1. Introduction

This randomized trial studies the proximate and medium-term effects of a newly designed intervention that (i) establishes village “security committees” to enhance communication between local communities and a peacekeeping mission and (ii) complements this security-based treatment with civic and peace education. The village security committees will meet with local peacekeeping contingents once per month and will also provide real-time information on security related developments to the peacekeeping units. The two-way factorial design of the trial crosses the security committee treatment with a civic and peace education treatment, whereby a respected Liberian NGO will implement a civic and peace education curriculum through monthly meetings in the selected villages. The intervention is due to be implemented in Liberia over the coming one year, and we hope to replicate the trial in Cote d’Ivoire and possibly beyond.
From a policy perspective, this intervention is motivated by the need to improve peacekeeping missions’ abilities to attend to local insecurity. While the association between peacekeeping and macro-level stability appears to be quite strong (e.g., Gilligan and Sergenti, 2008), peacekeeping deployments within a country have not been associated with substantial improvements in local security. Mvukiyehe and Samii (2010) analyzed insecurity-related events and migration flows in Liberia after the 2003 end of civil war there. They could find no compelling evidence that UN peacekeeping deployments direct affected local security dynamics, finding only that the deployments were associated some increased economic vibrancy. These authors had previously conducted a similar analysis using data from Cote d’Ivoire, and the results were largely the same (Mvukiyehe and Samii, 2008). This weakness was demonstrated spectacularly in August 2010 when the presence of the United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo failed to prevent attacks and mass rape by armed factions in North Kivu.1 Academically, this suggests that peacekeeping’s causal contribution to lasting peace, if any, is probably due to macro-level factors—e.g. providing faction leaders with a mechanism through which they can credibly demonstrate their commitment to a peace process. However, there is still a need for peacekeeping operations to be effective in local security provision. For one thing, local security provision is part of many peacekeeping operations’ mandates, including those in Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire. Secondly, while macro-level stability is a crucial achievement, it often exists along with small scale, but nonetheless disruptive local violence, intimidation, and human rights abuses. The quality of democratic and economic reconstruction in the aftermath of civil war is certainly affected by this.

From a social science perspective, the intervention is intended to provide exogenous variation in perceptions of local security and peace-related norm change. This will allow us to test theories of local peacebuilding. The security committee treatment allows us to study how

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externally-guarded security affects economic dynamics, which in turn may create a self-enforcing peace. Elsewhere we have called this the “security bubble theory” (Mvukiyehe and Samii, 2010), and it accords with what United Nations documents themselves say about how peacekeeping can lead to sustainable peace (as discussed, for example, in Boutras-Ghali’s *Agenda for Peace*, 1995). The theory proposes that external security actors can help to create a local security bubble. The security within the bubble stimulates local investments, which in turn generate productive employment opportunities in a community. By attracting increasing numbers of people into the productive sector, the opportunity costs of conflict increase, creating conditions that allow the security actors to leave without the risk of a breakdown in order. The civic and peace education intervention will allow us to assess how norms change, both on its own and in combination with enhanced security, can affect peacebuilding dynamics.

For the intervention to be useful on these policy-based and academic terms, it needs to be effective in (1) boosting local security perceptions and (2) affecting people’s sense of when violence is appropriate for settling disputes. These are proximate effects that we will measure. Then, based on whether these proximate effects are manifest, we will be able to study the contributions of security provision and civic/peace education on medium term outcomes, such as local market vitality, confidence in expressing political opinions, freedom of movement, etc.

2. Design of the trial

The trial uses a multi-way hierarchical design\(^2\) that will allow us to measure effects for a number of treatments and sub-treatments. These are described below. The Liberia trial randomly assigns these treatment conditions over a set of 162 communities.\(^3\)

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\(^2\) For design and analytical principles for hierarchical designs, see Hudgens and Halloran (2008).

\(^3\) Formally, the unit of randomization is the Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) “enumeration area,” and programming will be centered in the largest town in the enumeration area. Enumeration areas
a. Security committees

80 out of the 162 communities are randomly assigned to receive a security committee. This will allow us to measure the effect of the security committees on average. The security committees will conduct the following tasks: (1) participate in monthly meetings with a local peacekeeping contingent to share information on security related issues, (2) oversee SMS-based reporting of security related developments that will be transmitted to peacekeeping contingents, and (3) provide a point of contact for the peacekeeping mission to be used on an as needed basis in case of emergency or during routine patrols. The committee’s presence will be publicly known, and communities hosting committees will be socialized to the intervention in a meeting at the start of the intervention.

