscal authority (Larreguy et al. 2020).[20] Further explanations of these variables are in

16. In the earlier version of this draft, the cases where the mayors were attacked in the public ceremonies were included in the control group. The estimation results do not differ much from the current version.

17. There are also no less than 23 failed kidnapping attempts, 64 incidences of family members attacked, and 50 threatening messages directed at municipality presidents. These are excluded from the regression but included in Figure 1.

18. Estadística de Finanzas Públicas Estatales y Municipales

19. CNGMD and ENOE stands for *Censo Nacional de Gobiernos Municipales y Demarcaciones Terrotoriales de la Ciudad de México* and *Encuesta Nacional de Ocupación y Empleo*.

20. The raw data for EFIPEM dates as far back as 1989. Results are robust if all available EPIFEM data are used.

Appendix A.4. Summary statistics for the analysis sample are in Table A4.[21]

The data on municipal personnel come from two sources. CNGMD provides data on the characteristics of municipal government workers, including the total size of the workforce and the number of workers by age group and type of duties, such as public service, security, and finance. The data are available biennially starting from 2010 onward. Thus, the sample for studying personnel capacity has a smaller timeframe than that for studying fiscal capacity. I also use nationally representative earnings data for workers in major industries in Mexico from ENOE. I use this source to estimate earnings from other sectors, which is crucial for analyzing how successful assassination affects the ability to retain municipal workers in Section 6. Summary statistics are provided in Tables A4.

3.3 Data sources for outcome variables used in falsification tests

I obtain variables that may confound the effects of assassinations such as non-political crimes, economic activities, and measures of population. Differential changes in these variables in municipalities with assassinations suggest factors beyond losing mayors that may impact local state capacity. If true, the size of the effects and the underlying channels may be inaccurately estimated. Thus, it is necessary to test whether these confounders vary with successful assassinations.

I gather the relevant data from multiple sources to test these alternative mechanisms. The municipal statistics on criminal activities are from INEGI and the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System (SESNSP). To proxy for the economic activities, I use the nightlight data from two sources (DMSP and VIIRS) and economic activity indicators from ENOE to test whether changes in economic activities affect the results (Donaldson and Storeygard 2016; Henderson et al. 2012).[22]

To capture changes in municipal population, I gather variables capturing population characteristics and movement from various sources. Mexican census investigates the official population count once every five years. To account for gaps in the data, I use the yearly population estimates based on satellite imaging techniques and survey data from the WorldPop dataset. For years in which both estimates are available, the Census counts and WorldPop estimates correlate strongly, as seen in Appendix Figure A2. I also use outmigration patterns to the United States from each Mexican municipality. This is measured by the number of Consular ID Cards (MCAS) issued to Mexicans

21. Summary statistics that include data from all municipalities in Mexico are in Appendix Table A5

22. DMSP is available up until 2013 and is discontinued after. VIIRS data is only available from the year 2012. I generate a harmonized measure of nightlight data with a procedure detailed in Appendix Figure A1 in Appendix Section A.5.

residing in the United States, available from the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME).[23]

3.4 Data sources for control variables

To address omitted variable bias, I include variables on criminal group presence, general criminal activity, and demographic and geographic characteristics. The data on organized criminal groups is identical to those used in Section 2 - Coscia and Rios (2012) for periods before 2000, Osorio and Beltran (2020) for 2000-2018, and ACLED for 2019 and after. I include municipality-level homicide statistics from INEGI to account for general criminal activities and other factors associated with lack of state presence (Dal Bó et al. 2013).

As for other variables on demographic and geographic characteristics at the municipal level, I use data from the Mexican Census. From there, I use the average years of schooling and the share of the Indigenous population at the municipal level. These variables capture the determinants of marginalization and underdevelopment, which are correlated with lack of state presence (Dal Bó et al. 2013). Further details are in Appendix A.4.[24]

4 Empirical strategy

I compare municipalities with successful assassinations to those with failed attempts that did not injure the mayors using event-study specifications. The treatment effect is identified by differences in the changes in the measures of local government capacity across the two groups of municipalities. This design addresses selection bias and nets out confounding factors such as the incidence of political violence. Furthermore, I identify how treatment effects change over time. I discuss the formation of the analysis sample and the main specification in this section.

4.1 Constitution of the treatment and control group municipalities

To isolate the effects of losing mayors to successful assassinations, I construct a counterfactual of the municipalities that lost their mayors to assassination with those whose mayors were unharmed

23. MCAS and IME each stands for *Matrica Consular de Alta Seguridad* and *Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior*. I chose this since existing data on internal migration within Mexico are based on surveys conducted in select municipalities and do not cover all the municipalities included in this research.

24. In the census data, these variables are available once every five years. The gaps in the data are filled by linearly interpolating between available data points. Subsequent results are robust to not including these two variables as covariates.

after the attacks. The former group of municipalities is the treatment group while the latter is the control group (*near-miss*). I leave out municipalities whose mayors were injured. These mayors are also unable to serve for some periods, similar to those in the treatment group. I study how including these cases in the control group affects the treatment effect in section 7. Municipalities whose mayors were never targeted are excluded from the analysis to ensure that the comparison is made conditional on an assassination attempt. Thus, I compare the effects of losing a leader to assassinations in places with similar degrees of political violence.

This research design addresses potential biases due to selection into treatment that may occur if municipalities with no assassination attempts are included. Perpetrators target certain municipalities over others based on the potential for strategic gains (Dell 2015; Enríquez 2022; Grillo 2011). This would lead to differences in unobserved and observed attributes such as economic, demographical, and criminal characteristics across targeted and nontargeted areas. These imbalances lead to contaminated estimation of the treatment effects. Thus, limiting the sample to municipalities with attacks is essential for the identification of the treatment effects.

In particular, it nets out confounding factors and leverages local-level outcomes by comparing municipalities that share similar characteristics except for the treatment. All comparisons in this setup are made conditional on an assassination attempt (Brodeur 2018; Jones and Olken 2009). Thus, treated municipalities are compared with near-miss ones that are similar in observable traits such as political violence. This nets out the influence of these confounders. Furthermore, I can leverage the variation in the outcome variables disaggregated to the municipal-by-year level. This allows me to investigate how losing a leader to successful assassinations affects local indicators of state capacity, which is not possible in a more aggregated setup such as country-level regressions.

To ensure the balancedness of the treatment and control groups, I implement the following measures. First, I drop four municipalities ranked in the top 3% of the population distribution. Since these municipalities have large spending, revenues, homicides, and other measurable activities, omitting these cases leaves me with municipalities that are comparable to each other. For robustness, I show throughout the results in Sections 5 and 7 that including or excluding these municipalities does not alter the results drastically. Then, I conduct a balance test with the remaining municipalities in Table 2 by regressing observable characteristics one year before assassinations (the year of assassinations for political affiliations) onto the treatment status.[25] For municipalities experiencing multiple assassina-

25. The rationale for setting the timing differently for political affiliations is that for some municipalities, the political

tion attempts, I include the first case of successful assassination and drop the others, leaving me with 81 municipalities in the treatment and 31 in the control group.[26] Overall, I find that the two types of municipalities are comparable except for treatment status as they mostly share similar observable characteristics in crime, criminal group presence, political circumstances, and other indicators.

4.2 Model specifications: Measuring the effects of assassinations over time

To estimate the dynamic treatment effects, I use an event-study regression which allows me to leverage temporal and geographical variation of assassination attempts. The regression includes indicators for time passed since assassinations, municipality and year fixed effects, and time-varying characteristics at the municipal level. The regression takes the following form.

$$y_{mt} = \alpha + \sum_{\substack{h=-6 \\ h\neq -1}}^{6} \tau_h I[t - \text{assassination} = h]_{mt} + \tau_{7^+} I[t - \text{assassination} \geq 7]_{mt} + \beta X_{mt} + \gamma_m + \delta_t + \varepsilon_{mt} \tag{2}$$

m and t index municipality and time, respectively. The unit of time is in years for most regressions except for those on municipal personnel, which is in biennial units. γ_m and δ_t are municipality and year fixed effects respectively. The standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

y_{mt} is the outcome variable of interest. For outcomes related to local fiscal capacity, this represents expenditure and revenues for the municipal governments. For models measuring effects on municipal personnel, y_{mt} refers to the variables on the share of different groups of municipal workforce. In models testing for mechanisms, y_{mt} represents potential confounding variables such as nightlights, population, and crime statistics at the municipal level.

$I[t - \text{assassination} = h]_{mt}$ is the treatment assignment variable for municipality m in year t. It equals 1 if municipality m had a mayor assassinated h years ago at year t. For near-miss municipalities, $I[t - \text{assassination} = h]_{mt}$ is always 0 for every t and h. Parameter τ_h captures the dynamic effect of assassinations on y_{mt} h years after such event by comparing treatment municipalities h years since assassination against near-miss municipalities.[27] I also include these indicators to account for timing

party of the mayor may differ between the year of assassinations and the year before. This is true for some cases where the attacked mayor is in the first year of the term and is a member of a different party compared to the predecessor. I choose this timing to make sure that the party affiliation of the attacked mayor is accurately reflected.

26. This follows a general setup of event study regressions where treatment status is nondecreasing over time (Sun and Abraham 2021; Callaway and Sant'Anna 2021). Estimation is robust if I discard municipalities with multiple assassination attempts.

27. The treatment period for municipalities with multiple assassination attempts begins from the first successful as-

before assassinations to check for pre-trends. I control for 6 leads and lags since this corresponds to two separate terms for mayoral positions before and after the event.[28] For normalization purposes, the year before the assassination ($h = -1$) is omitted (Schmidheiny and Siegloch 2023).

Furthermore, I group the municipality-year observations that experienced an assassination 7 or more years ago into the $I[t - \text{assassination} \geq 7]_{mt}$ variable. This is necessary in the case where long-run effects of an event may differ from short-run effects (Borusyak et al. 2021; Schmidheiny and Siegloch 2023). Therefore, τ_{7^+} could be understood as the long-run effect of an assassination.

X_{mt} is the set of time-variant municipality-level characteristics. These variables address omitted variable bias originating from other characteristics that determine outcome variables irrespective of assassinations. I include homicides per 100,000 persons, the log(total homicides), the log(number of criminal groups), the share of the Indigenous population, the average years of schooling of the municipal population, and the years passed since the most recent election (in levels and squares). However, including covariates for post-treatment periods may introduce bad control problems (Callaway and Sant'Anna 2021). To address this, I fix covariates for the post-assassination attempt years to those from the final pre-treatment year. I also report regression results where I drop all covariates.

The identifying assumption for the Equation (2) is the parallel trends between treated and near-miss municipalities. This is violated if τ_h for periods before the assassinations $(h \leq -1)$ are statistically different from zero. I test for this in Table 3 by taking averages over the pre-assassination periods for each outcome used in later sections and find that treated municipalities do not differ on outcome variables relative to the near-miss municipalities.

Furthermore, the two-way fixed effects estimates may be biased by temporal and cross-sectional heterogeneity of treatment effects (Baker et al. 2022; Sun and Abraham 2021). To address this, I report all municipality-level outcomes with recently developed event-study estimators. I present the stacked difference-in-difference estimator developed by Cengiz et al. (2019), the imputation estimator suggested by Gardner et al. (2024), and the estimator based on multiple 2×2 estimates (Sun and Abraham 2021). The latter two estimations retain the same set of fixed effects while Cengiz et al. (2019) estimator uses these fixed effects and state-specific linear yearly trends.[29] I also report three

sassination, following the nondecreasing treatment assignment setup over time (Sun and Abraham 2021; Callaway and Sant'Anna 2021).

28. The signs and estimators remain similar if I include different numbers of leads and lags

29. The state-specific linear yearly trends address potential differences in estimation results that may arise due to different weights across subdatasets (Baker et al. 2022). Estimation results are largely similar even without linear trends.

versions of the basic two-way fixed effects - those with covariates, without covariates, and including outlier municipalities with large populations - for further robustness checks.

5 Effects on local fiscal capacity

In this section, I empirically test the predictions on the fiscal capacity of local governments after successful assassinations and discuss the results. Local governments lose mayors who oversee tax collection and public goods provision to successful assassinations. This may lead to a fall in tax revenues and shifts in the allocation of resources across different public services, signaling ineffectiveness in local government operations. I report the estimation results and robustness tests to validate the findings. Overall, the findings indicate that affected local governments lose their capacity to maintain revenues and allocate public resources.

5.1 Negative effects on the municipal revenues

First, I estimate whether tax collection is impacted following the successful assassination of mayors. To capture changes in tax collection, I use the log of the total tax revenues as well as property taxes. I complement these measures with the per capita total and property tax revenues collected. To check whether other sources of revenue are affected, I include the log of non-earmarked intergovernmental funds (*fondos participaciones*[30]) and earmarked funds (*aportaciones* [31]), revenues from provision of public services (*derecho*) and legal functions (*aprovechamientos*). Non-earmarked funds are determined at a state level based on tax revenue at the municipal level while others are independent of taxation (Careaga and Weingast 2003; Timmons and Broid 2013). Thus, a decrease in the capacity to collect taxes may also reduce non-earmarked funds but not others.

Municipalities affected by assassinations lose the capacity to gain revenues through taxation. Figure 3 reports the estimates and the 95 percent confidence interval for the τ_h coefficients in Equation (2). I also report the average of the six-year post-assassination estimates and its standard errors in Table 4. Panel (a) shows that tax revenues in the affected municipalities decline immediately, with

30. Non-earmarked funds are comprised of General participation fund (FGP) and Municipal Development Fund (FFM). While equity across regions is the main objective, the latter also takes into account local taxation efforts (OECD 2016).

31. Earmarked funds are broken down into Municipal Fund for Social Infrastructure (FISM) and Funds for Municipal Development (FORTAMUN). Both are granted conditional on infrastructural and development projects within the municipalities while taking poverty levels and demographic factors into account (Larreguy et al. 2020).

negative effects persisting over the 6 years. The results are robust to using different estimation methods. Based on the estimates reported in Column (1) of Table 4, tax collection falls by around 27%, with the lowest being 22.7% and the highest being 28.8%. Most of these estimates are statistically significant at 1% levels. Per capita tax revenues fall at a similar rate. The reported estimates range from 67.4 pesos to 105 pesos, or from 18.2% to 28.4% relative to the control group mean before the assassination attempts, albeit less precise. Total and per capita property tax revenues fall by about 20% and 40 pesos, respectively. It can be seen that total revenues and per revenues decrease at a similar rate over the 6-year period..[32] Furthermore, two-way fixed effects results and other estimations, notably Cengiz et al. (2019), Gardner et al. (2024), and Sun and Abraham (2021) estimates, do not diverge. This shows that fiscal capacity diminishes among municipalities experiencing assassinations and the findings are robust to potential treatment heterogeneities that may bias event-study estimates.

This effect carries over to other sources of revenue determined by local taxation, reported in Figure 4 and Columns (5)-(8) of Table 4. There is a decline of non-earmarked funds ranging from 9.7% to 12.7%, all significant at 5% or 1% level (Column (5) in Table 4). As this fund is proportional to taxes collected within the municipality, this result is explained by a fall in municipal tax revenues. Other revenue sources determined by demographic factors, demand for public service, and legal functions are unaffected. The estimated treatment effects for these revenues are statistically indistinguishable from zero. These results are largely similar across different specifications. The results highlight that the loss of capacity to maintain tax collection can extend to other sources of revenue.

These results indicate that municipalities whose mayors were assassinated fail to maintain the level of tax collection relative to the near-miss municipalities. The funds from the federal government determined by local taxation efforts also fall. The findings are robust across specifications addressing treatment heterogeneity, granting them further credibility. Thus, the loss of leaders following assassinations hampers the capacity of local governments to maintain their sources of revenues.

5.2 Diversion of government resources to select sectors

I investigate whether the provision of public goods and services is affected by the successful assassination of mayors. I examine public investments in infrastructure construction projects, portion

32. 73% of municipal tax revenues are from property taxes (OECD 2016). However, property taxes account for just 2% of all taxes paid by individuals in Mexico (World Bank 2016). Furthermore, the share of own-source tax on total revenues is small and has high variation across small and large municipalities (World Bank 2016). Thus, changes in tax revenue for municipal governments are large whereas per capita changes are small.

of general services expenditure relevant for operating municipal governments, and transfers and allowances to municipal entities responsible for providing educational and health services.[33] The part of general services expenditure examined here (henceforth non-infrastructural expenditures) includes rents, maintenance, purchases, and travel expenses involved in operating the municipal government.[34] Other categories, such as basic services and personnel expenditures, are reported in the Appendix (Appendix Figure B2). I report the outcomes log amounts and proportions relative to total expenditures. The former captures changes in the total volume in terms of percentages while the latter represents changes in allocation across different categories of public services.

Figure 5 reports estimation results on Equation (2), with the 6-year post-assassination average reported in Table 5. Since assassinations, the share of public investment expenditure rises by 4.7 percentage points to 5.5 percentage points, mostly significant at 1% level (Column (1) in Table 5). The volume of such expenditure rises by roughly 20%, although less precise than the estimates using the share as an outcome (Column (2) in Table 5). The share and volume of non-infrastructural expenditures fall by 1.5 percentage points and approximately 45%, respectively (columns (3) and (4) of Table 5). Furthermore, the allocation and the level of expenditure to transfers and allowances to municipal institutions each fall by 1-2 percentage points and 40% (columns (5) and (6) in Table 5). These findings are robust to dropping covariates, including back the outlier municipalities, and using Cengiz et al. (2019), Gardner et al. (2024), and Sun and Abraham (2021) estimators.

These findings suggest that the provision of public resources in affected municipalities is shifted to the sectors that may benefit criminal organizations, sacrificing primary services. The estimated increase in the allocation towards public investment on construction projects is similar to the 4.9-5.8 percentage point increase of similar expenses after the Mafia infiltration in Italian municipalities reported in Di Cataldo and Mastrorocco (2022). Furthermore, this is consistent with other cases of increased resources diverted to construction after infiltration by criminal organizations in Italy and Mexico (De Feo and De Luca 2017; Di Cataldo and Mastrorocco 2022; Calderón et al. 2019). This leaves little for other public services that matter for key services such as poverty reduction and economic development (Liu and Mikesell 2014; Mauro 1998). The decrease in the other two expenditure categories examined demonstrates this. These findings highlight that the capacity to

33. Each are called *Inversión pública*, *servicios generales*, and *Transferencias, asignaciones, subsidios y otras ayudas* in EFIPEM.

34. In the EFIPEM dataset, general services expenditure includes expenses on the provision of basic services such as water and electricity (*servicios basicos*). These outcomes are calculated by subtracting basic services expenditure from total general services expenditure.

provide resources for essential services is hampered by successful assassinations.

5.3 Summary of findings

Overall, municipalities with successful assassinations of mayors fail to maintain their fiscal capacity. Affected local governments cannot maintain the level of tax collection to finance their operation. The provision of resources and public goods is shifted towards investment in construction at the expense of essential operations and services. Thus, successful assassinations negatively affect the capacity of local governments to collect and allocate resources for providing public services that are important for economic development. I explore further outcomes that suggest how the presence of leaders becomes important in maintaining local fiscal capacity in light of political violence.

6 Changes to the personnel capacity of local governments

This section examines the consequences of successful assassinations on the personnel capacity of local governments. First, I derive a conceptual framework outlining how assassinations affect the allocation of workers in local government and hamper the capacity to retain them. Then, I analyze the effect of successful assassinations on departures and retention costs of the local government workers. Young and productive workers with better outside options are more likely to leave, and the cost of retaining them rises. There is suggestive evidence that the allocation across different types of tasks in municipal governments changes following assassinations. These suggest that changes to the municipal personnel capacity explain the decline in local state capacity after successful assassinations.

6.1 Framework for local state capacity

Consider an economy comprised of individuals, whose population is normalized to 1, and the local government. Individuals earn income from working at the local government or taking an outside option. Local government collects taxes and provides public goods to maximize social utility using labor as input. Successful assassinations affect the quantity of labor by driving potential workers away and hindering local government productivity. The insights from this framework rationalize the main findings above and are used to generate hypotheses on the personnel of the local governments.

Individuals choose the public sector if the returns outweigh outside options. The gain from the

public sector is the sum of the wage w and nonpecuniary amenity π. v represents gains from outside options. Individuals work for the public sector if $w + \pi \geq v$ and take the outside option if otherwise. Thus, the supply of local government labor (L) can be written as a function of wages, amenities, and outside options, $L = L(w, \pi, v)$. The supply is increasing and concave in w and π while it decreases in v. The labor choice is modeled with a more rigorous structure in Appendix Section C.1.1.

The local government collects taxes and provides public goods to maximize social utility. Each individual consumes private goods with her income net of taxes T and values public good G by α. Public sector workers earn w while those accepting outside options earn $E[v|v > w + \pi]$ on average. Local government pays for public workers L out of tax and other revenue R. The social utility aggregating all individual utilities and the budget constraint each have the following form.

$$\alpha G + Lw + (1 - L)E[v|v > w + \pi] - T \tag{4}$$

$$R + T \geq wL \tag{5}$$

Local government capacity can be captured by public goods production and tax collection. I model this using a production function with labor L_j and productivity A_j for either tax collection (T) or public goods (G) (Thus, $j \in \{T, G\}$). Production functions for each operation are represented by $t(\cdot)$ and $g(\cdot)$, respectively. Each function is increasing and concave in labor. I also assume that labor in the public sector is allocated to either one of the two areas. The production functions and labor allocation constraints are expressed as follows, with a detailed explanation in Appendix Section C.1.2

$$T = A_T t(L_T), \;\; G = A_G g(L_G) \;\; (t' > 0,\; t'' < 0,\; g' > 0,\; g'' < 0) \tag{6}$$

$$L_T + L_G = L \tag{7}$$

The local government allocates labor to maximize social welfare (4) subject to constraints (5)-(7). In the absence of exogenous shocks, labor is allocated to equate the marginal costs of taxation to the marginal benefits of public goods (Appendix Section C.1.3). Successful assassination changes the allocation of labor, tax collection, and public goods provision through productivity and amenity shocks. The following proposition summarizes the comparative statics of successful assassinations

Proposition 1. The effects of successful assassination on local state capacity

1. A negative productivity shock ($\Delta A_T(A_G) < 0$) decreases L_T (L_G), leading to a fall in T (G). If wages are flexible, w decreases due to decreased labor demand.

2. An negative amenity shock ($\Delta\pi < 0$) decreases labor supply, pushing L_T and L_G downwards. This decreases T and G. If wages are flexible, w increases due to contracting supply.

Proof: Appendix Section C.1.4.

The framework yields three important insights. First, it rationalizes how tax revenues and public goods provision decrease after successful assassinations. Second, it suggests that younger and more productive workers with higher outside options are more likely to depart, as their relative advantage of working at local government is smaller. Last, the possible rise in wages from the amenity shock motivates the exercise to calculate the cost of retaining workers in the local government. I estimate the departure rates and retention costs of different workers in the next section.

6.2 Loss of young and productive municipal personnel and subsequent costs

Based on the insights above, I test whether treated municipalities lose productive workers and uncover the cost required to retain them. I proxy the productivity of the workers with age. To justify this approach, I obtain the wage profile by age using the individual-level earnings data from ENOE. I use hourly wage and monthly earnings to capture returns from the outside options v for each age group and as a proxy for their productivity in the labor market.[35]

I show the differences in earnings by age in two ways. First, I calculate the average earnings for each age group. The average earnings are the highest for those in their 30s and 40s, as in Panels (a) and (b) in Figure 6. Second, I obtain the relationship between earnings and age net of the unobserved municipality, time, and industry characteristics using the following regression.

$$y_{imjt} = \alpha + \sum_G \beta_G I[i \in G] + \phi_j + \gamma_m + \delta_t + \epsilon_{imjt} \quad (G \in \{20\text{s}, 30\text{s}, 40\text{s}, 50\text{s}, 60\text{s}, 70\text{s}\}) \tag{8}$$

$I[i \in G]$ is an indicator for individual i belonging in age group G. Fixed effects for industries (ϕ_j), time (δ_t), and municipalities (γ_m) are included. Thus, β_G coefficients capture the relationship between earnings and age net of unobserved industry, municipality, and time characteristics. Again, those in

35. The educational attainment data for municipal workers are only available from the 4th wave of the CNGMD, limiting the statistical power.

their 30s and 40s have the highest earnings, suggesting that these workers have higher productivity and outside options than others (Panels (c) and (d) in Figure 6).

Then, I investigate whether those in their 30s and 40s are more likely to leave after successful assassinations. I use the share of workers in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s or above relative to the total number of municipal workers.[36] In the regression, I reduce the number of leads and lags and measure time in biennial units in Equation (2) to account for shorter availability and larger time intervals used in the data. Other features of Equation (2) are preserved.

The baseline two-way fixed effects estimates of worker departures following successful assassinations are shown in Figure 7, with post-assassination average effects in Panel A of Table 6. The share of workers in their 30s drops by 8.7 percentage points, representing a 27.6% fall from the pre-assassination average (31.5%). The share of workers in their 20-30s and 30-40s drop by 10 and 13.3 percentage points, respectively. Other estimators result in similar estimates (Figure 7 and Appendix Tables C1-C5), confirming the higher likelihood of departure for young and productive workers.

With these estimates, I calculate the retention cost of these workers following successful assassinations. I use the labor supply framework from the previous section, assuming outside options remain unaffected by political assassinations. The retention cost is defined as an increase in wages in response to a decrease in amenities after assassinations to keep the labor supply constant. This trade-off in wages and amenities can be calculated using total derivatives and has the following form.

$$\frac{dw}{d\pi} = \frac{-\frac{\partial L(w,\pi)}{\partial \pi}}{\frac{\partial L(w,\pi)}{\partial w}} \tag{9}$$

I use my estimates on the departure of workers and labor supply elasticity estimates from Dal Bó et al. (2013) to obtain retention costs. The numerator of the right-hand side of Equation (9) represents changes in the worker supply after successful assassinations, which can be derived from the departure rates by age groups shown in Panel A of Table 6. The denominator represents the elasticity of labor supply with respect to wages. For this, I use the estimated labor supply elasticity from a field experiment on Mexican municipal workers: 2.15 (Dal Bó et al. 2013).[37]

The calculated retention costs for workers in their 30s are approximately 13% (Panel B of Table 6).

