

ELECTIONS AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

Evidence from Changes in Traditional Institutions in Liberia

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HOW do community-level institutions affect collective action? Political scientists have long argued that elections can create a sense of community, inculcate participation, and legitimize leaders in ways that facilitate subsequent collective action.¹ Furthermore, a number of recent laboratory and field experiments have empirically demonstrated that the introduction of elections can facilitate collective action and civic participation.²

Yet many communities that do not select their leaders by elections have also proved themselves capable of overcoming collective action dilemmas. In particular, the reliance on “traditional” leaders to mobilize communities for collective action is common in developing countries. Such leaders are typically not elected and they are argued to be effective in mobilizing collective action because of their ability to appeal to custom and long-established norms as a source of legitimacy.³ In the

* The authors would like to thank Oeindrila Dube, Guy Grossman, Caroline Payne, three anonymous reviewers, the editors of *World Politics*, and audience members at the Contemporary African Political Economy Research Seminar and the Alexander Hamilton Center Graduate Student Conference at New York University, and the Center for the Study of African Politics at the University of Florida, for helpful comments. We are grateful to Cyrus Samii for his collaboration on this project, and to the survey team for excellent work. Part of this project was commissioned by the United Nations’ Office of Internal Oversight Services (UN-OIOS), as part of an evaluation of the United Nations Mission in Liberia’s (UNMIL) operations, with additional funding provided by the Swedish Government’s Folke Bernadotte Academy. Kate Baldwin acknowledges the support of the Center for the Study of Democratic Politics at Princeton University. The views expressed in this paper are the authors’ own and do not reflect the position of funding agencies.

¹ Levi, Sachs, and Tyler 2009; Lindberg 2006; Thompson 1970.

² Dal Bó, Foster, and Putterman 2010; Fearon, Humphreys, and Weinstein 2009; Grossman and Baldassarri 2012; Olken 2010.

³ Englebert 2000; Koter 2013; Ostrom 1990; Swidler 2013.

World Politics 67, no. 4 (October 2015), 690–725

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doi: 10.1017/S0043887115000210

context of customary institutions for local governance, would elections for leaders improve collective action?

We believe the question is still open, as the findings from recent experiments may not apply in cases in which well-established indigenous institutions are democratized. On the one hand, lab experiments ask respondents to make decisions in novel environments in which non-electoral institutions may be relatively ineffective because they do not draw on established norms and expectations. On the other hand, in most of the field experiments conducted to date, elections have been introduced in new institutions that *parallel* rather than *supplant* traditional governance structures. As a result, these studies may not capture the full effects of replacing customary methods of selecting leaders with elections in existing traditional institutions. It is important to complement these analyses with studies in which the customary methods are replaced by electoral methods.

The main challenge to studying the effects of introducing elections in traditional institutions is developing an identification strategy. Few entrenched local leaders would volunteer to be part of an experiment that randomly introduced elections into their communities. This article takes advantage of a break in the process of selecting local leaders in Liberia following the country's civil wars (1989–96 and 1999–2003). At the end of these wars, some local clan chiefs were appointed by small groups of elite while others were elected by their communities; however, virtually all clan chiefs who left office after the end of the war were replaced by chiefs selected through elections. This break permits us to identify the effect of introducing elections in traditional institutions.

We use surveys and a behavioral game conducted with clan chiefs and their subjects in sixty rural communities to measure the effects of elections on citizens' participation and contributions to public goods. In particular, we consider the effects of clan chief elections on self-reported participation in community governance, national political participation, and contentious (noninstitutionalized) participation, as well as on contributions in a public goods game. Contrary to the findings of most other recent lab and field experiments, we find that elections do not significantly improve most types of collective action and they may harm public order and the provision of public goods. Clan chief elections do not significantly increase participation in either community-level or national-level governance, but they increase participation in contentious acts, such as protests and riots, and decrease contributions to collective endeavors.

THEORY AND EXISTING EVIDENCE

Many forms of participation are subject to collective action dilemmas. Because not every member of a society usually needs to make payments toward a community project for it to be built, or to monitor the leaders of a project to prevent corruption, these types of activities are subject to free riding, with every individual trying to reap the benefits of other community members' efforts without participating themselves.⁴ As a result, rates of political participation and contribution to public goods are almost always lower than optimal.

Early research on collective action focused on the effectiveness of decentralized peer-sanctioning regimes in allowing communities to overcome their collective-action dilemmas. More recently, political scientists and economists have begun to pay greater attention to the importance of local leaders in organizing collective action. In particular, a number of scholars have examined the differential effectiveness of leaders in facilitating voluntary participation in collective endeavors.⁵

The experimental research on this topic suggests that elected leaders are generally more effective than unelected leaders in organizing collective action, and not just because elections result in the selection of leaders who have a higher ability to organize collective action. In addition, elections are thought to foster a sense of community among individuals living in a society, to socialize people into participating, and to give leaders a legitimacy that induces higher rates of compliance with their requests even in the absence of improvements in the quality of leadership.

Lab and field experiments have generally found positive effects of elections on rates of participation and public goods provision. Tables 1 and 2 review recent lab and field experiments, respectively, that randomize the institution of elections as a procedure for making decisions. We have attempted to be comprehensive in identifying articles or working papers published in the past ten years that randomize elections and then examine the effects of elections on collective action. Specifically, we include all studies that examine the effects of elections on either contributions to public goods or participation in politics.⁶ We identify five

⁴ For the classic statements, see Downs 1957; Olson 1965.

⁵ Blair 2013; Grossman and Baldassarri 2012; Grossman 2014.

⁶ Our list excludes studies that examine the effects of binding or nonbinding elections over contribution levels in public goods games because in the first case (where the decision is binding), the amount contributed is no longer subject to a collective action dilemma, and in the second case (where the decision is not binding), elections are not in fact decision-making mechanisms. For an example, see Kroll, Cherry, and Shogren 2007. We also exclude papers that consider the effects of elections exclusively on outcomes other than citizen participation and collective action, such as Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov 2013a.

lab experiments and five field experiments on the topic. All of the lab experiments introduced elections in the context of public goods games, one of the field experiments introduced elections as a means of selecting development projects, and four of the field experiments introduced elections for local committees as part of broader community-driven development projects.⁷

The lab experiments in Table 1 randomly introduced elections to determine some aspect of the rules of a public goods game and then examined whether individuals were significantly more likely to contribute to public goods. These studies consistently show that elections that determine some aspect of the game environment (for example, elections to decide the punishment rule) result in higher levels of voluntary contributions to public goods compared to situations where the rules of the game are set by the researcher or randomly determined. Furthermore, Pedro Dal Bó, Andrew Foster, and Louis Putterman show that these effects are independent of the informational effects of elections, and Guy Grossman and Delia Baldassarri show these effects are independent of any election-related changes in the quality of leaders;⁸ these studies suggest that the positive effects of elections are in part due to the direct effects of participation in elections on the behavior of participants, and are not the result of electoral process outcomes.

The field experiments included in Table 2 introduced elections in a subset of communities and then followed up on subsequent rates of participation in the provision of public goods and in governance more generally. Half of the relevant studies find a positive effect on contributions to public goods.⁹ All but one of the five studies find at least some level of support for the hypothesis that elections increase subsequent levels of civic participation, whether measured by participation in community decision making, participation in local government, or a mix of formal and informal political participation.¹⁰ Thus, although the results from the field experiments are mixed, the experimental evidence generally supports the hypothesis that elections improve subsequent collective action within communities.

⁷ The studies of community-driven development are careful not to interpret their results as the effects of elections per se, because community-driven development interventions bundle the establishment of local committees with control over development funds together with the introduction of electoral processes, but we include them on our list because elections are an important component of these treatments.

⁸ Dal Bó, Foster, and Putterman 2010; Grossman and Baldassarri 2012.

