Final report

"Yes to Peace" programme evaluation

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1 Introduction

In almost all elections, particularly in countries rebuilding from wide spread communal conflict, there is risk of electoral violence, be it through bloody exchanges or low-level voter intimidation. Police officers and youth party activists are often at the center of these struggles, and members of both groups are able to escalate or deescalate tense situations during elections. Given that the perceptions and attitudes these key political intermediaries hold towards democracy and violence contribute to their actions, how can these attitudes be altered?

We partnered with the Liberian National Police on a locally-designed program that brought youth activists and police officers into a dialogue during Liberia's highly contested 2017 presidential election in November of 2017. This program involved the youth and police to participate in a series of workshops designed by Liberian police officers. The goal of the program, called "Yes to Peace," was to alter the perceptions and norms of both groups towards democratic institutions and the legitimacy of violence, and second, to increase trust between two typically antagonistic groups. The program (including baseline and endline surveys) was implemented from April of 2017 to June 2018. In total, 300 youth participated in the program and 120 police officers participated.

Unfortunately, the results of the program evaluation demonstrate that there were most likely too few participants to warrant adequate effects from the program. Using a difference and difference estimator, we do not find any effects, either negative or positive, among those who participated in the program compared to those who did not. However, the panel data nature of the paper allows us to evaluate the effect of the election on these perceptions. Here, we find that the experience of the election, which was largely positive, improved both police and youth perceptions of each other, as well as improved opinions about democracy and non-violence. Thus, while we find no conclusive programatic effect, we suggest that citizen's experiences with elections that run smoothly reinforce positive beliefs about democracy and non-violence.

2 Theory and Hypotheses

2.1 Election Violence in Post-Conflict Societies

In countries recovering from conflict, electoral violence can undermine paths towards democratization and security. Existing scholarship has tended to focus on either structural, instrumental, elite based explanations to explain why election violence occurs. While this work helps explain elite motivations and the factors that put some countries at risk, it does not give much insight into the motivations and preferences of non-elite or intermediary actors who may participate in violence either as elite agents or for their own individual reasons.

Several factors place countries like Liberia at higher risk of experiencing civil conflict around the time of elections. Countries that have experienced widespread civil conflict in the past are often seen as being at higher risk (Flores and Nooruddin 2012), and there is some debate over whether or not the risk declines over time, and as elections are repeated (Cheibub and Hays 2017, Goldsmith 2015).

Many of the challenges faced by new democracies in post-violence societies stem from the inability of politicians to credibly commit to shared rules and standards or due to the a lack of information and certainty about the goals and intentions of either incumbent or opposition parties (Brancati and Snyder 2013, Hyde and Marinov 2012). The risks posed by elite competition in these cases is heightened in winners-takes-all elections, or when competition aligns with ethnic or other identity-based cleavages (Fjelde and Höglund 2016, Höglund 2009). The strategies used in these tense situations can heighten deadlock and violence at the national level (LeBas 2011), which may in turn add fuel to the fire of pent-up desires for economic or constitutional reforms that can undermine the credibility of elections among frustrated populations (Kanyinga and Long 2012).

When election violence occurs, it does not always take shape as riots or mass killing in the aftermath of the voting, as was seen in Kenya in 2007 or Zimbabwe in 2008. Interpersonal, low-level, and often gendered violence can occur in the lead-up to and aftermath of polls, but rarely find their way into cross-national databases (Bjarnegard N.d.). In these instances, it may appear as if an election has avoided crisis, when in truth, citizens have experienced symbolic, physical and psychological violence. This can come in the form of violence against women, the spread of

harmful rumors and defamation, and the placement of economic and other barriers to fair and open participation (Krook and Sanin 2016).

2.2 Mid-Level Actors and Election Violence

While some research suggests elites may encourage violence in pursuit of political objectives, these strategies often depend on broader support from the population who will be directly involved in the protests and fights. Individual beliefs and attitudes as well as their fears of reprisal, may condition a person's choice to join in a riot or other risky behavior. For example, people are less likely to engage in protests if they anticipate a harsh police crackdown (Arriola 2013). Experimental studies of these micro-level determinants often examine how individual proclivity for participation are altered by civic education programs or anti-violence campaigns with mixed results. As noted earlier, these studies address broad swathes of the population, rather than targeting their interventions at people most likely to be involved in violence (Collier and Vicente 2014, Fafchamps and Vicente 2013, Finkel, Horowitz and Rojo-Mendoza 2012, Mvukiyehe and Samii 2017).

To the degree that elites use proxies to undertake violent actions on their behalf, they do not rely on the whole body politic as a private army. Not all citizens are as likely to play a role in election violence as others, implying that many studies have misidentified the crucial actors involved in election violence. In this study, we disaggregate any principle-agent relationship, allowing for space between the preferences of elites and those of the agents involved in violence on the ground, such as police officers and youth party members.

Police officers may either be called in to repress civilians on behalf of the state (Arriola 2013, Bellin 2012, Wilkinson 2004); or they may be asked to provide security in and around polling stations or protests and behave in a way that escalates violence rather than providing a check on tense situations. This is evident from anecdotal and journalistic accounts of aggrieved partisan protesters and party stalwarts may clash directly with state security forces. These reports are bolstered by careful ethnographic work on policing in the modern era that show that there is more room for shirking and drifting between elite preferences, institutional guidelines and police action. This is most likely the result of low levels of legitimacy, capacity, and lack of consistency within institutions and across countries, often related to their lack of presence outside major cities or crises of legitimacy rooted in colonial and wartime histories (Bierschenk 2017).

Within developing police forces, there is potential for discrepancies between the goals of different branches of the same police force, and within each police officers' complicated individual and institutional incentives (Baker 2005, Pratten 2017). This leads police to be stuck in a "twilight zone" between their public and private obligations, which are created by systems of internal norms, institutional prerogatives to maintain order, and informal obligations (Bierschenk 2017, Diphoorn 2017). These inconsistency in practices and relationships means that police forces, particularly in Africa, may have especially fraught and complex relationship with the citizens they are meant to protect (Beek and Göpfert 2013). This struggle is heightened when these relationships involve youth party activists; who are, by definition, more involved in politics, and may serve as agents of either incumbent or opposition politicians.

Studies of youth political participation are limited, but the overall consensus has been that countries with higher numbers of marginalized youth have a higher propensity for violence. At a structural level, greater numbers of young, often unemployed men; demographic youth bulges; and sex ratio imbalances can all be predictors of violence (Hudson and Den Boer 2002, Nordås and Davenport 2013, Urdal 2006). One reason for this is that youth may be vulnerable to the recruiting efforts of rebel or militia groups (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008), vulnerability long attributed to frustration and the lack of opportunity available to young people (Gurr 1970).