36. The first two waves of CNGMD do not include distinct categories for the 60s and 70s

37. The municipalities studied in Dal Bó et al. (2013) and mine differ. Using a different indicator of violence, Dal Bó et al. (2013) finds that labor supply elasticity could be lower in violent municipalities. Thus, the wage cost estimates presented here may be a lower bound of the true cost.

This finding is largely replicated across different specifications (Panel B in Appendix Tables C1-C5). Although hypothetical, these estimates quantify the cost of lost amenities, such as fear of political violence and inefficiencies from adjusting to a new work environment after assassinations. Furthermore, they confirm that the cost of retaining productive workers is higher than that of other workers.

6.3 Changes in allocation across different types of tasks

Successful assassinations of mayors may also affect various dimensions of local state capacity by changing how municipal governments allocate workers across different tasks. To test this, I use the share of *total municipal workers* working on different types of tasks - public service and public security. I also check if the public security efforts become more active by analyzing changes to the share of *municipal public service workers* in operative duties and those in administrative duties.

I find that fewer personnel are allocated to public service in exchange for more active public security efforts (Appendix Figure C1). The share of workers in public service tasks falls by roughly 6 percentage points following assassinations, although less precise in some estimators. While the share of *total municipal workers* in public security tasks remains unchanged, the share of *public security workers* in operative duties increases by 15 percentage points. Fewer public security workers carry out administrative tasks, albeit less precise. These changes in worker composition across tasks could explain the lower operational capacity for affected local governments, similar to Akhtari et al. (2022).

6.4 Takeaway: Increasing cost of retention and changes to task allocation

This section highlights how losing mayors to successful assassinations affects the personnel capacity behind local government operations. The framework shows that assassinations hamper personnel capacity by increasing worker departures and retention costs. The data confirms that young and productive workers are more likely to leave and are costlier to retain. There are also signs that affected municipalities devote less personnel to public services in exchange for more active public security duties. Thus, the absence of mayors following successful assassinations affects the personnel capacity behind local government effectiveness by increasing the costs of retaining young and productive workers and affecting allocation across different types of tasks.

7 Discussion: Testing potential alternative channels

I conduct exercises on potential alternative mechanisms. First, I test whether economic activities, crime rates, and population characteristics confound the effects of successful assassinations. Then, I check if the presence of organized criminal groups explains the main outcomes. Last, I examine the importance of the presence of mayors by using alternative control groups of mayors injured in failed attempts. There are no significant differences in confounders across the municipalities. The rise in criminal group presence is temporary and does not explain the lasting effects of successful assassinations. Additionally, I confirm that the presence of mayors explains the size of the effects.

7.1 Non-political violence, economic activities, and population characteristics

Non-political violence, economic activities, and population changes may confound the effects of successful assassinations. If the rate of non-political violence is high in treated areas, factors beyond successful political violence such as assassinations may contribute to the treatment effects. Furthermore, an increase in such crime could lead to a decrease in economic activities and population. These could shrink the tax base, alter demands for public goods, and decrease the size of the available workers for local governments. Thus, it is necessary to disentangle them from the effects of assassinations.

I use non-political crime, economic activities, and population outcomes to unpack these forces. Homicide rates (2005 and onward), property damages, robberies, and threats (2011 and onward) per 100,000 people proxies non-political violence. I recalculate homicide rates by excluding assassinated mayors. For economic activities, I use the log of the municipal nightlight intensity. I complement this with economically active status, full-time employment, informal sector employment, work hours, and earnings data from individual-level ENOE survey, with results and estimation methods explained in Appendix Section D.1. For population characteristics, I use population density, log of working-age population obtained from the Census and yearly WorldPop satellite estimates (1995 and onward), and outmigration to the United States from each municipality (2008 and onward).[38]

The results show that these alternative mechanisms can be ruled out. None of the crime indicators display statistically significant trends (Figure 8). Nightlight intensities and outcomes from the ENOE survey do not show any significant changes (Figure 9 and Appendix Figure D1). All population

38. The total population includes those aged below 15 and above 65 who are less likely than those aged 15-64 to participate in the local economy. As such, I use this group in this exercise.

indicators show no statistically different patterns (Figure 9). These findings are robust across different estimators. Thus, these factors are unlikely to confound the results.

7.2 Changes in criminal group presence are unlikely to explain long-lasting effects

To test if increases in organized criminal group activities explain the results, I check if there are changes in the presence of such groups. I use log(the number of criminal groups+1) and indicators for any, new, and multiple criminal groups in the municipality. The data for criminal group presence also includes unidentified criminal groups. I include these cases in generating indicators for any criminal group activity, but exclude them for new and multiple criminal groups.[39] If the long-lasting effects in Sections 5 and 6 are driven by the presence of organized criminal groups, the outcomes measuring their presence should also increase long-run.

Estimation results presented in Figure 10 suggest a temporary and dissipating increase in organized criminal group presence in treated municipalities. The number of criminal groups increases by roughly 15% in the year of assassinations. New criminal groups are more likely to enter by more than 10 percentage points in the treated municipalities. The differences across treated and near-miss municipalities dissipate over time. The results are robust across different estimation methods.

There are two takeaways from this exercise. The immediate increase in organized criminal groups in treated municipalities follows from the fact that they are responsible for most of the assassinations. Thus, they take advantage of the void in the local government leadership in the short run. However, the dissipating differences over time suggest that the differential presence of organized criminal groups does not fully explain the persistent effects following successful assassinations.

7.3 Presence of mayors matters: Results using alternative control groups

To investigate how much the presence of mayors following assassinations drives the findings, I run Equation (2) and triple-difference specifications using different types of control groups. The control group in the main specification is the municipalities whose mayors were unhurt by the attacks and continued with their duties. I now include municipalities whose mayors had to be absent in any way to check the role of the presence of mayors in explaining the effects of assassinations.

The goal is to see if effect sizes decrease when cases of successful assassinations are compared

39. Results are robust even if I address the unidentified criminal groups differently.

to different types of control groups. There are municipalities with injured mayors following failed attempts and municipalities whose mayors died due to non-violent causes such as health issues and accidents. The list of these cases and their sources are reported in Appendix Section A.3.[40] First, I replicate key findings using cases of all failed attacks, failed attacks leading to injury, and nonviolent deaths as control groups, respectively. Then, I run a triple-difference equation combining successful assassinations, failed attempts leading to injury, those that do not hurt mayors, and nonviolent deaths. Like the treatment group, other control groups involve the absence of mayors following an event. Based on this, I hypothesize that the effect sizes will decrease when treated municipalities are compared to alternative control groups.

The effect size decreases further with an increase in absent mayors in the control group (Appendix Figure D2). The results from the triple-difference specification reported in Table D1 also report decreasing effect sizes when successful assassinations are compared to other control groups. This confirms that the effect size is due to the difference in the presence of mayors between treatment and control groups following the event.

7.4 Takeaway on alternative channels

This section rules out confounding factors and confirms that changes to personnel allocations following mayoral absence shape the findings. Non-political violence, economic activities, and population changes are unlikely to affect the outcomes. The short-run rise in organized criminal group presence does not explain the long-lasting effects of successful assassinations. The effect size decreases when comparing treated municipalities with those whose mayors were absent for various reasons. Thus, the absence of leadership following successful assassinations affects local government effectiveness through changes in personnel capacity, less likely through these alternative channels.

8 Conclusion

This paper provides evidence on the effects of losing mayors to successful assassinations on the local state capacity to conduct bureaucratic functions. I exploit the variation in the presence of these leaders induced by the success and failures of assassination attempts. Local governments that lose

40. 50 mayors have passed away due to COVID-19 in 2020-2021. I exclude them from the exercise since there is not enough observation to capture post-death changes in outcome.

mayors to assassinations are unable to maintain revenues through taxes, allocate public services, and retain productive public workers. These outcomes are not attributable to non-political violence, changes in population, and economic activities. The temporary increase in organized criminal group presence is insufficient in explaining the persistent decline in local government capacity.

These findings highlight the broad impact of political violence and the significance of local politicians for an effective local government. Tax collection, public goods provision, and personnel recruitment are basic and bureaucratic tasks that determine the effectiveness of local governments besides political capacity. I show that the negative effects originating from political violence reach beyond political outcomes by showing that bureaucratic functions are hampered following assassinations (Daniele 2019; Jones and Olken 2009). Thus, the dangers of political violence are more extensive than previously understood. Moreover, the results show that changes to personnel capacity following the void in leadership after successful assassinations drive the outcomes. This complements studies documenting the role of individuals in public organizations (Akhtari et al. 2022; Best et al. 2023).

These results have important policy implications on the threats of political violence against local governments. I show that local governments can become ineffective due to successful assassinations. I highlight that these dangers are more serious in areas with organized criminal groups that can influence policy-making using illicit means (Dal Bó and Di Tella 2003; Daniele and Dipoppa 2017). These highlight the difficulties of developing local state capacity in areas with illegitimate external actors. This is relevant for many developing countries with histories of internal conflict and organized criminal groups (Blattman and Miguel 2010).

There are further avenues for research on this topic. Future works could provide additional perspectives on the discussion on the trade-off between decentralization and centralization in regions with violence and local capture (Bardhan 2002). While decentralization has promising aspects, my results show how they can be vulnerable in the face of illegitimate actors. Advances in text and geographical data are opening up access to information on state capacity and illegitimate actors at a local level. These could be utilized to provide more evidence to this discussion.

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Tables

Table 1: Determinants of assassinations on mayors in a given year, since 1995

	All of Mexico (Coeff × 100)				Assassination and Near-miss			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Panel A. Exclude unidentified groups								
log(# groups + 1)	0.208**			0.050	0.013			-0.006
	(0.089)			(0.097)	(0.009)			(0.012)
I(New group)		0.336***		0.297**		0.031**		0.035**
		(0.120)		(0.146)		(0.012)		(0.016)
Homicide per million	0.005	0.005	0.006	0.005	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Panel B. Include unidentified groups								
log(# groups + 1)	0.329**			0.191**	0.031***			0.010
	(0.075)			(0.075)	(0.009)			(0.010)
I(New group)		0.398***		0.296***		0.045***		0.040***
		(0.107)		(0.114)		(0.012)		(0.014)
Homicide per million	0.005	0.005	0.006	0.005	0.004	0.004	0.005	0.004
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.014)
N	59272	59272	59272	59272	3369	3369	3369	3369
Municipalities	2198	2198	2198	2198	125	125	125	125
Municipal FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

The table shows the coefficient estimates from the regression of the incidence of assassinations on mayors on variables relevant to gang presence and crime at the municipality-year level. For the sample using all of Mexico, coefficients are multiplied by 100 for convenience. The homicide per million is recalculated by excluding cases of mayor assassinations. All regressions include municipality, year fixed effects, and controls. Control variables included are the average schooling of the municipal population, the share of the indigenous population, the log of the total population, and the year since the election (level and squared). log(# group + 1) is the log of the number of criminal groups in the municipality, adjusted by adding 1 to account for municipalities with no presence of organized criminal groups. New group refers to the dummy variable for the existence of a criminal organization that newly began its activities within the municipalities. Standard errors are clustered at the municipal level.

Table 2: Balance table for covariates

	(1) Near-miss			(2) Assassination			(2)-(1) Test for difference		
Variable	N	Mean	(SE)	N	Mean	(SE)	N	Difference	[p-value]
Panel A. Municipality level control variables									
Total homicides	31	11.6	(28.8)	80	6.25	(15.4)	111	-5.4	[0.322]
log(Total homicides)	31	1.2	(1.45)	80	0.998	(1.22)	111	-0.202	[0.492]
Homicides per 100k	31	12.8	(24.8)	80	34	(157)	111	21.2	[0.245]
Tenure at attack (mths)	32	19.7	(14.4)	81	20.6	(13.2)	113	0.93	[0.751]
Avg Schooling	31	7.8	(1.52)	80	6.42	(1.45)	111	-1.38***	[0.000]
Share of indigenous pop.	31	11.7	(21.7)	80	18	(25.9)	111	6.34	[0.192]
Pop density	32	222	(515)	81	200	(921)	113	-21.9	[0.873]
# identified crime groups	32	0.531	(1.02)	81	0.531	(1.04)	113	-0.0004	[0.999]
log(# identified crime groups)	32	0.283	(0.491)	81	0.281	(0.486)	113	-0.002	[0.982]
I(New Group)	32	0.156	(0.369)	81	.148	(0.357)	113	-0.008	[0.915]
Panel B. Organized criminal groups									
Beltran Leyva	32	0.031	(0.177)	81	0	(0)	113	-0.031	[0.316]
CJNG	32	0.063	(0.246)	81	0.037	(0.19)	113	-0.026	[0.597]
Huachicoleros	32	0.031	(0.177)	81	0.025	(0.156)	113	-0.007	[0.854]
Barbies	32	0	(0)	81	0.062	(0.242)	113	0.062	[0.024]
Familia	32	0.094	(0.296)	81	0.074	(0.264)	113	-0.020	[0.742]
Gulf Cartel	32	0.063	(0.246)	81	0.086	(0.283)	113	0.024	[0.655]
Juarez Cartel	32	0.031	(0.177)	81	0.025	(0.156)	113	-0.007	[0.854]
Sinaloa Cartel	32	0.063	(0.246)	81	0.074	(0.264)	113	0.012	[0.825]
Tijuana Cartel	32	0.031	(0.177)	81	0.037	(0.19)	113	0.006	[0.878]
Zetas	32	0.125	(0.336)	81	0.074	(0.264)	113	-0.051	[0.441]
Other Cartels	32	0	(0)	81	0.037	(0.19)	113	0.037	[0.083]
Panel C. Political affiliation of mayors									
Partido Acción Nacional	32	0.125	(0.336)	81	0.173	(0.380)	113	0.048	[0.512]
Partido de la Revolucion Democrática	32	0.219	(0.42)	81	0.136	(0.345)	113	-0.083	[0.321]
Partido Revolucionario Institucional	32	0.344	(0.483)	81	0.395	(0.492)	113	0.051	[0.612]
Movimiento Regeneración Nacional	32	0.125	(0.336)	81	0.050	(0.100)	113	-0.076	[0.238]
Movimiento Ciudadano	32	0	(0)	81	0.062	(0.242)	113	0.062**	[0.024]
Partido Nueva Alianza	32	0.031	(0.177)	81	0	(0)	113	-0.031	[0.316]
Partido del Trabajo	32	0.063	(0.246)	81	0.025	(0.156)	113	-0.038	[0.418]
Partido Verde Ecologista de México	32	0.063	(0.246)	81	0.025	(0.156)	113	-0.038	[0.418]
Uso y Costumbres	32	0	(0)	81	0.111	(0.316)	113	0.111	[0.002]

***<0.01, **<0.05, *<0.1
Variables in Panels A and B are based on the reported values from the year before the failed/successful assassinations. Party affiliations in Panel C are calculated based on the year of the failed attacks/successful assassinations. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses, along with the p-value for the test of differences of group means in brackets.

Table 3: Pretrends for outcome variables

	Control mean	Pre-event difference	(SE)	[p-value]
Panel A. Fiscal capacity variables				
log(tax)	15.7	-0.107*	(0.063)	[0.091]
tax per capita	378	-37.2	(34.6)	[0.285]
log(property tax)	15.3	-0.0471	(0.058)	[0.422]
property tax per capita	238	-17.4	(18.1)	[0.338]
log(nonearmarked funds)	17.3	-0.026	(0.034)	[0.439]
log(earmarked funds)	17.5	-0.013	(0.053)	[0.813]
log(service)	14	-0.211	(0.159)	[0.186]
log(legal)	15.4	0.029	(0.085)	[0.736]
log(public investments)	17.6	-0.047	(0.097)	[0.630]
% public investments	0.313	0.002	(0.014)	[0.888]
log(non-infra service)	16.2	-0.212	(0.175)	[0.229]
% non-infra service	0.081	-0.003	(0.005)	[0.562]
log(transfers)	15.9	-0.063	(0.090)	[0.484]
% transfers	0.077	0.0002	(0.006)	[0.973]
Panel B. Personnel capacity variables				
% Personnel, ages 20-29	0.215	-0.008	(0.029)	[0.787]
% Personnel, ages 30-39	0.293	-0.003	(0.037)	[0.945]
% Personnel, ages 40-49	0.22	-0.009	(0.025)	[0.705]
% Personnel, ages 50-	0.156	0.050**	(0.023)	[0.035]
% Personnel, ages 20-39	0.508	-0.010	(0.045)	[0.818]
% Personnel, ages 30-49	0.512	-0.012	(0.037)	[0.750]
% Personnel, public service	1.07	-0.134	(0.323)	[0.679]
% Personnel, public security	0.211	-0.071	(0.050)	[0.163]
% Security Personnel, operative	0.787	0.009	(0.058)	[0.871]
% Security Personnel, admin	0.080	-0.013	(0.032)	[0.693]

***<0.01, **<0.05, *<0.1

Variables in Panels A and B are the outcome variables used in Sections 5 and 6. The control mean is obtained by averaging the variables over the near-miss municipalities for the 6 years before the failed attempts take place. Pre-event difference is obtained by regressing the outcome variables using Equation (2) and taking averages of the time indicators for the treatment group up until 6 years before the successful assassinations take place. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. p-values from testing the statistical significance of the pre-event differences are reported in the brackets.

Table 4: Changes in municipal fiscal capacity, 6-year post-event window across specifications

	Taxes				Non-taxes			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Estimation	ln (tax)	tax pc	ln (prop.)	prop. pc	ln (non-mark)	ln (mark)	ln (serv.)	ln (legal)
TWFE w/ controls	-0.270***	-82.6	-0.189*	-39.0	-0.122**	0.018	0.073	-0.123
	(0.102)	(53.4)	(0.102)	(28.9)	(0.055)	(0.082)	(0.127)	(0.232)
N	2565	2565	2311	2311	2376	2158	2572	2442
Clusters	112	112	112	112	112	112	112	112
TWFE w/ controls	-0.288***	-79.9	-0.213**	-40.8	-0.10**	-0.015	0.053	-0.116
(no omitted municipalities)	(0.104)	(54.3)	(0.105)	(30.7)	(0.081)	(0.057)	(0.227)	(0.189)
N	2673	2673	2414	2414	2475	2250	2679	2550
Clusters	116	116	116	116	116	116	116	116
TWFE w/o controls	-0.262***	-105.0**	-0.182*	-51.8*	-0.127**	0.105	0.111	-0.089
	(0.098)	(36.402)	(0.098)	(28.2)	(0.040)	(0.079)	(0.123)	(0.223)
N	2614	2605	2359	2350	2416	2192	2620	2489
Clusters	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114
Stacked DID	-0.227**	-74.5*	-0.118	-38.1*	-0.097***	-0.048	-0.001	-0.252
	(0.099)	(45.0)	(0.097)	(23.0)	(0.038)	(0.050)	(0.118)	(0.166)
N	22707	21838	20873	20104	16846	15734	22621	22178
Clusters	747	747	747	747	747	747	747	747
Gardner (2024)	-0.248***	-67.4*	-0.208**	-37.0*	-0.100**	-0.004	0.051	-0.052
	(0.084)	(37.8)	(0.084)	(21.8)	(0.040)	(0.060)	(0.107)	(0.191)
N	2614	2605	2359	2350	2416	2192	2620	2489
Clusters	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114
Sun-Abraham (2021)	-0.278***	-77.9	-0.209**	-40.9	-0.111**	-0.015	0.062	-0.100
	(0.105)	(56.6)	(0.105)	(32.3)	(0.055)	(0.085)	(0.131)	(0.222)
N	2614	2605	2359	2350	2416	2192	2620	2489
Clusters	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114
Control mean	15.771	369.454	15.461	243.94	17.711	17.688	15.459	14.243
Municipality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

The table reports the average of the 6-year post-assassination indicators in Equation (2). Each row contains results from different estimation methods. The first three rows are results from two-way fixed effects with different setups for sample restriction and covariates. The last three rows are Stacked DID, Gardner (2024), and Sun and Abraham (2021) estimates. The outcome variables used in each regression are the log of total tax revenue, per capita tax revenue, log of total property tax, per capita property tax, log of non-earmarked grants, log of earmarked grants, log of service revenues, and log of revenues from legal affairs. Control mean reports the average of the outcome variables for the near-miss municipalities one year before the assassination attempts. All regressions include a binned indicator for municipalities experiencing assassinations 7 or more years ago, municipality fixed effects, and year fixed effects. Stacked DID regression includes state-specific yearly linear trends to account for different weights across yearly subdatasets used to create the estimator. Two-way fixed effect regressions with covariates include controls for log(number of criminal organizations + 1), homicide rates, log(total homicides + 1), average years of schooling for the municipal population, the share of the indigenous population, and years since the most recent election (level and squared) fixed at the final pre-assasination attempt year. Other estimators do not include covariates. Standard errors are reported in parenthesis and clustered at the municipality level for all regressions except Stacked DID, which is clustered on municipality-year level.

Table 5: Changes in municipal expenditure post assassinations, log of expenditures

Estimation	(1) Investment (share)	(2) Investment (log)	(3) Non-infra (share)	(4) Non-infra. (log)	(5) Allowances (share)	(6) Allowances (log)
TWFE w/ controls	0.052***	0.221*	-0.015**	-0.459*	-0.010	-0.367**
	(0.018)	(0.121)	(0.006)	(0.250)	(0.009)	(0.146)
N	2621	2621	2482	2482	2624	2624
Clusters	112	112	112	112	112	112
TWFE w/ controls	0.047**	0.167	-0.015**	-0.490**	-0.010	-0.365**
(no omitted municipalities)	(0.019)	(0.133)	(0.007)	(0.240)	(0.009)	(0.144)
N	2728	2728	2584	2584	2732	2732
Clusters	116	116	116	116	116	116
TWFE w/o controls	0.055***	0.266**	-0.014**	-0.410*	-0.019*	-0.425***
	(0.018)	(0.120)	(0.006)	(0.244)	(0.010)	(0.143)
N	2667	2667	2528	2528	2673	2673
Clusters	114	114	114	114	114	114
Stacked DID	0.051***	0.165*	-0.014**	-0.512**	-0.021***	-0.402***
	(0.013)	(0.096)	(0.006)	(0.238)	(0.006)	(0.094)
N	22744	22744	20594	20594	22479	22479
Clusters	747	747	747	747	747	747
Gardner (2024)	0.051***	0.209*	-0.015**	-0.370**	-0.010	-0.316***
	(0.017)	(0.113)	(0.006)	(0.168)	(0.008)	(0.116)
N	2667	2667	2528	2528	2673	2673
Clusters	114	114	114	114	114	114
Sun-Abraham (2021)	0.049**	0.169	-0.015**	-0.502**	-0.010	-0.361**
	(0.020)	(0.139)	(0.007)	(0.247)	(0.010)	(0.146)
N	2667	2667	2528	2528	2673	2673
Clusters	114	114	114	114	114	114
Control mean	0.308	17.655	0.079	16.291	0.081	16.171
Municipality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

The table reports the average of the 6-year post-assassination indicators in Equation (2). Each row contains results from different estimation methods. The first three rows are results from two-way fixed effects with different setups for sample restriction and covariates. The last three rows are Stacked DID, Gardner (2024), and Sun and Abraham (2021) estimates. The outcome variables used in each regression are the shares and logs of investment in construction projets, general services expenditure not part of basic infrastructure spending, and allowances and transfers to municipal entities responsible for public service. Control mean reports the average of the outcome variables for the near-miss municipalities one year before the assassination attempts. All regressions include a binned indicator for municipalities experiencing assassinations 7 or more years ago, municipality fixed effects, and year fixed effects. Stacked DID regression includes state-specific yearly linear trends to account for different weights across yearly subdatasets used to create the estimator. Two-way fixed effect regressions with covariates include controls for log(number of criminal organizations + 1), homicide rates, log(total homicides + 1), average years of schooling for the municipal population, the share of the indigenous population, and years since the most recent election (level and squared) fixed at the final pre-assasination attempt year. Other estimators do not include covariates. Standard errors are reported in parenthesis and clustered at the municipality level for all regressions except Stacked DID, which is clustered on municipality-year level.