⁹ Olken 2010; Fearon, Humphreys, and Weinstein 2009.

¹⁰ See Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov 2013b; Casey, Glennerster, and Miguel 2012; and Fearon, Humphreys, and Weinstein forthcoming, respectively. We also view Olken 2010's measure of participation in electoral campaigns as a measure of civic participation.

TABLE 1
LAB EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS ON EFFECTS OF ELECTIONS ON
COLLECTIVE ACTION

<i>Study</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Control</i>	<i>Effects on Public Goods Contributions</i>
Baldassari and Grossman (2011/2012)	election for monitor	random monitor	positive
Dal Bó, Foster, and Putterman (2010)	election for punishment rule	researcher determined rule	positive
Ertan, Page, and Putterman (2009)	election for punishment rule	researcher determined rule	positive
Sutter, Haigner, and Kocher (2010)	election for reward/punishment rule	researcher determined rule	positive
Tyran and Feld (2006)	election for punishment rule	researcher determined rule	positive

TABLE 2
FIELD EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS ON EFFECTS OF ELECTIONS ON
COLLECTIVE ACTION

<i>Study</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Control</i>	<i>Effects on Public Goods Contributions</i>	<i>Effects on Civic Participation</i>
Casey, Glennerster, and Miguel (2012)	elected committee (and funds)	no committee (or funds)	no	positive
Fearon, Humphreys, and Weinstein (2009/forthcoming)	elected committee (and funds)	no committee (or funds)	positive	positive
Humphreys, de la Sierra, and van der Windt (2012)	elected committee (and funds)	no committee (or funds)	no	no
Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov (2013b, c)	elected committee (and funds)	no committee (or funds)		mixed
Olken (2010)	referendum on project	community meeting to choose project	positive	mixed

But in theory, elections for community leaders could also have negative effects on collective action within communities. For example, if the median voter has a shorter time horizon than the individual responsible for appointing leaders in nonelectoral regimes, elections may result in victories for populists who will underinvest in public goods that would benefit the community in the long run.¹¹ In addition, rather than creating a sense of collective fate among community members, election campaigns could divide communities and result in the selection of leaders supported by only a plurality of citizens.¹²

The costs of introducing elections may be likely to outweigh theoretical benefits when the nonelectoral methods of selecting leaders are rooted in community custom. Traditional community leaders are rarely selected through electoral methods.¹³ Yet, these leaders are nonetheless often viewed as legitimate by community members.¹⁴ Consequently, they may be highly effective in fostering a sense of altruism toward other community members and high levels of compliance with instructions from the leader.

Although the methods by which communities select traditional leaders vary dramatically across different places and inevitably evolve over time (in some cases, quite dramatically), many communities have shared ideals regarding the proper “customary” method of selecting these leaders.¹⁵ For example, the Cochiti Pueblo in New Mexico is governed by a popular traditional theocracy in which leadership positions are selected by the supreme religious leader.¹⁶ Villages in Malawi are led by traditional leaders selected from within the royal family of those villages, and this connection with their village’s original founders is thought to underpin their power and legitimacy.¹⁷ In another example, among the

¹¹ Dionne 2011; Huntington 1968.

¹² Horowitz 1985; Snyder 2000.

¹³ For example, according to George Murdock’s ethnographic atlas, just 10 percent of headmen in Africa were historically selected through a formal consensus process. See Murdock 1967. Giuliano and Nunn take a more generous view of what constitutes a “democratic tradition,” considering any group that uses either a *formal* or *informal* consensus process to select leaders to have a “democratic tradition,” but still report that precolonial societies outside Europe rarely used methods of consensus to appoint headmen, ranging from a low of 18 percent in Africa to a high of 33 percent in Asia. See Giuliano and Nunn 2013.

¹⁴ For example, Logan reports that traditional leaders are reported to be more trustworthy than any set of elected leaders (including the president, members of parliament, or local councilors) in more than half of the fifteen African countries in her study, and they are viewed as more trustworthy than all but the president in two-thirds of those countries. See Logan 2009.

¹⁵ Ranger’s revised views regarding the “invention of tradition” are insightful here. In many cases, the methods of appointing customary leaders changed during the colonial and postcolonial periods, but this does not necessarily prevent communities from sharing ideas about the proper “custom” for selecting these leaders. See Ranger 1993.

¹⁶ Cornell and Kalt 2000.

¹⁷ Swidler 2013.

Akan in Ghana, a chief's authority is legitimated through the process of being selected by the queen mother.¹⁸

From a theoretical perspective, it is not clear that democratizing the method of selecting customary leaders will improve community collective action. Customary nonelectoral methods of selecting leaders may share some of the anticipated benefits of elections in fostering a sense of community and giving leaders legitimacy, while avoiding some of the associated costs. The findings from the lab and field experiments reviewed in Tables 1 and 2 cannot speak directly to this empirical question.

The lab experiments in Table 1 compare the effects of elections in the context of stylized games that were new to the players. In this context, behavioral patterns are likely to be weakly established, and the nonelectoral decision-making process (in which the researcher determined the rules of the game or selected them at random) is likely to have limited legitimacy in the eyes of the participants. As a result, elections may bestow legitimacy on institutions relative to the nonelectoral control group in this setting, but may not have the same positive effects when appointments have greater precedent in the community, as is often the case in the selection of traditional leaders.

In contrast, the field experiments in Table 2 introduced elections in real-life contexts complete with preexisting norms. But to date, field experiments have introduced elections in institutions that parallel rather than replace existing governance institutions. Although the resulting situation of "dual authority" within communities has many real-world instances, it does not shed light on the effect of democratizing traditional institutions. In particular, the dual authority structures created by these experiments leave open the possibility for elected local leaders to collaborate with the unelected leaders who remain atop the community's traditional governance institutions to collectively mobilize the community. As a result, these field experiments may not capture the full costs of replacing customary selection methods with elections.¹⁹

This observation underscores the importance of complementing existing field and lab experimental studies with analyses of the effects of introducing elections in traditional institutions. We expect nonelected

¹⁸ Busia 1951.

¹⁹ On the importance of collaboration between elected leaders and traditional authorities for the mobilization of collective action, see Baldwin 2013. But it is also possible that the creation of dual authority structures could result in poor coordination and high levels of rent seeking; in such cases these field experiments may not capture the full *benefits* of replacing customary decision-making processes with electoral decision-making processes. See Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov 2013b.

traditional leaders to have greater legitimacy than the institutions adopted in the control groups in the experiments referenced above.²⁰ As a result, it is possible that elections could have less salutary effects on collective action and could even potentially depress the ability of traditional leaders to organize communities to contribute to collective endeavors. We began this investigation uncertain about whether elections for traditional leaders would have beneficial effects on leadership capacity and citizens' levels of political participation, or whether they would harm the ability of traditional leaders to organize collective action.

EMPIRICAL CASE

We study the effects of elections for traditional leaders on subsequent collective action within communities drawing on evidence from clans in Liberia. Specifically, we take advantage of the fact that although clan chiefs were selected by a variety of methods during the civil wars, following the end of these wars, communities converged on elections as a method of selecting clan chiefs.

In Liberia, clans were traditionally the largest political entities within most ethnic groups.²¹ Historically, they consisted of towns and villages joined together through strong kinship bonds in a defensive alliance. The clan was governed by a clan chief, who was responsible for defense of the clan, organization of major collective work projects, and hearing appeals from the courts of lower chiefs.²² Clan chiefs were usually from the ruling family of a clan and ruled for life. But succession rules often entailed a degree of flexibility, and in some cases elders might select individuals outside the ruling family. Secret societies (*poros*) often played an important role in appointing clan chiefs and in reinforcing or checking their power.²³

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Liberian government attempted to regularize the governance of the country. Clans became a formally recognized division of local government, and clan chiefs became official government authorities. As a result, they became responsible for administering government activities in their clan in addition to their traditional roles in organizing collective action and resolving

²⁰ Of course, the legitimacy of traditional leaders varies greatly from place to place. Our claim is merely that on average, these leaders will have more legitimacy than the novel institutions introduced in many experiments.

