

The effect of Foundational state design processes, Transitional political processes & Election support on Feelings of trust & Acceptance of diversity

Effect: Positive (studies highlight the complex relationship between state institutions, political processes, and individual perceptions of trust and stability)

Confidence in study findings: Low (three studies, low confidence)

Short summary

Overall, the studies highlight the complex relationship between state institutions, political processes, and individual perceptions of trust and stability. They suggest that policies aimed at increasing trust and promoting stability should focus on creating inclusive and representative institutions, addressing historical grievances, and ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities. For instance, land titling can be seen as a foundational state design process, as it involves the establishment and enforcement of property rights, a fundamental aspect of state functioning. The study's finding that the acquisition of title deeds can increase trust in state institutions suggests that foundational state design processes that demonstrably benefit citizens can potentially foster positive feelings of trust towards the state (Klaus, 2020). Jochem (2020) suggests that BV, and to a lesser extent MBC, could have positive effects on security perceptions, potentially encouraging greater participation in elections, even in areas where insecurity has previously hindered voter turnout.

Long summary

The intervention

The three studies provide information about the effects of several specific interventions related to elections, post-conflict transitions, and land ownership. The interventions studied are generally limited to one geographic area and time.

Two studies (Jochem, 2020; and Klaus, 2020) focus on evaluating interventions related to election support or transitional political processes. Jochem (2020) assesses the effects of different electoral systems on various measures of trust and participation in Afghanistan's elections. Klaus (2020) analyses the land titling program implemented by the Kenyan government before the 2017 general election and its effects on political trust and perceptions of electoral violence. Szy (2018) looks at the use of traditional justice mechanisms as a tool for addressing the legacy of conflict and promoting reconciliation in post-conflict societies. This intervention is situated within the broader field of transitional justice, which encompasses a range of approaches aimed at addressing past human rights abuses and fostering a more peaceful and just society.

How the intervention is expected to work

The three studies collectively suggest that well-designed institutions can play a crucial role in fostering trust, promoting reconciliation, and ultimately strengthening democratic processes, particularly in fragile and post-conflict contexts.

Jochem(2020) argues that electoral systems that allow for greater voter preference expression, such as block vote (BV), and multi-member Borda count (MBC) can increase public trust in democratic institutions, especially among marginalised groups. These systems enhance the perceived legitimacy of elections and encourage participation, even among those who might be sceptical of the political process. Similarly, land reform programs such

as land titling, as shown in the case of Kenya by Klaus(2020), can significantly impact trust in state institutions. By providing secure land rights, these programs reduce conflict, increase economic opportunities, and give a sense of ownership and belonging. This, in turn, can lead to greater trust in the government and its institutions.

On the other hand, Szy (2018) argues that for the locally-led traditional justice processes to be effective in healing collective trauma and promoting reconciliation. By providing a platform for community engagement, facilitating dialogue between former adversaries, and addressing the root causes of conflict, these processes contribute to the rebuilding of social cohesion and trust. However, the success of these processes depends on factors such as community ownership, voluntary participation and the ability to adapt to local contexts.

The evidence base

There are three qualitative studies reporting on the effects of **Foundational state design processes, Transitional political processes & Election support on Feelings of trust & Acceptance of diversity**. These studies are Jochem, T., Murtazashvili, I., & Murtazashvili, J. (2020). *Can the Design of Electoral Institutions Improve Perceptions of Democracy in Fragile States? Evidence from Afghanistan*. *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 5(3), 443-462; and Klaus, K. (2020). *Raising the stakes: Land titling and electoral stability in Kenya*. *Journal of Peace Research*, 57(1), 30-45; and Szy, P. (2018). *Back to the Roots: How Traditional Justice Processes Heal Collective Trauma after Conflict*. All references are from these three studies.

The evidence

The studies offer insights into the potential for various interventions to promote trust and, to a lesser extent, acceptance of diversity. They highlight how interventions that empower citizens, address grievances and foster inclusive participation can contribute to more peaceful and cohesive societies. However, it is essential to acknowledge the complexities and potential limitations of these interventions, as well as the need for careful consideration of context-specific factors. For example, Szy's (2018) analysis highlights the importance of context and local ownership in designing and implementing interventions aimed at healing collective trauma. A one-size-fits-all approach may not be effective, and interventions should be tailored to the specific needs and cultural contexts of the communities involved. The study argues for a nuanced understanding of traditional justice processes as interventions to foster a sense of belonging and encourage trust. Thus, emphasizing the potential benefits of locally-led initiatives while acknowledging the complexities and challenges associated with institutionalised approaches (p. 62)

Additionally, the emphasis is on the importance of understanding the mechanisms through which these interventions operate, such as community engagement, perceptions of fairness and justice, and the voluntary nature of participation for instance, uneven land distribution can create tensions between those who benefit and those who do not. This can heighten the stakes of elections, as beneficiaries may fear losing their newly acquired land, while others may see elections as an opportunity to reclaim lost rights. This dynamic can potentially lead to conflict and violence (Klaus, 2020)

Confidence assessment

Overall confidence: Low Confidence Qualitative Study (It is unclear whether the study uses an established small n approach; theoretical framework is not presented; no triangulation done; sources of potential data bias are not addressed)