Table 6: Hypothetical wage costs of retaining departing workers by age group, TWFE with covariates

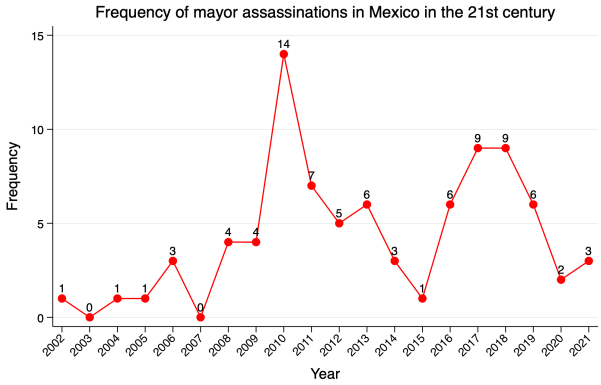
	(1) 20s	(2) 30s	(3) 40s	(4) 50s	(5) 20-30s	(6) 30-40s
Panel A. Change in proportion of workers by age						
Change in share	−0.013	−0.087**	−0.046	0.041	−0.100**	−0.133***
	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.033)	(0.046)	(0.046)
Pre-event share (1=100%)	0.220	0.315	0.248	0.217	0.535	0.563
% change in size due to π (1=100%)	−0.059	−0.276	−0.185	0.189	−0.187	−0.236
Panel B. Wage-amenity tradeoff with Dal Bó et al. (2013) elasticity estimate (2.15)						
Trade-off rate	−0.027	−0.128	−0.086	0.088	−0.087	−0.110
N	644	644	644	644	644	644
Municipalities	112	112	112	112	112	112
Municipality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Survey FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Covariates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

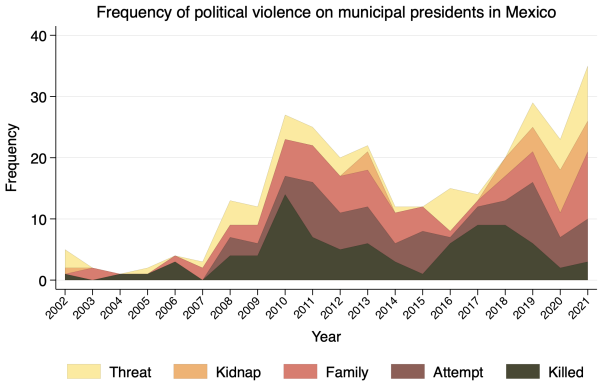
This table reports the estimates of the rate of increase in wages required to retain different types of municipal workers, as explained in Section 6.2. The first row in Panel A reports the point estimates and the standard errors of the average post-assassination treatment effects for the proportion of each age group within municipal governments specified in the header of each column. Results are obtained using two-way fixed effects and covariates analogous to Equation (2). Standard errors are clustered at the municipal level and reported in parentheses. The second row is obtained from taking the average of the proportion of these workers one period before the assassination attempt took place. Numbers in the third row are obtained by dividing the point estimates in the first row by the same in the second row. This represents the change in the number of workers in each category before and after the assassination attempts. In Panel B, the wage-amenity trade-off rate is calculated by dividing the percent change in size of workers obtained from Panel A with changes in labor supply with respect to wages from Dal Bó et al. (2013), 2.15. This represents the increase in wages needed to keep workers employed. Given that this cost arises from a decrease in amenities due to assassinations and the fear of political violence that follows it, it quantifies the cost of political violence to the local government.

Figures

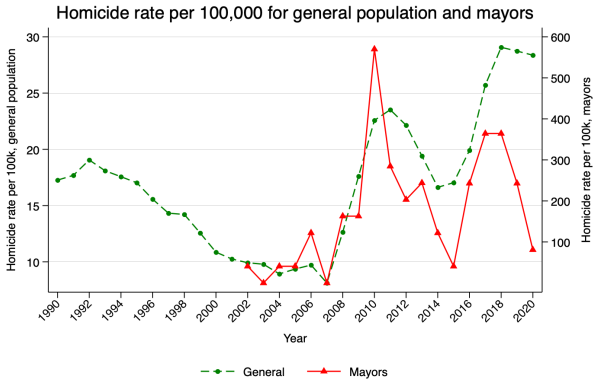
Figure 1: Assassination against mayors, in total numbers and murder rate



(a) Assassination against mayors, 2002-2021



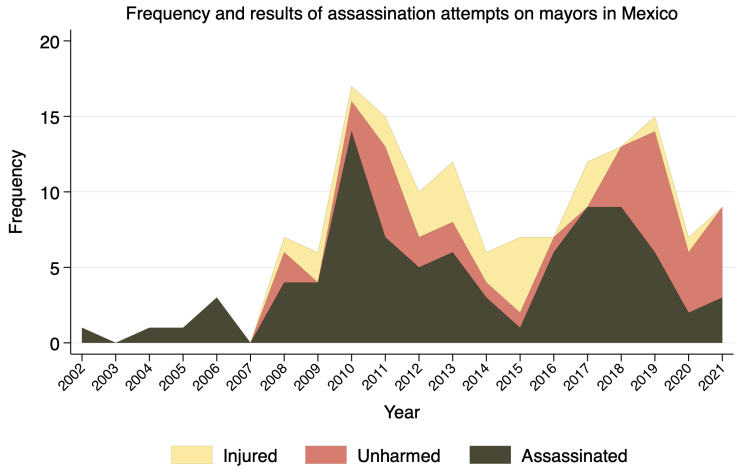
(b) Violence against mayors, 2002-2021



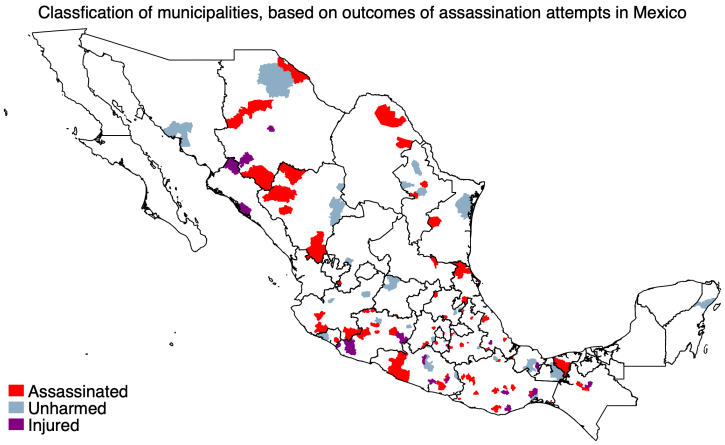
(c) Homicide rate per 100,000, general population and the mayors

Note: Figures above show the variation in the incidence of assassinations and murder rates across different years and municipalities. The figures in the top panel describe the number of assassinations against mayors from 2002-2021, based on the data collected by the author. The figures in the bottom panel present murder rates calculated as homicides per 100,000 people for mayors and all population. The numbers for the general population are represented by the left axis and the green dashed lines. The numbers are obtained from the World Development Indicators in the World Bank. The same for the mayors is displayed on the right axis and in a red solid line. This is calculated by dividing the annual number of mayors assassinated by the total number of municipalities and then multiplying by 100,000.

Figure 2: Temporal and Geographical variation in successful mayor assassinations vs near-misses



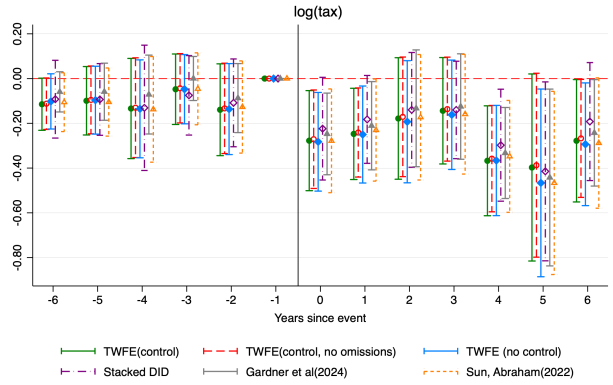
(a) Frequency of successful attacks and near-misses on mayors



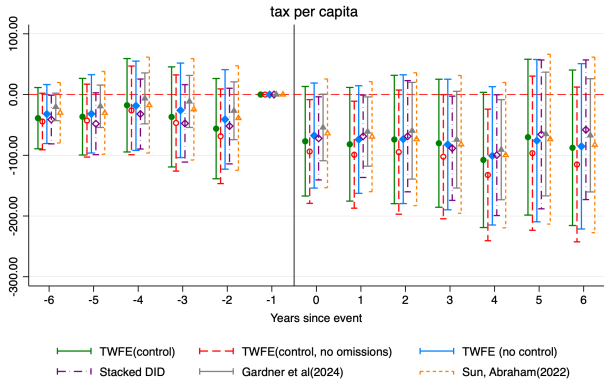
(b) Geographical distribution of the outcome of attacks on mayors

Note: Panel (a) shows the variation of the results of attacks against mayors across time. Categories include successful attacks resulting in the death of a a mayor (treatment), mayors who escaped unharmed (control), and those who were injured, but not killed. Panel (b) shows the results of these attacks at a geographical level. Municipalities in which both failed attacks and successful assassination has occurred is classified as a treatment group and appears as 'Assassinated' on the map. The data used for creating the figures are from various sources and the author's collection is based on the method described in Section 3. A full list of mayors who were victims of the attack and sources are in Appendix A.3.

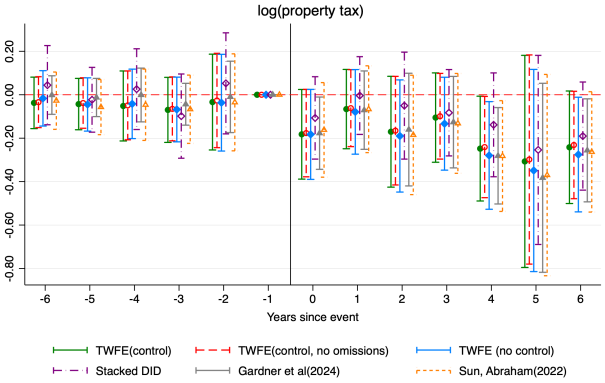
Figure 3: Decreases in tax revenues after assassinations



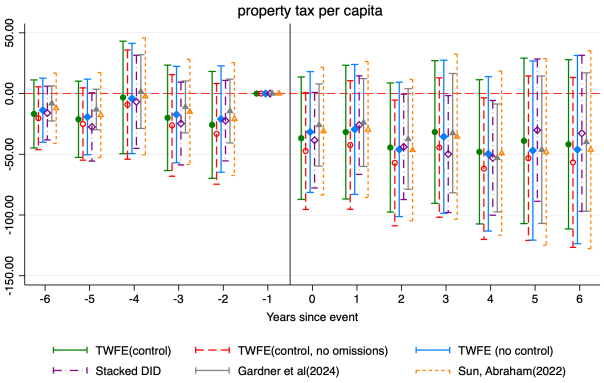
(a) log(Total tax revenue)



(b) Total tax revenue per capita



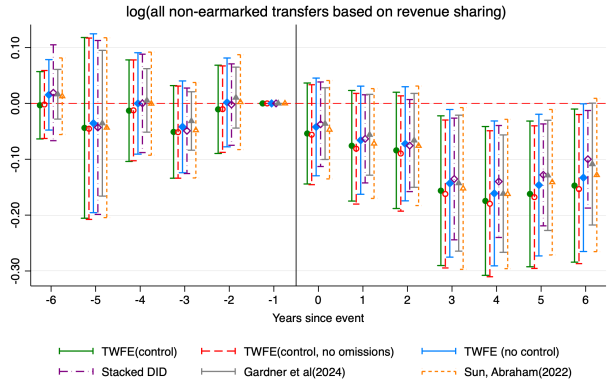
(c) log(Total property tax revenue)



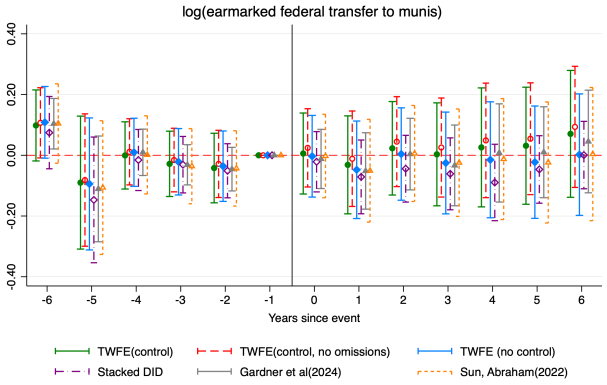
(d) Property tax revenue per capita

Note: The figures report the event study regression on the different measures of tax revenues.The outcome variables used in each regression are listed below each graph. All regressions include a binned indicator for municipalities experiencing assassinations 7 or more years ago, municipality fixed effects, and year fixed effects. Stacked DID regression includes state-specific yearly linear trends to account for different weights across yearly subdatasets used to create the estimator. Two-way fixed effect regressions with covariates include controls for log(number of criminal organizations + 1), homicide rates, log(total homicides + 1), average years of schooling for the municipal population, the share of the indigenous population, and years since the most recent election (level and squared) fixed at the final pre-assasination attempt year. Other estimators do not include covariates. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

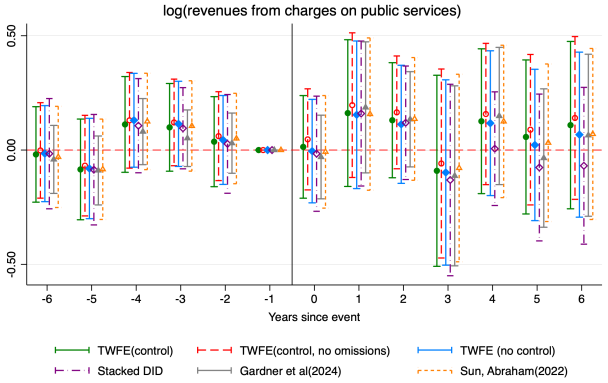
Figure 4: Changes in revenues from other sources for the municipalities



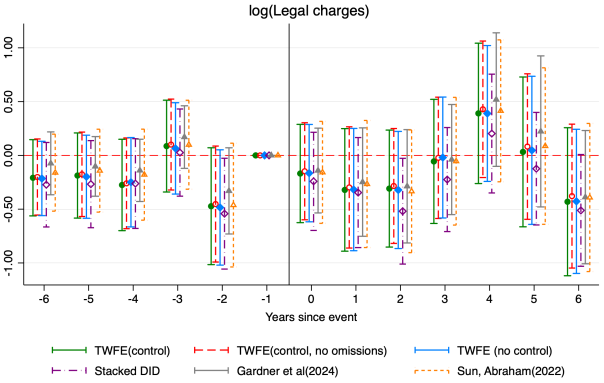
(a) Non-earmarked funds to municipalities



(b) Overall earmarked funds to municipalities



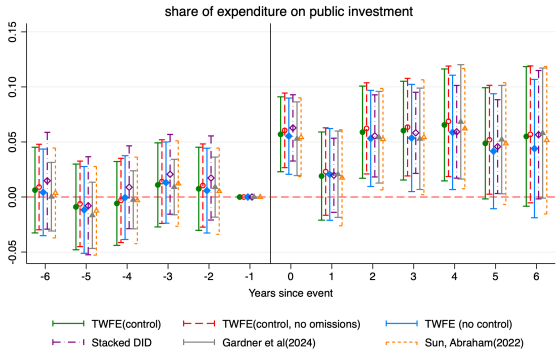
(c) Revenues from charge on public services



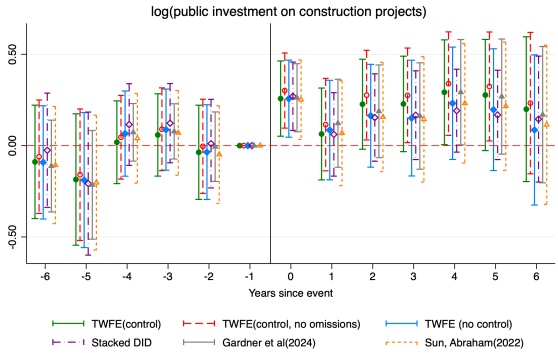
(d) Revenues from legal services

Note: The figures report the event study regression on the different sources of revenues for the municipal government. The outcome variables used in each regression are listed below each graph. All regressions include a binned indicator for municipalities experiencing assassinations 7 or more years ago, municipality fixed effects, and year fixed effects. Stacked DID regression includes state-specific yearly linear trends to account for different weights across yearly subdatasets used to create the estimator. Two-way fixed effect regressions with covariates include controls for log(number of criminal organizations + 1), homicide rates, log(total homicides + 1), average years of schooling for the municipal population, the share of the indigenous population, and years since the most recent election (level and squared) fixed at the final pre-assasination attempt year. Other estimators do not include covariates. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

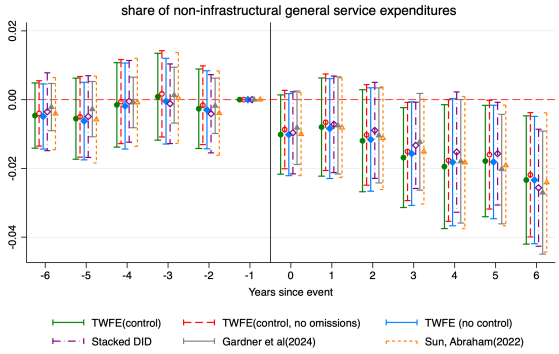
Figure 5: Share and volume of expenditures across different categories



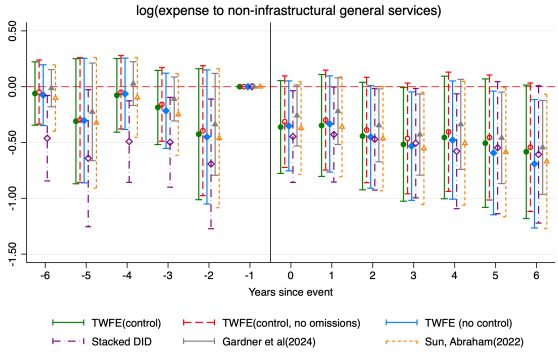
(a) Share of public investments on construction



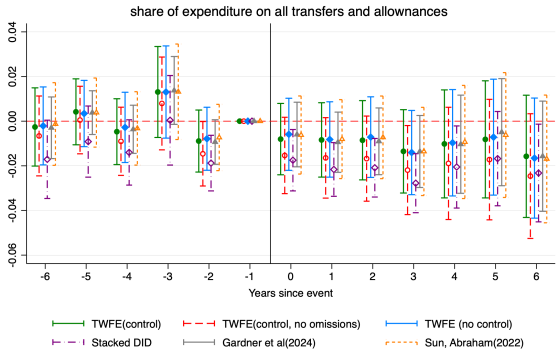
(b) log(Public investments on construction)



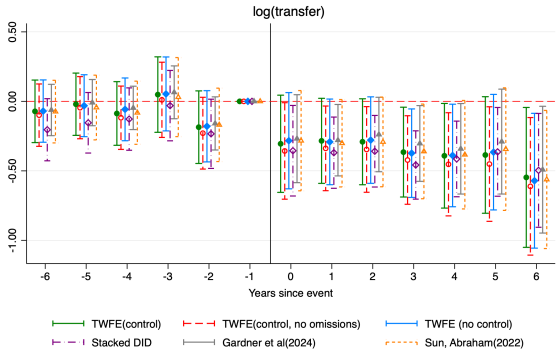
(c) Share of other general operations



(d) log(Other general operations)



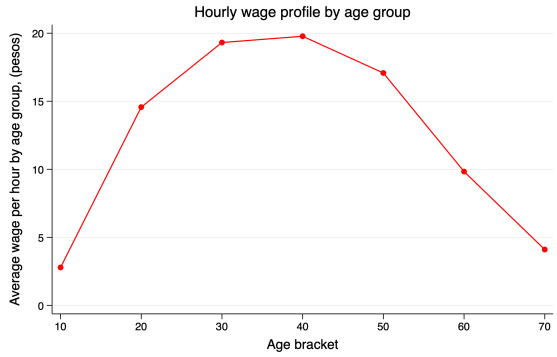
(e) Share of allowances to municipal entities



(f) log(Allowances to municipal entities)

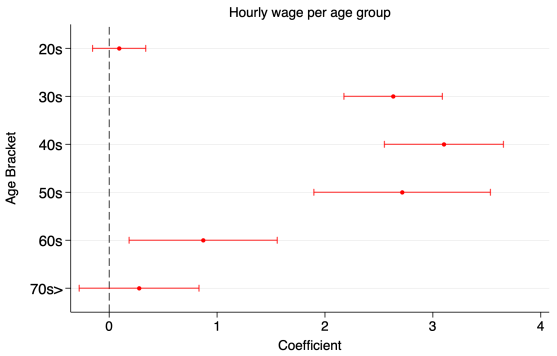
Note: The figures report the event study regression on the different measures of expenditures of the municipal government. The outcome variables used in each regression are listed below each graph. All regressions include a binned indicator for municipalities experiencing assassinations 7 or more years ago, municipality fixed effects, and year fixed effects. Stacked DID regression includes state-specific yearly linear trends to account for different weights across yearly subdatasets used to create the estimator. Two-way fixed effect regressions with covariates include controls for log(number of criminal organizations + 1), homicide rates, log(total homicides + 1), average years of schooling for the municipal population, the share of the indigenous population, and years since the most recent election (level and squared) fixed at the final pre-assasination attempt year. Other estimators do not include covariates. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Figure 6: Outside opportunities peak for those in 30s and 40s

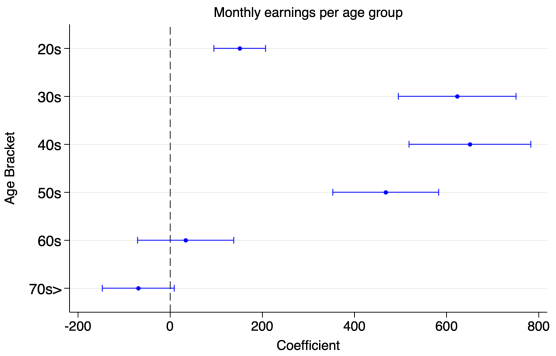


(a) Average hourly wage per age group

(b) Average monthly earnings per wage group



(c) Age premium net of industry, time, municipality FE for hourly wage

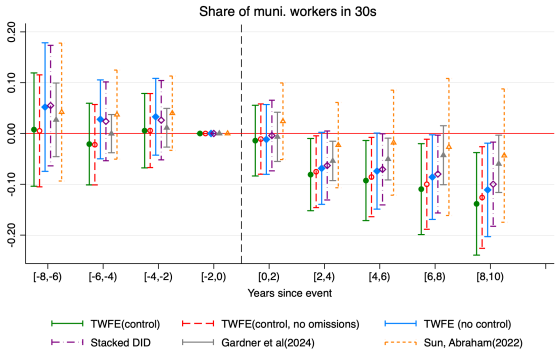


(d) Age premium net of industry, time, municipality FE for monthly earnings

Note: The figure depicts the summary statistics for labor earnings by each age group, sourced from the National Survey on Occupation and Employment (ENOE) from INEGI. Panels (a) and (b) report the average hourly wage and monthly earnings per age group whose municipality of residence is included in the same group of municipalities in the regressions. Panels (c) and (d) report the regression coefficients for the dummies in the age group from the regression that uses each labor earnings as an outcome and includes fixed effects for industry, year, quarter of survey, and municipality. Respondents in their 10s were used as a benchmark group. The figures in Panels (c) and (d) also include a 95% confidence interval with standard errors clustered at the municipal level.

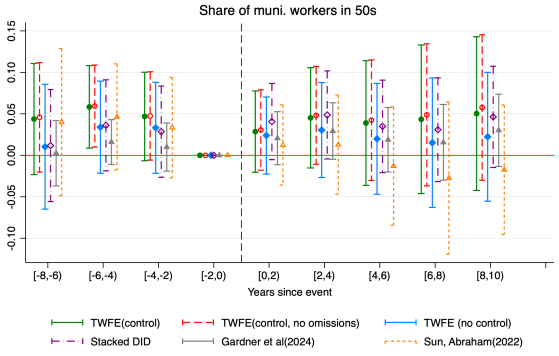
Figure 7: Changes in the size and age composition of municipal workers

(a) Share of municipality workers in 20s

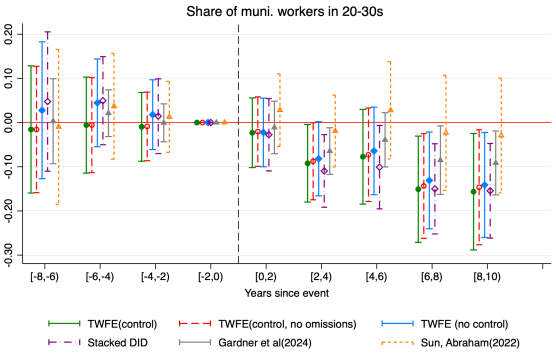


(b) Share of municipality workers in 30s

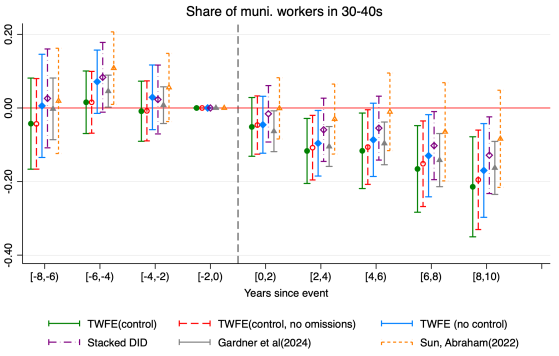
(c) Share of municipality workers in 40s



(d) Share of municipality workers in 50s



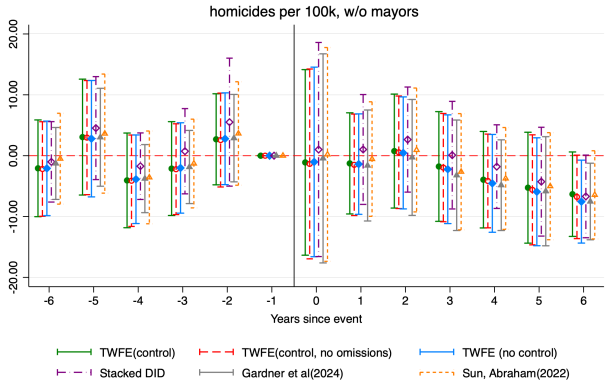
(e) Share of municipality workers in 20s-30s



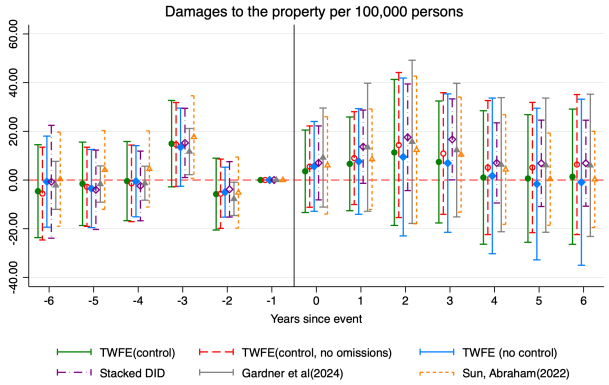
(f) Share of municipality workers in 30s-40s

Note: The figures report the event study regression on the composition of workers by age group. The outcome variables are calculated relative to the total number of municipal workers. All regressions include a binned indicator for municipalities experiencing assassinations beyond the event timing window, municipality fixed effects, and year fixed effects. Stacked DID regression includes state-specific yearly linear trends to account for different weights across yearly subdatasets used to create the estimator. Two-way fixed effect regressions with covariates include controls for log(number of criminal organizations + 1), homicide rates, log(total homicides + 1), average years of schooling for the municipal population, the share of the indigenous population, and years since the most recent election (level and squared) fixed at the final pre-assasination attempt year. Other estimators do not include covariates. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