²¹ The Liberian government has created paramount chieftaincies, but they have little historic relevance. See Liebenow 1987, 41.

²² Liebenow 1987, 42.

²³ Ellis 1999, 198–206.

disputes. Rural Liberia is divided into 476 clans, with town chiefs functioning at a level below the clan chief. During the Liberian civil wars, large numbers of clan and town chiefs were displaced or killed. When compared to the formal state apparatus, traditional institutions showed surprising resilience during this period. For example, experiments conducted after the wars show that Liberians are more likely to comply with instructions from traditional leaders than instructions from the central government or peacekeepers.²⁴

Under the administrations of Liberian presidents William Tolbert (1971–80) and Samuel Doe (1980–90), clan chiefs were supposed to be elected for fixed terms, but elections were not organized with any regularity, and in some areas they were never organized at all.²⁵ During the civil wars, many communities reverted to nonparticipatory methods of selecting chiefs: elders, secret societies, and leaders of armed groups appointed them without broad popular input.²⁶ In many cases, it was not possible to organize a large community gathering at which to elect a new chief. In particular, in communities with strong poro institutions and high levels of displacement, clan chiefs were typically appointed by secret societies or higher-level leaders. In contrast, in communities without poro institutions and without massive displacement, clan chiefs were usually selected through electoral processes.²⁷

After the wars, it became possible to organize large public meetings again and when chiefs were replaced, communities converged on elections as the appropriate method of selecting the new ones. Three things potentially explain the convergence on elections. First, civil war exposure has been found to be associated with increased civic participation, and the widespread violence in Liberia could have resulted in high levels of postwar participation across the country.²⁸ Second, most communities in postwar Liberia had a great deal of exposure to international peacekeeping and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and it is possible that these institutions spread democratic ideals across the entire country. Third, elections were the method by

²⁴ Blair 2013. See also Sawyer 2005.

²⁵ Author interview, Monrovia, January 2011.

²⁶ The fact that many of the new chiefs chosen during the war were former combatants or had close connections to armed groups raises the question of whether the appointments can be considered “customary.” Sawyer argues that community institutions usually played an important role both in selecting and coopting these new leaders. For example, elders and secret-society leaders were often strategic in choosing “local boys” with a “similar temperament” to them in order to provide protection for themselves and their community more generally. See Sawyer 2005, 49 and 60.

²⁷ According to our survey, in communities where poros existed and the majority of the population was displaced, more than two-thirds of clan chiefs were *appointed* during the war; in communities without poro institutions or massive displacement, two-thirds of chiefs were *elected* during the war.

²⁸ Bellows and Miguel 2006; Blattman 2009.

which clan chiefs were supposed to be chosen according to Liberian law. Although the central government did not officially organize elections in any communities at the end of the wars, communities may have felt it appropriate to revert to this procedure following the removal of extraordinary barriers to organizing community-wide elections during the wars.²⁹

The fact that these elections were locally initiated has benefits and costs for our research. On the positive side, it allows us to compare indigenously selected electoral and nonelectoral rules, which is important in so far as locally selected rules may be viewed as more legitimate.³⁰ On the negative side, it means that the electoral processes used to select leaders vary across communities and often fall short of adhering to international standards regarding free and fair elections. Community members typically select among candidates who have been vetted by community elders, and the vote is public.³¹ We view this as a necessary trade-off and note that these electoral institutions are similar to those introduced elsewhere during efforts to democratize traditional institutions.³² It is also important to note that we view the elections mainly as a process that allows voters to select their preferred leaders, rather than as a mechanism for holding leaders accountable, because historically, clan chief elections have not been held regularly.³³

IDENTIFICATION STRATEGY

At the end of the civil war, some Liberian communities elected chiefs and some appointed them and, as discussed above, these communities differed from each other in important ways. However, in cases where the chief in power at the end of the civil war was removed from office for exogenous reasons—that is, he died of natural causes, moved away, or his fixed mandate ended—the new officeholder was selected by

²⁹ As mentioned earlier, some communities did not hold elections before the wars, even though this was legally mandated, so the postwar convergence on elections cannot be explained by institutional reversion alone.

³⁰ Boettke, Coyne, and Leeson 2008.

³¹ Although this is an important departure from current norms regarding national elections, the secret ballot has not historically been viewed as a defining characteristic of elections, as demonstrated by the fact that the United States is usually classified as a democracy prior to the full adoption of the secret ballot in 1892. In fact, many historical proponents of democracy, such as John Stuart Mill, argued against the secret ballot due to concerns that it would promote selfish voting rather than positions people would be willing to publicly defend. See Mill 1991 [1861] and also Brennan and Pettit 1990.

³² Alexandre 1970; Williams 2010.

³³ For the seminal work on elections as a mechanism for selecting “good types” rather than holding politicians accountable for their actions, see Fearon 1999.

electoral methods. In the case of clans with appointed chiefs, the removal of chiefs in some communities but not in others following the end of the wars provides a quasi-random source of institutional variation. We use a difference-in-difference estimation strategy that compares the size of the effects of chief replacement in communities with elections prior to the end of the civil wars (where replacement is not associated with institutional change), and without elections during the same period (where replacement is associated with institutional change), to identify the effects of elections on collective action and participation, as explained in more detail below.

Specifically, there are four types of communities in our analysis, depicted in Table 3. First, there are communities where the chiefs in power at the end of the civil wars were elected and have not been subsequently removed from office (cell A1). Second, there are communities where the chiefs in power at the end of the wars were elected, have been subsequently removed from office for exogenous reasons, and have been replaced by another elected clan chief (cell A2). Third, there are communities where chiefs were appointed before the end of the civil wars and have not been subsequently removed from office (cell B1). Fourth, there are communities where chiefs were appointed before the civil wars ended and have been subsequently removed from office for exogenous reasons, and where the current chief is elected (cell B2).³⁴

Among villages where the chief in power at the end of the civil wars was appointed, the communities where the chief has been subsequently

TABLE 3
STUDY COMMUNITIES BY EXPOSURE TO TREATMENT

	1 <i>No Change in Leadership Postwar (C=0)</i>	2 <i>Change in Leadership Postwar for Exogenous Reasons (C=1)</i>
A	A1	A2
Chief at end of war elected ($N=0$)	25 clans with old elected chiefs	5 clans with new elected chiefs
B	B1	B2
Chief at end of war not elected ($N=1$)	22 clans with old unelected chiefs	8 clans with new elected chiefs

³⁴ There are also four clans in our sample where chiefs were removed for endogenous reasons or where chiefs partly stepped aside due to illness. These clans are treated as being subject to a competing threat, and they are excluded from the analysis.

removed and replaced by electoral methods (cell B2) should have similar characteristics to the communities where the chief has not been removed and the current chief was not elected (cell B1). But a simple comparison of these villages does not let us isolate the impact of elections from the effect of having a new leader (and the various leadership characteristics that might be associated with that). We can measure the effect of having a new leader independent of institutional change by comparing the villages in cells A2 and A1. These villages, all of which have elected clan chiefs, should be otherwise equivalent except that some of the new chiefs were installed after the end of the civil wars. If we assume that the effect of getting a new chief (and the various changes in leadership characteristics associated with that) is constant across both sets of villages, we can identify the effect of elections for chiefs through a difference-in-difference approach. Specifically, we compare the differences in the outcomes of the communities in cells B2 and B1 to the differences in the outcomes of the communities in cells A2 and A1:

$$\delta_1 = (\bar{y}_{B2} - \bar{y}_{B1}) - (\bar{y}_{A2} - \bar{y}_{A1}). \quad (1)$$

