

The Legacies of Civil War on Citizens' Preferences for the Rule of Law

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The rule of Law: Critical in post-conflict settings

- Democracy
- Peace
- Development



Citizen support is crucial for the rule of law to prevail

- Rely on institutionalized mechanisms to resolve conflicts.
- Withdraw support from politicians who fail to abide by the rule of law.
- Prevent the rise of extremist and authoritarian political groups.
- Influence public responses to violations of the law.



Critical barrier: The political culture of war-torn societies

- Weak civic culture
 - Discredited political institutions
- Weak support for the rule of law



Does civil war erode support for the rule of law?

The democratic deficit of war-torn societies has been assumed rather than investigated.

Does civil war erode support for the rule of law?

Goals:

1. Derive hypotheses about *how* civil war could erode support for the rule of law.
2. Test these hypotheses with data on individuals and communities in Colombia.

1. Hypotheses

- (1) **Exposure to armed actors** (proximity to wartime phenomena)
- (2) **Disorder** (high uncertainty)
- (3) **Violence** (insecurity)
- (4) **Armed groups' success at improving security** (insecurity & authoritarian preferences)
- (5) **Exposure to repressive institutions** (authoritarian preferences)

2. Testing hypotheses: Data

- The Colombian armed conflict
- Not a post-conflict setting but many areas did transition to having no presence of non-state armed actors.

2. Testing hypotheses: Data

- (1) Data on individuals' attributes and support for the rule of law:
- ELCA (2013): 4.555 rural households in +230 rural communities located in 17 municipalities.
 - Some communities endured presence of armed groups, some did not.

2. Testing hypotheses: Data

- (1) Data on individuals' attributes and support for the rule of law.
- (2) Wartime dynamics (Arjona 2014, 2016) in communities with armed group presence:
 - Memory workshops
 - Surveys
 - Local histories

2. Testing hypotheses: Models

- Outcome: whether the person reports either disagreeing or totally disagreeing with authorities' reliance on extra legal measures to control crime (i.e. supporting the rule of law).