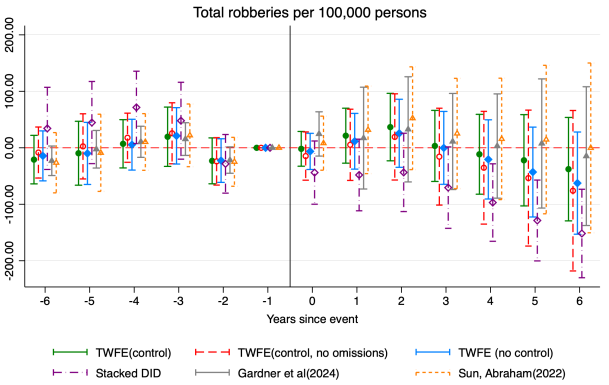
Figure 8: Insignificant changes in non-political violence across treated and control municipalities



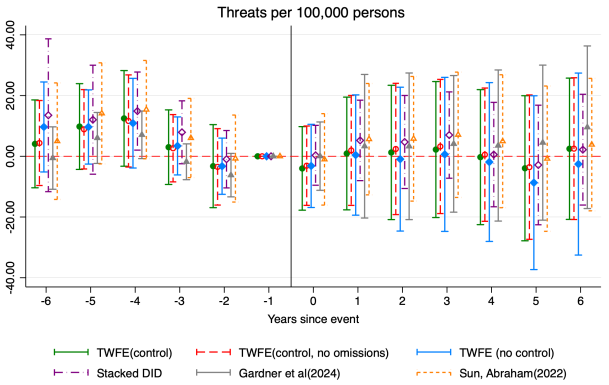
(a) Homicide rates per 100,000 people



(b) Property damages per 100,000 people



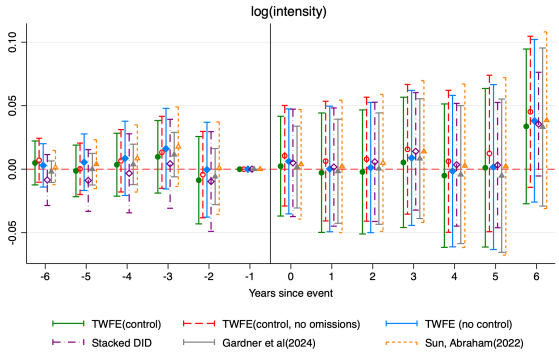
(c) Robberies per 100,000 people



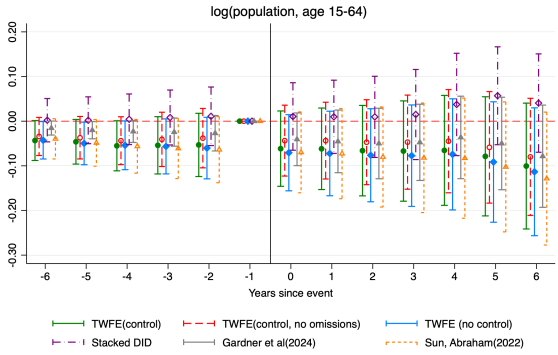
(d) Threats per 100,000

Note: The figures report the event study regression on the type of crime specified in the captions for each figure. The measures of homicides in Panel (a) is recalculated by omitting the assassination of a mayor. The data for homicides date from 1995, while data for other crimes starts from 2011. Specifications used for each plot and 95% confidence intervals are listed in the bottom of each graph. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

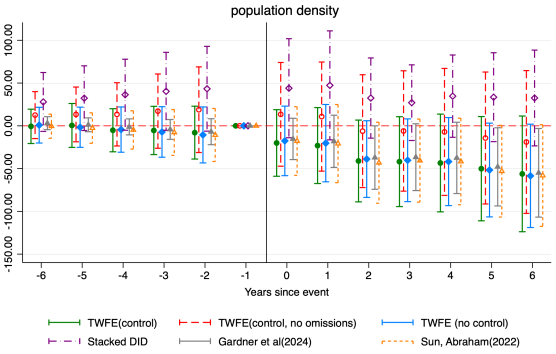
Figure 9: No significant differentials in nightlights, and population measures



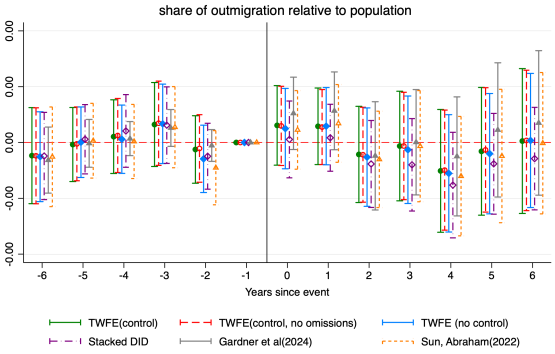
(a) log(nightlights intensity)



(b) log(municipal population aged 15-64)



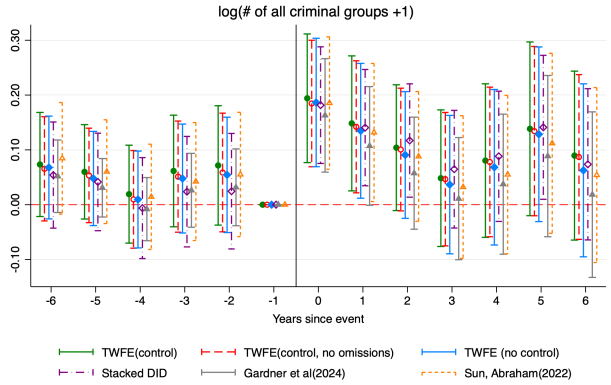
(c) Population density



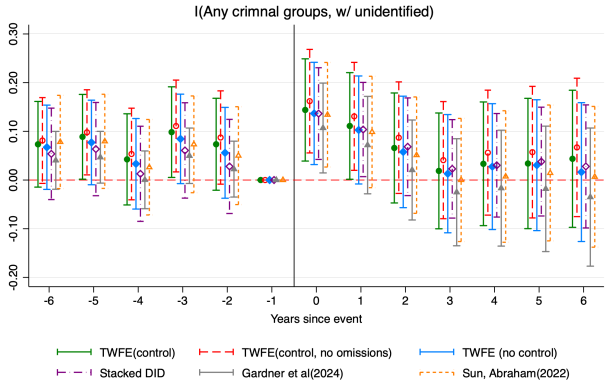
(d) Share of municipal outmigrants to the US

Note: The figures report the event study regression on the log and inverse hyperbolic sine of the nightlight intensities, as well as population variables. Nightlight variables are sourced from DMSP (1995-2013) and VIIRS (2014-2021). The unit of nightlight intensity is measured by the harmonized measure that was calculated in the process of merging the two datasets. Detailed procedure is found in Appendix Section A.5. The working age population is from the WorldPop (2000 and after) and the Mexican Census (pre-2000). Outmigration data is from the MCAS public data in the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME) and is available from 2008 and onwards. The regression equation is the same as Equation (2), with an identical set of control variables being used. Each regression includes fixed effects for years and municipalities. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

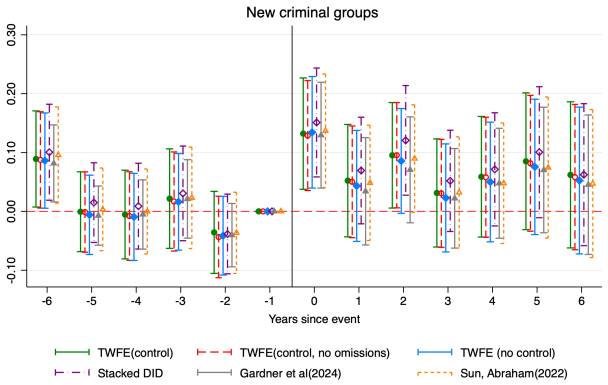
Figure 10: Further criminal organization presence in treated municipalities



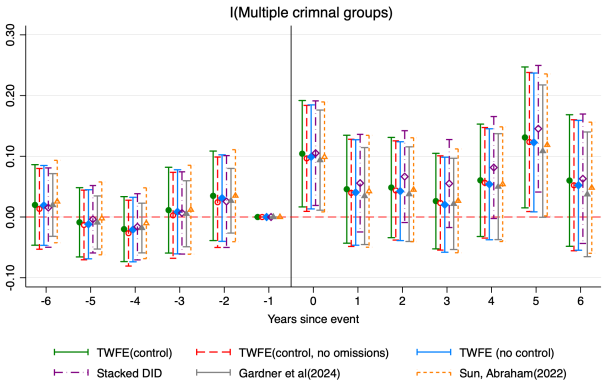
(a) log(number of criminal groups +1)



(b) Indicator for any criminal group presence



(c) Indicator for entry of new criminals



(d) Indicator for multiple criminal group presence

Note: The figures report the event study regression on the different measures of gang presence. The outcome variables used in each regression are specified in the sub-caption for each figure. Outcomes in Panels (a) and (b) include unidentified armed groups. Panels (c) and (d) calculates new entries and multiple criminal groups using criminal groups that are indentified (thus, unidentified criminal groups are excluded). Specifications used for each plot and 95% confidence intervals are listed in the bottom of each graph. Each regression includes fixed effects for years and municipalities. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Appendix A Further explanation on the background and the data

In this section, I will provide an additional explanation of the details of municipal finance in Mexico, the full procedure of collecting data on mayors who are victims of assassination attempts and the complete list, a further definition of key variables used in the research, and a detailed explanation on the composition of the nightlight dataset.

A.1 Additional details on municipal finance in Mexico

Municipalities in Mexico shoulder the work of providing key public goods to Mexico. The revenue required comes mainly from three sources - property taxes, non-earmarked funds (*particpaciones*) and earmarked funds (*aportaciones*). Property taxes are purely determined by the tax collection at the municipal level, but they take up only about 15-20% of the municipal revenues (INEGI 2016). Others are from the two funds from the federal government, with the design following the principles of fiscal federalism (Weingast 2009). Earmarked funds are designed to correct for equity, while non-earmarked funds include components that emphasize fiscal incentives and efficiency of subnational governments(Weingast 2009; World Bank 2016).

- **Property taxation**: Municipalities are responsible for collection and keeping records of property owners and values (World Bank 2016). This takes up 70% of the total tax revenues (World Bank 2016; INEGI 2016). However, tax rates are subject to approval from the state legislature (OECD 2016).

- **Non-earmarked funds**: These are composed of General Participation Funds (FGP) and Municipal Development Funds (FFM), as well as transfers from taxes received by the federal governments (Timmons and Broid 2013). Each of these categories includes proportions determined by past receipt of the same funds, demographics, and tax revenues generated within municipalities (Timmons and Broid 2013). Specific formulas and shares are determined at the state legislature (SEGOB 2011).

- **Earmarked funds**: These include Funds for infrastructural development (FISM) and Funds supporting municipal development (FORTAMUN). The former is conditioned primarily for infrastructural development while the other can be more general in purpose (SEGOB 2011). In

both, the amount of funds primarily depends on population and poverty indices (SEGOB 2011; World Bank 2016)

A.2 Data collection procedure for identifying mayors who are attacked

The collection of the information on mayors who are the victims of successful and failed assassination attempts is based on a semi-automated program written in Python and primarily uses `selenium` package. The `selenium` package is a collection of codes that automate the human interaction with the web interface.[1] Actions that can be performed with this package include clicking links, typing designated phrases, and storing blocks of text. However, for getting through some security features such as two-way authentication, automation is complicated and needs human intervention. Thus, the program I have devised is semi-automated.

The workflow designed in the program is as follows. First, the program accesses the online newspaper archives (*Newsbank* and *ProQuest*) using log-in credentials provided by the school library.[2] In using the school login credentials, I follow the default security settings for the school and use two-way authentication. Then, The program types in key phrases on the search box and filters search results based on newspaper source and date. Afterwards, the program collects the name of the publisher, date, title, and the full text of the article. Finally, I discard the unnecessary articles and categorize assassination attempts into successful and failed ones based on the texts in the article. This last step is not based on `selenium`, but done through reviewing the articles. The following diagram summarizes the process.

The key phrases used for the search are as follows

- Assassinated: *presidente municipal fue asesinado*, and *matan/asesinan/ejecutan a presidente municipal*
- Failed: *presidente municipal fue atacado/atentado* and *atentan/atacan a presidente municipal*

1. Alternatives to scraping texts include `scrapy` and `beautlfulsoup` packages. While they provide better performance in terms of speed, they are also likely to be subject to anti-scraping measures implemented by each website. Thus, I chose `selenium` as the primary package for this program.
2. Access to these online newspaper archives are mostly provided to libraries in many educational institutions in the US and other countries.

- Kidnapped: *presidente municipal fue secuestrado* and *secuestran a presidente municipal*
- Threats: *presidente municipal fue amenazado* and *amenazan/narcomensaje a presidente municipal*
- Famliy members targeted: Include the terms *esposo/esposa* (husband/wife), *hermano/hermana* (brother/sister), *hijo/hija* (son/daughter), *padre/madre* (father/mother), *primo/prima* (cousins), *tío/tía* (uncle/aunt), and *sobrino/sobrina* (nephews) to the key phrases used above
- Non-violent deaths: *presidente municipal fallecio/murio* and *fallece/muere presidente municipal*

Once the key phrases are entered, the program filters the articles based on the date of publication and source. Specifically, I select the dates up to Dec 31st, 2021 since I do not include cases from the year 2022 and onwards for the analysis due to the lack of data on key variables for this period. In addition, I limit the results to show just the newspaper articles, which rules out other types of sources stored in the online news archives such as books, and scholarly articles on the topic.

After filtering, the program collects information on the publisher, title, date, and text content of the article. The publishers used in this stage include *Reforma, El Universal, El Norte,* and *El Economista*, among others. The newspaper sources used to identify each case are contained in the list of mayors who are part of the study. Other information is used to identify whether the article is about attacks on mayors, as well as to pinpoint the date and location of the attacks.

Then, I discard the unrelated articles and categorize assassination attempts into successful and failed ones based on the information in the article text. Unrelated articles include all words in the key phrases but are not relevant to attacks on mayors, such as the article about a municipal president criticizing an assassination of other individuals. Based on the manual review and topic categorization using Latent Dirichlet Allocation, I narrow down the collection to relevant articles and determine the type of attacks carried out against a mayor. To distinguish between injured and unharmed mayors, I check for words such as *herido/lesionado/se translado al hopital* (injured) and *sale ileso/ilesa* (unharmed).[3]

A.3 List of mayors included in the study

The table below is a list of mayors who are included in the study. The list includes information on the names, municipalities, and political parties that they represented at the time of the attack, the date of the attack, and whether this was a successful or failed assassination attempt.

3. Any cases which mention that the mayor was not present at the attacks on the office/residence is categorized as unharmed. Also, I check for similar verbs for female mayors, with *o*'s in the end replaced with *a*'s.

Table A1: List of mayors who were assassinated

	Name	Municipality and state	Date	Sources
1	Jaime Valencia Santiago	San Agustín Loxicha-Oaxaca	2002/01/13	Imparcial Oaxaca, La Jornada, El Universal
2	Mario Sostenes Lozano Camacho	San Sebastián Tecomaxtlahuaca-Oaxaca	2004/07/14	Proceso, Wradio, El Universal
3	Fernando Chavez Lopez	Buenavista-Michoacan	2005/07/09	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, La Jornada
4	Neguib Tadeo Manriquez Madriaga	Ciudad Ixtepec-Oaxaca	2006/01/13	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, La Jornada
5	Raul Delgado Benavides	Cuautitlán de García Barragán-Jalisco	2006/07/15	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Colima Noticias
6	Walter Herrera Ramirez	Huimanguillo-Tabasco	2006/11/15	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, El Heraldo de Tabasco
7	Juan Marcelo Ibarra Villa	Madero-Michoacan	2008/06/01	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, La Jornada
8	Manuel Angulo Torres	Topia-Durango	2008/06/03	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Proceso
9	Homero Lorenzo Rios	Ayutla de los Libres-Guerrero	2008/09/25	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, La Jornada
10	Salvador Christopher Vergara Cruz	Ixtapan de la Sal-Edomex	2008/10/03	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, La Jornada
11	Claudio Reyes Nunez	Otáez-Durango	2009/02/04	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, La Jornada
12	Octavio Manuel Carrillo Castellanos	Vista Hermosa-Michoacan	2009/02/24	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Vanguardia
13	Luis Carlos Ramirez Lopez	Ocampo-Durango	2009/06/01	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Vanguardia
14	Hector Ariel Meixueiro Muñoz	Namiquipa-Chihuahua	2009/07/14	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, La Jornada
15	Ramon Mendivil Sotelo	Guadalupe y Calvo-Chihuahua	2010/02/17	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Milenio
16	Manuel Estrada Escalante	Mezquital-Durango	2010/02/22	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, La Jornada
17	Vidal Olivera Cruz	San Lorenzo Albarradas-Oaxaca	2010/04/01	Esparza et al. (2018), Excelsior, AALMAC
18	Jose Santiago Agustin	Zapotitlán Tablas-Guerrero	2010/04/28	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, El Economista
19	Jesus Manuel Lara Rodriguez	Guadalupe-Chihuahua	2010/06/19	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, El Mañana
20	Oscar Venancio Martinez Rivera	San José del Progreso-Oaxaca	2010/06/20	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, La Jornada
21	Nicolas Garcia Ambrosio	Santo Domingo de Morelos-Oaxaca	2010/06/30	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Expansion
22	Alfonso Pena Pena	Tepehuanes-Durango	2010/07/26	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Expansion
23	Edelmiro Cavazos Leal	Santiago-Nuevo León	2010/08/18	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, LA Times
24	Marco Antonio Leal Garcia	Hidalgo-Tamaulipas	2010/08/30	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, LA Times
25	Alexander Lopez Garcia	El Naranjo-San Luis Potosí	2010/09/09	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Expansion
26	Prisciliano Rodriguez Salinas	Doctor González-Nuevo León	2010/09/24	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Vanguardia
27	Gustavo Sanchez Cervantes	Tancítaro-Michoacan	2010/09/27	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Informador
28	Jaime Lozoya Avila	San Bernardo-Durango	2010/11/05	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, La Jornada
29	Saúl Vara Rivera	Zaragoza-Coahuila	2011/01/05	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Excelsior
30	Abraham Ortiz Rosales	Temoac-Morelos	2011/01/10	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Excelsior

31	Pedro Luis Jiminez Mata	Santiago Amoltepec-Oaxaca	2011/01/13	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Excelsior
32	Saturnino Valdes Llanos	Tampico Alto-Veracruz	2011/02/23	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Expansion
33	Fortino Cortes Sandoval	Benito Juárez-Zacatecas	2011/07/28	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Vanguardia
34	Jose Eduviges Nava Altamirano	Zacualpan-Edomex	2011/08/19	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Expansion
35	Ricardo Guzman Romero	La Piedad-Michoacan	2011/11/03	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, El Pais
36	Rafael Landa Fernandez	Atzalan-Veracruz	2012/04/18	El Universal, Alcalorpolitico, Vanguardia
37	Marisol Mora Cuevas	Tlacojalpan-Veracruz	2012/06/29	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, La Jornada
38	Pedro Filemon Luis Hernandez	San Miguel Tilquiápam-Oaxaca	2012/08/02	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Libertad Oaxaca
39	Nadin Torralba Mejia	Técpan de Galeana-Guerrero	2012/08/05	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Vanguardia
40	Himeldo Rayon de Jesus	San Juan Juquila Mixes-Oaxaca	2012/08/24	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Diario Despertar de Oaxaca
41	Wilfrido Flores Villa	Nahuatzen-Michoacan	2013/02/04	El Universal, Justice in Mexico, La Jornada
42	Feliciano Martinez Bautista	San Juan Mixtepec Distrito 08-Oaxaca	2013/03/24	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, La Jornada
43	Jose Rene Garrido Rocha	San Salvador el Verde-Puebla	2013/04/21	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Ell Siglio de Torreon
44	Celestino Felix Vazquez Luis	San Miguel Tilquiápam-Oaxaca	2013/06/04	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Proceso
45	Geronimo Manuel Garcia Rosas	Aquila-Veracruz	2013/07/23	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, La Jornada
46	Ygnacio Lopez Mendoza	Santa Ana Maya-Michoacan	2013/11/07	El Pais, El Universal, Aristegui Noticias
47	Gustavo Garibay Garcia	Tanhuato-Michoacan	2014/03/22	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Justice in Mexico
48	Teodulo Gea Dominguez	Pánuco-Veracruz	2014/07/14	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Alcalorpolitico
49	Manuel Gomez Torres	Ayutla-Jalisco	2014/08/03	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Expansion
50	Mario Sanchez Cuevas	San Miguel el Grande-Oaxaca	2015/10/07	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, Presencia
51	Gisela Mota Ocampo	Temixco-Morelos	2016/01/02	Esparza et al. (2018), El Universal, NY Times
52	Juan Antonio Mayen Saucedo	Jilotzingo-Edomex	2016/04/22	Esparza et al. (2018), Aristegui Noticias, Mexico News Daily
53	Domingo López González	Chamula-Chiapas	2016/07/23	Esparza et al. (2018), El Pais, El Financiero
54	Ambrosio Soto Duarte	Pungarabato-Guerrero	2016/07/24	Esparza et al. (2018), El Financiero, The Yucatan Times
55	Jose Santa Maria Zavala	Huehuetlán el Grande-Puebla	2016/08/01	Esparza et al. (2018), Expansion, El Economista
56	Jose Villanueva Rodriguez	Ocotlán de Morelos-Oaxaca	2016/12/17	Esparza et al. (2018), AALMAC, El Imparcial
57	Antolin Vidal Martinez	Tepexco-Puebla	2017/01/24	Esparza et al. (2018), La Jornada, El Mineral
58	Alejandro Hernandez Santos	San Bartolomé Loxicha-Oaxaca	2017/04/28	Esparza et al. (2018), Imagen del Golfo, Proceso
59	Stalin Sanchez Gonzalez	Paracho-Michoacan	2017/10/06	Esparza et al. (2018), El Financiero, El Universal
60	Manuel Hernandez Pasion	Huitzilan de Serdán-Puebla	2017/10/10	Esparza et al. (2018), Animal Politico, Cronica de Chihuahua
61	Crispin Gutierrez Moreno	Ixtlahuacán-Colima	2017/10/20	Esparza et al. (2018), La Jornada, El Universal Queretaro
62	Victor Manuel Espinoza Tolentino	Ixhuatlán de Madero-Veracruz	2017/11/25	Esparza et al. (2018), Noroeste, El Financiero
63	Jose Santos Hernandez	San Pedro el Alto-Oaxaca	2017/12/09	Esparza et al. (2018), Telesur TV, AALMAC
64	Sergio Antonio Zenteno Albores	Bochil-Chiapas	2017/12/18	Esparza et al. (2018), Zeta Tijiana, Sin Embargo

65	Arturo Gómez Pérez	Petatlán-Guerrero	2017/12/28	Esparza et al. (2018), Mexico News Daily, Noroeste
66	Jose Efrain Garcia Garcia	Tlanepantla-Puebla	2018/04/12	Esparza et al. (2018), El Pais, Noticieros Televisa
67	Juan Carlos Andrade Magana	Jilotlán de los Dolores-Jalisco	2018/04/15	Esparza et al. (2018), Telesur TV, La Jornada
68	Alejandro Gonzalez Ramos	Pacula-Hidalgo	2018/05/03	Esparza et al. (2018), Proceso, El Piñero
69	Abel Montufar Mendoza	Coyuca de Catalan-Guerrero	2018/05/08	Esparza et al. (2018), Aristegui Noticias, Alcaldes de Mexico
70	Alejandro Chavez Zavala	Taretan-Michoacan	2018/06/14	El Universal, NPR, Dallas News
71	Javier Urena Gonzalez	Buenavista-Michoacan	2018/06/27	ACLED, El Norte, Noroeste
72	Victor Jose Guadalupe Diaz Contreras	Tecalitlán-Jalisco	2018/07/02	ACLED, El Financiero, El Economista
73	Genaro Negrete Urbano	Naupan-Puebla	2018/08/06	ACLED, El Financiero, Milenio
74	Olga Gabriela Kobel Lara	Juárez-Coahuila	2018/12/16	ACLED, El Universal, Milenio
75	Alejandro Aparicio Santiago	Heroica Ciudad de Tlaxiao-Oaxaca	2019/01/01	ACLED, El Universal, Milenio
76	David Eduardo Otlica Aviles	Nahuatzen-Michoacan	2019/04/23	ACLED, Mexico News Daily, Milenio
77	Maricela Vallejo Orea	Mixtla de Altamirano-Veracruz	2019/04/24	ACLED, Infobae, El Universal
78	Carmela Parral Santos	San Jose Estancia Grande-Oaxaca	2019/08/17	ACLED, El Pais, Reporte Indigo
79	Francisco Tenorio Contreras	Valle de Chalco Solidaridad-Edomex	2019/10/29	ACLED, La Jornada, El Universal
80	Arturo Garcia Velazquez	San Felipe Jalapa de Díaz-Oaxaca	2019/12/23	ACLED, Milenio, La Jornada
81	Carlos Ignaio Beltran Bencomo	Temósachic-Chihuahua	2020/09/29	ACLED, Infobae, El Financiero
82	Florisel Rio Delfin	Jamapa-Veracruz	2020/11/11	ACLED, e-Veraceruz, Proceso
83	Leobardo Ramos Lazaro	Chahuites-Oaxaca	2021/02/04	ACLED, El Pais, El Economista
84	Alfredo Sevilla Cuevas	Casimiro Castillo-Jalisco	2021/03/11	ACLED, Infobae, 24horas
85	Manuel Aguilar Garcia	Zapotlán de Juárez-Hidalgo	2021/06/09	ACLED, La Jornada Hidalgo, Noroeste

Note: The above list includes mayors who were assassinated. 3 Municipalities were subject to multiple assassinations against their mayors (San Miguel Tilquiápam-Oaxaca in 2012 and 2013; Buenavista-Michoacan in 2005 and 2018; Nahuatzen-Michoacan in 2013 and 2018). Thus, there are 82 unique municipalities that experienced at least one assassination. Full link to the articles are stored in the separate data file.