Our difference-in-difference strategy deviates from a standard design where a change is introduced that induces variation in exposure to the treatment within the sample.³⁵ Our setup relies on variation in the method of selecting chiefs before the end of the civil wars to identify the effects of elections, and uses the convergence on elections postwar to parse the effects of elections from the differences between the sets of communities that historically held elections and those that did not. The identification strategy hinges on the assumption that the communities in cells A1 and A2, and cells B1 and B2, differ in similar ways. As a result, the differences between the four sets of communities, except for the process by which they select leaders, can be captured by fixed effects for groups A and B, respectively, and by a variable measuring the difference between communities with a change in leadership (column 2) and without a change in leadership (column 1). We do not depend on communities with new leaders being otherwise identical to communities without new leaders in the absence of the introduction of elections, but instead count on the slightly less demanding condition that communities in cells A1 and A2 and cells B1 and B2 are similar except for

³⁵ For examples, see Angrist and Pischke 2009, chap. 5.

a difference that is constant across the two pairs.³⁶ For example, it is not a problem if new chiefs are systematically younger or less experienced than old chiefs, as long as the difference in the characteristics of the new chiefs would be the same across the pairs of communities in group A and group B in the absence of the institutional change in group B.

We address the plausibility of these assumptions in three parts. First, we discuss the causes of the change in leadership in some communities but not in others following the end of the civil war. Second, we present data on the characteristics of communities at the end of the civil wars, and we show that communities in cells A1 and A2 and cells B1 and B2 are very similar, respectively. Third, we discuss the most plausible reasons we might suspect the parallel-trends assumption is violated, causing the difference between cells A1 and A2 and cells B1 and B2, respectively, to vary even in the absence of the introduction of elections in the latter pair, and we provide evidence against these scenarios.

The causes of changes in leadership after the end of the wars were threefold: the previous chief died of natural causes (54 percent), the chief's fixed mandate ended (23 percent), or the chief moved away for economic or security reasons (23 percent).³⁷ Regarding the first two types of turnover, the timing of leadership changes should be unrelated to the political dynamics in local communities. Indeed, it is rare for communities to force a chief out of office prematurely in Liberia. For example, when one elderly man was asked what he could do about a chief who had been forced upon his community, he said "Nothing. The only thing we are doing is to just pray that he dies so that we can put someone else there."³⁸ The timing of the third type of turnover, a chief moving away for economic or security reasons, could plausibly be related to either particularly poor leadership by the chief or particularly poor local conditions. But the long tenures of the chiefs who left for these reasons suggest they were probably not forced out by their communities, and the levels of exposure to conflict these communities endured during the civil wars and their levels economic development are very close to the averages for the sample.³⁹

³⁶ In the supplementary material to this article, we demonstrate that we get very similar results if we consider only the differences between cells B2 and B1, so the results do not greatly depend on the difference between cells A2 and A1. Baldwin and Mvukiyeh 2015.

³⁷ In the places that used appointments to select chiefs before the end of the wars, one chief's mandate ended, five died of natural causes, and two left for economic/security reasons. In the places that held elections to select chiefs before the end of the wars, two chiefs had mandates end, two died of natural causes, and one left for economic/security reasons.

³⁸ Research assistant interviews, Liberia, December 2009–January 2010.

³⁹ For example, one-third of these clans had experienced a large violent event during the wars and on average one-third of the villages per clan had schools that were functioning at the end of

We also present evidence that the characteristics of the communities that experienced a change of leadership post-civil war and those that did not were otherwise very similar at the end of the wars. As a first cut, Figure 1 provides information on the approximate location of these four sets of communities. The open circles indicate places where the chief was elected during the civil wars and the crossed circles indicate places where the chief was not elected during the wars; the lighter colors indicate communities with no change of leadership during the wars and the darker colors indicate places that had experienced change during them. The map shows no clear geographic pattern in the distribution of the four types of communities.

Table 4 provides more information on the comparability of the four sets of communities at the end of the civil wars. The first section of the table describes the characteristics of the clans included in the study before and during the wars, compiled from a variety of sources, including a UN survey, geographic data, and peacekeeping records. The second section describes the personal backgrounds of the community members living in the clan in late 2009, compiled from the household survey described in more detail below. The third section provides information on the chief in power in each clan at the end of the wars, compiled from our survey of clan chiefs.⁴⁰ Columns 1 and 2 compare clans where the person who was chief at the end of the wars had been appointed, and thus the change in chief resulted in a change in the method for selecting chiefs (see Table 3, cells B1 and B2). Columns 4 and 5 compare clans where the person who had been chief at the end of the wars was selected by an election, and thus the change in chief did not result in a change in the method for selecting chiefs (see Table 3, cells A1 and A2). These columns indicate the mean of the variables with the standard deviation in parentheses below. Columns 3 and 6 display the p-value from an unequal t-test of the null hypothesis that the mean is not different across the pairs of communities.

the wars. In the sample as a whole, 32 percent of the clans had experienced a large violent event during the wars and on average 29 percent of the villages per clan had a functioning school. Furthermore, outmigration of chiefs occurred at similar rates in communities where chiefs were elected at the end of the wars (20 percent of cases of turnover) and communities where chiefs were not elected at the end of the wars (25 percent of cases of turnover). Therefore, even if communities in which the chief outmigrated after the wars are systematically different from those where outmigration did not occur, the difference should be captured in the trend-term measuring the difference between communities with and without changes in leadership and should not bias our estimates of the effects of elections.

⁴⁰ The characteristics of the chiefs in power at the time of our survey in late 2009 are partly determined by whether there was postwar turnover in leadership, and we discuss them in the next section. In cases where the chief changed postwar, we asked the current clan chief some basic questions about his predecessor.

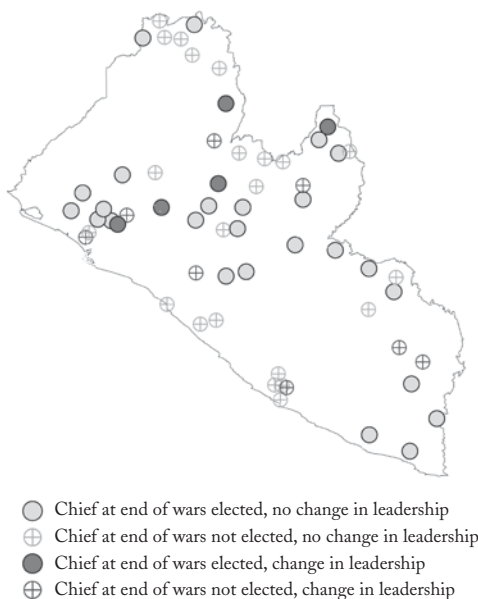


FIGURE 1
LOCATION OF COMMUNITIES BY STATUS OF CHIEFS

The table suggests good balance between communities where chiefs left their positions postwar and places where they did not. None of the differences between columns 1 and 2 or columns 4 and 5 are statistically significant at conventional levels. Still, there are a few differences that are moderately large from a substantive perspective, and where the failure to find statistically significant results could be due to weak power. We next explain why we do not believe any of these differences pose a large problem to our inference strategy.