We are interested to know how legitimacy may be conferred to committees such as these. In order to do so, we have randomly selected 32 of these committees to be nominated through a community ballot process, with the rest being appointed by the community chief(s).

We are also interested in knowing how spill-over and synergy effects from committees in neighboring areas may moderate the effectiveness of the intervention. As such, we have randomly manipulated the proportion of villages in an area that will receive security committees. Thus, if we group the communities into “clans”, the third-tier administrative unit in Liberia, then a randomly selected half of the clans will contain security committees in a relatively high proportion of communities, and the other half will contain security committees in a relatively low proportion of communities. In this way, we have exogenous variation in the density of security committee communities from clan to clan.

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were created by LISGIS as geographic units that are similar in population size (about 500 people on average) and that sit below the “clan” level and above the “town” level in the administrative unit hierarchy. Thus, enumeration areas are clusters of 5-10 towns and villages.

4 The determination of the number, 32, to have the community balloting is based on the need to preserve orthogonality of treatment assignments along with the other treatments that are being used.
b. Civic and peace education

60 of the 162 communities are randomly assigned to receive a civic and peace education curriculum, with 30 of them being in communities that also have a security committee. The civic and peace education curriculum in Liberia has been developed by our NGO partner, Liberia Democracy Watch. The curriculum involves various group activities to be carried out in monthly sessions over a year to deepen appreciation and knowledge of democratic and non-violent means of dispute resolution and political expression.

[Table 1 here]

Table 1 shows the distribution of the 162 communities over the treatment conditions. The sets of three numbers in parentheses in each cell show the distribution of communities for that cell in “high density”-security committee, “low density”-security committee, and no security-committee zones, respectively. Thus, in the top right cell, we see that there are 52 communities that receive neither a security committee nor education. Of those 52, 16 are located in zones where a large proportion of other communities do have security committees. To the extent that there are positive spillovers from neighboring communities with committees, we expect to isolate them here. Then, 11 are located in zones where only a small proportion has security committees. We might detect small spillovers in these communities, but really, the establishment of this intermediate category is intended to allow us to isolate security committee effects in isolation. Finally, 25 from that cell are in zones in which no communities have security committees. This last group of 25 communities functions as our “pure control” group. The numbers in the other cells can be interpreted in the same way. As Table 1 indicates, we will not have adequate power to measure all community-level effect interactions. Rather, our interest is in measuring average effects across the main treatment variations. Thus, our estimate of the average effect of the security committees will average over the $30 + 18 + 20 + 12 = 80$ communities that contain committees. Similarly, our estimate of the
average effect of the education programming will average over the $30 + 18 + 12 = 60$ communities that receive educational programs. The same averaging will apply to the density treatments and the security committee selection process treatments.

[Figure 1 here]

Figure 1 shows the geographic distribution of the intervention sites. The labeled, colored dots on the map each show the centroid for a “clan,” which as we described above consists of a collection of about 6 to 30 communities. The red and green outlines, with the labeling of “groups” numbered from 1 to 12, show how the clans and the communities they contained were geographically blocked prior to randomization. The blocking was based, as is apparent, on location and proximity to each other, as well as mutual proximity to a peacekeeping deployment point.

[Figure 2 here]

Within each group, the order of randomization was such that each of the clans in the group was first randomly assigned to a security committee treatment “density” condition, and then the communities within the clans were assigned to host security committees, education programs, or both. Then, finally, the security committee selection method was assigned. This order of randomization is shown in Figure 2.

3. **Data and measurement**

We will collect community-level data to track peacebuilding-related outcomes over time in the different communities. We will use four sources of data:

- Monthly community observation reports from all communities.
- Weekly events monitoring via an Ushahidi-based mobile phone text message system.\(^5\)

\(^5\) Ushahidi is a software and network system that allows people to use their mobile phone text-messaging feature (short-message service, or “SMS”) to transmit geo-coded information to a central database. See [http://www.ushahidi.com/](http://www.ushahidi.com/)
- At the time of follow-up after approximately one year, a sample survey of household decision-makers in all communities.

- At the time of follow-up, a survey conducted with peacekeepers on their relative familiarity with security and peacebuilding dynamics in communities with and without committees.

