

## **Effect of Foundational state design processes, transitional political processes, and election support intervention on civic participation**

The civic and electoral engagement interventions had a moderate effect on citizen participation.

Geographic focus: Middle East & North Africa, Sub Saharan Africa

Effect: Moderate effect ( $g=0.103$ )

Confidence in study findings: Low (3 studies with 23 effect sizes)

### **Short summary**

Interventions aimed at increasing civic and electoral engagement through participatory processes, anti-violence campaigns, and governance strengthening showed moderate improvements in civic participation. In Liberia, participatory selection of clan chiefs increased political discussion, community engagement, and peaceful protest participation, with spillover effects on national politics. Nigeria's anti-violence campaigns raised voter turnout by 7–11 percentage points, mitigating the suppressive effects of electoral violence. In Iraq, governance-strengthening initiatives improved civic engagement, with the share of citizens viewing political participation as a responsibility rising from 57% in 2013 to 68% in 2015. Overall confidence in this cell is low due to some inconsistencies across studies.

### **Long summary**

#### *The intervention*

The interventions included participatory processes for selecting clan chiefs, anti-violence electoral campaigns, and initiatives to strengthen governance responsiveness and legitimacy through civil society. Electoral campaigns used town meetings, popular theatres, and door-to-door materials to encourage collective action. Participatory chief selection influenced leader behavior and facilitated more accountable leadership. Governance-strengthening initiatives aimed to improve citizen engagement and trust in institutions.

#### *How the intervention is expected to work*

Participatory selection processes increase local political discussion, attendance at community meetings, and contact with clan chiefs, with effects spilling over to national politics, including contact with political representatives and attendance at peaceful protests. Anti-violence campaigns in Nigeria reduced the suppressive effect of electoral violence on voter turnout, increasing registration by 7–11 percentage points. Governance-strengthening initiatives in Iraq enhanced citizens' perception of civic responsibility and willingness to participate in politics, despite rising disillusionment with government.

#### *The evidence base*

The cell contains 3 studies: 3 impact evaluations designed as quasi-experimental studies. The studies are from Nigeria (1), Liberia (1) and Iraq (1).

#### *Evidence findings*

The interventions had a moderate effect on civic and electoral participation. Participatory processes improved political discussion and community engagement in Liberia, anti-violence campaigns increased voter turnout in Nigeria, and governance-strengthening initiatives enhanced civic engagement in Iraq. Findings were consistent across the 3 studies, though overall confidence remains low. There are 3 impact evaluations in the cell and evidence summaries of the study are provided here:

#### *Included studies*

**Baldwin & Eric (2011)** examines the effects of participatory processes for selecting clan chiefs in rural Liberia. After the civil war, some chiefs were appointed by higher authorities, while others were selected by their communities. All chiefs who became incapacitated after 2002 were replaced through participatory processes, providing a natural experiment to study the effects of these processes on established institutions. The research employs a difference-in-difference estimation strategy to identify the effects of participatory processes independent of timing effects. The study draws on survey data and outcomes from behavioral games conducted in 70 clans across 13 of the 15 counties in rural Liberia. Within each clan, 15 households were targeted for interviews, and additional community-level activities were conducted to measure contributions to public goods. The participatory selection of chiefs increases consultation at the community level and raises levels of political participation both locally and nationally. However, it also reduces contributions to local public goods, suggesting that chiefs selected through participatory processes may be less effective at enforcing cooperation. The study finds that participatory processes do not result in the selection of more educated or connected chiefs, but they do lead to more consultative leadership. The study is rated as medium confidence because it is a non-experimental study and only partially describes the intervention and outcome; and attrition is more than 20% as reported in the study.

**Collier (2014)** conducted a field experiment based on anti-violence campaigning. The campaign appealed to collective action through electoral participation and worked through town meetings, popular theatres, and door-to-door distribution of materials. The campaign was designed to induce experimental subjects to oppose voter intimidation. The main mechanism employed was to lower the perceived threat to individual voters through collective action. The study was conducted in Nigeria. The study is designed as a randomized controlled trial. The study included 24 enumeration areas, 1200 participants in baseline (50 per area), and 1149 participants during the post-election survey. The study showed that the anti-violence campaign was able to increase the sense of security to the general population. The campaign also boosted empowerment to counteract electoral violence – the likelihood that the postcard was mailed was 8 percentage points higher for treated respondents. It was also found clear and statistically significant effects of the campaign on diminishing perceptions of political violence and increasing empowerment of the population against political violence. These effects are 0.39, 0.23, and 0.22 standard deviation units for general political freedom and conflict, local electoral violence from the top, and local empowerment from the bottom (respectively). These effects are strongly significant at the 1 or 5 percent levels using cluster-robust standard error inference. The study is rated as low confidence due to no mention of attrition in the study.

**Tesfaye (2016)** The study assessed to identify how strengthening governance responsiveness and legitimacy through civil society may lead to sustainable peace in Iraq. The study was designed as a quasi-experimental design. This report is based on data from three rounds of nationwide public opinion surveys between 2013 and 2015, and in-depth interviews with 5,000 respondents across the country in each of the three years. The study found that when people who feel marginalized begin to believe the government is going to be more responsive, accountable, and fair, support for armed violence and the sectarian groups that perpetuate it decreases. Also, as the violent conflict continues or escalates, sectarian divisions have the potential to increase as political opportunists – both domestic and foreign – stoke tensions to gain power. The study is rated as low confidence due to no mention of power calculations.

#### *Confidence assessment*

Confidence in the cell is low because it comprises 3 studies, two of which are rated low confidence, and the results across studies are inconsistent.

**Other outcomes in the study:**

Social cohesion / Willingness to participate or help

Community and state governance / Government performance

Violence and atrocity prevention / Nature and scale of violence or atrocities / Social norms regarding violence and atrocities