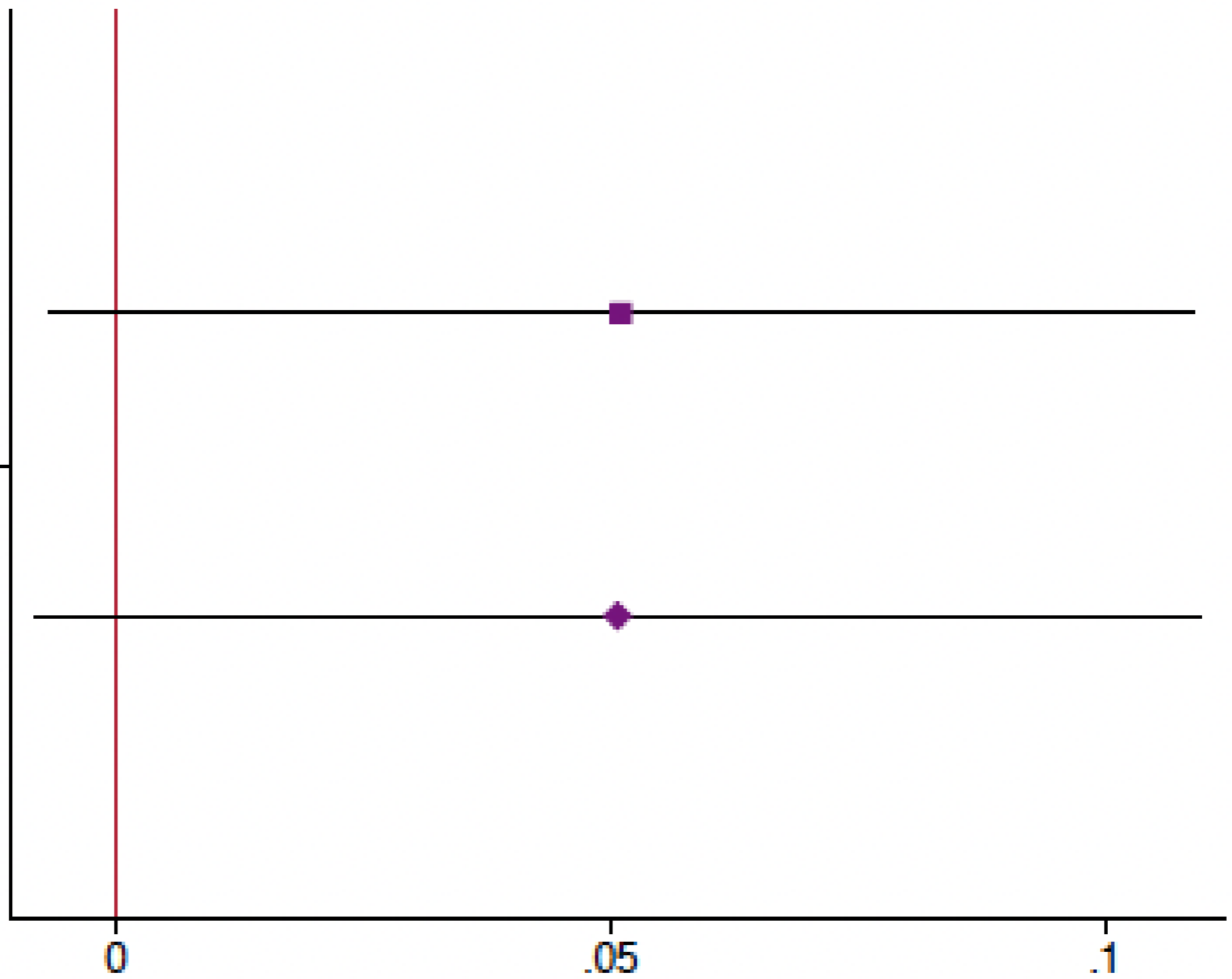
2. Testing hypotheses: Models

- Outcome: whether the person reports either disagreeing or totally disagreeing with authorities' reliance on extra legal measures to control crime (i.e. supporting the rule of law).
- Linear regression model
- Controls at the individual and locality levels.

Did civil war dynamics erode support for the rule of law?

