

**The Micro-Level Consequences of Democracy Promotion:
A Field Experiment in Rural Cambodia**

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Abstract: Since the early 1990s, efforts to promote democracy throughout the world have proliferated, yet as many scholars and policy-makers lament, the effects of these democracy promotion programs are poorly understood. This article presents a randomized field experiment of a “real” democracy promotion program undertaken by a prominent international non-governmental organization in Cambodia. We show that exposure to multi-party town hall meetings has positive effects on citizen knowledge about politics, attitudes towards democracy, and reported political behavior, but has null effects on citizen confidence in the political process. Several months after each intervention, qualitative evidence suggests that problem issues in treatment villages were more likely to be addressed than in control villages. Additionally, results from an election more than a year after the final intervention suggest longer term changes in voting behavior.

Foreign democracy promotion includes a diversity of interventions undertaken by intergovernmental organizations, bilateral donors, and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) aimed at increasing the prospects for democratization within sovereign states.¹ Despite their proliferation, the effects of democracy promotion activities remain poorly understood (National Research Council 2008; Green and Kohl 2007; Moehler 2010; Humphreys and Weinstein 2009). A recent report highlights the shortcomings of existing evidence, stating that “current evaluation practices do not provide compelling evidence of the impacts of [democracy and governance] programs” (National Research Council 2008, 2). Cross-national and case-based studies on the effectiveness of democracy promotion have reached contradictory conclusions, and some scholars and practitioners argue that understanding democracy promotion now requires evaluating the effects of specific programs and aggregating these micro-level findings into a broader understanding of the consequences of democracy-promotion efforts (National Research Council 2008). Similar arguments have been made about the possible use of field experiments in studying international relations more generally (Findley, Nielson, and Sharman 2013; Hyde 2015), and the study of democracy promotion within IR is poised to “bring citizens back in,” by rigorously testing the consequences of democracy-promotion activities at the subnational or individual level.

This article presents a field experimental evaluation of a democracy-promotion program implemented by an INGO in Cambodia.² It contributes to a growing body of research that relies

¹ Recent work includes Bush 2015; Donno 2013; Jamal 2012; Kelley 2012b; Kelley 2012a; McFaul 2009; Wright 2009; Youngs 2010.

² Per a memorandum of understanding, the name of the INGO is omitted from this version of the article. The first author served as the pro-bono principal investigator during the implementation of the study for access to the data. The other author served as a field researcher during implementation.

on field experimental methods to study questions that are relevant to both academics and policy-makers,³ but is one of very few that explicitly focuses on a “real” ongoing democracy-promotion intervention rather than a researcher-driven intervention.⁴ The study was initiated by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in response to a call for more rigorous evaluation of democracy promotion programs (National Research Council 2008). It was carried out through an academic-practitioner partnership, which have been relatively rare in the study of democracy promotion (Driscoll and Hidalgo 2014; Moehler 2010; Finkel and Smith 2011), but represent one way to advance research that is relevant to academic and policy audiences.⁵

Cambodia’s repressive electoral authoritarian regime makes it a difficult country in which to engage in democracy promotion (Ear 2013; Human Rights Watch 2010; McCargo 2005; Schedler 2013). Cambodia is also one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia, average levels of literacy and education are low, particularly in the rural areas targeted by this program; the country has a recent history of genocide and civil war (see Kiernan 2014). Although Cambodia faces a number of ongoing challenges in development; promoting democracy has been among the priorities of Western donors since the 1993 peace agreement and formal restoration of multi-party democracy (Peou 2004), and donors have spent significant aid on Cambodian democracy assistance (Ear 2013).

³ Some examples include Humphreys, Masters, and Sandbu 2006; Humphreys and Weinstein 2009; Wantchekon 2003; Fujiwara and Wantchekon 2013; Olken 2007; Hyde 2010; Hyde 2015; Paluck and Green 2009; Paluck, Blair, and Vexler, Daniel n.d.; Fearon, Humphreys, and Weinstein 2009; Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov 2012; Moehler 2010; De La O 2013.

⁴ Contrast this study with, for example, work by Fujiwara and Wantchekon (2013) or Casey, Glennerster, and Bidwell (2015) in which the intervention is caused by the researcher.

⁵ Much of the commentary encouraging more policy-relevant research focuses on the need for international relations contributions of theory to policy (e.g. Jentleson and Ratner 2011). Fewer calls have been made for policy-relevant empirical work in IR, but many of the same arguments can be applied.