Table A2: List of mayors subject to failed attacks

	Name	Municipality, State	Date	Time away	Sources
1	Antonio Pouchoulen Cardenas	Las Choapas-Veracruz	2008/03/29		Alcalor Politico, Wradio, Proceso
2	Jesus Fernando Garcia Hernandez	Navolato-Sinaloa	2008/11/05	✓	La Jornada, El Siglio de Torreon, El Universal
3	Luis Carlos Ramirez Lopez	Ocampo-Durango	2008/11/18		El Siglo de Torreon, Wradio, El Universal
4	Arturo Bonilla Morales	Tlacoapa-Guerrero	2009/10/14	✓	El Siglo de Torreon, El Universal,
5	Maria Santos Gorrostietta	Tiquicheo de Nicolás Romero-Michoacan	2009/10/15	✓	Insight Crime, El Universal, Expansion
6	Maria Santos Gorrostietta	Tiquicheo de Nicolás Romero-Michoacan	2010/01/23	✓	Insight Crime, El Universal, Expansion
7	Raul Mario Mireles Garza	Sabinas Hidalgo-Nuevo León	2010/10/11		Expansion, Wradio, El Economista
8	Jose Eligi Moreno Martinez	Cuencame-Durango	2010/10/20		Reforma, El Siglio de Durango,
9	Jaime Heliodoro Rodriguez Calderon	Garcia-Nuevo León	2011/02/25		Expansion, La Jornada, Proceso
10	Ricardo Solis Manriquez	Gran Morelos-Chihuahua	2011/03/23	✓	El Mañana, Reforma,
11	Jaime Heliodoro Rodriguez Calderon	García-Nuevo León	2011/03/29		Expansion, La Jornada, Proceso
12	Clara Luz Flores Carrales	General Escobedo-Nuevo León	2011/07/03		Expansion, La Jornada, El Economista
13	Eleazar Palacios Rojas	San Pedro Totolápam-Oaxaca	2011/07/08	✓	Quadratin Oaxaca, La Radio del Siglo XXI,
14	Julio Cesar Salmeron Salazar	Alcozauca-Guerrero	2011/08/04		Vanguardia, Informador,
15	Filiberto Martinez	Solidaridad-Quintana Roo	2011/09/14		Proceso, Noticaribe, EFE News
16	Alejandro Higuera Osuna	Mazatlan-Sinaloa	2011/11/08		Chicago Tribune, Wradio, El Universal
17	Miguel Hernandez Anaya	San Miguel el Alto-Jalisco	2011/12/18		Informador, Proceso,
18	Andres Cardenas Guerrero	Coahuayana-Michoacan	2012/03/09	✓	Arestegui Noticias, Quadratin Michoacan,
19	Francisco de Jesus Ayon Lopez	Guadalajara-Jalisco	2012/07/09		Informador, 24horas, El Economista
20	Francisco Omar Corza Gallegos	Vista Hermosa-Michoacan	2012/07/23		El Universal, Arestegui Noticias,
21	Alejandro Tejeda Lopez	Zacapu-Michoacan	2012/10/05		El Universal, Arestegui Noticias,
22	Gustavo Garibay Garcia	Tanhuato-Michoacan	2012/10/12	✓	El Pais, Excelsior, El Economista
23	Miguel Entzin Cruz	Pantelho-chiapas	2012/12/18	✓	Reforma, SDP Noticias, Proceso
24	Rocio Rebollo Mendoza	Gomez Palacio-Durango	2013/02/05		Vanguardia, El Siglo de Torreon, Excelsior
25	Feliciano Alvarez Mesino	Cuetzala del Progreso-Guerrero	2013/04/09	✓	Proceso, Diario,
26	Pedro Luis Jiminez Hernandez	Santiago Amoltepec-Oaxaca	2013/05/13	✓	Excelsior, La Jornada, Animal Politico
27	Cesar Miguel Penaloza Santana	Cocula-Guerrero	2013/06/06		La Silla Rota, Imagen Radio, Proceso
28	Pablo Rodriguez Santiago	San Miguel del Puerto-Oaxaca	2013/06/24	✓	Excelsior, Vanguardia, La Jornada
29	Feliciano Alvarez Mesino	Cuetzala del Progreso-Guerrero	2013/08/26	✓	Proceso, Diario,
30	Enrique Antonio Paul	Texistepec-Veracruz	2014/04/01	✓	El Universal, Reforma, El Economista

31	Elizabeth Gutierrez Paz	Juan R. Escudero-Guerrero	2014/05/19	✓	La Jornada, El Financiero, Notigodinez
32	Leopoldo Molina Corral	Guadalupe y Calvo-Chihuahua	2014/09/08		Milenio, Debate, Noroeste
33	Juan Raúl Acosta Salas	Choix-Sinaloa	2015/03/06	✓	The Guardian, Debate, Expansion
34	Leticia Salazar	Matamoros-Tamaulipas	2015/03/09		Expansion, Colima Noticias, Telesur TV
35	Miguel Antonio Castillo	Coahuitlan-Veracruz	2015/03/13	✓	Costa Veracruz, El Heraldo de Poza Rica, Marcha
36	Mario de la Garza Garza	San Fernando-Tamaulipas	2015/05/30		El Siglio de Torreon, Aristegui Noticias, Reforma
37	Miguel Angel Castro Rosas	Amatlan de los Reyes-Veracruz	2015/07/19	✓	Quadratin Veracruz, El Siglio de Torreon
38	Romualdo Fuentes Galicia	Jantetelco-Morelos	2015/08/13	✓	Zona Centro Noticias, El Financiero, Reforma
39	Jose Santa Maria Zavala	Huehuetlán el Grande-Puebla	2015/09/01	✓	Expansion, El Pais, El Universal
40	Víctor Eduardo Castañeda Luquín.	Ahualulco de Mercado-Jalisco	2016/03/01		Excelsior, La Vanguardia, Alcaldes de Mexico
41	Israel Varela Ordóñez	Batopilas-Chihuahua	2017/01/17	✓	La Jornada, AM, Sin Embargo
42	Oscar Toral Rios	Asuncion Ixtaltepec-Oaxaca	2017/06/01	✓	El Universal, Corta Mortraja, ABC Radio
43	Jose Misael Gonzalez	Coalcomán de Vázquez Pallares-Michoacan	2017/10/20	✓	El Universal, Reforma, Aristegui Noticias
44	Andres Valencia Rios	San Juan Evangelista-Veracruz	2018/01/08		ACLED, Enlace Veracruz, El Sol de Puebla
45	Jose Rafael Nunez Ramirez	San Martín Texmelucan-Puebla	2018/02/01		ACLED, Milenio, Angulo7
46	Hugo Garcia Rios	San José Tenango-Oaxaca	2018/04/28		La Silla Rota, Vanguardia, El Sol de Mexico
47	Pablo Higuera Fuentes	Eduardo Neri-Guerrero	2018/06/26		ACLED, El Universal, El Financiero
48	Antonio Ramirez Itehua	Astacinga-Veracruz	2019/02/04	✓	ACLED, El Universal, El Economista
49	Emilio Montero Perez	Juchitan de Zaragoza -Oaxaca	2019/03/09		El Imparcial, Noticieros Televisa, Debate
50	Ernesto Quintanilla Villareal	Cadereyta Jiménez-Nuevo León	2019/03/10		ACLED, El Universal, Linea Directa
51	Domingo Cordoba Martinez	Chapulco-Puebla	2019/06/04		ACLED, El Popular, Milenio
52	Felix Alberto Linares Gonzalez	Ocuilan-Edomex	2019/07/03		Debate, De Paso Yucatan, La Jornada
53	Griselda Martinez Martinez	Manzanillo-Colima	2019/07/27		ACLED, Infobae, El Universal
54	Benito Olvera Munoz	Acatlan-Hidalgo	2019/07/31		El Sol de Hidalgo, El Reportero, AM
55	Eduardo Maldonado Garcia	San Felipe-Guanajuato	2019/08/22		ACLED, Milenio, El Siglo de Durango
56	Sara Valle Dessens	Guaymas-Sonora	2019/10/10		ACLED, El Imparcial, La jornada
57	Fernando Vilchis Contreras	Ecatepec-Edomex	2019/11/05		El Sol de Mexico, Noticias CD
58	Juan de Dios Valle Camacho	Ahumada-Chihuahua	2020/03/04		El Sol de Mexico, Reforma, El Norte
59	Abraham Cruz Gomez	Chenalho-Chiapas	2020/07/07	✓	ACLED, Excelsior, La Verdad Noticias
60	Aldo Molina Santos	Tenango de Doria-Hidalgo	2020/09/04		ACLED, Milenio, Quadratin Hidalgo
61	Cuitlahuac Contrado Escamilla	Acayucan-Veracruz	2020/11/17		Data Civica, Milinio, Infobae
62	Ponciano Gomez Gomez	Chamula-Chiapas	2020/12/05		El Siglio Coahuila, Proceso, La Jornada
63	Sinforiano Armenta Garcia	Tepetongo-Zacatecas	2021/04/08		La Jornada
64	Jorge Alberto Quinto Zamorano	Hueyapan de Ocampo-Veracruz	2021/04/22		Data Civica, Diario de Xalapa, El Sol de Mexico

65	Sandra Velazquez Lara	Pilcaya-Guerrero	2021/08/11	ACLED, Milenio, La Jornada
66	Carlos Alberto Paredes Correa	Tuxpan-Michoacan	2021/10/07	ACLED, Proceso, El Sol de Morelia
67	Geminiano Hernandez	Chiconamel-Veracruz	2021/11/19	ACLED, Milenio, Avi Veracruz
68	Calixto Urbano Lagunas	Atlatlahucan-Morelos	2021/11/19	ACLED, Diario de Morelos
69	Sinforiano Armenta Garcia	Tepetongo-Zacatecas	2021/11/24	Proceso, Excelsior, El Norte

Note: The above list includes mayors who were subject to failed attacks. 4 Municipalities were subject to multiple failed attacks against their mayors (Tiquicheo de Nicolás Romero-Michocan in 2009 and 2010; García-Nuevo Leon 2011 Feb and March; Cuetzala del Progreso-Guerrero in 2013 Apr and Aug; Tepetongo-Zacatecas in 2021 Apr and Nov). In 7 of the municipalities listed here, a mayor was assassinated either before or after the failed attacks occurred (Ocampo-Durango in 2009; Vista Hermosa-Michoacan in 2009; Tanhuato-Michoacan in 2014; Santiago Amoltepec-Oaxaca in 2011; Guadalupe y Calvo-Chihuahua in 2010; Huehuetlán el Grande-Puebla in 2016; Chamula-Chiapas in 2016). Thus, 58 unique municipalities experienced at least one failed attack without experiencing successful mayor assassinations. These cases were separated into mayor spending time away from office due to being injured (*herido(a), lesionado(a), se translasdo(a) al hospital*) and returning due to being unharmed (*sale ileso(a)*). These cases were categorized based on expressions appearing in the articles mentioned in the source column. In one case, a mayor (Ricardo Solís Manríquez) was unharmed from attacks but had to spend time away due to injuries he suffered during the election. Full links to the articles are stored in a separate data file.

Table A3: List of mayors who passed away in a non-violent manner

	Name	Municipality, State	Date	Reason of death	Sources
1	Oscar Zúñiga Quiroz	Mier y Noriega-Nuevo León	2002/03/15	car accident	Magar (2018), Proceso, Vlex
2	Carlos Filemón Kuk y Can	Motul-Yucatan	2003/07/28	car accident	Magar (2018), Proceso
3	Cecilio Amador Cuauhtle	Contla de Juarez Cuamatzi-Tlaxcala	2004/02/14	car accident	Magar (2018), El Siglo de Torreon, Proceso
4	Pedro Rojas Pérez	Santa Cruz Quilehtla-Tlaxcala	2004/02/14	car accident	Magar (2018), Proceso, Vlex
5	Delia Garza Gutiérrez	San Fernando-Tamaulipas	2007/07/20	cancer	Magar (2018), La Jornada, Cimac Noticias
6	Miguel Ángel Nicolás Mata	San Pedro Totolapan-Oaxaca	2009/08/06	car accident	Magar (2018) Panorama del Pacifico
7	José Manuel Maldonado	Piedras Negras-Coahuila	2010/07/07	plane crash	Magar (2018), El Economista, Plano Informativo
8	Rogelio Pérez Arrambide	Pesquería-Nuevo León	2010/07/25	heart attack	Magar (2018), Vlex, Presencia
9	Ignacio Rodríguez Villa	Nahuatzen-Michoacan	2012/09/29	respiratory disease	Magar (2018), Quadratin Michocan, TVNotas
10	Salomón Domínguez Jiménez	San Juan Lajarcia-Oaxaca	2012/11/19	car accident	Magar (2018), Libertad Oaxaca, Quadratin Oaxaca
11	Félix San Juan Rebollar	San Baltazar Chichicapam-Oaxaca	2013/01/06	unspecified illness	Magar (2018), Quadratin Oaxaca,
12	Leobardo Díaz Estrada	Urique-Chihuahua	2013/02/07	car accident	Magar (2018), Vanguardia, La Jornada
13	Joel Cebada Bernal	Nogales-Veracruz	2013/04/14	kidney failure	Magar (2018), Alcalor Politico, Orizaba en Red
14	Ernesto Rodríguez Rodríguez	Juchipila-Zacatecas	2013/08/16	heart attack	Magar (2018), Zacatacas Online, Vanguadia
15	Filimón Carlos Robles Díaz	Tepetongo-Zacatecas	2013/09/30	suicide	Magar (2018), Zacatacas Online, La Jornada
16	Eliud Cervantes Ramírez	Catemaco-Veracruz	2013/11/02	heart attack	Magar (2018), El Economista, Quadratin Mexico
17	Juan Ángel Castañeda Lizardo	Sombrerete-Zacatecas	2014/02/10	car accident	Magar (2018), Milenio, La Jornada
18	Sadot Bello García	Copala-Guerrero	2015/06/19	respiratory disease	Magar (2018), Expansion, Excelsior
19	Jesús Alvarado Hernández	San Pedro Sochiapam-Oaxaca	2015/11/03	Car accident	Magar (2018), El Universal, Excelsior
20	Alfredo Vizcarra Díaz	Concordia-Sinaloa	2016/09/20	stroke	Magar (2018), Noroeste, Proceso
21	Martha Elvia Fernández Sánchez	Cuautitlán-Edomex	2017/03/05	cancer	Magar (2018), MVS Noticias, Infobae
22	Fernando Álvaro Gómez	Tianguistenco-Edomex	2017/03/25	heart attack	Magar (2018), Proceso, El Sol de Mexico
23	Aurelio Cortez Aguirre	Santa Maria la Asuncion-Oaxaca	2017/05/17	gastric ulcer	Magar (2018), Legislador43, Tvbus
24	Irma Camacho García	Temixco-Morelos	2017/07/19	unspecified illness	Magar (2018), Proceso, Sinembargo
25	Edgar Gil Yoguez	Venustiano Carranza-Michoacan	2017/08/26	heart attack	Magar (2018), Notivideo, Mi Morelia
26	Salvador Aguilar García	Cohetzala-Puebla	2018/01/29	car accident	Magar (2018), Contrastes de Puebla
27	Jorge Luis García Vera	Villanueva-Zacatecas	2018/08/11	car accident	Magar (2018), El Universal, El Sol de Zacatecas
28	Zótico Gómez Bautista	Santiago Tetepec-Oaxaca	2018/09/20	car accident	Magar (2018), Debate, Excelsior
29	Jesús Bernardo Torres García	Santiago Suchiquitongo-Oaxaca	2018/10/30	pneumonia	Magar (2018), El Pinero, Imparcial Oaxaca
30	Raymunda Che Pech	Kantunil-Yucatan	2019/10/06	fainted at home	Magar (2018), El Financiero, El Universal

31	Félix Alberto Linares	Ocuilan-Edomex	2020/01/04	plane accident	Magar (2018), El Economista, Infobae
32	Óscar Gurría Penagos	Tapachula-Chiapas	2020/02/20	heart attack	Magar (2018), El Sol de Mexico, Milenio
33	Armando Portuguez Fuentes	Tultepec-Edomex	2020/05/23	heart attack	Magar (2018), Infobae, Excelsior
34	Sergio Anguiano Meléndez	Coyotepec-Edomex	2020/06/08	covid	Magar (2018), El Financiero, El Economista
35	Javier Santiago Ruiz	Reyes Etla-Oaxaca	2020/06/15	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, El Universal Oaxaca
36	Rigoberto González Pacheco	Bacoachi-Sonora	2020/06/16	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, Reforma
37	José Humberto Arellano	Acaponeta-Nayarit	2020/06/17	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, Infobae
38	Florencio San Germán Santiago	San Baltazar Chichicapam-Oaxaca	2020/06/28	covid	Magar (2018), La Razon, Central Municipal
39	Gerardo Tirso Acahua Apale	Coetzala-Veracruz	2020/06/28	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, El Universal
40	Josué Antonio García Rodríguez	Vanegas-San Luis Potosí	2020/07/08	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, El Sol de San Luis
41	Reyna Marlene de los Ángeles Catzín Cih	Maxcanú-Yucatan	2020/07/09	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, El Universal
42	Faustino Carín Molina Castillo	Amaxac-Tlaxcala	2020/07/13	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, La Jornada
43	Fernando Bautista Dávila	San Juan Bautista Tuxtepec-Oaxaca	2020/07/16	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, El Universal Oaxaca
44	Irma Delia Bárcena Villa	Miahuatlan-Veracruz	2020/07/16	covid	Magar (2018), El Sol de Mexico, Imagen del Golfo
45	Rigoberto Javier Tun Salas	Samahil-Yucatan	2020/07/19	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, El Universal
46	Artemio Ortiz Ricárdez	Tamazulapan del Espiritu Santo-Oaxaca	2020/08/05	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, El Universal Oaxaca
47	Victoria Rasgado Perez	Moloacan-Veracruz	2020/08/09	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, Milenio
48	Alfredo Juarez Diaz	Matias Romero-Oaxaca	2020/08/18	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, Excelsior
49	Pedro Escárcega Pérez	Santiago Jocotepec-Oaxaca	2020/08/21	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, Infobae
50	Miguel Ángel Antonio Vázquez	General Felipe Ángeles-Puebla	2020/08/24	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, Milenio
51	Victorino Gómez Martínez	San Bartolomé Quialana-Oaxaca	2020/08/25	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, Milenio
52	Simón Ursino Barzán	San Simón Zahuatlán-Oaxaca	2020/08/26	car accident	Magar (2018), SDP Noticias, Milenio
53	Tomás Primo Negrete	Tonanitla-Edomex	2020/08/30	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, El Universal
54	Daniel Efren Hernández Hernández	San Miguel del Rio-Oaxaca	2020/09/13	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, Quadratin Oaxaca
55	Pedro Modesto Santos	Santa Cruz Xitla-Oaxaca	2020/09/24	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, Sopitas
56	Héctor Carrasco Márquez	Venustiano Carranza-Puebla	2020/10/03	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, Milenio
57	Roberto Arriaga Colín	Ocampo-Michoacan	2020/10/05	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, El Universal Oaxaca
58	Carlos Mario Ortiz Sánchez	Salvador Alvarado-Sinaloa	2020/10/07	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, El Universal
59	Juan Manuel Rodríguez Rodríguez	Tulcingo del Valle-Puebla	2020/10/26	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, Heraldo de Mexico
60	Carmen Prieto Mortera	Moloacan-Veracruz	2020/11/08	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, Milenio
61	Rubén Díaz Espinoza	Santo Domingo-San Luis Potosí	2020/11/09	covid	El Sol de San Luis, Quadratin Queretaro
62	Jorge Luis Peña Peña	Los Aldamas -Nuevo León	2020/12/14	heart attack	Magar (2018), El Norte, Reforma
63	José Rosario Romero Lugo	Jaltenco-Edomex	2020/12/17	covid	Magar (2018), El Economista, El Universal
64	Juan José Losoya Ponce	San Francisco de los Romo-Aguascalientes	2021/01/05	heart attack	El Universal, El Sol de Centro, La Razon

65	Efraín Lázaro	San Juan Tamazola-Oaxaca	2021/01/23	covid	Magar (2018), El Universal, Reforma
66	José Yolando Jarquín Bustamante	Xitlapehua-Oaxaca	2021/01/25	covid	Magar (2018), Proceso, Milenio
67	Filogonia Adorno Aragon	San Bartolo Cohuecan-Puebla	2021/01/27	covid	El Economista, El Sol de Puebla, Milenio
68	María de Jesús Chávez	Tasquillo-Hidalgo	2021/01/30	covid	Magar (2018), Excelsior, La Silla Rota
69	Aparicio Reyes Rojas	Santos Reyes Tepejillo-Oaxaca	2021/01/30	covid	Magar (2018), Excelsior, Proceso
70	Leonilo Ruiz Martínez	Santa Catarina Loxicha-Oaxaca	2021/02/02	covid	Magar (2018), Quadratin Oaxaca, Milenio
71	Fernando Raymundo Valeriano Rodriguez	San Simon Zahuatlán-Oaxaca	2021/02/05	covid	Nvinoticias, La Silla Rota
72	Misael Lorenzo Morales	Atzacan-Veracruz	2021/02/08	covid	Magar (2018), Infobae, Milenio
73	Jan Cruz Idiaquez	San Francisco Sola de Vega-Oaxaca	2021/02/08	unspecified illness	La Silla Rota, El Universa Oaxaca
74	Patricia González	Villa Tezontepec-Hidalgo	2021/02/18	covid	Magar (2018), La Jornada, Excelsior
75	Juvenal Garcia Hernandez	San Sebastian Rio Hondo-Oaxaca	2021/02/19	covid	El Economista, El Universal, El Imparcial Oaxaca
76	Amado Vasquez	San Pedro Mixtepec - Distrito 26–Oaxaca	2021/02/22	covid	El Economista, El Universal Oaxaca
77	Filadelfo Vergara Tapia	Petlalcingo-Puebla	2021/02/23	covid	El Economista, Reforma, El Sol de Puebla
78	Nicolas Galindo Marquez	Jalpan-Puebla	2021/02/25	covid	El Economista, La Jornada de Oriente, Milenio
79	Hugo García Ríos	San Jose Tenango-Oaxaca	2021/02/28	covid	El Economista, SDP Noticias, El Universal Oaxaca
80	Baltazar Gaona Sánchez	Tarimbaro-Michoacan	2021/03/05	covid	El Economista, La Jornada, El Sol de Morelia
81	Leobardo Aguilar Flores	Soltepec-Puebla	2021/03/31	covid	El Economista, Milenio, La Jornada de Oriente
82	Rogelio Torres Ortega	Tepoztlan-Morelos	2021/04/13	covid	El Economista, Infobae, Milenio
83	Jose Dolores Jimenez Lopez	Santa Maria Nativitas-Oaxaca	2021/06/09	covid	El Economista, El Universal Oaxaca
84	Trinidad Perez Coria	Mazatepec-Morelos	2021/07/20	heart attack	Milenio, El Sol de Cuernacava, La Jornada
85	Evergisto Gamboa Diaz	Santiago Choapam-Oaxaca	2021/07/31	covid	El Norte, La Razon, Nvinoticias
86	Jorge Humberto Aguilar Perera	Kaua-Yucatan	2021/08/10	covid	Grillo de Yucatan, Diario de Yucatan
87	Carlos Manuel Calvo Martinez	Jiquipilas-Chiapas	2021/09/08	covid	La Jornada, Vanguardia Veracruz, Excelsior
88	Antonio Francisco Perez	Hermenegildo Galeana-Puebla	2021/09/15	covid	Municipios Puebla, Angulo7, El Sol de Puebla
89	Abel Sanchez Campos	San Antonino Castillo Velasco-Oaxaca	2021/12/28	natural	Meganoticias, El Universal Oaxaca

Note: The above list includes mayors who were subject to non-violent deaths. 3 municipalities experienced multiple non-violent deaths of their mayors (Moloacan-Veracruz in Aug and Nov of 2020; San Baltazar Chichicapam-Oaxaca in 2013 and 2020; San Simon Zahuatlán-Oaxaca in 2020 and 2021). In 2 municipalities, a mayor was also assassinated (Nahuatzen-Michoacan in 2013; Temixco-Morelos in 2016). Thus, 84 unique municipalities experienced non-violent deaths of the mayors without assassinations.

A.4 Definition of key variables from other datasets

A.4.1 Fiscal indicators: Revenues to municipal government

Following are the definitions of the fiscal variables used in the research. The definition and the categorization come from the INEGI's database (INEGI 2016).

- Tax revenues (*impuestos*): These are revenue that is paid by legal and natural persons under the relevant taxation law. At the municipal level, the following taxes are collected
  - Property taxes (*impuesto predial*)
  - Land tax revenues (*impuestos al patrimonio*): Summation of property taxes and sale tax on real estate. In some cases, this is translated as wealth tax
  - Other taxes include additional taxes on education (*impuestos adicionales para educación*) and public works (*impuestos adicionales para obras de públicas*)
- Non-earmarked funds from the federal government (*participaciones*): These are funds and resources given to the municipal governments, with no conditions specifically defined. The funds in this category depend both on demographic traits and local revenue-generating activities (SEGOB 2011)
  - General Participation Funds (*Fondo General de Participaciones*): This is also shared with the state governments, who must also share 20% of the amount they receive from this fund to municipalities according to the Financial Coordination Law (*Ley de Coordinación fiscal*)
  - Municipal Development Funds (*Fondo de Fomento Municipal*): There are more components determined by taxation in this category in general. This fund is exclusively destined to the municipalities and not the states (SEGOB 2011)
  - Other categories include transfers based on taxes collected at the federal or state level, such as vehicle taxes, gasoline taxes, and payroll taxes
- Earmarked funds from the federal government (*aportaciones*): These are funds and resources given to the municipal governments, with conditions on where these funds could be spent according to the Financial Coordination Law

  - Municipal Fund for Social Infrastructure (*Fondo de Aportaciones para la Infraestructura Social Municipal*): Conditioned for the public projects and infrastructure development that benefits municipal population
  - Funds for Municipal Development (*Fondo de Aportaciones para el Fortalecimiento de los Municipios*): Conditioned for supporting municipal treasuries and other requirements of the municipalities, such as public security. Generally, the conditions on this fund are weaker than those of FISM (SEGOB 2011).