Reflecting these broad findings, case studies of youth wings in political parties in Tanzania, South Africa, Ghana and many other countries have shown that these members of youth wings of political parties tend to be more militant than their peers, and their attitudes are often shaped by years of mistrust and uncertainty with government agents, including the police (Anderson 2002, Brennan 2006, Cheeseman and Tendi 2010, LeBas 2011, Lodge 2014).

These accounts imply that youth and police often come head to head around the time of elections, and, moreover, that focusing on these two groups may help explain and address local violence. This can be readily seen in journalistic accounts of elections in Africa and elsewhere. For example, in Kenya, armed militia groups constituted the ruling party's youth wing in the 1990s and drove electoral violence in the Rift Valley (TJRC 2013). In Kenya's 2007 election, when widespread perceptions of rigged elections led to violent opposition protests, many protesters and onlookers died in the subsequent police crackdown. This cycle was repeated in 2017, when police killed between 33 and 50 people who engaged in protests contesting the fairness of their candidate's

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loss in the elections.

2.3 Raising the Costs of Participation in Violence

Many studies have shown that a primary element underlying election violence in post-conflict societies is the lack of information and marked uncertainty surrounding the process (Brancati and Snyder 2013, Hafner-Burton, Hyde and Jablonski 2014, Hyde and Marinov 2012, Taylor, Pevehouse and Straus 2017). This project attempts to alleviate the risk of electoral violence, first, by centering an intervention around mid-level actors who are central to political violence. Second, by attempting to raise the costs of participation in violence due to a change in information, particularly among these key actors. The costs of participation are increased due to the alteration in norms and attitudes held by police officers and youth party members. These include attitudes towards violence, democracy and views of each other.

In post-conflict settings, police officers and youth may receive conflicting messages from their higher ups about their proper role in the election. For the police, overlapping layers of obligation between public and private spheres allow uncertainty in how they should react to unique circumstances (Diphoorn 2017). As illustrated by case studies on youth political wings, youth activists are often used as foot soldiers by party elites, potentially even receiving messages and orders to instigate violence (Anderson 2002, Brennan 2006). Moreover, both police and youth party members have developed a level of mistrust toward the other group. In Liberia, this is in part a remnant of repeated negative interactions throughout the civil war years and the subsequent unsteady progress to democracy and peace. Given limited experience with democratic constraints and weak faith in institutional guarantees, it is likely that past perceptions based on these negative experiences provide much of the information that mid-level actors are using in split-second decisions on the ground.

During elections, when uncertainty is by definition high, police and youth interpret the intentions and risks posed by the other group based on a mix of orders and the limited information they have at their disposal. Therefore, these priors shape how individuals in each group choose to react when something suspicious happens at a polling station or outside party headquarters. Updating the prior knowledge of both actors may impact whether they are willing to reach out to the other side, proceed with tolerance and caution, or whether they see formal institutions as

adequate channels for grievance.

As the goal is to decrease the proclivity of mid-level actors to participate in electoral violence, interventions must increase the costs of participation or decrease the level of uncertainty surrounding these events. For this project, we specifically argue that changing attitudes towards the acceptability of violence, views of the other group, and perceptions of democratic or legal mechanisms for solving problems raise the costs of participating in violence. This leads to four hypotheses about how participation in programming like "Yes to Peace" leads to alterations in the attitudes of police officers and youth party members.

Hypothesis 1: *Participation in the program will decrease participants' (police and youth) perceptions of violence as an appropriate means for conflict resolution and management.*

In tense, post-conflict environments, it may be natural for both youth party members and police officers to justify the use of violence. Police officers, as the arm of state repression and control, are tasked with keeping order in public spheres. When protests spin out of control, or civilians shout at each other and threaten violence, police may well believe that the most immediate and natural response is to crack down on protesters, rather than to step back and remain calm. Research has long suggested that many police organizations allow colleagues to sanction each others' illegal use of violence as a natural, moral consequence of their occupation (Westley 1953). For some politically engaged youth, it is possible to legitimate the use of violence as a moral reaction to seemingly unjust politics (Wood 2003). Members of either group may recognize violence as wrong on some level, but still fail to recognize their responses as inappropriate. They may, moreover, believe that violence is an acceptable, normal, or even inevitable consequence of their political environment.

As stated above, Hypothesis 1 argues that the discussion and contextualization of violence as neither an inevitable nor an acceptable response will raise the costs of participating in violence by placing their actions and choices within context. The violence prevention program under consideration prioritized other forms of conflict management as viable alternatives to participation in violence, which leads to Hypotheses 2 and 3.

Hypothesis 2: *Participation will make participants (police and youth) more aware of the*

appropriate legal channels for electoral grievances and disputes.

Sharing clear and accurate information with these actors about the appropriate legal channels for electoral grievances and disputes should help them better understand the options at their disposal. In the heat of the moment, knowing the proper roles of the police, the electoral commission, or other organizations may help tip the balance for both youth and police in favor of more sustainable action. Hypothesis 2 should, in this case, be understood as a mirror of Hypothesis 1, in which both actors are better prepared to choose legal mechanisms of conflict management over paths of violence. We are, of course, unable to measure actual outcomes on the day of the election, however, both hypotheses focus on how these actors frame and understand the choices available to them beforehand.

Hypothesis 3: *Participation will increase participants' (police and youth) perceptions of democratic institutions as a viable and preferred form of government and an appropriate avenue for competition.*

A shared history of fraught elections peppered with claims of fraud and irregularities may lead individuals to believe that democracy is not a proper way to handle competition between interest groups in society. This would hardly be surprising, particularly if certain party activists believe that previous elections were stolen or tipped unfairly in favor of other groups. As participants in the program learn more about how democratic institutions and processes are organized, and as they discuss these institutions with both their peers and with people they were formally predisposed to mistrust, they should begin to see democracy as more tenable. These discussions of democratic norms and practice should help participants see beyond negative personal experiences to better understand how democracy can and should work. Ideally, rather than view democratic elections as a hurdle to overcome on the path to power, participants will begin to view democracy itself as valuable and be more willing to engage positively in the process.

Hypothesis 4: *Participation will make youth and police see each other in a more positive light.*

It is possible that many of the police and party members had not previously communicated with one another beyond their past negative interactions. An important aspect of the program was to build a network of people who were willing and able to communicate with one another. Open and safe communication within the program should also enable participants to learn more about the other sides' goal, anxieties and role within the democratic process. Moreover, through the exposure in this program, increased knowledge and awareness of the other group should lead both police and youth to put a human face to the other group. This would fall in line with previous psychological studies that find that contact between groups can, under certain circumstances, help group members re-categorize, better understand, and think more positively of members of the out-group (Pettigrew 1998).

In sum, changes in any of these attitudes may assist in raising the costs of participation in violence, and diminish uncertainty during the election process. For police and youth, both of whom are likely to be front and center at any crisis point, shifts in these norms and attitudes may make their split-decision making processes more conducive to peaceful, sustainable democratic elections at the local level.