A working list of indicators is given in Appendix A.
References


Appendix A

Working List of Outcome Indicators

Security
- Disputes/ tensions & threatening behaviors (not yet escalated into violence)
  - Land disputes
  - Disputes between different ethnic groups
  - Disputes between different religious groups
  - Disputes between town residents and refugees/ IDPs
  - Disputes & threatening behaviors between security forces
  - Disputes & threatening behaviors by security forces against civilians
  - Disputes & threatening behaviors by the town chief against residents
- Violent conflict against or between groups
  - Violence triggered by land disputes
  - Violence between different ethnic groups
  - Violence between different religious groups
  - Violence between security forces
  - Violence by security forces against civilians
  - Violence by the town chief against residents
  - Mob violence
- Violence directed against individuals & property
  - Armed robberies
  - Homicide
  - Personal injury
  - Rapes
  - Kidnapping of a town resident
  - Physical fight between two residents
  - Damage to property (arson & looting)
  - Vandalizing farm (arson & looting)
- Other security threats/ incidents
  - Presence/discovery of military devices such as mines, firearms etc.
  - Presence of suspicious people / threatening messages
  - Arrival in town of large numbers of refugees/ IDPs
  - Departure from town of large numbers of refugees/ IDPs
  - Suspicious border movements (suspected militias or armed individuals)
  - Existence of “unsafe areas“ in town
  - General perceptions of security

Economics
- Changes in the number of vendors at the market
- Changes in the number of kiosks selling goods and any other business that open or close
- Price of a key items that have to be brought in from a big city (like cooking oil, sugar, or salt)
- New buildings or repairs, whether public buildings, shops, or houses
- Changes in school attendance

Local governance issues and leadership
- Arrest of town resident by the police
- Town chief is collecting arbitrary taxes/ fines
- Town chief is forcing a resident(s) to go work on his farm/ property
- Town chief has taken away someone's land/ property
- Complaints by town residents about town chief's inability/ unwillingness to provide justice/ redress
- Protests/ complaints by town residents against the town chief
- Requests heavy fines before he can address someone's problem
- Corruption (misuse of public resource & giving undue favors to family and co-ethnics)
- Disputes & argument between town chief and superior leader
- Disputes & argument between town chief and elections staff from NEC
- Complaints/ protests by town chief about UNMIL / INGOs
- Complaints/ protests by town residents about UNMIL / INGOs

Community collective action
- Community meetings (not project-related)
- Community collective works & projects
- Cultural celebration
- Collective petition addressed to an authority

Elections-related events (elections are due in October 2011)
- Civic/ voter education events (by actor)
- Dispute/ violence at the Voter registration center
- Campaign rallies (by party/ candidate)
- Negative campaign message/ playing the ethnic or religious card.
- Positive campaign message
- Voter intimidation/ suppression
- Attacks on a candidate
- Attack on a political campaign worker
- Attack on a party representative
- Attack on a town resident because of their party affiliation/ political stands
- Vandalism on someone's property or farm because of their party affiliation/ political stands

Political participation & civic engagement
- Visit by a senator/ house representative
- Collective petition addressed to an authority
- Peaceful protest

- Presence of security forces
- Visit of town by UNMIL military
- Visit of town by UN police
- Visit of town by LNP

Peacekeeper Knowledge
- Awareness of key concerns and threats facing communities with and without committees
### Tables and Figures

**Table 1: Distribution of communities over treatment conditions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No education (HD, LD, N)</th>
<th>Civic and peace education (HD, LD, N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No security committee</td>
<td>52 (16, 11, 25)</td>
<td>30 (9, 6, 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security committee nominated by chief</td>
<td>30 (25, 5, 0)</td>
<td>18 (15, 3, 0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security committee by ballot</td>
<td>20 (14, 6, 0)</td>
<td>12 (9, 3, 0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>102</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**: The sets of three numbers in parentheses in each cell show the distribution of communities for that cell in “high density”-security committee, “low density”-security committee, and no security-committee zones, respectively. See text for details.
Figure 1: Geographic distribution of intervention sites

[Map showing geographic distribution of intervention sites.]
Figure 2: Order of randomization

Clans blocked into groups 1-12

High density security committee clan
- Ed. plus sec. committee cmnty
- Security committee only cmnty
- Education only community
- No activities community

Low density security committee clan
- Ed. plus sec. committee cmnty
- Security committee only cmnty
- Education only community
- No activities community

No security committee clan
- Education only community
- No activities community

Random assignment

Ballot
- No ballot

Random assignment

Ballot
- No ballot

Random assignment

Ballot
- No ballot