- Revenues from provision of public service (*derechos*): These are contributions to the municipal revenue through receipt of fees from servicing a public goods and services. The following are included
  - Registration services (*registro civil, registro público de la propiedad y del comercio*)
  - Certification and recording services (*certificaciones y constancias diversas*)
  - Licenses (*icencias al comercio ambulante, licensias de construcción*)
  - Water (*agua potable*)
  - Services related to urban development (*Servicios de desarrollo urbano y obras públicas*)
- Revenues from legal functions (*aprovechamientos*): Income received from public law functions.
  - Surcharges for interest payments (*recargos*), Fines (*multas*), Penalties for late payments of fees (*Rezagos*)

A.4.2 Fiscal indicators: Municipal government expenditures

Like the revenue variables, the definition and categorizations are from the INEGI (2016)

- Total payments to personnel (*Servicios personales*): Expenses towards the remuneration of personnel at the service of public entities. This includes wages, bonuses, and social security benefits.
  - General remunerations (*remuneraciones al personal*)
  - Others: Additional pay (*Remuneraciones adicionales y especiales*), Social security quotas (*cuotas de seguridad social y seguros*)

- Expenditures on general services (*Servicios generales*): Expenses designed to cover the costs of the services provided by the municipal government
  - Basic services (*servicios basico*): Includes expenses to water, electricity, telephone, and internet services
  - Those that are counted as other general expenditures include leases (*arrendamientos*), financial services (*servicios financieros, bancarios, y comerciales*), expenses on maintenance services including waste management (*servicios de instalación, reparación, mantenimiento y conservación*) and travel expenses for municipal personnel (*servicios de translado y viáticos*)
- Public investment (*Inversíon pública*): Expenses on public projects and contracts on works related to municipal development and infrastructure.
  - Includes construction of residential and nonresidential buildings, schools, hospitals, and energy infrastructures on public and private domains
- Transfers and allowances to municipal institutions (*Transferencia, Asignaciones, subsidios y otra ayuda*): Allowances destined directly or indirectly to various entities to support economic and social policy, following the strategies for development and maintenance of the performance of the recipient entities
  - Transfers and allowances to internal public organizations (*ransferencias internas y asignaciones al sector público*)
  - Subsidies to private entities (*Subsidios*)
  - Social assistance to individuals (*Ayudas*)

A.4.3 Variables on municipal personnel

- Committees mentioned in the Census of Municipal Governments: Among many others, the primary ones are treasury, internal control, public security, social development, and economic development. Other minor ones include committees for culture, municipal presidents, and others. (The categorization has changed in the 6th wave of the Census of Municipal Governments, published in 2021)

A.4.4 Further definition of the control variables used in the main specification

- Number of organized criminal groups: Calculated based on the number of organized criminal groups appearing in Coscia and Rios (2012) and Osorio and Beltran (2020) and ACLED. While Osorio and Beltran (2020) and ACLED also identifies subdivision of the major organized criminal groups, this is not the case for Coscia and Rios (2012). Thus, I use the number of major organized criminal groups and not their subdivisions for consistency.

- Homicide indicators: The total count of homicides is generated from the homicide records in INEGI, accessible with this link https://www.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/olap/proyectos/bd/continuas/mortalidad/defuncioneshom.asp?s=est. As for the homicide rate per 100,000 people, this is generated by dividing this with population measure

- Average level of schooling: Calculated based on response to year of schooling questions from the Mexican Census, with intercensal years calculated based on interpolation

- Share of indigenous population: Calculated based on response to year of schooling questions from the Mexican Census and population from census and WorldPop, with intercensal years calculated based on interpolation[4]

- Years since election: Number of calendar years passed since the most recent election

- Resource endowment: Amount of gold, silver, iron, copper, and zinc extracted in each municipality measured in tons. Data from 2000 and after uses a Mining-metallurgical industry survey from INEGI. Earlier data are from the mineral yearbook of the Council of Mineral Resources.

A.5 Creation of harmonized nightlight measures from DMSP and VIIRS

The two sources of the nightlight data primarily available for research purposes are the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP) and Visible and Infrared Imaging Suite (VIIRS).[5] DMSP is available from 1992 to 2013, with multiple different satellites (F10, F12, F14, F15, F16, F18) covering

4. Results for homicides rates and share of population are robust to using either the Census of the combination of Census and WorldPop as population measures

5. Both datasets can be downloaded from the website for the Payne Institute for Public Policy under the Colorado School of Mines: https://eogdata.mines.edu/products/dmsp/ (DMSP) and https://eogdata.mines.edu/products/vnl/ (VIIRS)

different time periods.[6] F10 satellite was operated from 1992-1994. F12 covers 1994-1999. F14 is available from 1997-2003. F15 is used from 2000-2007. F16 runs from 2004-2009. For 2010-2013, F18 is used. VIIRS, on the other hand, is available publicly from 2012 and onwards, using a single satellite. The timeframe of this research spans from 1995 and 2021. With no single dataset having a time coverage that spans this period on its own, it is necessary to combine the two datasets to utilize the nightlight variables

However, two other differences complicate the combination of the two datasets. First, each pixel in the two datasets is measured in different geographic units. Each pixel of nightlight intensities in DMSP is measured in a 1km-by-1km unit, whereas the same for VIIRS is 500m-by-500m. Thus, I need to match the pixel units by aggregating the observations in the VIIRS to match the same unit of distance in DMSP.

More importantly, the measure of light intensity used in the two datasets is different. In DMSP, nightlight intensity is measured using 'digital numbers' (DNs), which is an arbitrary unit generated with a 6-bit quantization radiometric resolution over the nightlights (Yuan et al. 2022). The range for the DNs is 0 to 63, with extremely bright (dark) nightlights being topcoded (bottomcoded). For VIIRS, the nightlight intensities are measured in terms of the actual radiance and capture a wider range of nightlight intensities than DMSP. Furthermore, 1 value of DNs in DMSP can correspond to multiple values of nightlight intensities in the VIIRS dataset (Li et al. 2022; Yuan et al. 2022). Therefore, I create a unified light intensity measure by translating the VIIRS nightlight intensities to the corresponding DMSP DN values.

I take the following steps to create a combined dataset with an identical geographic pixel unit and consistent light intensity measure, based on the methods suggested by Li et al. (2022) and Yuan et al. (2022). I first create consistent nightlight intensity measures across all the different satellites in the DMSP sample. For years with multiple satellites, I averaged the different intensity values to represent the nightlight for each pixel. Then I generate a regression with the DN of each year t for each pixel i as an outcome variable, with the constant, DN, and DN-squared of the base year (2010)

6. As individual satellites were degrading in quality of measurements over time, multiple satellites were employed to make up for the shortcomings. (Yuan et al. 2022)

for the same pixel as an input (Yuan et al. 2022).[7]

$$DN_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DN_{i.2010} + \beta_2 DN^2_{i.2010} + u_i \tag{A1}$$

After the regression, I generate the fitted nightlight values for each year by fitting the estimated coefficients $\hat{\beta}_0, \hat{\beta}_1$ and $\hat{\beta}_2$ in the following manner

$$\widehat{DN}_{i,t} = \hat{\beta}_0 + \hat{\beta}_1 DN_{i,t} + \hat{\beta}_2 DN^2_{i,t} \tag{A2}$$

I apply this to all for $t \leq 2013$. This generates a consistent nightlight measure for all DMSP samples.

Then, I generate a DMSP-like measure for the VIIRS data. For this, I use the two years for which both DMSP and VIIRS are available as references - 2012 and 2013. I start by aggregating the pixels in VIIRS resolution from the 500m-by-500m level to the 1km-by-1km level by taking averages across the 4 pixels making up the 1km-by-1km space. I denote the newly aggregated pixel values as $x_{i,t}$ for year t at point i. Then, I take the inverse hyperbolic sine on the aggregated pixel values to optimize the fitting procedure (Li et al. 2022).[8] Then, I fit this measure with the nonlinear regression using the following sigmoid function to follow the idea that the DMSP is bottom-coded and top-coded.[9] This step generates the DMSP-like nightlight values in DNs for all the VIIRS samples.

$$DN_{i,t} = \gamma_0 + \frac{\gamma_1}{1 + \exp(-\gamma_2(ihs(x_{i,t}) - \gamma_3))} + e_i \quad (2014 \leq t \leq 2021) \tag{A3}$$

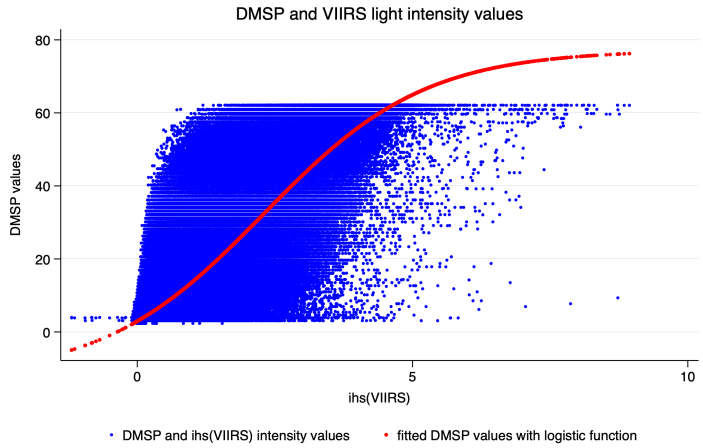
The resulting nightlight measures are summarized by Figure A1. The top panel reports the degree of fit between the DMSP and VIIRS nightlight intensities. The bottom panel shows the nightlight intensity measures across different satellites in the two datasets. The blue and red line represents the DMSP nightlight intensity values that fit across different satellites in the DMSP sample and the generated DMSP values for the VIIRS dataset. For the research, these two lines were used as the nightlight intensity measures.

7. Base year of 2010 is suggested by Yuan et al. (2022) on the basis that the DN values for that year had the highest total and thus, a sufficient variation to be used as a reference year.

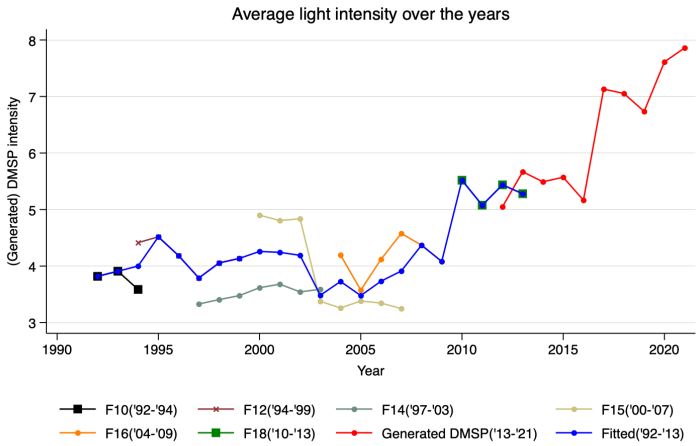
8. This step is carried out to smooth out the coarse values that are calculated as a result of aggregating from 500m-by-500m level to the 1km-by-1km level. Further technical details are found in Li et al. (2022).

9. For this, I use the `nl` command in Stata with `log4` option, which fits the outcome and independent variables with a logistic function

Figure A1: Harmonizing nightlight intensity variables across DMSP and VIIRS



(a) Fitting VIIRS and DMSP for 2013 and 2013



(b) Measure of nightlight intensity variables in the two datasets

Note: The top panel describes the fit between DMSP and VIIRS nightlights matched with the logistic function in Equation (A3). The bottom panel maps out the nightlight values for all satellites in the data as well as the fitted DMSP values for all the DMSP datasets (in blue) and VIIRS dataset (in red).

A.6 Full summary statistics and balance tables

Table A4 provides summary statistics for the whole sample in the survey. Table1 A5 breaks down the summary statistics for key variables in the text by near-miss, assassination, and the rest of Mexico.

Table A4: Summary statistics for outcome variables at municipality-year level

Variable (unit)	N	Mean	St. dev.	10th pct.	Median	90th pct.
Panel A. Outcome variables for municipal government revenues						
Total income (th. Pesos)	3,075	213,072	679,872	4,710	47,984	397,070
Tax revenues (th. Pesos)	2,945	27,752	126,609	39	1,093	48,246
Tax per capita (Pesos)	2,836	157	354	3	51	349
Property Tax (th. Pesos)	2,665	17,576	82,440	36	799	31,207
Property Tax per capita (Pesos)	2,575	98	201	3	37	220
Non-earmarked Fund (th.Pesos)	2,725	67,367	225,573	3,312	17,413	117,106
Earmarked Fund (th. Pesos)	2,478	58,148	127,059	4,261	21,290	128,929
Usage Fee (th. Pesos)	2,959	13,102	61,707	42	1,144	20,194
Legal Service (th. Pesos)	2,827	6,136	27,091	11	395	10,089
Panel B. Outcome variables for municipal government expenditures						
Total expenditure (th. Pesos)	3,075	213,072	679,872	4,710	47,984	397,070
Personnel expenditure (th. Pesos)	3,066	71,139	273,777	962	11,712	125,340
Public Investment (th. Pesos)	3,006	46,715	108,707	534	14,952	105,224
Basic Infrastructure (th. Pesos)	2,847	8,744	27,872	122	1,666	15,384
Other General Services (th. Pesos)	2,847	24,657	97,838	339	3,077	35,364
Transfer/allowance (th. Pesos)	3,014	24,383	107,937	250	3,000	30,041
Internal transfers (th. Pesos)	2,452	15,232	71,746	125	1,722	18,841
Panel C. Outcome variables for municipal workers						
Total (Persons)	747	627	1,554	35	209	1,317
20s (Persons)	746	105	225	1	38	204
30s (Persons)	746	167	422	3	59	317
40s (Persons)	746	152	464	2	40	273
$\geq$50s (Persons)	746	134	437	0	24	264
Panel D. Outcome variables for alternative mechanisms						
Fitted nightlights (DNs)	3,429	0.778	1.36	0	0	2
Total Outmigration (Persons)	1,778	621	1,800	24	264	1,113
Total population (Persons)	3,294	75,311	211,475	4,589	20,694	139,336
Population age 15-64 (Persons)	3,294	47,065	140,190	2,332	11,120	84,182
# Organized Criminal (Groups)	3,429	0.432	1.11	0	0	1
Total homicides (Cases)	3,375	13.1	53.2	0	1	22
Homicide per 100k (Rate)	3,375	17.2	42.6	0	5.72	43.8
Robbery (Cases)	1,229	684	3,378	2	29	1,128
Threat (Cases)	1,229	55.4	236	0	4	122

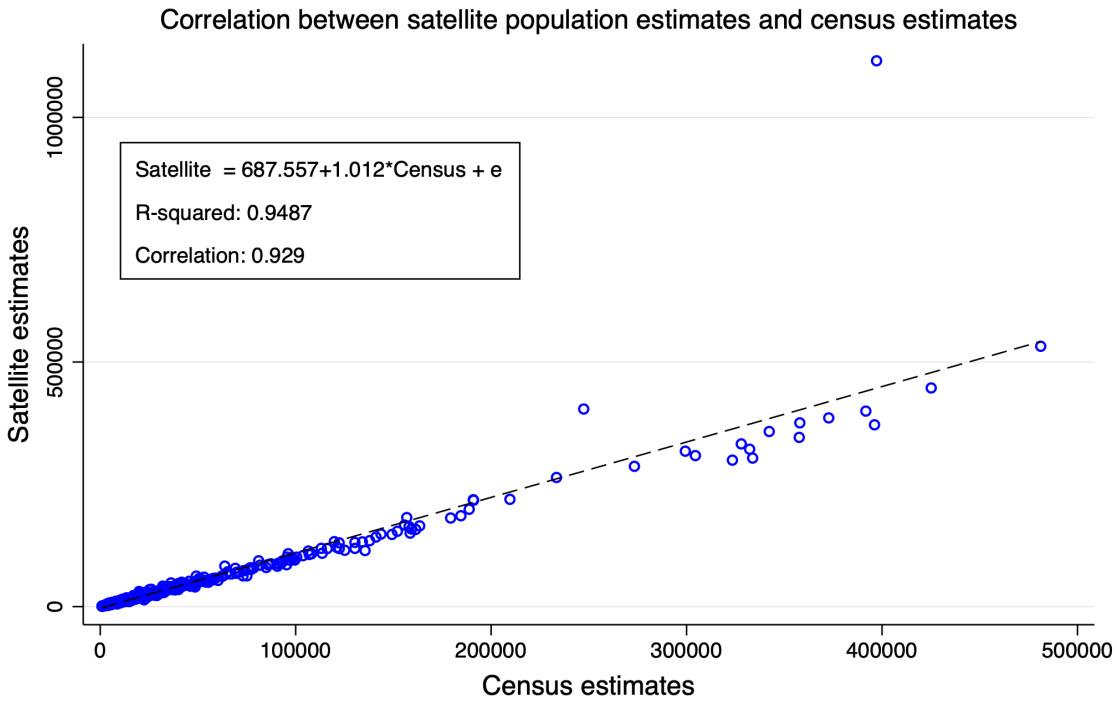
The table lists the summary statistics for the variables in Section 3 at the municipal level. The statistics presented here are mean, standard deviation, 10th percentile, median, and 90th percentile. For the units, "th. Pesos " refers to a thousand Pesos. The number of observations for each municipality is counted from 2011 for outcome variables in Panel C (biennially), and robbery and threat cases in Panel D (annually). Outmigration is counted from 2008 in Panel D (yearly). Other variables are included from 1995 (yearly). The most recent observations for all outcomes are from 2021.

Table A5: Summary statistics for outcome variables, per category of municipalities

	(1) Near-miss			(2) Assassination			(3) Rest of Mexico		
Variable (unit)	N	Mean	St. dev	N	Mean	St. dev	N	Mean	St. dev
Panel A. Outcome variables for municipal government revenues									
Total income (th. Pesos)	1,147	451,430	1,059,344	1,928	71,268	126,669	55,409	108,604	366,104
Tax (th. Pesos)	1,122	66,429	198,304	1,823	3,948	14,770	52,128	13,777	86,779
Tax per capita (Pesos)	1,080	249	466	1,756	101	245	49,543	102	251
Property tax (th. Pesos)	1,031	41,660	128,592	1,634	2,379	7,742	45,562	8,391	48,947
Property tax per capita (pesos)	995	152	270	1,580	65	130	43,371	65	137
Nonearmarked fund (th. Pesos)	1,027	138,861	352,198	1,698	24,126	41,433	48,475	37,185	114,779
Earmarked fund (th. Pesos)	941	100,107	188,499	1,537	32,460	50,504	43,820	35,123	79,181
Service Revenue (th. Pesos)	1,112	13,871	41,913	1,715	1,121	2,719	48,009	3,429	22,721
Legal functions (th. Pesos)	1,121	30,670	97,425	1,838	2,387	6,430	52,043	6,257	31,025
Panel B. Outcome variables for municipal government expenditures									
Total expenditure (th. Pesos)	1,147	451,430	1,059,344	1,928	71,268	126,669	55,409	108,604	366,104
Personnel expenditure (th. Pesos)	1,144	154,827	431,175	1,922	21,327	48,155	55,114	36,521	144,337
Public Investment (th. Pesos)	1,124	81,629	161,780	1,882	25,864	45,711	53,969	27,415	73,280
Basic Infrastructure (th. Pesos)	1,069	18,813	43,206	1,778	2,690	4,960	50,702	4,974	18,716
Other general service (th. Pesos)	1,069	57,195	153,799	1,778	5,095	9,732	50,702	11,040	49,621
Transfer/allowances (th. Pesos)	1,130	56,331	170,973	1,884	5,222	11,638	54,078	10,527	48,176
Internal transfers (th. Pesos)	948	34,374	112,402	1,504	3,167	7,554	44,572	7,042	33,490
Panel C. Outcome variables for municipal workers									
Total (persons)	266	1,292	2,404	481	259	425	13,722	396	1,000
20s (persons)	266	204	340	481	49.8	76.3	13,722	71.2	159
30s (persons)	266	333	657	481	74.9	119	13,722	111	269
40s (persons)	266	315	735	481	60.8	111	13,722	99.1	276
$\geq$50s (persons)	266	292	692	480	47.2	101	13,680	95	333
Panel D. Outcome variables for alternative mechanisms									
Fitted nightlights (DNs)	1,215	13.1	14.9	2,214	7.14	7.55	62,910	8.99	10.7
Total outmigration (persons)	630	1,140	2,895	1,148	336	444	32,777	333	986
Total population (persons)	1,166	162,726	333,094	2,128	27,413	44,532	59,616	43,804	126,909
Population aged 15-64 (persons)	1,166	103,554	221,533	2,128	16,112	28,960	59,616	27,375	84,407
# Criminal groups (groups)	1,215	0.59	1.37	2,214	0.346	0.923	62,964	0.222	0.773
Total homicides (cases)	1,188	26.5	85.9	2,187	5.88	14.9	56,511	8.56	76
Homicide per 100k (rate)	1,188	11.7	18.4	2,187	20.3	50.9	56,403	10.9	36.6
Robbery (cases)	461	1,635	5,358	768	113	424	21,094	349	1,561
Threat (cases)	461	127	371	768	12.4	36	21,094	39.9	187

The table lists the summary statistics for the variables in Section 3 at the municipal level, broken down into three categories. The categories are defined depending on whether there were assassinations that failed to kill and injure a mayor (Column (1)), those that killed a mayor (Column (2)), and the rest of Mexico (Column(3)). The number of municipality-year observations, mean, and standard deviation are presented. For the units, “th. Pesos" refers to a thousand Pesos. The number of observations for each municipality is counted from 2011 for outcome variables in Panel C (biennially), and robbery and threat cases in Panel D (annually). Outmigration is counted from 2008 in Panel D (yearly). Other variables are included from 1995 (yearly). The most recent observations for all outcomes are from 2021.

Figure A2: Correlating Mexican Census and WorldPop estimates



Note: The Figure displays the correlates between WorldPop estimates (vertical axis) and Census counts (horizontal axis) for years in which both values are available - every year that ends with 5 or 0. Blue dots represent the values from sources. Black dotted line plots linear regression between the WorldPop estimates and Census counts. The regression results are reported in the box on the top left, with slope estimate being statistically significant at 1% level. R-squared from that regression and raw correlates between two data sources are also displayed in the box.

Appendix B Supplementary results and statistics for Sections 2 and 5

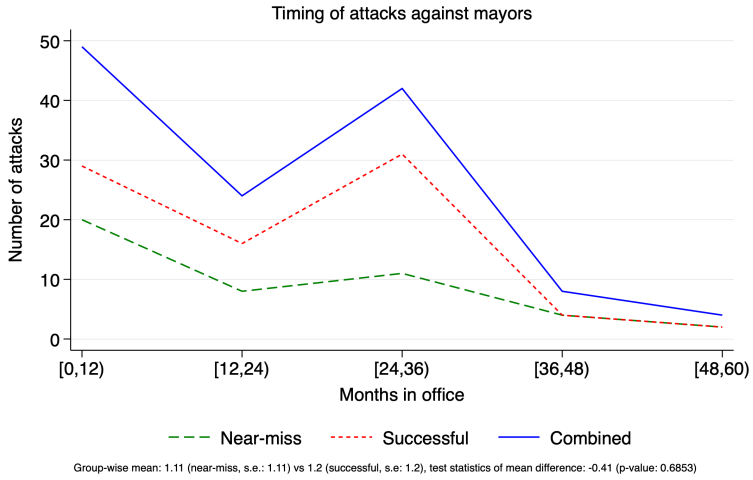
Table B1: Incidence of attacks on mayors in a given year, since 1995

	All of Mexico (Coeff × 100)				Assassination and Near-miss			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Panel A. Exclude unidentified groups								
log(# groups + 1)	0.305**			0.135	0.024**			0.004
	(0.122)			(0.156)	(0.011)			(0.016)
I(New group)		0.425**		0.322		0.040**		0.037
		(0.170)		(0.211)		(0.017)		(0.023)
Homicide per million	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.002**	0.002**	0.002**	0.002**
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Panel B. Include unidentified groups								
log(# groups + 1)	0.509***			0.337***	0.047***			0.023*
	(0.102)			(0.110)	(0.010)			(0.013)
I(New group)		0.549***		0.367		0.058***		0.046**
		(0.139)		(0.160)		(0.016)		(0.020)
Homicide per million	0.013	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.019*	0.020**	0.022**	0.019*
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
N	59272	59272	59272	59272	3369	3369	3369	3369
Municipalities	2198	2198	2198	2198	125	125	125	125
Municipal FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

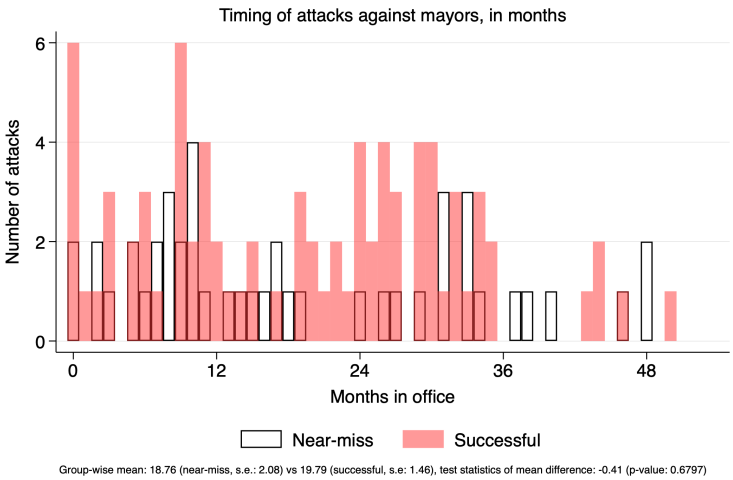
* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

The table shows the coefficient estimates from the regression of the incidence of attacks on mayors on variables relevant to gang presence and crime at the municipality-year level. For the sample using all of Mexico, coefficients are multiplied by 100 for convenience. Homicides per million is recalculated to exclude cases of mayor assassinations. All regressions include municipality, year fixed effects, and controls. Control variables included are the average schooling of the municipal population, the share of the indigenous population, the log of the total population, and the year since the election (level and squared). log(# group + 1) is the log of the number of criminal groups in the municipality, adjusted by adding 1 to account for municipalities with no presence of organized criminal groups. New group refers to the dummy variable for the existence of a criminal organization that newly began its activities within the municipalities. Standard errors are clustered at the municipal level.