(1) Exposure to armed actors

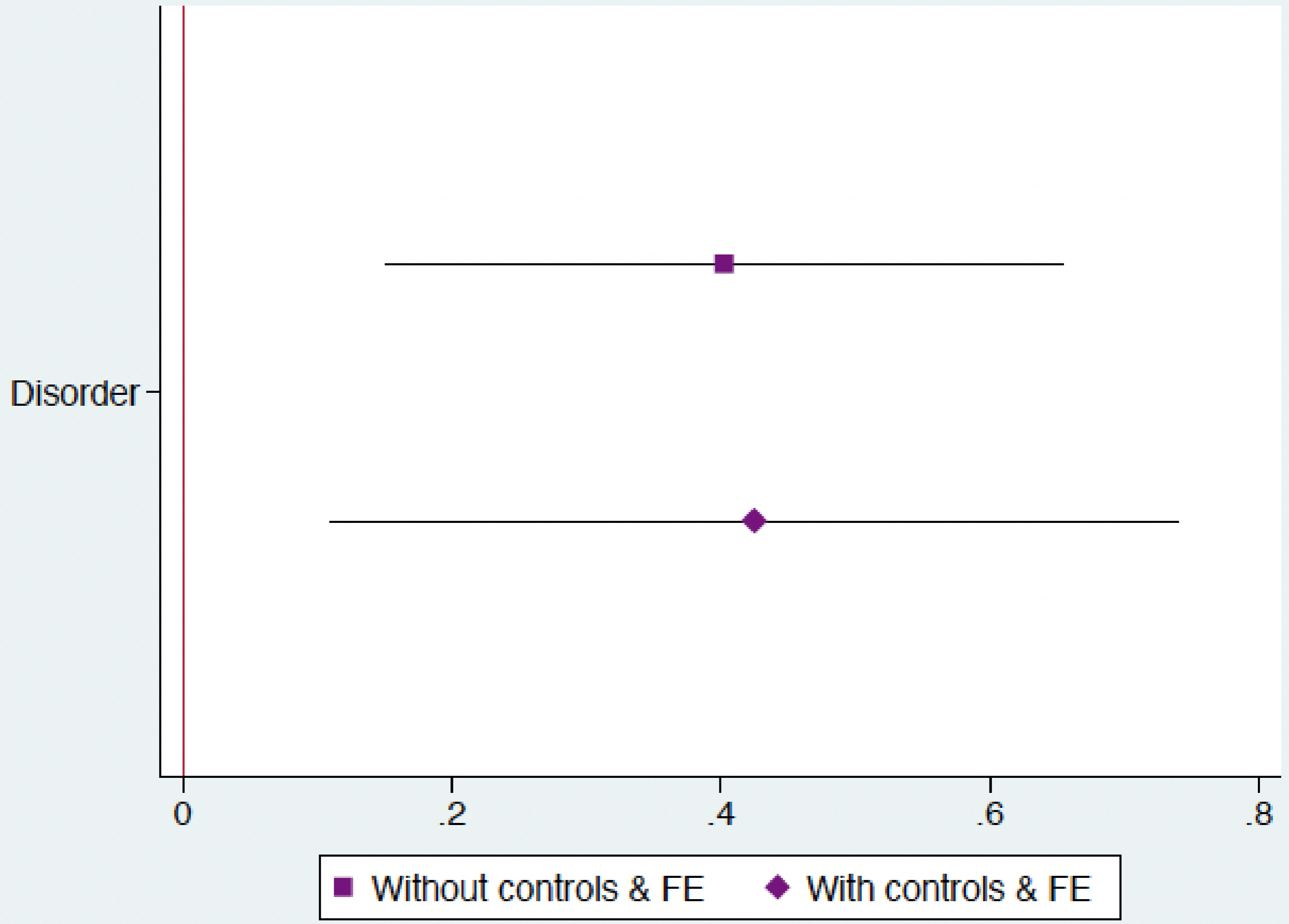
Presence of
armed groups



■ No controls & FE ◆ With controls & FE

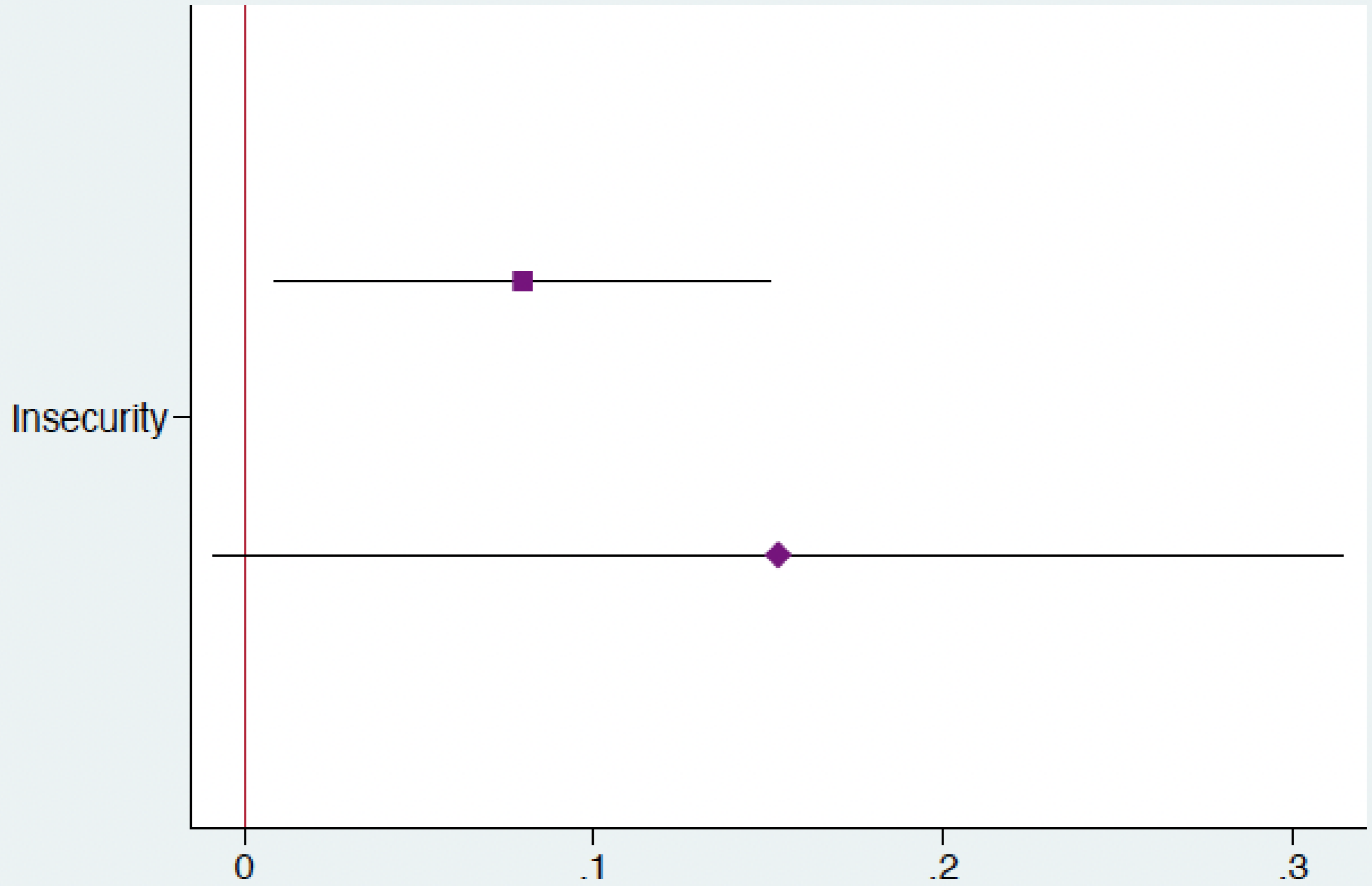
How can civil war erode support for the rule of law?