3 CONTEXT: THE PROGRAM

From 2015–2016, one of the study's principal investigators met regularly with the then commander of the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) to help him write a proposal for his idea, the "Yes to Peace, No to Violence" program. As envisioned by the ERU commander, the program would bring the police closer to communities of youth through a series of community dialogues and through a mentorship program between youth and police.

The proposal written by the LNP states: "In an effort to provide professional, accountable, effective and efficient services to the Liberian people for the upcoming general and presidential elections in 2017, the ERU envisages providing a safe, secure and conducive atmosphere, where Liberians irrespective of gender, ethnicity, and socio-political affiliation can have the opportunity to exercise their political suffrage without fear or intimidation."

To this end, the LNP proposed two activities that take a preventative approach to election-related violence. First, the LNP held community dialogues with the youth leaders of political

parties. The objective of these dialogues is to communicate the duties and responsibilities of the LNP before, during and after elections. Through these forums, the LNP's goal is to make party youth aware of alternatives to violence and conflict resolution efforts, as well as to allow for questions to the LNP. Second, the LNP conducted a mentorship program with the youth political party leaders. The treatments are pooled in the analysis because of the small sample size.

This project was conducted from May 2016 to November 2017. It includes all the political parties registered with the National Elections Commission.

Topics discussed stemmed from the Liberian Constitution, election laws, responsibilities of voters, police functions before, during and after elections, conflict resolution and procedure for redress. A baseline survey was conducted in April-May of 2017 and an endline survey was conducted in April-June 2018.

3.1 Treatment Description

The first treatment was participation in the dialogue program. The dialogue took place on May 24, 2017, and lasted from 9am-5pm. Members from the LNP hierarchy (Inspector General of Police, Gregory O.W. Coleman and entourage) National Elections Commission, Media and other Civil Societies groups were present. The dialogue was facilitated by a Liberian NGO NAYMOTE. It brought together people from different backgrounds to include but not limited to the Liberia National Police, Youth from different Political Parties, National Elections Commission, the Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation, Media and other Civil Society Organizations. At the end of the first interactive dialogue between the police and the youth, the police and the youth agreed to the following: a) In order to have a peaceful elections, police officers are expected to demonstrate a nonpartisan role before, during and after the elections b) the LNP should not be quick to use violence against them, because they too have rights c) youth will learn to follow the LNP instructions, d) in the event they feel aggrieved, the law will take it course and both parties submitted that violence is not to way to achieving one's goals.

The second treatment included mentorship programs between the police and youth. They all met at the same time, but divided themselves into separate groups. On Wednesday, June 7, 2017, at 1200hrs, the first mentorship workshop was organized under the topic "Conflict Resolution and Management" at the National Police Training Academy. During the discussion on Conflict

Resolution and Management, the aim was "To enhance the knowledge and skills of participants to effectively respond to conflicts before, during and after the general and presidential elections of 2017." Additionally, the objectives were: 1) to define conflicts and discuss the processes and tools for carrying out conflict analysis; 2) analyze, critique and distinguish between the different conflict responses mechanisms and 3) discuss the skills and techniques necessary for successful negotiation/mediation.

On Friday, July 7, 2017, the second mentorship workshop was organized under the topic "Leadership in Peacebuilding". During the discussion on "Leadership in Peacebuilding," the core objective was "the critical role of leadership in peacebuilding", and "how participants could effectively utilize their leadership ability or charisma to respond or resolve conflicts before, during and after the general and presidential elections of 2017." Additionally, other objectives included: 1) Understanding what Leadership is about; 2) Distinguishing between a leader and a manager; 3) Identifying leadership skills and qualities and helping participants to review their own qualities and potential; 4) The role of gender in peacebuilding; 5) And understanding various leadership styles, identifying theirs and how these impact on their individual roles. Moreover, a one-hour role play was conducted, where the participants were divided into three groups, namely: Party Aries, Party Orion, and Police officer.

On Friday, July 21, 2017, the third mentorship workshop was organized under the topic "Communication Skills: Understanding Effective Communication Skills." The core objective was understanding how communication can be use as a tool for non-violence. Additionally, other objectives were: 1) Defining communication; 2) The Communication Process; 3) Causes of Miscommunication or barriers to Communication; 4) Techniques for Effective Communication; 5) Listening, the key to Staying Informed; and 6) Formal Communication Paths.

On August 7, 2017, the fourth mentorship workshop was organized under the topic "The do's and do not's of the LNP before, during and After Elections." The core objective was to understand the role and responsibilities of elections security officers during elections. Additionally, other objectives were: 1) Elections Security Conduct; 2) Duties and Responsibilities of elections security officers; 3) Do's for elections security officers; 4) Don?t for election security officer; 5) Know persons permitted to enter a polling station and 6) Election offenses.

The last mentorship workshop took place on February 8, 2018. The goal of this workshop

was to reconcile any problems that may have arose from the election. All participants also received a certificate of completion.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN

In total, with the help of NAYMOTE, 300 youth party leaders were selected for the program and with the help of the LNP, 120 police officers were randomly selected from a roster. All recruits participated in a baseline survey. After the completion of the baseline survey, individuals were randomly assigned to attend the workshop and the mentorship program. Figure 1 shows the research design of the project as well as the issues related to compliance. The difference in the numbers are due to some members of the police and youth finding out about the programs. Thus, they attended the programs. Due to ethical reasons, those implementing the program felt that they could not turn them down from attending. Because of this spillover, we use a intent-to-treat design, which should bias against a positive treatment effect.
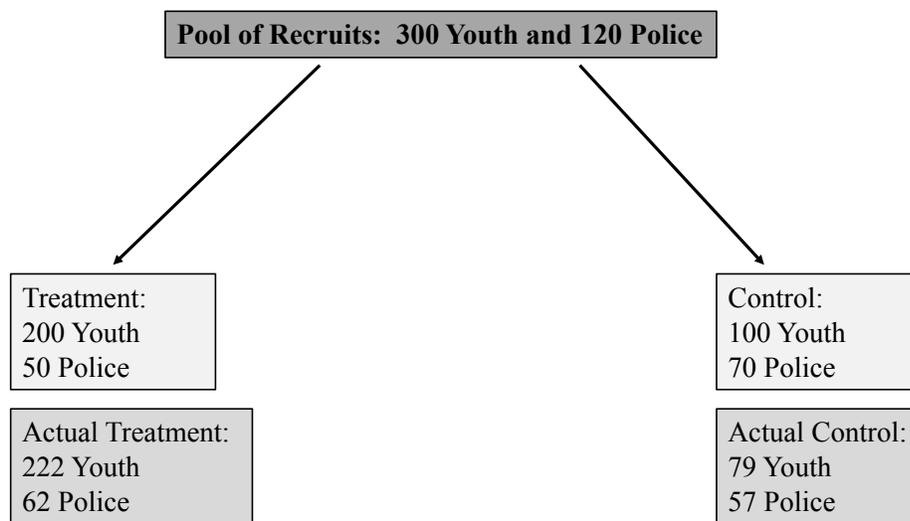
Figure 1: Research Design