Among communities where the chief was not elected during the war (columns 1 and 2), the communities that had postwar turnover were exposed to more violent events and were more likely to host peacekeepers than those that did not experience turnover, raising concern that any effects attributed to elections could be due to greater exposure to violence during the wars, or to peacekeeping and international NGOs after them. Yet on other measures of wartime and NGO exposure, such as the proportion of the current community who reported hiding from rebels during the wars and the presence of human rights NGOs, communities where the unelected chief left and was replaced by an elected chief do not have higher levels of exposure than places where the unelected chief did not leave. More important, among the villages where the chief was

TABLE 4
BALANCE BETWEEN COMMUNITIES WHERE CHIEF LEFT OFFICE POSTWAR AND
COMMUNITIES WHERE CHIEF STILL IN POWER^a

	<i>Clans Where Chiefs Not Elected at End of Wars</i>			<i>Clans Where Chiefs Elected at End of Wars</i>		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<i>Still in Office Not Elected</i>	<i>Left Office Elected</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Still in Office Elected</i>	<i>Left Office Elected</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<i>Clan-Level Characteristics</i>						
Number of households (log) (2004)	6.63 (1.81)	6.87 (0.48)	0.57	7.11 (0.96)	7.27 (2.02)	0.87
Population density (1990)	33.2 (93.5)	36.2 (40.1)	0.90	27.6 (30.1)	26.1 (33.8)	0.93
Distance to Monrovia (log)	12.1 (0.55)	11.8 (0.97)	0.54	12.1 (0.68)	11.8 (0.68)	0.38
Prop. villages accessible by road in rainy season (2004)	0.58 (0.29)	0.50 (0.31)	0.57	0.57 (0.25)	0.53 (0.26)	0.75
Prop. villages with functioning schools (2004)	0.30 (0.32)	0.29 (0.27)	0.89	0.28 (0.23)	0.23 (0.15)	0.56
Average rainfall (2004–7)	0.16 (0.02)	0.16 (0.01)	0.83	0.15 (0.02)	0.15 (0.01)	0.62
Whether clan was site of violence during wars	0.14 (0.35)	0.38 (0.52)	0.26	0.40 (0.50)	0.60 (0.55)	0.48
Peacekeeping force present	0.23 (0.43)	0.38 (0.52)	0.49	0.56 (0.51)	0.80 (0.45)	0.32
Poro exists	0.89 (0.32)	0.83 (0.41)	0.77	0.71 (0.46)	0.80 (0.45)	0.69
Human rights NGO present (pre–2003)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	1.00	0.04 (0.20)	0.00 (0.00)	0.33
Prop. of respondents from clan who were displaced during wars	0.55 (0.24)	0.54 (0.23)	0.89	0.37 (0.22)	0.51 (0.33)	0.42

elected during the wars (columns 4 and 5), those in which the chief left office after the wars have higher rates of exposure to violence and peacekeeping. This observation is critical because it means that even if real differences existed between communities where chiefs left office after the wars and communities where they did not, the differences appear to be very similar across the communities in group A and group B. As a

TABLE 4 *cont.*

	<i>Clans Where Chiefs Not Elected at End of Wars</i>			<i>Clans Where Chiefs Elected at End of Wars</i>		
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
	<i>Still in Office Not Elected</i>	<i>Left Office Elected</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Still in Office Elected</i>	<i>Left Office Elected</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<i>Aggregate Characteristics of Survey Respondents</i>						
Prop. respondents working in agriculture (1999)	0.37 (0.14)	0.31 (0.10)	0.27	0.41 (0.15)	0.39 (0.13)	0.69
Prop. respondents belonging to an association (1989)	0.54 (0.29)	0.53 (0.14)	0.97	0.62 (0.25)	0.47 (0.25)	0.26
Prop. respondents whose father attended school	0.42 (0.15)	0.40 (0.16)	0.79	0.38 (0.18)	0.43 (0.14)	0.46
Prop. respondents that hid from rebels during wars	0.61 (0.16)	0.61 (0.10)	0.97	0.65 (0.18)	0.55 (0.15)	0.22
Prop. respondents with family member injured by armed group	0.32 (0.13)	0.38 (0.10)	0.26	0.35 (0.13)	0.34 (0.09)	0.94
<i>Characteristics of Chiefs at End of Wars</i>						
Year installed	1995 (6.02)	1990 (6.82)	0.11	1994 (9.76)	1987 (6.93)	0.14
Poro member	0.87 (0.35)	0.67 (0.52)	0.41	0.62 (0.50)	0.80 (0.45)	0.45

^a Columns 1, 2, 4, and 5 display the mean of the variable with the standard deviation listed in parentheses. Columns 3 and 6 display the p-value from an unequal t-test of the null hypothesis that the mean is not different.

result, the differences between communities should be captured by the trend term in the difference-in-difference analysis. Similarly, the third section of Table 4 shows that chiefs who had been in power longer at the end of the wars were more likely to be removed between 2003 and 2009 than chiefs who were more recently installed, although the results are not quite statistically significant at conventional levels. If age and health are key factors driving turnover, it is not surprising that chiefs

who had been installed longer were more likely to be removed from office. Reassuringly, this trend is also similar across both communities in groups A and B and so it should be accounted for by the trend term in the empirical analysis.

Next, we consider threats to the validity of the parallel-trends assumption. First, we consider whether the effect of getting a new leader in a nondemocratic system is different from the effect of getting a new leader in a democratic system even in the absence of a change in the mode of selecting leaders. This could be the case if nondemocratic systems benefit more from leadership changes than democratic systems, which have more subtle ways of introducing changes over time, or if unelected leaders are better able to maintain their legitimacy over time than elected leaders. To assess this question, we examined the effects of leader tenure on collective action under nonelectoral and electoral rules and did not find significant differences.⁴¹

We also consider whether the effect of getting a new leader differs depending on the extent to which a community has been affected by the wars. Variations in experience could create different leadership trends over time even in the absence of institutional change if communities look for different characteristics in leaders during and after exposure to violence. To assess whether differential war experience could plausibly generate different trends in the communities in groups A and B, we examine whether the effect of leadership turnover on collective action varies depending on exposure to violence. Reassuringly, we do not find significant differences in the effects of getting a new leader postwar in communities with high and low exposure to violence during the wars.⁴² Thus, we find little evidence for the two most theoretically plausible explanations for why the parallel-trends assumption may be violated.

DATA AND MEASUREMENT

Data for this article were collected as part of a broader project on peacebuilding in post-civil war Liberia.⁴³ Because an important goal of the broader project was to make inferences about the effects of peacekeeping, a sample of seventy clans was purposefully chosen to include the diverse types of communities that hosted peacekeeping bases, and just

⁴¹ Results available in the supplementary material. Baldwin and Mvukiyeye 2015.

⁴² Results available in the supplementary material. Baldwin and Mvukiyeye 2015.

⁴³ This broader project was developed for an evaluation commissioned by the Inspections and Evaluations Division of the United Nations Office for Internal Oversight.

under half of the clans sampled actually hosted such bases.⁴⁴ As a result, characteristics used to determine appropriate locations for these bases, including minimum levels of road access and potential flash points for violence, are more prevalent in the sample than for rural Liberia as a whole. But the sample is similar to the country as a whole on other characteristics, and it is dispersed across thirteen of Liberia's fifteen counties.⁴⁵

This article draws on surveys with clan chiefs and household members in sixty clans in which we were able to collect data on the current method of selecting the clan chief and the method of selecting the clan chief prior to the end of the civil wars.⁴⁶ We interviewed the chief in each of these clans. We randomly selected one enumeration area, and then two villages within the enumeration area for sampling. On average, we interviewed fifteen civilians in each clan, with respondents selected at random within households from a roster of all household members age 18 to 65 years old who were never combatants during the civil wars. In addition, in each clan we conducted a public goods game with twenty-five additional household members in the clan chief's village.

The surveys were conducted between December 2009 and January 2010. The enumeration teams were managed by a Liberian research firm and trained extensively by one of the authors on the questionnaires, interview techniques, experimental protocols, and human subjects protection principles. Quality control was conducted through unannounced visits to the teams. In addition, enumeration teams regularly reported global positioning satellite coordinates to ensure that enumeration was taking place in the correct localities.