- (1) Exposure to armed actors
- (2) Disorder



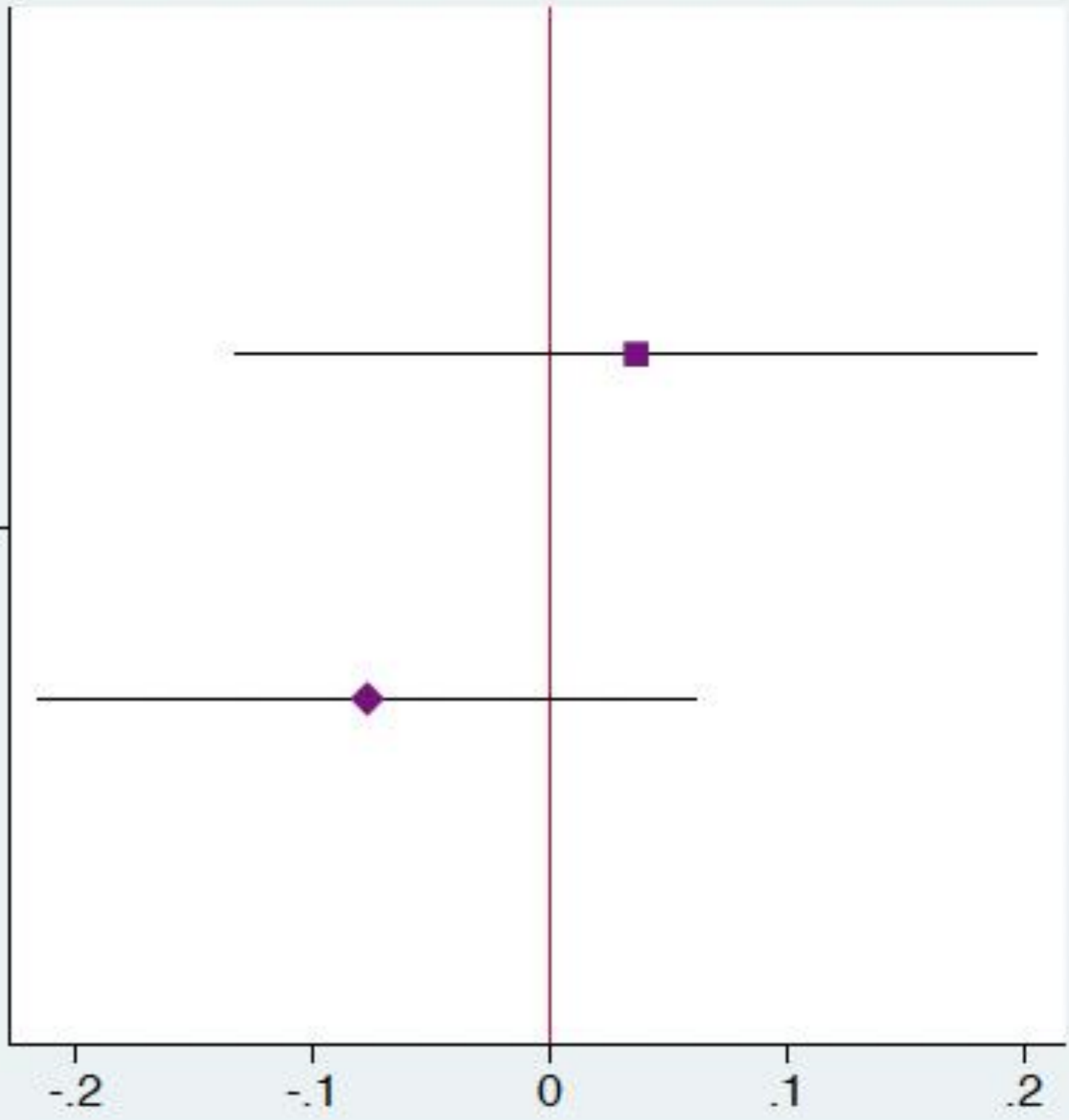
How can civil war erode support for the rule of law?