Elections since 1993 have qualified as multi-party on paper, yet the ruling Cambodian People's Party engages in numerous tactics intended to intimidate, weaken, or eliminate electoral competition (Brown 1998; Hughes 2007; Peou 2004). The government tolerates but periodically challenges democracy promotion programs. Opposition parties are allowed few opportunities for voice at the national or local level. Many citizens are afraid to share opinions that may be perceived as counter to the governing party's position, detentions of citizens by police are routine, and surveillance is more or less expected during political events (see Human Rights Watch 2012).

In this challenging context, this study evaluates the effectiveness of a democracy promotion program aimed at fostering dialogue between elected Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) and their rural constituents. National politicians typically spend little time in their districts, especially outside of the campaign period. The partner INGO began working with major Cambodian political parties in 2004, inviting them to participate in INGO-organized multiparty town hall meetings in dozens of rural villages. The overall objectives of the town-hall-meeting program include improving citizen awareness of how multi-party democracy should work, the ability of citizens to make demands from their elected officials, interaction between MNAs and their constituents, and therefore both citizens' ability to demand accountability from their elected officials and the likelihood that MNAs will respond to such demands.

These interactions are typically the only time that most participants ever see representatives of multiple political parties interact with one another, the only time their national representatives have visited their village, and a unique form of civic education in which introductory remarks about democracy and citizens' rights are combined with interactions with elected national representatives from multiple parties.

Based on randomization of the town hall meetings within village pairs, this study found that the program had relatively large effects on individuals' knowledge about politics and their self-reported willingness to take a variety of political and civic actions. Crucially, however, the program did not "green wash" the poor state of democracy in Cambodia. Citizens became more knowledgeable and willing to take individual actions (protest, sign a petition, contact their MNA), but a few hours of exposure to a multiparty forum did not make them more likely to think that Cambodia is a democracy, that democratic political institutions in Cambodia function as they should, or that their activism is likely to be successful.

To be clear, the null results for questions in the broad category of confidence in the political process were not anticipated by the authors, and the pre-analysis expectation was that the program would improve citizen confidence in the political process. In retrospect, this is an interesting and somewhat hopeful finding for students of democracy promotion: at least in the Cambodian context but potentially more broadly, this type of program enabled citizens to learn about civic action that could prove useful if Cambodia experiences further political liberalization. But citizens do not interpret this brief multiparty interaction with their MNAs as a sign that Cambodia is a fully-functioning democracy, which may be useful when there are serious concerns that much of democracy promotion empowers autocrats (Bush 2015). There is also evidence suggestive of longer-term behavioral changes within treated villages: treatment villages had noticeable increases in votes cast for opposition parties more than a year after the study's final town hall meeting.

These findings have potentially important implications for developing a broader theory of democracy promotion, thinking more systematically about the dynamics of democracy promotion within an electoral authoritarian context, as well as the likely consequences of giving

citizens with little democratic experience the opportunity to interact with their elected representatives outside of the electoral cycle.

Note that the overarching goal of this article is not to debate the normative value of democracy promotion. Rather, we take democracy promotion as given in Cambodia and in more than one hundred other countries in the world, and instead evaluate the consequences of a specific program among the citizens exposed to it. Similar programs, which aim to increase electoral accountability and communication between constituents and representatives outside of the campaign period, have been implemented in dozens of countries. To our knowledge, none of them has been studied in this type of systematic fashion.⁶ In the remainder of the article we discuss relevant existing work, describe the intervention and field experimental design in greater detail, and present the results, including pre and posttest survey data, the 2013 election results, and qualitative follow up on village level changes associated with the town hall meeting.

Democracy Promotion and the Micro-Macro Link

There is a very long list of academic articles and books on democracy promotion (for example, see overviews in Carothers 2004; Finkel, Pérez Liñan, and Seligson 2007; Kelley 2012a; Krasner and Weinstein 2014). Democracy-promotion activities—which include “democracy assistance”—are funded by most wealthy democracies and undertaken by many NGOs. By itself, the National Endowment for Democracy funds democracy promotion activities for hundreds of NGOs throughout the world each year (Bush 2015, 116). Although most Western policy makers agree that democracy promotion is a good idea for strategic and/or normative reasons (e.g. McFaul 2009), there is very little academic consensus on whether democracy

⁶ Several related studies are focused on the electoral period are not international democracy promotion (Casey, Glennerster, and Bidwell 2015; Fujiwara and Wantchekon 2013).