4.1 Dependent Variables

4.2 Survey Questions and Measures

From February to June 2018, after the final mentorship program, the enumerators set up meetings via phone with the respondents from the initial survey, which had taken place in May 2017. The survey interviews were conducted in person, and the enumerators did not link the survey to the "Yes to Peace" program. The survey questions ranged from topics on standard demographics, to experiences during the war, levels of civic engagement, and opinions towards democracy, police, youth, and violence. The pre-analysis plan stated which questions would be used to address each of the four hypotheses. A fifth hypotheses that had been included in the pre-analysis plan, regarding rates of contact between police and youth, was dropped from the analysis due to inconsistencies in the coding between the baseline and endline surveys. The questions used to analyze each of the four hypotheses are listed below.

Due to the possibilities for social desirability bias, questions were asked in a myriad of different ways. Several questions were asked in statement for statement, and enumerators asked respondents how much they agree with the statement from strongly agree to strongly disagree. These are pooled as binary responses. Other questions asked respondents to choose between two competing statements, while others asked yes or no questions. Several of the questions were posed as potential real world scenarios with substantive answers of different types of responses the individual might have. For these scenario questions, the proper answer was chosen after the survey by the LNP . The correct procedure for electoral grievances, which were described in the scenario questions, should have been made clear to all participants during the program. The questions were developed in conjunction with the organizers of "Yes to Peace" so that they matched the content of the dialogues and mentorship programs.

H1: Changing Perceptions of Violence

- It is acceptable to engage in violence under some circumstances. (Youth) (Appropriateness)[1]

- Can conflict and violence be avoided? (Youth and Police) (Avoidability)[2]

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[1] Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

[2] Both this question on avoiding violence and the following question about competition between political parties

- Does competition between political parties lead to violent conflict? (Police)

H2: Appropriate Legal Channels

- If you or another party member were physically attacked by members of another party how would you retaliate? (Youth) (Attacked)[3]

- If another political party were intimidating voters in your community would you do? (Youth) (Intimidated)[4]

- If a big man/woman party leader encouraged you to harass members of another party, how would you respond to the leaders' orders? (Youth) (Harassed)[5]

- If you witness election fraud, what would be your first step? (Youth)(Witnessed Fraud)[6]

- It is election day, and you are at a polling station watching people. You notice that someone from a different party starts shouting at someone in line. What do you do? (Youth) (Saw Shouting)[7]

- You found out that your party has just lost by 59 votes. During the election, you suspected there might have been some election fraud. As a result, you think that your party should have won the election. What do you do? (Youth) (Lost Election)[8]

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may have responses ranging from sometimes and never to always.

[3]1 Attack the person/group myself and fight back 2 Gather other party wing members to attack the individual/group **3 Report it to local Electoral Commission official** 4 Report it to the police 5 Report it to party leaders/elders 6 Report it to the media 7 Post on social media (Facebook, twitter) 8 Do nothing 98- I don't know 9- refuse to answer

[4]1Stop it yourself 2 Call your own party members and stop it together 3 Call your own party leader to report it **4 Report it to an authority (i.e. police)** 5 Call an NGO 6 Call UNMIL 7 Do nothing 98 I don't know 99 I refuse to answer

[5]1 Do whatever he or she tells me to do 2 Get other party members to do it with me **3 Refuse to harass anyone** 4 Report the party leader to the police 98 I don't know 99 I refuse to answer

[6]1 Confront the person/group individually 2 Gather other party wing members to confront the individual/group **3 Report it to local Electoral Commission official** 4 Report it to the police 5 Report it to party leaders 6 Report it to the media 7 Post on social media 8 Do nothing 98 I don't know 9 refuse to answer

[7]1 Confront the person/group myself 2 Gather other party wing members to confront the individual/group **3 Report it to local Electoral Commission official** 4 Call the police 5 Report it to party leaders 6 Report it to the media 7 Post on social media (Facebook, Twitter) 8 Do nothing 98 I don't know 99 refuse to answer

[8]1. Go with other youth wing leaders to confront the other party 2. Hold a rally and protest outside the headquarters of the political party 3. Riot in the streets and disrupt traffic to raise awareness 4. Report the fraud to the police **5. Ask the National Election Commission and ask for a recount** 6. Accept the results 98 I don't know 99 I refuse to answer

- Does the law say that the LNP can arrest people during the election (Youth and Police)[9]

- It is election day and you are at a polling station watching people. You notice that someone from a different party starts shouting at someone in line. What do you do? (Police) [10]

- You have spent one year getting to know an orphaned girl who is involved in party politics. She is 16 years old. She is your neighbor. During the election, you see her engaging in protests and see her setting a car on fire. What do you do first? (Police)[11]

- You see that a crowd is forming to protest the results of the election because there were reports of fraud. You also think that there was fraud that happened and prevented your party from winning. The crowd is starting to get violent. What do you do? (Police)[12]

- You received an intelligence report from a neighbor that indicates that a group of young armed boys are lying in wait along the 72nd and SKD-Blvd junctions to hijack electoral materials that were traveling from said location to the NEC. You then realize that one of the boys in the group is your nephew. What do you do? (Police)[13]

H3: Views of Democracy

- How can you best resolve conflict between two political rivals? (Youth and Police) (Democracy Resolves Conflict)[14]

- We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open and honest elections. vs. Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders. (Youth) (Democracy to Choose Leaders)

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[9]Accurate answer is yes.

[10]Proper response is to inform the National Election Commission. Other response options include calling for back up, arresting or confronting the person, posting on social media, contacting the media or doing nothing.

[11]Proper response is to arrest the girl. Other options include removing her from scene, calling back up, doing nothing, or speaking to community leaders.

[12]Proper response is to do nothing and allow the crowd to protest. Other responses include calling for back up, handling the situation alone, call reporters or post on social media.

[13]Proper response is to alert the NEC. Other responses include arresting the hijackers; calling for back up; call party members, media, or family members.