- (1) Exposure to armed actors
- (2) Disorder
- (3) Violence



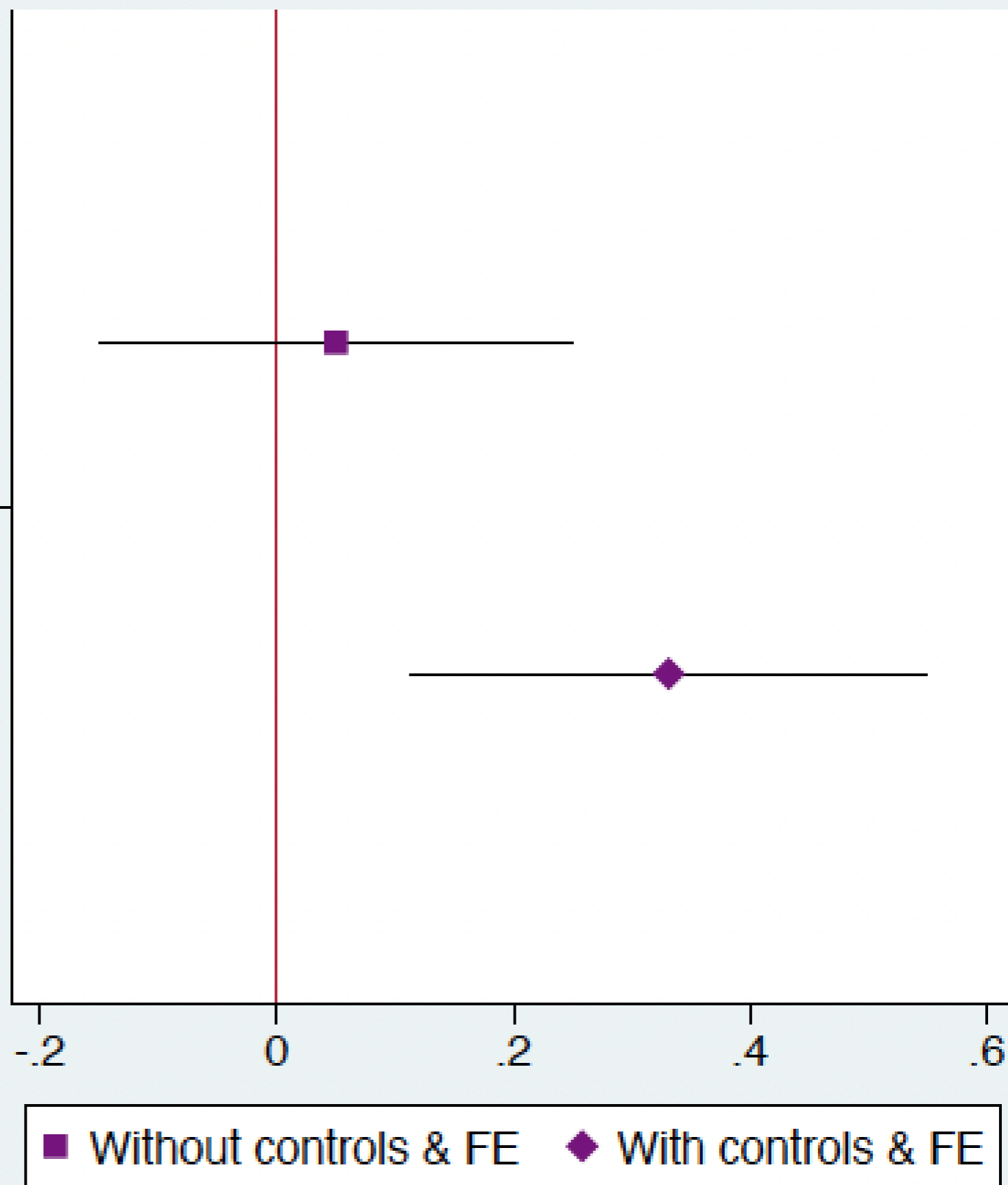
■ Without controls & FE ◆ With controls & FE