We relied on the clan chiefs themselves to report the method by which they were selected. Selection methods in which large percentages of the community were able to vote were considered elections, even if there were restrictions on who could run for office. Methods in which the final selection was made by a small group of elite were considered appointments. In relying on self-reported responses, there are always concerns about confirmation bias and measurement error. However, as we discuss in more detail in the next section, we find no evidence that chiefs are more likely to report being elected in communities with

⁴⁴ A matching algorithm was used to find nonbase communities that resembled each of the base communities on predeployment covariates. For full details on the sampling protocol, see Mvukiyehé and Samii 2012.

⁴⁵ For a detailed comparison, see the supplementary material. Baldwin and Mvukiyehé 2015.

⁴⁶ We were able to collect this data for sixty-four of the seventy clans in the sample. An additional four clans were dropped from this study because the chief only partly stepped aside due to illness or was fired for endogenous reasons, as described in fn. 34.

greater exposure to NGOs, alleviating the concern that we were measuring exposure to Western ideas rather than actual practices.

As our outcomes of interest, we consider community members' participation in a variety of different collective endeavors through self-reported measures and through a public goods game described in more detail below. Specifically, we consider three different types of self-reported political participation: community-level participation, national-level participation, and contentious participation. We consider community-level participation to be engagement with clan-level governance institutions, national-level participation to be engagement with national political institutions, and contentious participation to be extra-institutional forms of political participation, such as protests and riots.⁴⁷ We consider the third form of political participation separately from the other forms because this type of collective endeavor may harm public order and occur in contexts in which formal institutional channels have proven ineffective; as a result, for the community as a whole, these activities could be a "public bad" that a strong leader would try to prevent rather than facilitate.

Each of the three types of participation can manifest itself in different ways, and so we asked multiple questions designed to capture each type. Table 5 includes the exact wording of the questions. All of the questions asked respondents about whether they had engaged in a particular form of participation during the previous twelve months. Specifically, we measured community-level participation based on whether the respondent attended community meetings, spoke at community meetings, or contacted the clan chief. We measured national-level participation through questions on whether the respondent had contacted their member of parliament (MP) or senator, attended a political rally, or called a radio program to discuss the performance of a national-level politician. Because a national-level election had not been held during the previous five years in Liberia, we did not include voting in a national election in our measure of national participation.⁴⁸ We measured contentious participation as participation in protests, riots, and vigilantism. We combined the different measures of each type of participation into indices of community, national, and contentious participation to

⁴⁷ We follow Tarrow's definition of contentious politics as "collective activity . . . relying at least in part on noninstitutional forms of interaction with the elite, opponents, or the state." See Tarrow 1996, 874, and also Tarrow 1998, 3.

⁴⁸ We cannot include questions about voting or campaigning in the 2005 election in our index of political participation because we are using the turnover of leaders between the end of the war and the time of our survey in 2010 as the source of variation on which we rely to identify the effects of elections; most of this turnover occurred after 2005.

provide a clear interpretation of the effects, following the method first suggested by Jeffrey Kling, Jeffrey Liebman, and Lawrence Katz.⁴⁹

Our measure of public goods provision comes from a real-life public goods game. In each clan, the survey team conducted a behavioral activity with twenty-five individuals selected from the clan chief's village. This game assessed the willingness of community members to contribute to public goods and their ability to work together to achieve common goals. It is a crucial part of the data collection in so far as it results in a measure of collective action that matches the outcome variable used in much of the experimental literature.

The public goods game worked in the following way. Twenty-five randomly selected community members were invited to a central location in the clan chief's village and given LRD \$100 (about US \$1.50) for their participation. The participants were then asked to vote on which one of five community-level projects their community needed. (The chief was asked separately about his preferred project, and so we are also able to measure whether the chief shared the opinion of the plurality of community members.)⁵⁰

Once the community members had voted to decide on a project, the participants were told that they could anonymously contribute some share of their payment to a communal fund. If the total contribution was at least half of the project's cost, they were told that the project team would add the other half and help the community get the project. If the total amount contributed was less than half of the project's cost, the respondents were told that the contributed funds would be redistributed equally among the participants, regardless of whether they contributed to the fund or not. Each participant was given an envelope and decided how much (if any) of their payment to privately put into the envelope, which was then placed in a ballot box. Our outcome of interest in this game was the average community-level contribution.⁵¹

CONCEPTUALIZING CLAN CHIEF ELECTIONS

In this section, we briefly discuss the causes of clan chief elections and their effect on the types of leaders selected before moving to our

⁴⁹ Kling, Liebman, and Katz 2007.

⁵⁰ In half of the clans, selected by random, the clan chief was present during the exercise; in the other half, he was not. We include a dummy variable indicating which design variant a clan was assigned to because communities in which the chief was present contributed significantly more.

⁵¹ The amount contributed to the public good is both a function of the preferences of community members and the capacity of community institutions to organize collective action. We are not able to parse which of these mechanisms plays a larger role.

TABLE 5
QUESTION WORDING

“Now I am going to read you a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things in the past twelve months. Did you do any of the following . . . ?”

Community-Level Participation

“ . . . Attend a community meeting?”
 (If yes), “Did you make a speech or an intervention?”
 “ . . . Meet or contact clan chief?”

National-Level Participation

“ . . . Meet or contact your representative/senator?”
 “ . . . Call a radio program to complain or praise your MP/senator?”
 “ . . . Attend a rally to listen to a politician, government official, or local leader?”

Contentious Participation

“ . . . Attend a peaceful protest?”
 “ . . . Attend a violent protest/riot?”
 Participate “in the beating of thieves or drivers who hit people with their cars?”

analysis of their consequences for local collective action. We have argued that the use of elections to select clan chiefs after the wars could either reflect deference to the officially prescribed method of selecting chiefs according to Liberian law, or widespread exposure to democratic norms through NGOs and peacekeepers after the wars. If the spread of democratic ideals was pervasive across the country, it could conceivably have caused convergence on the use of elections for clan chiefs, which would not be a concern for our analysis. However, it would be problematic if communities with greater exposure to NGOs were more likely to adopt elections, as this could confound our results.⁵²

Table 6 examines whether chiefs who report greater exposure to NGOs and human rights programming are more likely to be elected. In particular, we estimate the effect of elections (δ_1) on whether chiefs report (1) the operation of human rights NGOs in their community, (2) the organization of human rights workshops in their community, (3) personally attending a human rights workshop, or (4) discussing human rights with family and friends. The results provide little evidence

⁵² It would also be a concern if greater exposure to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) led to more chiefs claiming to be elected by democratic methods even if those methods are not actually employed, as this would undermine the validity of our measure.

that elected chiefs have more exposure to human rights campaigns. In fact, on some dimensions, such as previous attendance at workshops on human rights, they have less exposure, though none of the results are statistically significant at conventional levels.⁵³

We next consider the quality of candidates selected via clan chief elections. As discussed above, elections in Liberia allow citizens to play a role in selecting leaders, but do not create clear incentives with regard to reelection. In addition, they often involve aberrations from standard democratic procedures, including public voting. As a result, it is important to empirically consider whether elections result in the selection of different types of leaders or whether they are just window dressing. Again, we use δ_1 to measure the difference attributable to elections.

First, we consider whether elected chiefs differ from unelected chiefs in their personal characteristics. These results are reported in the first four rows of Table 7. We find that compared to appointed chiefs, elected chiefs appear less likely to be members of local secret societies, although the results are not statistically significant in part due to the fact that we have missing responses for a number of leaders. Interestingly, and more surprisingly, they are significantly less likely to have held a white-collar job than appointed chiefs, and they are less likely to be able to

TABLE 6
ELECTIONS AND EXPOSURE TO NGOs^a

Human rights (HR) NGO	0.15 (0.27) N=60
HR workshop in community	0.11 (0.32) N=58
Attended HR workshop	-0.48 (0.29) N=58
Talk about HR	-0.07 (0.28) N=55

^a Table displays coefficients δ_1 with robust standard errors in parentheses.