promotion contributes to democratization, much less the mechanisms by which it is expected to operate, or even what, precisely, democracy promotion is supposed to influence. Conclusions about the effectiveness of democracy promotion are particularly problematic in light of recent findings in several other literatures, including the burgeoning research agenda on the strategic use of democratic institutions by authoritarian leaders and debates about the role of electoral politics in the stability of authoritarianism (Gandhi 2010; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Lust-Okar 2006; Magaloni 2006; Malesky and Schuler 2010; Malesky, Schuler, and Tran 2012; Svobik 2012), as well as research that highlights ways in which foreign donors are inconsistent or insincere in their commitments to democracy promotion (e.g. Risse and Babayan 2015).

Overall, the field lacks a concise theory of democracy promotion, and it is not straightforward to link macro-level foreign policy claims about promoting democracy abroad to micro-level expectations about how an internationally funded program should be expected to cause change at the subnational level. Thus far, many studies of democracy promotion implicitly discuss success or failure at the national level and in binary terms. There is little attention paid to whether “success” in democracy promotion might be a rare (but consequential) event, whether incremental change is observable, or how long democracy promotion might be expected to take before a full political transition is likely. A better understanding of the subnational and individual effects of democracy promotion programs is one way to add value to a large literature that has tended to rely primarily on cross-national and case-study evidence (e.g. Bush 2015; Carothers 2004; Donno 2013; Goldsmith 2008; Schraeder 2003; Finkel, Pérez Liñan, and Seligson 2007; Pevehouse 2002; Risse and Babayan 2015; Youngs 2010). Prominent scholars like Thomas Carothers and Michael McFaul provide numerous anecdotal examples of successes in democracy promotion as a foreign policy tool, while also highlighting the potential limitations of and

challenges to democracy promotion efforts (Carothers 1997a; Carothers 2004; Ottaway and Carothers 2000; Carothers 1997b; McFaul 2004; McFaul 2009). Although valuable, such studies must often confront thorny problems of causal inference. For example, Finkel et al.'s (2007) influential study of the effects of US foreign assistance on democratization found that foreign aid can have a positive effect on levels of democratization, but for skeptics, the cross-national nature of the study makes it very difficult to eliminate the possibility that selection problems or omitted variable bias can be fully addressed. And, the mechanisms by which dollars spent on democracy promotion and regime-level indicators are not always clear.

Although the field lacks a well-developed theory of democracy promotion with well-specified micro-implications, theories of democratization could provide theoretical grounding for making the micro-macro link. Robert Dahl, for example, focuses on three necessary conditions for democracy, including “unimpaired opportunities” for citizens “[t]o formulate their preferences; [t]o signify their preferences to their fellow citizens and the government by individual and collective action; [and t]o have their preferences weighed equally in the conduct of the government, that is, weighted with no discrimination because of the content or source of the preference” (Dahl 1971, 2). From this perspective, one could argue that democracy-promoting organizations can take aim at individual-level outcomes, at least in the near term, as a path toward democratization.

The Treatment: Multiparty Town Hall Meetings with Rural Constituents

As introduced above, the town hall program was motivated in part because there are very few opportunities in which elected Cambodian representatives from opposition political parties can interact with their constituents, and even fewer opportunities for opposition parties to appear on equal footing with representatives from the ruling CPP. Each town hall meeting in the study

was attended by between 400 and 1,000 community residents.⁷ Meetings began with remarks by a representative of the INGO, who explained the purpose of the meeting to the audience. Each introduction included a statement that Cambodia is a democracy and that they, the audience, have elected their representatives and have a right to share their concerns with them; that the purposes of their elected representatives are to form policies and exercise oversight on the government, but not to provide gifts or personal favors; that these representatives must represent the interests of their constituents and that they work for and are accountable to their constituents; and a reminder that everyone, including audience members, have the right to speak and be heard and to criticize and disagree with the policies or positions on any issue.

Participating MNAs offer brief opening remarks to the audience. The floor is then open to participants to voice their concerns, raise questions directly to MNAs, and request that actions be taken to resolve problems. During their allocated response time, MNAs can update citizens on the activities of the legislature and government and provide other relevant information. The dialogues encourage unscripted, two-way communication, allowing for sometimes challenging questions and demands from citizens.