[14]1. Rioting 2. Fighting 3. War **4. Through an election** 5. Mediation by traditional and community elders 6. Mediation by religious leaders 7. Mediation by police. Mediation by the National Election Commission 98- Don't know. 99- Refuse to Answer

- It is important to accept the election results, even if you think there was fraud. vs. It is not necessary to accept the results if there was fraud. (Youth) (Report Fraud)

H4: Views of Each Other[15]

    Youth Views

- Efficacy

  - I believe the LNP should have more power to conduct police operations. (More Power)

  - The LNP are good at catching criminals. (Good at Job)

  - I feel safer when the LNP are in my community. (Feel Safer)

  - It is easy to get help from the LNP. (Helps Us)

- Legitimacy

  - The police [does not] steal things from me or the community. (Does not Steal)

  - The LNP [does not cause] problems if they come into the community. (Does not Cause Problems)

  - The LNP [is not] corrupt and eating money. (Is not Corrupt)

  - The LNP [does not] discriminate based on religion/ethnicity/tribe. (No Discrimination (Ethnic))

- Neutrality

  - The LNP are [not] aligned with a particular political party. (Unaligned)

  - The LNP will [not] influence voters in the election. (Does not Influence)

  - If the election results are contested, the LNP will remain impartial. (Non-Partisan)

  - The LNP [does not] discriminate based on political party. (Neutral)

Police Views

- The youth today are very politically active and making the country a better place.

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[15]Responses for these questions: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree, Don't know, Refuse to Answer

- Youth party members listen to adult party leaders and do whatever they tell them to do.

- The youth today are too lazy.

- The youth today are causing too many problems for Liberia.

- The youth today are responsible for much of the crime and violence in Liberia.

The questions were reformatted in the positive, so that improvement on the variables would lead to a positive coefficient.

4.3 Research Ethics

We ensured that all participation was voluntary by having a third party NGO invite youth to the meetings or by stressing to the police the fact that the program was not mandatory.[16] To ensure that all parties felt comfortable with one another when they were alone, the dialogue was held first with third party NGOs. This allowed both the youth and police to build trust for the next phase, which was the mentorship program. During the mentorship program, the youth and police met on their own, without the involvement of third parties. This may not have worked or been seen to be threatening without the community dialogue that preceded the mentorship.

To ensure the safety of our enumerators, we developed an agreement with them that they would gain permission from the police to survey police officers. Thus, there was never a concern that they would get arrested themselves when interacting with police officers. We also noted that we would stop the project if there was an emergency that occurred during the election such as natural disasters, the outbreak of disease or outbreak of large-scale conflict.

Most importantly, we felt that the project was ethical because it was locally conceived. We did not have the idea to conduct and evaluate the "Yes to Peace" program on our own, but rather helped get funding for an idea that the ERU commander had to prevent violence. The ERU commander designed most of the project based on what would be feasible and the amount of funding we were able to obtain for the project. Thus, the program ensured local knowledge about what was the most appropriate way to design the program. Moreover, the police had help from

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[16]Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained for this study from Cornell University (Protocol Number ID: 1703007021).

local NGOs to design the best community dialogue and mentorship program to ensure it would be safe for all.

4.4 MODEL

As mentioned above, to evaluate the hypotheses, we run analyses that pool both treatment groups (the community dialogue and mentorship). This is a conservative estimate because those in the community dialogue program received less "dosage." Nevertheless we note that when separating the treatments, the results below do not change. As mentioned above, we utilize an intent-to-treat design, assessing outcomes based on treatment assignment rather than compliance. Due to limited sample size, the statistical power is not strong enough to make strong causal claims beyond the simpler, pooled analysis. Given the small-n in the second treatment group, our preferred model breaks down police and youth separately, but pools both treatments.

We model a difference-in-difference design using data from both the baseline and post-treatment survey. For this analysis, we use the standard model for panel designs:

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 T_s + \beta_2 P_t + \beta_3 (T * P) + V_i \gamma + \epsilon_{it}$$

Y_{it} is the outcome of interest for a given individual at a given time. β_1 accounts for the differences between treatment and control groups. The indicator T signals if the observation is in the treatment group, and P signals the post-treatment period. The parameter of interest is the interaction in β_3, which gives the estimate of the average treatment effect. We include V_i as a limited series of controls, but only including pre-treatment variables that were not balanced through randomized selection. This means that we balance on whether the youth were christian.

In addition to the diff and diff approach, we also evaluate the treatment (T) separately (comparing the results from the endline survey only) and endline (P) (which signifies a potential election effect).

5   Descriptive Statistics

5.1   A Note about Age

Figure 2 shows the age distribution of those that were recruited. The Figure shows that the distribution of youth and police differ, with youth clearly being younger than the police. Nevertheless, it is notable that the average age of the youth in the baseline is 29 and for the police it was 37. The United Nations and other international organizations have called for a more flexible definition of youth in war-torn countries because many "youth" lost the opportunity to be youth because of the war. Thus, the "youth" could refer those even forty years of age (Lowicki 2002).
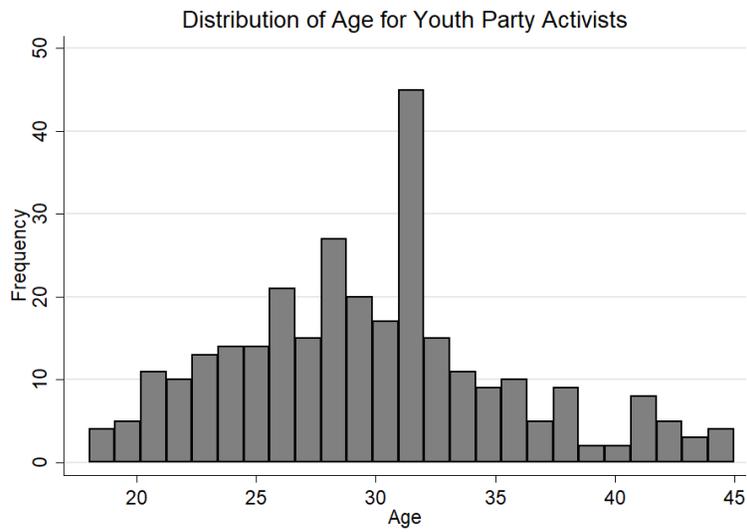
(a) Age Distribution of Youth
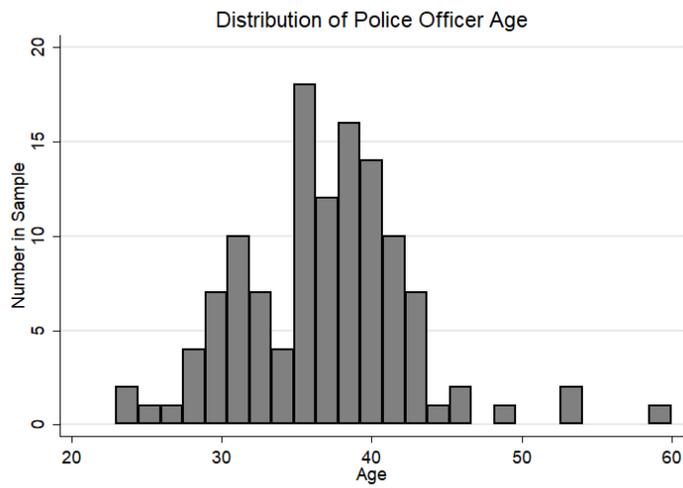
(b) Age Distribution of Police