⁵³ In the supplementary material, we show that we get similar results when using aggregate measures of community members' exposure to human rights and democracy-promoting NGOs. Baldwin and Mvykiyehe 2015.

correctly name their MP. Also, they may be more likely to be related to the previous chief, although this result is not statistically significant at conventional levels. This information suggests small groups of elite may be more likely to appoint well-qualified community members outside a clan's ruling family than the electorate more generally.⁵⁴

Next, we consider whether elected chiefs are more consultative than unelected chiefs. These results are reported in the last two rows of Table 7. We find that elected chiefs are more likely to report organizing the last community meeting. In addition, they are more likely to prioritize the same local development projects as a majority of their community in the public goods game, although this second effect is not statistically significant. These results suggest that elections are not simply window dressing; they make a difference to governance, though in complex ways.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

This section reports our main empirical results regarding the effects of clan chief elections on collective action. We report the effects of elections for clan chiefs on community-level participation, national-level participation, contentious participation, and public goods provision. We employ the difference-in-difference strategy outlined above to identify the effect of clan chief elections independent of other temporal leadership trends. In the tables below, we estimate the effect of clan chief elections— δ_1 —via ordinary least squares using the regression equation:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 N + \delta_0 C + \delta_1 N * C + \varepsilon_i, \quad (2)$$

where N is a dummy variable indicating whether the chief in power at the end of the civil wars was appointed (not elected) and C is a dummy variable indicating whether there was a change in leadership postwar.⁵⁵ The difference-in-difference estimate is the coefficient δ_1 , which captures whether the effect of a change of chief is larger in places that did not use

⁵⁴ Another characteristic that the electorate could have prioritized in this context is the ability to provide security. Unfortunately, we do not have direct information on whether the clan chief was considered a particularly effective fighter during the civil conflicts, but we do know whether the chief said security concerns and preventing violence were major components of his job. As reported in the supplementary material, we do not find elections significantly changed the likelihood of the clan chief emphasizing this aspect of his job. Baldwin and Mvukiyehe 2015.

⁵⁵ Specifically, N indicates whether the chief in power in 2002 (the year before the wars ended) was selected by nonelectoral methods, and C indicates whether the chief in office in 2002 subsequently left office for exogenous reasons.

TABLE 7
ELECTIONS AND CHIEFS' CHARACTERISTICS^a

Poro member	-0.51 (0.39) N=44
White-collar job	-0.40* (0.21) N=59
Know MP	-0.57** (0.22) N=56
Unrelated to predecessor	-0.49 (0.31) N=60
Whether chief organized last meeting	0.90*** (0.29) N=57
Same preferences as community for project	0.23 (0.17) N=58

^a Table displays coefficients δ_i with robust standard errors in parentheses; *, **, and *** indicate significance at the 90, 95, and 99 percent confidence levels, respectively.

elections to select their chief before the end of the war (and therefore, the change of chief resulted in a change in the method for selecting chiefs). The participation outcomes are measured at the individual level, and standard errors are clustered at the clan level in these models. The outcome from the public goods game is measured at the clan level, in which case we substitute y_g for y_i in the equation above, and calculate robust standard errors.⁵⁶

We begin by examining the effects of elections for clan chiefs on community-level participation. The first section of Table 8 displays the effects of elections on each outcome (δ_i). We find weak evidence that elections increased citizens' reported levels of participation in community-level governance. In our study, elections did not have a substantively large or statistically significant effect on whether respondents attended or spoke at a community meeting in the past year. Elections did

⁵⁶ We do not include additional covariates in the models presented in the text of this article because of the strong balance across the comparison groups demonstrated in Table 4. The results are similar if we include covariates in the models, as demonstrated in the supplementary material. Baldwin and Mvukiyehe 2015.

increase the probability of respondents having met their clan chief in the previous twelve months, an effect that is statistically significant at the 99 percent confidence level. However, they did not have a significant positive effect on our index of community participation.

We next consider the effects of elections for clan chiefs on national-level participation; these results are reported in the second section of Table 8. We find little evidence that elections for clan chiefs spurred greater levels of participation in national-level politics. Elections had a positive effect on whether individuals had met with their MP or senator, whether they called a radio program to discuss the performance of their MP or senator, and whether they attended a political rally in the previous twelve months, but the effect is not statistically significant in any instance. Likewise, we do not find a significant effect of elections on our index of national-level participation, although this may be due partly to the weak power of the study to detect moderate-sized effects.

In the third section of Table 8, we consider the effects of elections on contentious political participation. Interestingly, we find elections had relatively large, consistently positive, statistically significant effects on contentious participation in politics. Elections increased the probability of respondents participating in peaceful protests and violent protests, and both of these effects are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level. The effect of elections on the likelihood of the respondent participating in vigilantism against thieves and reckless drivers is also positive, but not statistically significant. We find elections resulted in large positive increases in our index of contentious participation, and this effect is statistically significant at the 99 percent confidence level.

In Table 9, we consider the effects of elections on public goods provision as measured in the behavioral game conducted in each clan. Specifically, the outcome of interest is the average amount contributed by all participants in the public goods game. In a reversal of the findings from the experimental literature, we find elections for clan chiefs are associated with *lower* contributions to public goods. On average, clan chief elections reduced average contributions in the anonymous public goods game by LRD \$14. This effect is statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

The results in Tables 8 and 9 are very similar if additional covariates are included in equation (2), as demonstrated in the supplementary material. Neither the inclusion of clan-level indicators, such as the level of exposure to violence, peacekeeping, or NGOs, nor individual-level indicators substantially affect the results in Table 8, and the inclusion of clan-level indicators does not change the size of the coefficient in Table 9.

TABLE 8
EFFECTS OF ELECTIONS ON PARTICIPATION^a

<i>Community-Level Participation</i>	
Whether attended community meetings	-0.04 (0.07) N=886
Whether spoke at community meetings	0.04 (0.08) N=867
Whether met with clan chief	0.20*** (0.07) N=867
Index of community-level participation	0.16 (0.18) N=889
<i>National-Level Participation</i>	
Whether met political representative	0.12 (0.09) N=872
Whether called radio program	0.03 (0.05) N=877
Whether attended political rally	0.07 (0.09) N=865
Index of national-level participation	0.27 (0.21) N=892
<i>Contentious Participation</i>	
Whether attended peaceful protest	0.14** (0.06) N=880
Whether participated in violent protest/riot	0.08** (0.03) N=875
Whether participated in vigilantism	0.06 (0.05) N=875
Index of contentious participation	0.51*** (0.14) N=895

^a Table displays coefficients δ_i with standard errors clustered by clan in parentheses; *, **, and *** indicate significance at the 90, 95, and 99 percent confidence levels, respectively.

In addition, the results are generally robust to dropping potentially influential observations. The supplementary material reports the effects of elections on collective action and public goods provision, dropping each of the thirteen clans that experienced a postwar change in leadership one by one. The effect of elections on community-level participation always remains statistically insignificant, and the effect of elections on national-level participation is statistically insignificant at the 90 percent confidence level in all but two cases. The effect of elections on contentious participation remains statistically significant at the 99 percent confidence level in all instances, and the effect of elections on public goods provision remains statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level in all but three instances.⁵⁷

Collectively, these findings indicate that clan chief elections do not significantly improve and may actually harm some collective action within clans. On the one hand, elections do not significantly increase citizen engagement with community-level and national-level political institutions. On the other hand, they significantly increase noninstitutionalized forms of participation (protests, riots, and vigilantism), which may result in or reflect disorder and weak governance. Furthermore, they may be associated with lower levels of contributions to public goods. This suggests that appointed chiefs are particularly effective at keeping public order and organizing contributions to public goods. These findings are an important complement to existing lab and field experiments, suggesting that elections have less salutary effects when they supplant, rather than parallel, customary methods of appointing leaders.