Figure B1: Timing of the attacks on mayors



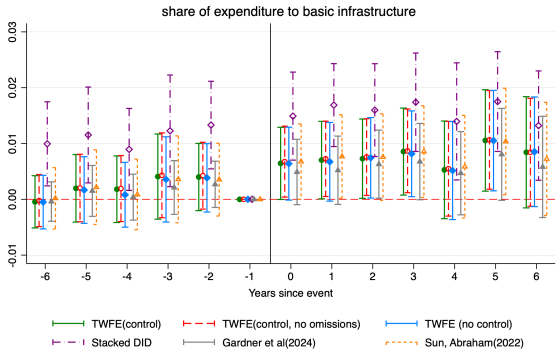
(a) Timing of attack, in terms of year in office



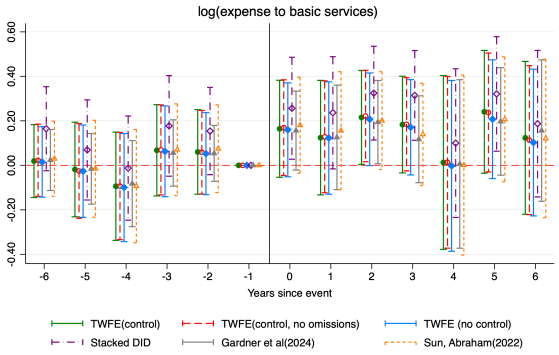
(b) Timing of attacks, in terms of months in office

Note: The graphs in this figure trace the timing of attacks that target mayors in terms of year and months in office for both cases where the assassination attempt succeeded and failed. Panel (a) traces the number of assassination attempts in terms of years while Panel (b) does so for each month in office. The notes in each paragraph show the t-test result of the difference in group-wise means. In both cases, there are no meaningful differences in the timing of the attacks against the mayors across cases where the assassinations were successful or not. The sources of the data used are based on the data collected by the authors, among others. A detailed explanation of the data is found in Section 3.

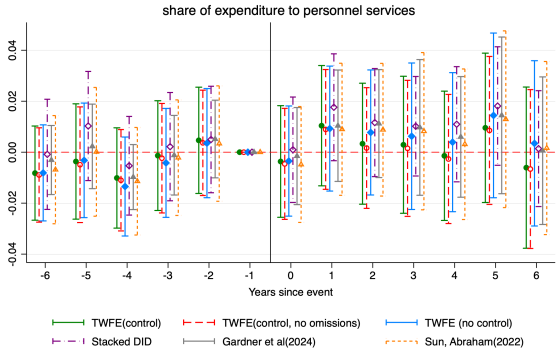
Figure B2: Shares of various expenditures across different categories



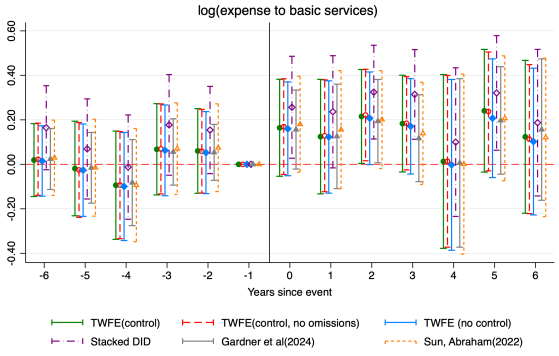
(a) Share of basic infrastructure expenses



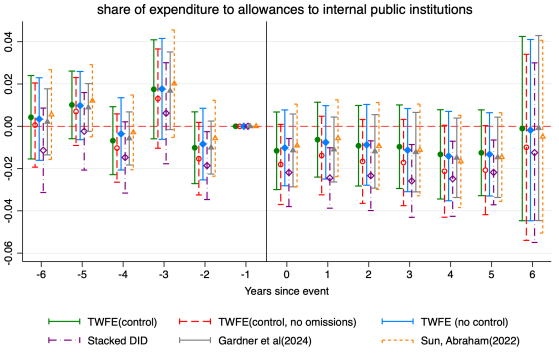
(b) log(Basic infrastructure expenses)



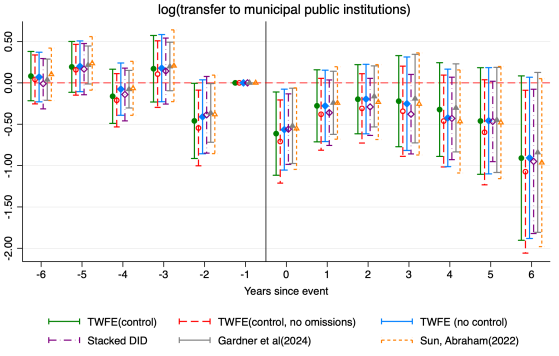
(c) Share of personnel compensation



(d) log(Personnel compensation)



(e) Allowances to internal institutions



(f) log(Allowances to internal instituitions)

Note: The figures report the event study regression on the different measures of expenditures of the municipal government. The outcome variables used in each regression are listed below each graph. All regressions include a binned indicator for municipalities experiencing assassinations 7 or more years ago, municipality fixed effects, and year fixed effects. Stacked DID regression includes state-specific yearly linear trends to account for different weights across yearly subdatasets used to create the estimator. Two-way fixed effect regressions with covariates include controls for log(number of criminal organizations + 1), homicide rates, log(total homicides + 1), average years of schooling for the municipal population, the share of the indigenous population, and years since the most recent election (level and squared) fixed at the final pre-assasination attempt year. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Appendix C Framework and supplementary results for Section 6

C.1 Full conceptual framework

In this section, I will provide a detailed explanation of the derivation of the key conditions stated in Section 6. I first derive the first-order conditions for the demand for public sector labor and the socially optimal allocation of workers across tax collection and public goods provision. Then, I show the comparative statics involving changes in productivity, value of public goods, and amenities for working in the public sector.

C.1.1 Individual choices and utility

Individual choice of labor: Individuals can earn income from two different sources. They can take an outside option with a realized income of v. This is drawn from a known distribution $f(v)$ with cumulative distribution $F(v)$. They can choose to work in the public sector if the wage w and amenities of working for the government π outweigh v. Wages are determined by the government through cost minimization and are publicly posted. π can be interpreted as the pro-social sentiment that motivates individuals to serve in the government sector, as in Dal Bó et al. (2013). It can also represent nonpecuniary amenities provided by the government, such as a sense of security. Combined, the proportion of the population working in the government can be expressed as

$$w + \pi \geq v \implies \Pr(v \leq w + \pi) = F(w + \pi)$$

This setup captures the idea that any decrease in w or π leads to a decrease in the supply of public sector workers.

Individual utility: Individuals gain income Y from working in either one of the two sectors outlined above and pay T in lump sum taxes to the local government.[1] The individual utility is linear in private consumption X and public goods G which is valued at rate $\alpha > 0$. Thus, individual utility can be written as the following indirect utility form

$$\alpha G + X \text{ s.t. } X \leq Y - T$$

1. The choice of lump sum tax follows from the observation that local governments primarily levy property taxes. Income taxes are collected by state or national governments in many countries (Weingast 2009). Furthermore, this setup is sufficient to capture the idea that tax collection depends on the amount of labor allocated.

For workers in the public sector, their income is a fixed wage w. The expected income for those taking outside options over the public sector is written as $E[v|v > w + \pi]$. When aggregating to the population level, the individual incomes are weighted by the share of the population taking the public and the outside options.

C.1.2 Outlining the problem faced by the local government

Role of local government: The goal of the government is to provide public goods and collect taxes to maximize social utility while complying with the budget and labor constraints. The social utility is obtained by summing over all individual utility functions. Thus, I obtain the following social utility function for individuals taking jobs in both public and outside options.

$$\alpha G + F(w + \pi)w + (1 - F(w + \pi))E[v|v > w + \pi] - T$$

Government gains revenues from taxes T and other sources, written as R.[2] The government uses the revenues to finance workers in the public sector. This gives the following equation for the budget constraint

$$R + T \geq wF(w + \pi)$$

The local government is responsible for providing public goods and collecting taxes. In this framework, this is modeled in ways similar to the production function of a firm. Labor in the public sector is split into those collecting taxes (L_T) and providing public goods (L_G).[3] Production for taxes and public goods are written in $A_T t(L_T)$ and $A_G g(L_G)$, where $t(\cdot)$ and $g(\cdot)$ are increasing and concave in L_T and L_G respectively. Parameters $A_T > 0$ and $A_G > 0$ capture the productivity in these operations. Combined, the production of taxes and public goods, along with labor constraints are written as

$$T = A_T t(L_T)$$

$$G = A_G g(L_G)$$

$$L_T + L_G = F(w + \pi)$$

2. In this framework, R captures the grants from the central government. This is exogenously given in the current setup for analytical convenience. However, this amount is determined by the central government based on the revenues generated within the municipalities for places complying with fiscal federalism (Weingast 2009).

3. This is to ensure that every worker who prefers to work in the public sector gets assigned. Allowing non-assignment implies that there are unemployed workers in the model, which is the situation not addressed in this research.

C.1.3 Deriving the first order conditions

The problem of finding the allocation of labor across tax collection and public goods provision that maximizes social utility follows two steps. First, the local government determines the total amount of public labor that minimizes the cost of operations. In turn, wages w, which are assumed to be equal for both types of public workers, are determined. Then, the government maximizes the summation of individual utilities by optimally allocating workers across tax collection and public goods provision.

Cost minimization of the government: Here, the local government selects the total available labor for the public sector that minimizes its costs given its production function. In turn, this is where the wage w is determined. I use L to denote the total public sector labor, equivalent to $F(w + \pi)$. I assume that the wages across the tax collectors and the public goods providers are equal. Given this, the objective function and the production function are to minimize total expenditure on workers subject to the production function and labor allocation rule. This is written as

$$\min_{L} wL \text{ s.t. } T = A_T t(L_T).\ G = A_G g(L_G)$$

Here, the public sector is allocated to either one of L_T or L_G, so $L = L_G + L_T$. With this, the Lagrangian can be written as

$$wL + \lambda_T[T - A_T t(L - L_G)] + \lambda_G[G - A_G g(L - L_T)]$$

where λ_T and λ_G refer to the value of taxation and public goods to the government. Solving the first-order conditions with respect to L yields

- $[L]$: $w - \lambda_T A_T t'(L - L_G) - \lambda_G A_G g'(L - L_T) = 0$
- Complementary slackness: $\lambda_T[T - A_T t(L - L_G)] = 0, \lambda_G[G - A_G g(L - L_T)] = 0,\ \lambda_T, \lambda_G \geq 0$

Rearranging $[L]$ condition yields

$$w = \lambda_T A_T t'(L - L_G) + \lambda_G A_G g'(L - L_T)$$

In other words, public sector labor and wages are selected to satisfy the condition where the wage is equal to the weighted sum of marginal productivities across tax collection and public goods provision.

Allocating public labor to maximize social utility: Here, the local government maximizes the sum of individual utility. In the indirect utility form, this can be written as

$$\alpha G + Y - T$$

where Y is the labor income of the individual. This is equal to the public sector wage w for those who work in local government ($L = F(w + \pi)$) while others take the outside option.

The social utility is obtained by aggregating the individual utilities. Aggregating over public sector workers with income w and those accepting outside option with expected income $E[v|v > w + \pi]$, the social utility can be written as

$$\alpha G + F(w + \pi)w + (1 - F(w + \pi))E[v|v > w + \pi] - T$$

This is maximized subject to the production function and the government budget constraint.

$$\begin{aligned} R + T &\geq wL \text{ where } F(w + \pi) = L \\ L &= L_T + L_G \\ T &= A_T t(L_T) \\ G &= A_G g(L_G) \end{aligned}$$

With this setup, the Lagrangian can be written as

$$\max_{\{L_T, L_G\}} \alpha A_G g(L_G) + [F(w+\pi)w + (1 - F(w+\pi))E[v|v > w+\pi]] - A_T t(l_T) + \lambda[R + A_T t(L_T) - wF(w+\pi)]$$

Taking first-order conditions with respect to L_T and L_G yields

- $[L_T]$: $(\lambda - 1)A_T t'(L_T) - \alpha A_G g'(L_G) = 0$
- $[L_G]$: $\alpha A_G g'(L_G) - (\lambda - 1)A_T t'(L_T) = 0$
- Complementary slackness: $\lambda[R + A_T t(L_T) - wF(w + \pi)] = 0$ with $\lambda \geq 0$

Combining the two first-order conditions yields

$$\alpha A_G g'(L_G) = (\lambda - 1)A_T t'(L_T)$$

Here, α is the value of the public good to the society. λ is the value of taxation, with 1 subtracted to reflect that tax collection comes at a cost to private good consumption. This implies that the L_G and L_T are selected to equate the value of marginal productivity of public goods and taxation from the societal point of view. In addition, for a nonzero amount of tax collection, the condition implies that $\lambda > 1$.

C.1.4 Comparative Statics

Now I incorporate the assassination into the framework by addressing how the allocation of labor, tax collection, and public goods provision respond to the changes in the key parameters. Assassinations can negatively affect tax collection and public goods provision by introducing various inefficiencies in these operations. This is captured by the decrease in productivity A_T and A_G. In addition, assassinations can increase fear of exposure to political violence among the workers, decreasing the amenity π. The comparative statics of the changes in these parameters lead to the following proposition.

Proposition 1. The effects of successful assassination on local state capacity

1. A productivity shock ($\Delta A_T(A_G) < 0$) decreases L_T (L_G), leading to a fall in T (G). If wages are flexible, w decreases due to decreased labor demand.
2. An amenity shock ($\Delta\pi < 0$) decreases overall labor supply, pushing L_T and L_G downwards. This decreases T and G. If wages are flexible, w increases due to contracting supply.

Proof: Appendix Section C.1.4.

Proof for part 1. To analyze how changes in A_T affect L_T and w, I start by applying the total derivatives to the two first-order conditions derived above.

$$w - \lambda_T A_T t'(L_T) - \lambda_G A_G g'(L - L_T) = 0$$
$$\alpha A_G g'(L - L_T) - (\lambda - 1) A_T t'(L_T) = 0$$

where I write L_G in terms of L_T by using the allocation restraint $L = L_T + L_G$. Taking total derivatives

with respect to changes in A_T yields

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{dw}{dA_T} - \lambda_T A_T t''(L_T)\frac{dL_T}{dA_T} + \lambda_G A_G g''(L - L_T)\frac{dL_T}{dA_T} &= \lambda_T t'(L_T) \\ -\alpha A_G g''(L_T)\frac{dL_T}{dA_T} - (\lambda - 1)A_T t''(L_T)\frac{dL_T}{dA_T} &= (\lambda - 1)t'(L_T)\end{aligned}$$

In matrix form, this can be written as

$$\underbrace{\begin{bmatrix}1 & -\lambda_T A_T t''(L_T) + \lambda_G A_G g''(L - L_T) \\ 0 & -\alpha A_G g''(L - L_T) - (\lambda - 1)A_T t''(L_T)\end{bmatrix}}_{=X}\begin{bmatrix}\frac{dw}{dA_T} \\ \frac{dL_T}{dA_T}\end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix}\lambda_T t'(L_T) \\ (\lambda - 1)t'(L_T)\end{bmatrix}$$

From here, I invoke the implicit function theorem to get the solutions for $\frac{dw}{dA_T}$ and $\frac{dL_T}{dA_T}$. Obtaining the inverse function of X, I solve

$$\begin{bmatrix}\frac{dw}{dA_T} \\ \frac{dL_T}{dA_T}\end{bmatrix} = \frac{1}{\det(X)}\begin{bmatrix}-\alpha A_G g''(L - L_T) - (\lambda - 1)A_T t''(L_T) & \lambda_T A_T t''(L_T) - \lambda_G A_G g''(L - L_T) \\ 0 & 1\end{bmatrix}\begin{bmatrix}\lambda_T t'(L_T) \\ (\lambda - 1)t'(L_T)\end{bmatrix}$$

where $\det(X) = -(\alpha A_G g''(L - L_T) + (\lambda - 1)A_T t''(L_T)) > 0$ $(t''(\cdot) < 0, g''(\cdot) < 0)$. From these, we can obtain

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{dL_T}{dA_T} &= \frac{(\lambda - 1)t'(L_T)}{\det(X)} > 0 \\ \frac{dw}{dA_T} &= \frac{A_G(-g''(L - L_T))t'(L_T)[\alpha\lambda_T + (\lambda - 1)\lambda_G]}{\det(X)} > 0\end{aligned}$$

since $\lambda > 1, \alpha > 0$ for nonzero taxation and public goods and the complementary slackness conditions implies $\lambda_T \geq 0$, $\lambda_G \geq 0$. Thus, changes in A_T shift L_T and w in the same direction, implying that negative shocks to A_T after successful assassination decrease L_T and w. Consequentially, tax collection decreases relative to the pre-assassination equilibrium (marked with asterisk)

$$T = A_T t(L_T) < {A_T}^* t({L_T}^*) = T^*$$

Similar logic can be applied to identifying changes in L_G and w in response to exogenous changes

in A_G. Writing the total derivatives with respect to A_G for the first order conditions in matrix yields

$$\underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 1 & \lambda_T A_T t''(L-L_G) - \lambda_G A_G g''(L_G) \\ 0 & \alpha A_G g''(L_G) + (\lambda-1) A_T t''(L-L_G) \end{bmatrix}}_{=W} \begin{bmatrix} \frac{dw}{dA_G} \\ \frac{dL_G}{dA_G} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \lambda_G g'(L_G) \\ -\alpha g'(L_G) \end{bmatrix}$$

Invoking the implicit function theorem, I can write

$$\begin{bmatrix} \frac{dw}{dA_G} \\ \frac{dL_G}{dA_G} \end{bmatrix} = \frac{1}{\det(W)} \begin{bmatrix} \alpha A_G g''(L_G) + (\lambda-1) A_T t''(L-L_G) & -\lambda_T A_T t''(L-L_G) + \lambda_G A_G g''(L_G) \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \lambda_G g'(L_G) \\ -\alpha g'(L_G) \end{bmatrix}$$

with $\det(W) = \alpha A_G g''(L_G) + (\lambda-1) A_T t''(L-L_G) < 0$. Given these,

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dL_G}{dA_G} &= \frac{-\alpha g'(L_G)}{\det(W)} > 0 \\ \frac{dw}{dA_G} &= \frac{A_T t''(L-L_G) g'(L_G)[\alpha\lambda_T + (\lambda-1)\lambda_G]}{\det(W)} > 0 \end{aligned}$$

With changes in A_G shifting L_G and w in the same direction, negative shocks to A_G from successful assassinations decrease wages and L_G. As a result, public goods are under-provided compared to pre-assassination equilibrium (marked with asterisk)

$$G = A_G g(L_G) < {A_G}^* g({L_G}^*) = G^*$$

■

Proof for part 2. π enters the framework through the labor supply of the public sector. Specifically

$$L = F(w+\pi) = \Pr(v \leq w+\pi) = \int_{-\infty}^{w+\pi} f(v)dv$$

To differentiate this with respect to π, I use the fundamental theorem of calculus.

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d}{d\pi} \int_{-\infty}^{w+\pi} f(v)dv &= \frac{d}{d\pi} \left[F(w+\pi) - F(-\infty)\right] \\ &= \frac{d}{d\pi} \left[F(w+\pi)\right] \\ &= f(w+\pi) > 0 \end{aligned}$$

This implies that public sector labor supply changes in the same direction as π. Thus, decreases in π due to successful assassinations decrease the labor supply.

To see how this changes the allocation of labor across L_T and L_G, I return to the first-order conditions from the social utility maximization problem

$$\alpha A_G g'(L_G) = (\lambda - 1) A_T t'(L_T)$$

By taking total derivatives with respect to π, I obtain

$$\alpha A_G g''(L_G) \frac{dL_G}{d\pi} - (\lambda - 1) A_T t''(L_T) \frac{dL_T}{d\pi} = 0$$

which can be written as

$$\frac{dL_G/d\pi}{dL_T/d\pi} = \frac{(\lambda - 1) A_T t''(L_T)}{\alpha A_G g''(L_G)} > 0$$

The last inequality is justified by the fact that $t''(\cdot) < 0, g''(\cdot) < 0$ from the concavity of the production functions and that $\alpha > 0, \lambda > 1$, a condition imposed for nonzero production of public goods and tax collection. This rules out the case where L_T and L_G changes in the opposite direction with respect to π without any productivity changes. Thus, in the case of a successful assassination that drives the public sector labor supply downward, both L_T and L_G face downward pressure.

With fewer L_T and L_G compared to the pre-assassination equilibrium (denoted with an asterisk), the total tax collected and the public goods supplied decrease.

$$T = A_T t(L_T) < A_T t(L_T^*) = T^*$$
$$G = A_G g(L_G) < A_G g(L_G^*) = G^*$$

As for wages, I return to the first-order condition on the cost minimization problem.

$$w = \lambda_T A_T t'(L_T) + \lambda_G A_G g'(L_G)$$

Taking total derivatives with respect to π yields

$$\frac{dw}{d\pi} = \lambda_T A_T t''(L_T) \frac{dL_T}{d\pi} + \lambda_G A_G g''(L_G) \frac{dL_G}{d\pi} < 0$$

where the last inequality comes from the fact that $\frac{dL_j}{d\pi} > 0$ for $j \in \{T, G\}$, $t''(\cdot) < 0$, $g''(\cdot) < 0$, and $\lambda_T \geq 0$, $\lambda_G \geq 0$ from the complementary slackness conditions in the first order conditions. Thus, w and π move in opposite directions, implying that a decrease of π from successful assassinations induces upward pressure on w. ■

Effectively, changes in A_T and A_G act similarly to labor demand shock, whereas changes to π mimics labor supply shock.

C.2 Supplementary results

Table C1: Hypothetical wage costs of retaining departing workers by age group, TWFE with covariates and outlier municipalities

	(1) 20s	(2) 30s	(3) 40s	(4) 50s	(5) 20-30s	(6) 30-40s
Panel A. Change in proportion of workers by age						
Change in share	−0.018	−0.070**	−0.035	0.022	−0.088**	−0.106**
	(0.032)	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.029)	(0.042)	(0.044)
Pre-event share (1=100%)	0.209	0.311	0.252	0.228	0.520	0.563
% change in size due to π (1=100%)	−0.086	−0.225	−0.139	0.096	−0.169	−0.188
Panel B. Wage-amenity tradeoff with Dal Bó et al. (2013) elasticity estimate (2.15)						
Trade-off rate	−0.040	−0.105	−0.065	0.045	−0.079	−0.087
N	668	668	668	668	668	668
Municipalities	116	116	116	116	116	116
Municipality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Survey FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Covariates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

This table reports the estimates of the rate of increase in wages required to retain different types of municipal workers, as explained in Section 6.2. The first row in Panel A reports the point estimates and the standard errors of the average post-assassination treatment effects for the proportion of each age group within municipal governments specified in the header of each column. Results are obtained using two-way fixed effects and covariates analogous to Equation (2), without dropping outlier municipalities. Standard errors are clustered at the municipal level and reported in parentheses. The second row is obtained from taking the average of the proportion of these workers one period before the assassination attempt took place. Numbers in the third row are obtained by dividing the point estimates in the first row by the same in the second row. This represents the change in the number of workers in each category before and after the assassination attempts. In Panel B, the wage-amenity trade-off rate is calculated by dividing the percent change in size of workers obtained from Panel A with changes in labor supply with respect to wages from Dal Bó et al. (2013), 2.15. This represents the increase in wages needed to keep workers employed. Given that this cost arises from a decrease in amenities due to assassinations and the fear of political violence that follows it, it quantifies the cost of political violence to the local government.

Table C2: Hypothetical wage costs of retaining departing workers by age group, TWFE w/o covariates

	(1) 20s	(2) 30s	(3) 40s	(4) 50s	(5) 20-30s	(6) 30-40s
Panel A. Change in proportion of workers by age						
Change in share	−0.015	−0.080**	−0.042	0.045	−0.094**	−0.121***
	(0.033)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.032)	(0.046)	(0.046)
Pre-event share (1=100%)	0.220	0.314	0.252	0.214	0.534	0.566
% change in size due to π (1=100%)	−0.068	−0.254	−0.167	0.210	−0.176	−0.214
Panel B. Wage-amenity tradeoff with Dal Bó et al. (2013) elasticity estimate (2.15)						
Trade-off rate	−0.032	−0.119	−0.078	0.098	−0.082	−0.099
N	656	656	656	656	656	656
Municipalities	114	114	114	114	114	114
Municipality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Survey FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

This table reports the estimates of the rate of increase in wages required to retain different types of municipal workers, as explained in Section 6.2. The first row in Panel A reports the point estimates and the standard errors of the average post-assassination treatment effects for the proportion of each age group within municipal governments specified in the header of each column. Results are obtained using two-way fixed effects without covariates analogous to Equation (2). Standard errors are clustered at the municipal level and reported in parentheses. The second row is obtained from taking the average of the proportion of these workers one period before the assassination attempt took place. Numbers in the third row are obtained by dividing the point estimates in the first row by the same in the second row. This represents the change in the number of workers in each category before and after the assassination attempts. In Panel B, the wage-amenity trade-off rate is calculated by dividing the percent change in size of workers obtained from Panel A with changes in labor supply with respect to wages from Dal Bó et al. (2013), 2.15. This represents the increase in wages needed to keep workers employed. Given that this cost arises from a decrease in amenities due to assassinations and the fear of political violence that follows it, it quantifies the cost of political violence to the local government.