Figure 2: Age Distribution

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Covariate Balance: Police Baseline Survey

	Treatment	Control	Difference	p-value
Age	36.38	37.28	0.9	0.77
Female	0.18	0.27	0.08	0.28
Children	0.97	0.92	0.05	0.25
Christian	0.93	0.88	0.05	0.35
War Violence	0.53	0.57	0.04	0.67
Beaten Someone	0.08	0.03	0.05	0.25
Arrested Someone	0.95	0.95	0.00	1.00
Categorical Variables:				Pr(Chi2)
Ethnicity				0.16
Rank				0.92
Department				0.76
Party				0.92

5.2 BALANCE

Figure 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the data and the balance across the treatment and control groups. The police are balanced across the treatment and control groups. Figure ?? shows that there were more Christians in the treatment group, so we add the co-variate to the analyses below.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Covariate Balance: Youth Baseline Survey

	Treatment		Control		Difference	
	mean	sd	mean	sd	b	p-value/PR(chi^2)
Sex	0.24	0.43	0.17	0.37	0.08	(0.16)
Age	29.79	5.96	29.75	5.68	0.04	(0.96)
Children (binary)	0.65	0.48	0.67	0.47	-0.02	(0.75)
Christian	0.88	0.32	0.78	0.42	0.11*	(0.02)*
University Education	0.69	0.46	0.67	0.47	0.02	(0.71)
Victim	0.29	0.46	0.38	0.49	-0.09	(0.16)
Arrested	0.91	0.29	0.89	0.32	0.02	(0.68)
Victim in War	0.43	0.50	0.53	0.50	-0.10	(0.13)
Party Leader	0.41	0.50	0.37	0.48	0.04	(0.58)
UP	0.12	0.32	0.20	0.40	-0.09	(0.06)
CDC	0.23	0.42	0.17	0.38	0.06	(0.26)
LP	0.09	0.29	0.06	0.25	0.03	(0.49)
Small Party	0.28	0.45	0.25	0.43	0.03	(0.56)
No Party	0.28	0.45	0.32	0.47	-0.03	(0.57)
Ethnicity (Cat)						(0.580)
Religion (Cat)						(0.172)
Party (Cat)						(0.695)
Observations	78		218		296	

6 RESULTS

The first set of results for the youth show that the difference and difference estimator (interaction term) is insignificant in all the tables. This is the case for for H1 or youth perceptions about violence as well as H2, about knowledge about legal channels, H3, youth perceptions about democracy, and H4 perceptions of police. What is noticeable, however, is that the "endline" variable or the post-election survey variable is consistently statistically significant and in the right direction (positive).[17] It is possible that the election itself may have changed youth perceptions about violence, democracy, knowledge about legal channels, and perceptions toward the police. Specifically, youth perceptions about the appropriate way to resolve conflicts (variable = appropriateness) may have improved after the election. Youth knowledge about what to do in certain scenarios improved. Youth may also turn to more democratic channels for resolving conflicts. Youth perceptions of police efficacy and police legitimacy increased. We could interpret these results as a possible "election effect."

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[17]Recall that the questions were reformatted so that a positive direction is the appropriate direction for the hypotheses to be supported.

Table 3: H1, Youth's Perceptions of Violence

VARIABLES	(1) h1_1 Appropriateness	(2) h1_2 Avoidability
Treatment x Endline	0.0117	-0.157
	(0.0517)	(0.0964)
Endline	0.154***	-0.0269
	(0.0500)	(0.114)
Treatment	-0.0602	0.0912
	(0.0590)	(0.131)
Christian = 1	-0.0999***	-0.0311
	(0.0265)	(0.0707)
Constant	0.896***	2.233***
	(0.0491)	(0.104)
Observations	586	576
R-squared	0.042	0.007

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Turning to the results for the police, we notice a similar pattern. Again, the difference and difference estimator (interaction term) is insignificant in all the tables. And, again there is some evidence to suggest that police views about violence improved as a result of the *election* and not necessarily the "yes to peace" program. Police views about democracy may also have improved as a result of election, as well as their views about the youth. For both the youth and police, it is important to note that these "election effect" results are observational, thus we cannot be certain that the election did cause the change in perceptions. Yet, because the surveys were done immediately following the election, there is some reason to believe that the change is due to the election.

Table 4: H2, Youth's Knowledge of Legal Channels

VARIABLES	(1) h2_1 Attacked	(2) h2_2 Intimidated	(3) h2_3 Harrassed	(4) h2_4 Witnessed Fraud	(5) h2_5 Saw Shouting	(6) h2_6 Lost Election
Treatment x Endline	-0.116*	-0.0469	-0.0450	0.0587	-0.00420	0.000259
	(0.0631)	(0.0542)	(0.0332)	(0.0639)	(0.0576)	(0.0654)
Endline	-0.0444	-0.201***	0.0260	0.0356	0.214***	0.211***
	(0.0765)	(0.0722)	(0.0320)	(0.0778)	(0.0757)	(0.0709)
Treatment	0.113	0.0866	-0.0319	-0.0975	0.00279	-0.0620
	(0.0902)	(0.0848)	(0.0432)	(0.0904)	(0.0882)	(0.0836)
Christian = 1	0.0339	0.117**	-0.0379	-0.0931*	-0.0356	-0.0367
	(0.0536)	(0.0519)	(0.0268)	(0.0491)	(0.0507)	(0.0491)
Constant	0.668***	0.702***	0.981***	0.706***	0.278***	0.651***
	(0.0711)	(0.0649)	(0.0370)	(0.0692)	(0.0657)	(0.0705)
Observations	571	580	572	576	580	573
R-squared	0.008	0.033	0.012	0.010	0.051	0.035

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5: H3, Youth's Perceptions of Democracy

VARIABLES	(1) h3_1 Democracy Resolves Conflict	(2) h3_2 Democracy to Choose Leaders	(3) h3_3 Report Fraud
Treatment x Endline	-0.0200	0.0167	0.0166
	(0.0604)	(0.0267)	(0.0627)
Endline	0.211***	0.00143	-0.00450
	(0.0774)	(0.0315)	(0.0761)
Treatment	0.0117	0.0104	0.0527
	(0.0899)	(0.0394)	(0.0893)
Christian = 1	0.0443	-0.0411	0.0116
	(0.0508)	(0.0295)	(0.0516)
Constant	0.243***	0.0748**	0.323***
	(0.0708)	(0.0330)	(0.0697)
Observations	579	586	586
R-squared	0.054	0.007	0.003

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

7 Impact and Conclusion

The results show that the "Yes to Peace" program did not change youth or police perceptions with regards to violence, democracy, rule of law, nor of each other. The insignificant results may be due to the small sample size may have been too small. Due to limited funding, we were only able to include 420 participants. For the youth, the questions for H4 or perceptions about the police are all in the correct directions, but not statistically significant, perhaps indicating that with more youth participants, there could have been an effect detected. The power analysis suggests that 400 participants (200 in control and 200 in treatment) for just the youth may be needed to detect an effect at the 0.2 level with a power of 0.8. Thus, future programs should be scaled up. Most local programs do not receive funding and in cases such as these, do not receive adequate funding to be fully powered. Thus, the recommendation is to increase funding for programs like "yes to peace," as there is no evidence that they damage perceptions, only that there is potential for them to improve perceptions if more participants are included.