Community leaders threatened

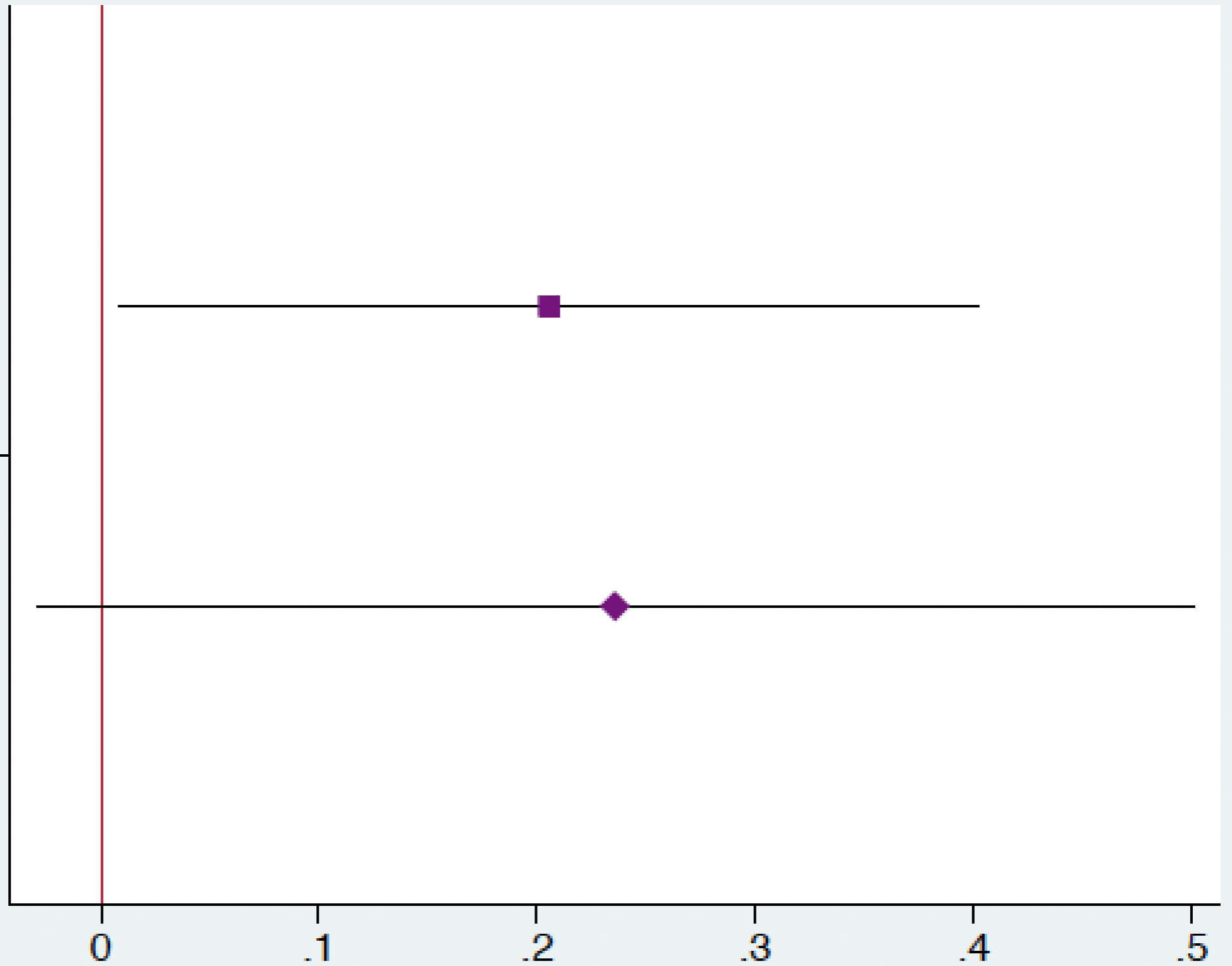


■ Without controls & FE ◆ With controls & FE

Community sector was targeted



Displacement

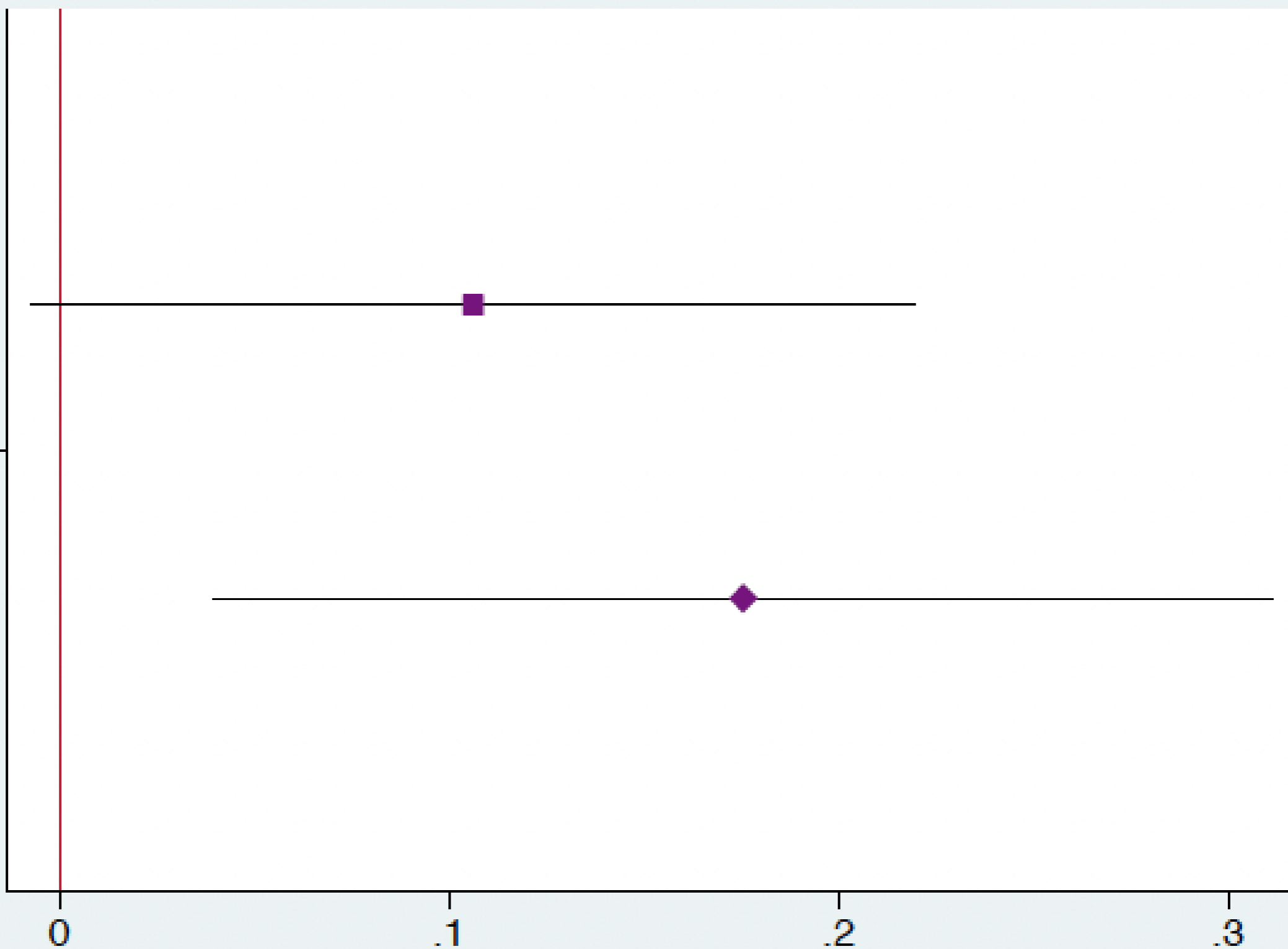


■ Without controls & FE ◆ With controls & FE

How can civil war erode support for the rule of law?

- (1) Exposure to armed actors
- (2) Violence
- (3) Disorder
- (4) Armed groups' success at improving security