TABLE 9
EFFECTS OF ELECTIONS ON CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC GOODS^a

Average amount contributed in public	-13.9*
goods game	(7.3)
	N=58

^a Table displays coefficient δ_1 with robust standard error in parentheses; *indicates significance at the 90 percent confidence level.

⁵⁷ The supplementary material also reports the effects of elections on all outcomes in the participation module of the survey to show that the results do not hinge on the specific variables included in our indices. It also provides p-values adjusted for multiple comparisons. Even using the most conservative adjustments for multiple comparisons, we have great confidence in our finding that clan chief elections increase contentious collective action. After adjusting for multiple comparisons, there is somewhere between a one-in-ten and one-in-four chance of finding that clan chief elections depress contributions to public goods even if the null hypothesis of no effect is true, so we must be more cautious in interpreting this result.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS AND INTERPRETATION

Our analysis of clan chief elections in Liberia is important in that it provides empirical evidence on the effects of introducing elections into traditional institutions. The Liberian case is useful because there was a clear break in the process of selecting clan chiefs, which allowed us to identify the effects of introducing elections in this setting. However, it is important to consider whether there are peculiar features of the Liberian case that could either confound the introduction of elections in this context or limit the applicability of the findings. In this section, we conduct auxiliary tests on our data from Liberia to evaluate the extent to which alternative explanations may be driving our findings. In the conclusion, we discuss the generalizability of our results beyond Liberia.

One concern is that many of the appointed chiefs in our data set were selected in communities that experienced large amounts of displacement during the civil wars. As a result, we may be capturing the effects of chiefs installed in war-torn communities, rather than the effects of appointed chiefs more broadly. To assess the extent to which chiefs appointed in clans with high exposure to the conflicts could be driving our results, we created two dummy variables, one for chiefs installed during the periods of civil conflict in clans with particularly high displacement rates (thirteen clan chiefs fall in this category), and one for chiefs installed during the civil conflicts in clans in which violent battles occurred (eight clan chiefs fall in this category). In fact, our main results are very similar if we drop these chiefs from the analysis, indicating it is not war chiefs who are particularly effective at preventing riotous actions and organizing public goods; we still find appointed chiefs to be more effective than elected chiefs, as demonstrated in Table 10.

A second contextual factor that might explain why we find less salutary effects of elections on collective action is the mechanics of elections for Liberian clan chiefs. Liberian communities typically vote in public for clan chiefs, and it is possible that this might lead to divisions within communities, low social trust, and low levels of subsequent collective action. In fact, we believe departures from standard electoral procedures are likely to be common when elections are introduced in traditional institutions.⁵⁸ But we do not think this is the cause of the different electoral effects we observe in our study.

⁵⁸ Alexandre 1970; Williams 2010.

If public voting causes voters to become aware of divisions within their communities, we would expect it to be associated with lower social capital and interpersonal trust.⁵⁹ We can test whether this mechanism is at work by examining the effect of elections on trust in neighbors. Our measure of trust in neighbors is from a behavioral measure embedded in the survey. In all cases, respondents were paid for participating in the survey. At the end of the survey, we asked respondents whether they would be willing to leave their payment for participation with a neighbor because we could not make change. The enumerator then “found” small change, so it was not necessary to carry through with this arrangement, but if individuals indicated they would be willing to have their payment left with the neighbor before the change was found, we coded them as trusting their neighbors. In the supplementary material, we show that elections have a positive, not a negative, effect on trust in neighbors, although the effect is not quite statistically significant. As a result, we do not believe divisions caused by a public vote are driving our result.

A final question is whether our study measures the effects of a change toward elections, or simply a change in the method of selecting leaders. We cannot parse these mechanisms with our data, and it is possible that

TABLE 10
EFFECTS OF ELECTIONS, NO WAR CHIEFS^a

	<i>Displacement</i>	<i>Violence</i>
Index of community participation	0.15 (0.19) N=658	0.11 (0.19) N=732
Index of national-level participation	0.24 (0.23) N=661	0.31 (0.22) N=735
Index of contentious participation	0.45*** (0.16) N=663	0.44*** (0.15) N=738
Average amount contributed in public goods game	-22.1** (9.55) N=42	-15.4* (8.18) N=47

^a Table displays coefficients δ_1 with standard errors clustered by clan in parentheses in the top three rows, and robust standard errors in parentheses in the bottom row. *, **, and *** indicate significance at the 90, 95, and 99 percent confidence levels respectively.

⁵⁹ Putnam 1993.

changing from elections to appointments would have similar negative effects on public goods provision. This is a potentially important scope condition. We do not show that appointments that replace elections in traditional institutions will harm collective action when elections are the status quo, but show only that changes toward elections from traditional appointments are associated with costs in terms of the ability of the community to act collectively. In this sense, our argument and analysis speak to only one half of the theory that institutional clashes cause poor governance.⁶⁰ However, given the prominence of nonelectoral methods of selecting customary leaders around the world, it is an important set of cases to understand.

CONCLUSION

Our study shows that when elections are introduced in traditional institutions, they may actually decrease collective action and public goods provision. Specifically, chiefs appointed through customary methods appear to be more effective than their elected counterparts in maintaining public order and organizing contributions to public goods.

These results provide an important counterpoint to the recent experiment-based literature on the impact of elections that finds positive effects of elections on collective action. Lab experiments consistently find that contribution levels are higher in public goods games when participants are able to vote on the rules of the game. But in these experiments, the rules imposed in the control group are determined through a process that has little preexisting legitimacy to participants, which may explain the more positive effects of elections in these contexts.

Field experiments also frequently find positive effects of electoral institutions on subsequent participation and contributions to public goods. But in the field experiments conducted to date, elections have been introduced in institutions that parallel, rather than replace, customary institutions, and as a result, elected leaders have maintained the option of collaborating with appointed customary leaders to organize local contributions to collective action.⁶¹ In contrast, when appointed traditional leaders are replaced with elected traditional leaders, this option is no longer available. In this context, elected leaders appear to have difficulty keeping order and organizing community contributions to collective goods.

⁶⁰ Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov 2013b; Cornell and Kalt 2000; Englebert 2000; Wade 1988.

⁶¹ For an example of this type of collaboration, see the discussion in Swidler 2013, 323.

Although our empirical analysis focuses exclusively on Liberia, research by other scholars in other settings is consistent with our findings. For example, in Sierra Leone, citizens show lower levels of trust in chiefs and lower rates of participation in collective action in chiefdoms with higher levels of competition for the office of paramount chief.⁶² In the US, American Indian reservations run by general councils consisting of all voting-age tribal members have worse economic development outcomes than those without this form of broad participation.⁶³ In Zambia, chiefs selected through processes that are more participatory are less likely to prioritize the provision of local public goods in their communities.⁶⁴

Of course, even if open and participatory methods for selecting community leaders hinder subsequent collective action within communities, it does not mean these methods do not have other benefits. Certainly, many customary appointment procedures have fairly been criticized for failing to consider the interests of women, minorities, and youth.⁶⁵ But, as is often the case, there are trade-offs involved in institutional design. A better understanding of the costs of introducing elections in customary settings is important both to inform decisions about institutional reforms and to ensure that reforms are designed to mitigate or compensate for potential negative side effects.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Supplementary material for this article can be found at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0043887115000210>.

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⁶² Acemoglu, Reed, and Robinson 2014.

⁶³ Cornell and Kalt 2000.

⁶⁴ Baldwin forthcoming.

⁶⁵ Acemoglu, Reed, and Robinson 2014; Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov 2013c; Clayton 2014.

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