While the "Yes to Peace" program did not yield significant results, the post-election variable

Table 6: H4a, Youth's Perceptions of Police Efficacy

VARIABLES	(1) h4a_3 Eff: Good at Job	(2) h4a_4 Eff: Helps Us	(3) h4a_1 Eff: More Power	(4) h4a_2 Eff: Safer
Treatment xEndline	0.0578	-0.0755	-0.0438	0.000884
	(0.0626)	(0.0665)	(0.0666)	(0.0528)
Endline	0.119	0.0198	0.211***	0.132**
	(0.0775)	(0.0810)	(0.0760)	(0.0526)
Treatment	-0.0699	-0.0125	-0.146	-0.0729
	(0.0911)	(0.0941)	(0.0900)	(0.0629)
Christian = 1	-0.0520	-0.0382	-0.0618	-0.0573*
	(0.0538)	(0.0540)	(0.0534)	(0.0343)
Constant	0.348***	0.501***	0.594***	0.864***
	(0.0722)	(0.0744)	(0.0733)	(0.0551)
Observations	573	574	581	578
R-squared	0.008	0.006	0.027	0.019

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 7: H4b, Youth's Perceptions of Police Legitimacy

VARIABLES	(1) h4b_3 Leg: Is not Corrupt	(2) h4b_4 Leg: Does not Discriminate (Ethnic)	(3) h4b_1 Leg: Does not Steal	(4) h4b_2 Leg: Does not Causes Problems
Treatment x Endline	-0.0646	0.0296	-0.0777	0.0100
	(0.0579)	(0.0592)	(0.0693)	(0.0586)
Endline	0.219***	0.152**	0.263***	0.0633
	(0.0775)	(0.0625)	(0.0769)	(0.0673)
Treatment	-0.0772	-0.0832	0.0224	0.0560
	(0.0889)	(0.0732)	(0.0908)	(0.0771)
Christian = 1	-0.0519	-0.0529	-0.0526	0.00176
	(0.0502)	(0.0398)	(0.0535)	(0.0434)
Constant	0.293***	0.797***	0.547***	0.748***
	(0.0677)	(0.0624)	(0.0760)	(0.0632)
Observations	546	547	537	562
R-squared	0.045	0.018	0.086	0.021

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 8: H4c, Youth's Perceptions of Police Neutrality

VARIABLES	(1) h4c_3 Neut: Non-Partisan	(2) h4c_4 Neut: Neutral	(3) h4c_1 Neut: Unaligned	(4) h4c_2 Neut: Does not Influence
Treatment x Endline	0.0640	0.00607	0.0788	0.0471
	(0.0623)	(0.0583)	(0.0679)	(0.0551)
Endline	0.0915	-0.00805	0.177**	0.00873
	(0.0728)	(0.0714)	(0.0775)	(0.0676)
Treatment	-0.0241	0.00993	-0.0658	0.0387
	(0.0839)	(0.0828)	(0.0898)	(0.0754)
Christian = 1	0.0351	0.0876**	-0.00908	-0.0141
	(0.0488)	(0.0433)	(0.0499)	(0.0370)
Constant	0.644***	0.166***	0.591***	0.809***
	(0.0688)	(0.0610)	(0.0730)	(0.0586)
Observations	558	555	531	547
R-squared	0.011	0.006	0.023	0.011

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 9: H1, Police Perceptions of Violence

	Competition	Avoid
Treatment	-0.0649	0.0667
	(0.0914)	(0.0812)
Endline	0.146*	0.0586
	(0.0844)	(0.0823)
Treatment x Endline	0.0819	0.0391
	(0.120)	(0.109)
Constant	0.617***	0.700***
	(0.0633)	(0.0597)
Observations	236	237
R-squared	0.042	0.020

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 10: H2: Police Knowledge of Legal Channels

	Can Arrest
Treatment	-0.0500
	(0.0607)
Endline	0.0107
	(0.0548)
Treatment x Endline	-0.0159
	(0.0864)
Constant	0.900***
	(0.0391)
Observations	234
R-squared	0.008

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 11: H3: Police Viws of Democracy

	Arrest	Crowd	Hijack	Rivals	Polling
Treatment	0.0167	-0.000847	-0.00678	0.119**	-0.0167
	(0.0788)	(0.0405)	(0.0907)	(0.0479)	(0.0287)
Endline	-0.183**	-0.0339	0.0833	0.0667*	0.204***
	(0.0857)	(0.0335)	(0.0880)	(0.0397)	(0.0605)
Treatment x Endline	0.213*	0.000847	0.00678	-0.0497	0.0460
	(0.115)	(0.0470)	(0.125)	(0.0763)	(0.0852)
Constant	0.750***	0.0508*	0.600***	0.0167	0.0333
	(0.0564)	(0.0288)	(0.0638)	(0.0167)	(0.0234)
Observations	239	237	239	238	239
R-squared	0.040	0.009	0.008	0.032	0.110

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 12: H4: Police Views of Youth

	Active	Listen	Lazy	Problems	Crime
Treatment	-0.0402	-0.0214	0.0678	0.0946	0.0299
	(0.0860)	(0.0909)	(0.0926)	(0.0888)	(0.0763)
Endline	0.176**	0.0547	0.0845	0.109	0.147*
	(0.0734)	(0.0920)	(0.0925)	(0.0898)	(0.0815)
Treatment x Endline	0.0402	-0.0495	0.0822	0.0743	0.00339
	(0.104)	(0.131)	(0.128)	(0.127)	(0.117)
Constant	0.707***	0.632***	0.466***	0.322***	0.203***
	(0.0603)	(0.0645)	(0.0661)	(0.0614)	(0.0528)
Observations	238	219	238	237	239
R-squared	0.059	0.004	0.030	0.041	0.028