Table C3: Hypothetical wage costs of retaining departing workers by age group, Stacked DID

	(1) 20s	(2) 30s	(3) 40s	(4) 50s	(5) 20-30s	(6) 30-40s
Panel A. Change in proportion of workers by age						
Change in share	−0.045	−0.063**	−0.009	0.040	−0.108***	−0.072*
	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.030)	(0.024)	(0.040)	(0.038)
Pre-event share (1=100%)	0.220	0.314	0.252	0.214	0.534	0.566
% change in size due to π (1=100%)	−0.205	−0.201	−0.036	0.187	−0.202	−0.127
Panel B. Wage-amenity tradeoff with Dal Bó et al. (2013) elasticity estimate (2.15)						
Trade-off rate	−0.095	−0.093	−0.017	0.172	−0.094	−0.059
N	4335	4335	4335	4335	4335	4335
Municipality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Survey FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

This table reports the estimates of the rate of increase in wages required to retain different types of municipal workers, as explained in Section 6.2. The first row in Panel A reports the point estimates and the standard errors of the average post-assassination treatment effects for the proportion of each age group within municipal governments specified in the header of each column. Results are obtained using stacked DID without covariates analogous to Equation (2). Standard errors are clustered at the municipal level and reported in parentheses. The second row is obtained from taking the average of the proportion of these workers one period before the assassination attempt took place. Numbers in the third row are obtained by dividing the point estimates in the first row by the same in the second row. This represents the change in the number of workers in each category before and after the assassination attempts. In Panel B, the wage-amenity trade-off rate is calculated by dividing the percent change in size of workers obtained from Panel A with changes in labor supply with respect to wages from Dal Bó et al. (2013), 2.15. This represents the increase in wages needed to keep workers employed. Given that this cost arises from a decrease in amenities due to assassinations and the fear of political violence that follows it, it quantifies the cost of political violence to the local government.

Table C4: Hypothetical wage costs of retaining departing workers by age group, Gardner (2024)

	(1) 20s	(2) 30s	(3) 40s	(4) 50s	(5) 20-30s	(6) 30-40s
Panel A. Change in proportion of workers by age						
Change in share	−0.016	−0.043***	−0.071***	0.023*	−0.058***	−0.113***
	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.022)	(0.021)
Pre-event share (1=100%)	0.220	0.314	0.252	0.214	0.534	0.566
% change in size due to π (1=100%)	−0.072	−0.137	−0.282	0.107	−0.108	−0.200
Panel B. Wage-amenity tradeoff with Dal Bó et al. (2013) elasticity estimate (2.15)						
Trade-off rate	−0.034	−0.064	−0.131	0.050	−0.051	−0.093
N	656	656	656	656	656	656
Municipalities	114	114	114	114	114	114
Municipality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Survey FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

This table reports the estimates of the rate of increase in wages required to retain different types of municipal workers, as explained in Section 6.2. The first row in Panel A reports the point estimates and the standard errors of the average post-assassination treatment effects for the proportion of each age group within municipal governments specified in the header of each column. Results are obtained using Gardner (2024) estimates without covariates analogous to Equation (2). Standard errors are clustered at the municipal level and reported in parentheses. The second row is obtained from taking the average of the proportion of these workers one period before the assassination attempt took place. Numbers in the third row are obtained by dividing the point estimates in the first row by the same in the second row. This represents the change in the number of workers in each category before and after the assassination attempts. In Panel B, the wage-amenity trade-off rate is calculated by dividing the percent change in size of workers obtained from Panel A with changes in labor supply with respect to wages from Dal Bó et al. (2013), 2.15. This represents the increase in wages needed to keep workers employed. Given that this cost arises from a decrease in amenities due to assassinations and the fear of political violence that follows it, it quantifies the cost of political violence to the local government.

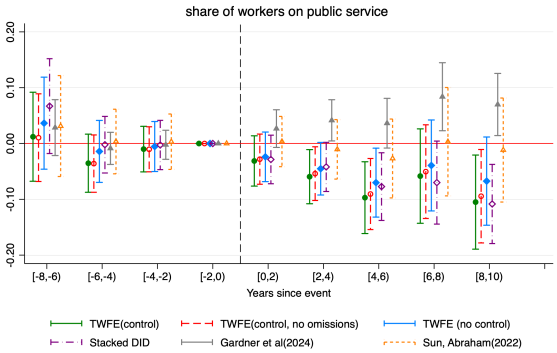
Table C5: Hypothetical wage costs of retaining departing workers by age group, Sun-Abraham (2021)

	(1) 20s	(2) 30s	(3) 40s	(4) 50s	(5) 20-30s	(6) 30-40s
Panel A. Change in proportion of workers by age						
Change in share	0.014	−0.017	−0.021	-0.006	−0.003	−0.038
	(0.028)	(0.048)	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.045)	(0.046)
Pre-event share (1=100%)	0.220	0.314	0.252	0.214	0.534	0.566
% change in size due to π (1=100%)	0.064	−0.054	−0.083	−0.028	−0.006	−0.067
Panel B. Wage-amenity tradeoff with Dal Bó et al. (2013) elasticity estimate (2.15)						
Trade-off rate	0.029	−0.025	−0.039	−0.013	−0.003	−0.031
N	656	656	656	656	656	656
Municipalities	114	114	114	114	114	114
Municipality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Survey FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

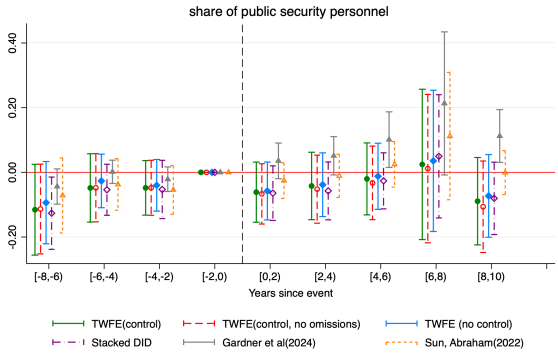
* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

This table reports the estimates of the rate of increase in wages required to retain different types of municipal workers, as explained in Section 6.2. The first row in Panel A reports the point estimates and the standard errors of the average post-assassination treatment effects for the proportion of each age group within municipal governments specified in the header of each column. Results are obtained using Sun and Abraham (2021) estimates without covariates analogous to Equation (2). Standard errors are clustered at the municipal level and reported in parentheses. The second row is obtained from taking the average of the proportion of these workers one period before the assassination attempt took place. Numbers in the third row are obtained by dividing the point estimates in the first row by the same in the second row. This represents the change in the number of workers in each category before and after the assassination attempts. In Panel B, the wage-amenity trade-off rate is calculated by dividing the percent change in size of workers obtained from Panel A with changes in labor supply with respect to wages from Dal Bó et al. (2013), 2.15. This represents the increase in wages needed to keep workers employed. Given that this cost arises from a decrease in amenities due to assassinations and the fear of political violence that follows it, it quantifies the cost of political violence to the local government.

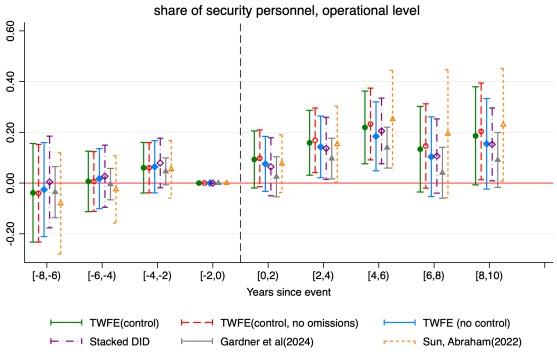
Figure C1: Allocation of municipal workers by type of work



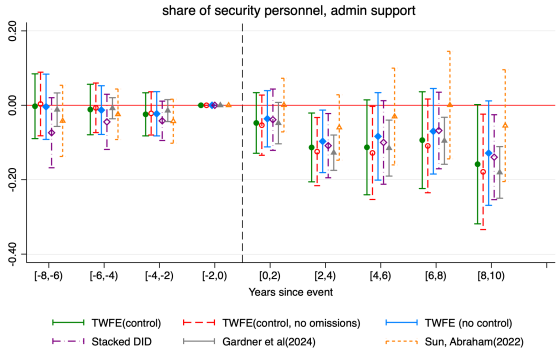
(a) %Municipal workers in public service



(b) %Municipal workers in public security



(c) %Public security workers in operative tasks



(d) %Public security workers in admin duties

Note: The figures report the event study regression on the composition of workers by the type of duties they conduct. The outcome variables for Panels (a) and (b) are calculated relative to the total number of municipal workers. The outcome variable for panels (c) and (d) are measured relative to the total number of workers on public security duties, including, but not limited to the municipal police and relevant committee members. All regressions include a binned indicator for municipalities experiencing assassinations beyond the event timing window, municipality fixed effects, and year fixed effects. Stacked DID regression includes state-specific yearly linear trends to account for different weights across yearly subdatasets used to create the estimator. Two-way fixed effect regressions with covariates include controls for log(number of criminal organizations + 1), homicide rates, log(total homicides + 1), average years of schooling for the municipal population, the share of the indigenous population, and years since the most recent election (level and squared) fixed at the final pre-assasination attempt year. Other estimators do not include covariates. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Appendix D Supplementary regression results for Section 7

D.1 Results from the individual level outcomes on ENOE surveys

In this section, we introduce some suggestive and descriptive evidence that supports the finding that differences in economic activities are not the alternative mechanisms behind the main findings in the paper. For this purpose, we use the individual-level responses from the quarterly ENOE surveys such as earnings, working hours, employment status, and sector of employment matched with the municipality of residence. Thus, the following equation that leverages variation at an individual-municipality-time period level is used.

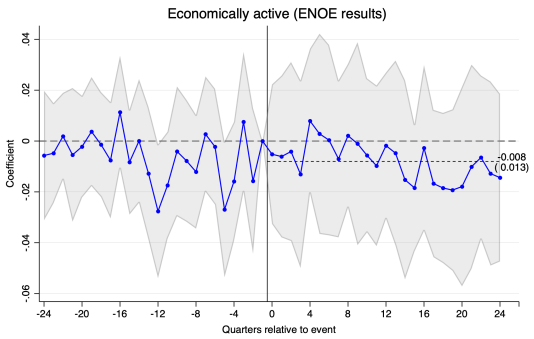
$$y_{imt} = \alpha + \sum_{\substack{h=-24 \\ h\neq -1}}^{24} \tau_h I[t - \text{assassination} = h]_{mt} + \tau_{25^+} I[t - \text{assassination} \geq 25]_{mt} + \gamma_m + \delta_t + \varepsilon_{imt}$$

y_{imt} are individual-levle outcomes of interest. Treatment indicators now have 24 windows to measure the dynamic effects 24 quarters (6 calendar years, as in the main text) before and after the event. Treatment indicators equal 1 if individual i resides in municipality m that experienced successful assassinations at quarter t . The regression includes municipality fixed effects (γ_m) and quarter fixed effects (δ_t). Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

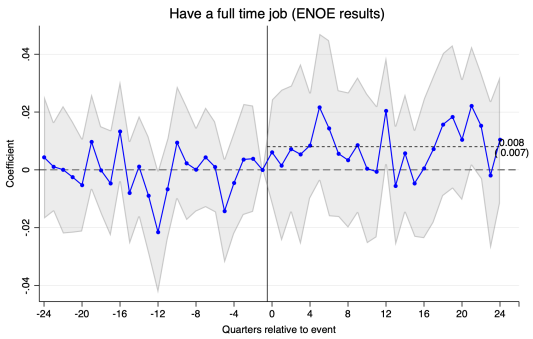
It should be noted that the results presented in this section should be interpreted as descriptive and suggestive evidence, not causal. As this is a repeated survey of different individuals at the same municipalities over time, individual-level fixed effects cannot be included. Therefore, the regression does not take unobservable characteristics that may affect outcomes into account. Rather, the results are intended to provide descriptive trends to various economic activity indicators following successful assassination and complement the findings using nightlight data in Section 7.

In Figure D1, we report the outcomes on being economically active, working full-time, working in an informal sector, log(weekly earnings), log(working hours per week), and log(hourly wage). There are no significant changes in these outcomes following a successful assassination attempt. These suggest that the economic activities are not different among municipalities with successful assassinations relative to those experiencing near-miss events. Thus, the finding that there are minimal changes in economic activities stated in Section 7 still stands.

Figure D1: Changes in economic activity measured through individual ENOE survey results

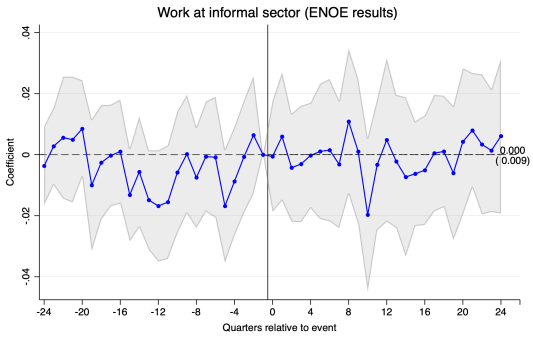


(a) Economically active

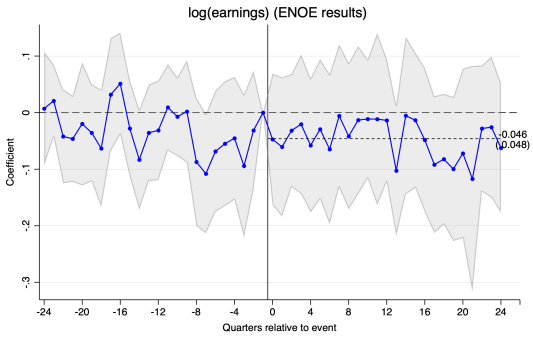


(b) Working full-time

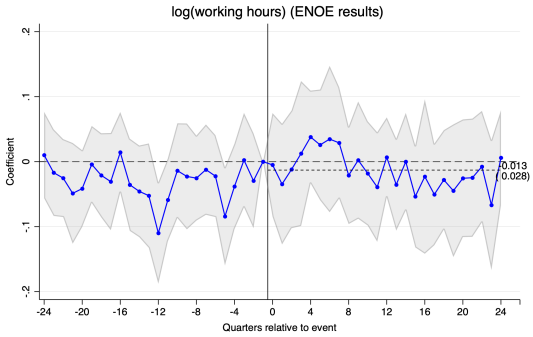
]



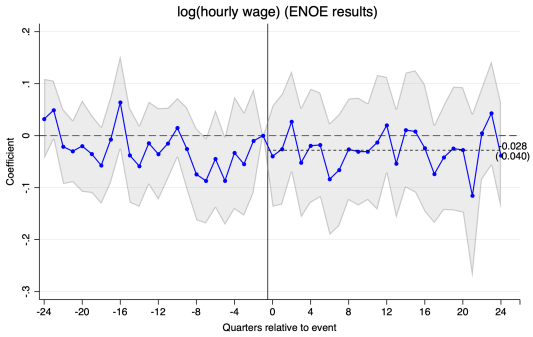
(c) Works in informal sefctor



(d) log(earning)



(e) log(working hour)

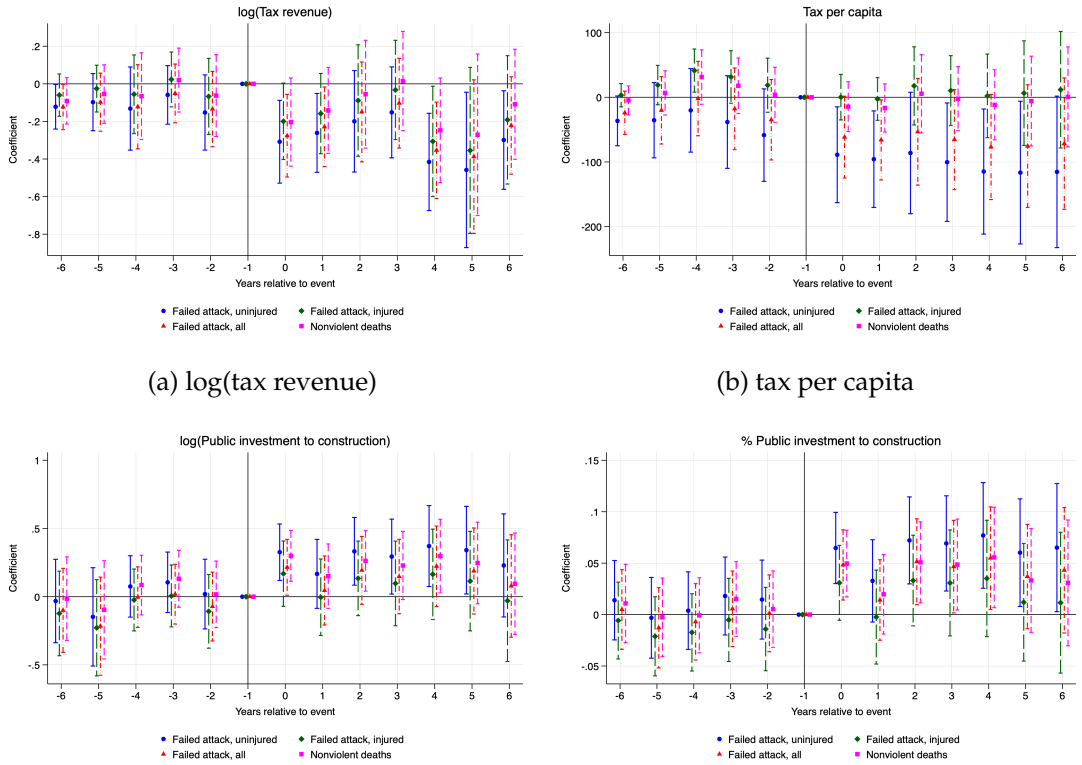


(f) log(hourly wage)

Note: The figures report the event study regression using the equation mentioned in Appendix Section ref-ssec:enoe. The outcome variables are specified as a caption for each picture. Regression includes fixed effects at the municipality and year-quarter level. The average effects of the assassinations 24 quarters after the event and their standard errors are also reported at the right-hand side in each figure. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

D.2 Comparison across different control group setups: Regression-by-regression

Figure D2: Regression using all municipalities with failed attacks on mayors as control group



(a) log(tax revenue)

(b) tax per capita

(c) log(investments in construction)

(d) Share of total expenditure on construction

Note: The figures report the event study regression using Equation (2) but with different sets of control variables for some of the outcome variables used in Section 5. The outcome variables are specified as a caption for each picture. The control groups reported are 1) the same control group in the main results, 2) municipalities with all failed assassination attempts, with injured and unharmed mayors, 3) only the municipalities with failed attempts that injured the mayors, and 4) municipalities whose mayors passed away for nonviolent reasons. The treatment group is identical to the ones used in Section 5. Regression uses the same control variables and fixed effects as in Section 5. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

D.3 Comparison across different control group setups: Triple-differences

In this section, I run a triple-difference specification that estimates the changes in the local state capacity outcomes among municipalities with successful assassinations, those with failed attempts that injured the mayors for some time, those that failed to injure mayors, and those whose mayors passed away nonviolently (health reasons and accidents). This serves as a robustness check to confirm that

mayoral absence is the driving mechanism, stated in Section 7. I use the following specification.

$$y_{mt} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Post}_{mt} + \beta_2 \text{Violent injury}_m + \beta_3 \text{Death}_m + \beta_4 \text{Post}_{mt} \times \text{Violent injury}_m$$
$$+ \beta_5 \text{Post}_{mt} \times \text{Death}_m + \beta_6 \text{Death}_m \times \text{Death}_m + \beta_7 \text{Post}_{mt} \times \text{Death}_m \times \text{Death}_m + \gamma X_{mt} + \phi_t + \varepsilon_{mt}$$

Post indicates attacks or nonviolent deaths taking place on or before year t and municipality m. Violent injury indicates that a mayor in municipality m is injured or killed as a result of violence. It equals 1 for municipalities with successful assassinations or failed attempts that injure mayors. Death equals 1 if a municipality loses a mayor to assassinations or nonviolent deaths at some point. Thus, municipalities with failed attempts that did not injure mayors are set up as a benchmark group.

The regression includes covariates defined and set up in the same manner as in the main text and year fixed effects. As indicators for violent injury and deaths are defined at the municipality level (not municipality-year), the fixed effects for municipalities are not included in this regression to avoid multicollinearity issues.

I test if the treatment effects are more pronounced when comparing treatment municipalities to those with failed attempts that did not injure mayors relative to other possible comparisons. Municipalities experiencing nonviolent mayor deaths and injuries following failed attempts both experience some degrees of absence following an event. Municipalities with no mayor injuries do not experience sudden absence of mayors. Thus, the difference in changes to local state capacity should be greatest when treated municipalities are compared against those with no mayor injuries following failed attempts. It should be noted that since the current regression does not test for the balance of observable characteristics across all four types of municipalities, the findings should be taken as descriptive.

Table D1 reports the estimation results from the triple-difference specification. Panel A reports individual coefficient estimates and Panel B presents changes in local state capacity measures across different types of municipalities obtained by linearly combining individual coefficients. As hypothesized, the treatment effects are largest in terms of absolute value when treated municipalities are compared against those with uninjured mayors following assassination attempts. The 95% confidence interval of these estimates contains the average 6-year post-assassination effects reported in Section 5. When treatment municipalities are compared with other types, the estimates are either smaller or statistically insignificant. Therefore, the claim that the difference in the presence of mayors following an event explains the effect size made in Section 7 holds.

Table D1: Difference across assassinations, failed attempts, and nonviolent deaths

	(1) Tax (log)	(2) Tax (per capita)	(3) Invstment (log)	(4) Invstment (share)	(5) Non-infra. (log)	(6) Non-infra. (share)	(7) Worker (30s) (share)	(8) Operative rank (share)
Panel A. Triple difference-in-difference results								
Post	0.021	121.785	-0.242	-0.047**	0.832***	0.034***	0.042**	-0.051
	(0.314)	(136.016)	(0.223)	(0.022)	(0.281)	(0.011)	(0.017)	(0.037)
Violent injury	-1.117***	-93.766	-0.499**	0.024	0.173	0.003	0.007	-0.048
	(0.337)	(73.056)	(0.208)	(0.020)	(0.377)	(0.007)	(0.029)	(0.058)
Death	-1.080***	-121.858	-0.641***	-0.000	0.046	0.017**	0.003	-0.004
	(0.311)	(80.427)	(0.182)	(0.018)	(0.295)	(0.007)	(0.022)	(0.028)
Post × Violent injury	-0.566	-102.557	0.246	0.062	-1.086**	-0.026*	-0.020	0.033
	(0.382)	(122.489)	(0.291)	(0.038)	(0.424)	(0.015)	(0.038)	(0.078)
Post × Death	-0.023	-92.050	0.317	0.031	-0.754**	-0.030**	-0.061**	0.052
	(0.410)	(124.460)	(0.264)	(0.026)	(0.358)	(0.014)	(0.026)	(0.051)
Violent injury × Death	0.947**	122.974	0.383	-0.016	-0.046	-0.012	0.050	-0.005
	(0.418)	(79.233)	(0.254)	(0.025)	(0.444)	(0.009)	(0.038)	(0.068)
Post × Violent Injury × Death	0.327	105.090	-0.070	-0.011	0.819	0.023	-0.009	0.018
	(0.533)	(128.771)	(0.352)	(0.045)	(0.504)	(0.018)	(0.046)	(0.092)
Panel B. Differences in the changes in outcome variables across different categories of municipalities								
Killed - Nonviolent death	-0.239	2.533	0.176	0.051**	-0.267	-0.004	-0.029	0.051
	(0.351)	(47.831)	(0.194)	(0.023)	(0.268)	(0.010)	(0.027)	(0.051)
Killed - Injury	0.304	13.040	0.247	0.020	0.065	-0.007	-0.070*	0.070
	(0.327)	(59.538)	(0.233)	(0.037)	(0.360)	(0.012)	(0.38)	(0.078)
Killed - Unhurt	-0.262	-89.517	0.493**	0.082***	-1.021***	-0.034***	-0.090***	0.103**
	(0.310)	(128.608)	(0.238)	(0.023)	(0.334)	(0.012)	(0.033)	(0.052)
Observations.	4675	3032	4818	4818	4314	4314	976	954
Municipalities	170	169	170	170	170	170	170	169

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

The table reports the triple difference-in-difference equation involving municipalities with successful assassinations, failed attempts that lead to injuries, failed attempts that did not lead to an injury, and non-violent deaths (diseases, accidents). Post is an indicator of an event (attacks or nonviolent deaths) taking place on or before that year. Violent injury indicates that a mayor in that municipality is hurt or killed as a result of violence and equals one if a municipality experiences assassinations or failed attacks that lead to injuries. Death equals 1 if a municipality loses a mayor to assassinations or nonviolent deaths at some point. Outcome variables are listed at the top of each column. Shares in columns (3) and (5) are measured relative to total expenditure. Outcomes in columns (7) and (8) are calculated relative to the total number of municipal workers and total number of municipal security workers, respectively. Panel A reports the coefficients and standard errors, clustered at the municipality level, from the triple difference-in-difference equation. Panel B reports the differences in changes in outcome variables following an event using linear combinations of the coefficients and their standard errors. The regression includes covariates and year fixed effects. Covariates vary across time before an event takes place in each municipality but are fixed at the last pre-event values for years in which an event takes place and afterward. As indicators for violent injury and deaths are defined at the municipality level (not municipality-year), the fixed effects for municipalities are not included in this regression to avoid multicollinearity issues.

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