Efficacy

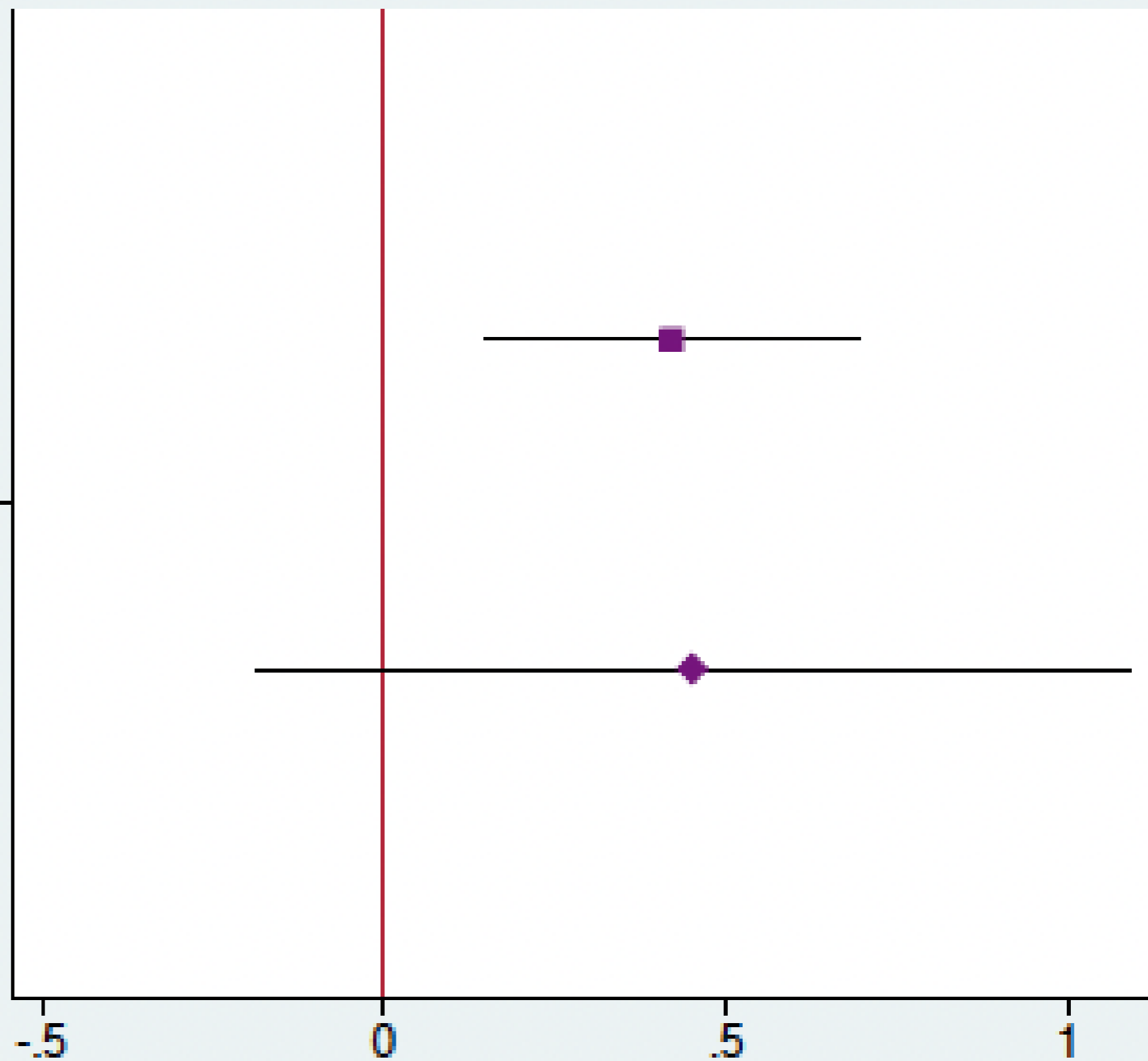


■ Without controls & FE ◆ With controls & FE

How can civil war erode support for the rule of law?

- (1) Exposure to armed actors
- (2) Violence
- (3) Disorder
- (4) Armed groups' success at improving security
- (5) Exposure to repressive institutions

Repressive institutions



■ Without controls & FE

◆ With controls & FE

Conclusion

- The rule of law is essential for democracy, peace and development in post-conflict settings.
- Citizen support for the rule of law is crucial.
- Civil war is assumed to erode support for the rule of law—but this has been assumed rather than investigated.
- We find that none of the wartime dynamics that, based on different literatures, would be expected to erode support for the rule of law did so in Colombia.

Conclusion

- There is a positive and significant association at best, and an insignificant association at worst.
- We do not claim that these phenomena *cause* higher support for the rule of law. Rather, we show that there is no evidence of a negative association.

Implications

- The widespread assumption about the effects of war on citizen support for the rule of law needs to be investigated.
- The assumption that war zones have a higher democratic deficit may be wrong.
- We need new theoretical approaches to trace the effects of the complex experiences of conflict zones on political behavior.
- We need to be cautious when making assumptions about the political culture of conflict zones when designing policies and interventions.

**Thank
you**



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