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
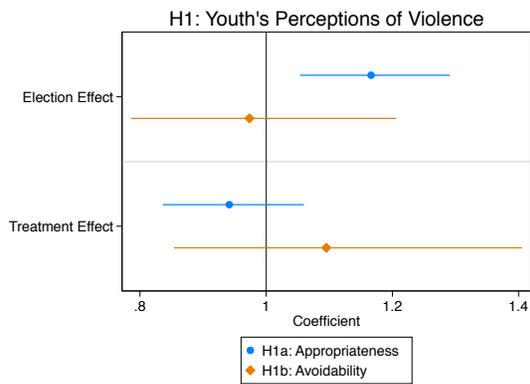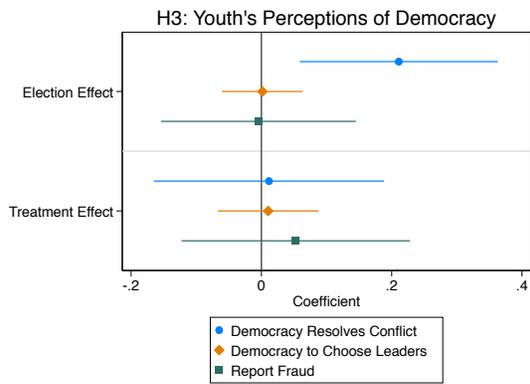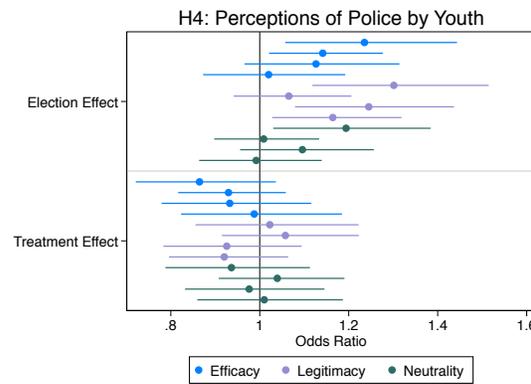
(a) Youth Perceptions of Violence
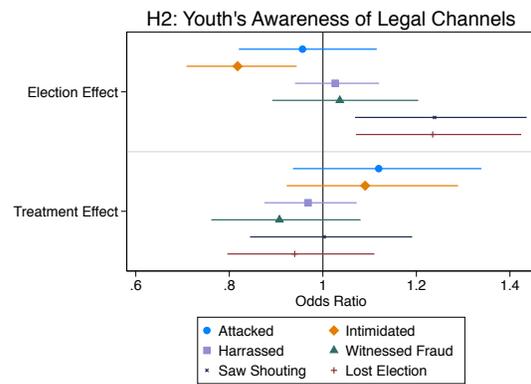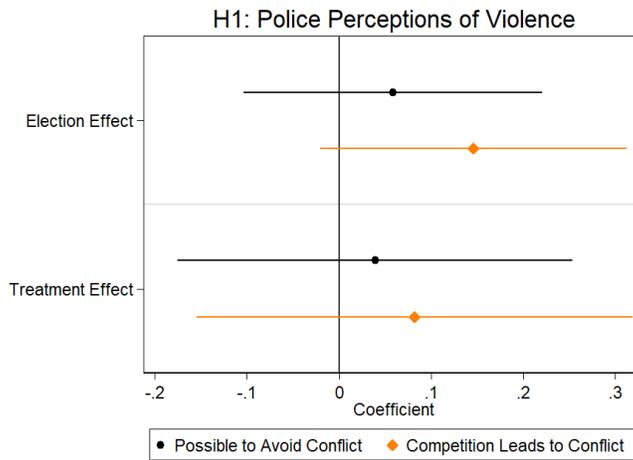
(b) Youth Awareness of Legal Channels

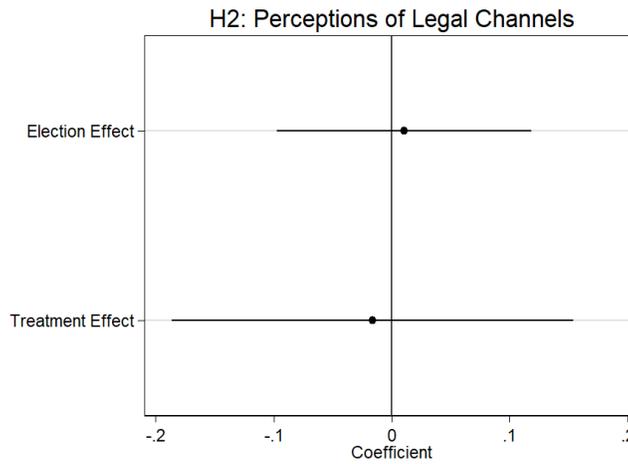(c) Youth Perceptions of Violence

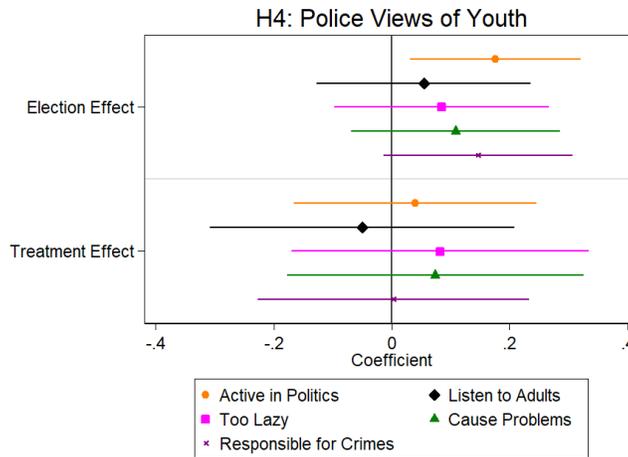(d) Youth Perceptions of Democracy

Figure 3: Youth Perceptions

(a) Police Perceptions of Violence

(b) Police Awareness of Legal Channels

(c) Police Perceptions of Youth

Figure 4: Police Perceptions

(endline) was statistically significant and in the right direction in a number of models for both the police and youth. Youth views about violence, democracy, and of the police improved after the election. These are observational results, but because the post-election survey was conducted immediately following the election, it is possible that the election changed perceptions. Thus, while we find no conclusive programatic effect, we suggest that citizen's experiences with elections that run smoothly reinforce positive beliefs about democracy and non-violence.

This unique field experiment contributes to the literature on electoral violence and security sector reform in several novel ways. First, we argue for the importance of focusing on mid-level intermediaries such as youth activists and police officers when attempting to address electoral violence. Second, we demonstrate the value of supporting locally-designed and managed violence prevention programs. These programs can effectively address important local issues, but are often overlooked by international actors and researchers. The program here was perhaps too small, but if scaled up could lead to positive outcomes. For this reason, partial funding of localized programs does little to improve outcomes. If funded, local programs should receive adequate funding. Finally, we show that the attitudes and norms of police officers could be changed through ground-up interventions, if these are run by the police themselves and are not imposed from the outside. To our knowledge, this is the first field experiment to successfully show that it may be possible to change police norms through short-term programming. Given the hierarchical and rigid structures of police forces, it is both surprising and hopeful that this program was able to shift attitudes towards violence and democracy, suggesting that this focus on mid-level actors is a fruitful way for future studies to address electoral violence.

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