To ensure equity and neutrality and foster constructive dialogue, each town hall meeting follows a format and requires that MNAs, participants, and moderators follow a code of conduct. The code specifies such items as the allotment of speaking time, appropriate and inappropriate topics for discussion, and the rules regarding audience participation.⁸ Local authorities are often present at the town halls, and in 2010, at the request of the parties, time was allotted for local authorities to speak at the end of the dialogues as well. Citizens who attend the town hall meetings are given water and bread, but no other incentive to attend.

⁷ The town hall meetings are advertised using a loudspeaker on the back of a motorbike in the days before the event.

⁸ From INGO Town Hall Report 2011.

The town hall meeting program was explicitly designed to promote citizen interaction with multiple parties, to demonstrate to citizens that opposition parties in Cambodia exist, and that interaction between them is a normal part of democracy. Representatives from five parties in the National Assembly have participated in the program: the CPP, the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP), FUNCINPEC,⁹ the Human Rights Party (HRP), and Norodom Ranariddh Party (NRP). Each party with one or more elected MNA in that province was invited, but fewer than five parties are represented at each town hall event.¹⁰ Because it requires multi-party participation, the INGO does not operate in half of the provinces that are represented exclusively by the CPP.

In this rare forum, citizens interact with their elected MNAs, and see MNAs from multiple political parties interact with one another. The meetings provide an opportunity to enhance MNAs' knowledge of and relations with their constituencies and educate citizens on the roles and responsibilities of MNAs in a democracy. In addition to learning about democracy and democratic actions, citizens may also be motivated to take part in politics either through political party activity or other political behavior. It is relatively clear that this type of dialogue would not be permitted to take place absent the work of the INGO.

One might wonder why the CPP allow the town hall meetings to take place if they allow political space for the opposition. Speculation by an individual familiar with the program suggests that their continued participation is somewhat of a mystery, as the CPP has refused to allow or participate in other similar programs proposed by other organizations in Cambodia. CPP participation was likely initiated because the CPP originally thought that the program would

⁹ FUNCINPEC is an acronym of the party's name in French, "Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique, et Coopératif."

¹⁰ Each party chooses which representative will attend the town hall event. MNAs are trained prior to the town hall event.

benefit it. After publicly supporting the program, withdrawing its participation would cause it to lose face (author correspondence, July 2013).

Hypotheses

What are the consequences of the town hall meetings? The town hall meeting should, at least in theory, increase participant knowledge of the duties of their elected representatives. The MNAs in attendance have multiple opportunities to inform participants about their work on national and local issues in the National Assembly. The moderator from the INGO identifies several of the roles of MNAs and explains that participants should not expect gifts from their representatives. MNAs have opportunities to respond to participant questions and give promises of action. We expect, therefore, that the town hall will work to increase participant knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of their elected representatives.

Hypothesis 1 (Knowledge of the Political Process): Participation in the town hall forum should increase respondents' knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of MNAs.

The town hall meetings are also expected to increase citizen confidence in the political process. We analyze changes in participant attitudes toward their own roles in democracy, toward opposition political parties, and toward the efficacy of representative democracy. We expect that this direct interaction with elected representatives should increase participant's confidence in the political process and in the democratic process itself.

Hypothesis 2 (Confidence in the Political Process): Exposure to the town hall will make respondents more likely to agree with statements about their own confidence in the political process and political options.

Next, we expect that citizens who are exposed to multi-party interactions and open debate between the ruling CPP and opposition political party representatives will also become more willing to report talking about politics, and to talk about controversial political issues.

Hypothesis 3 (Familiarity with Politics): Respondents exposed to the town hall event will be more likely to agree with statements about their own familiarity and willingness to discuss politics.

Fourth, we expect that the town hall event increases participant's civic engagement. Attendance at the town hall meeting is an act of civic engagement. We expect that this experience will increase motivation to be involved in political action in the future. In addition, the concluding remarks from the moderator urge attendees to continue communicating with their representatives. Often, the MNAs also encourage participants to contact them about their concerns. We expect that, through the town hall experience and the personal invitation to act, participants will increase their interest and activity in the public sphere, as measured by a willingness to engage in a variety of political actions.

Hypothesis 4 (Engagement with the Political Process): Respondents exposed to the town hall event should be more likely to report intentions to take part in civic actions.

At a more basic level, exposure to the town hall meeting should, at minimum, increase citizen perceptions of the responsiveness of their own MNAs. This hypothesis is something of a manipulation check. If respondents do not notice that MNAs visit their village to report on what they have been doing in the National Assembly, then it would be surprising if responses change in any other areas of the survey.

Hypothesis 5 (MNA Responsiveness): Respondents exposed to the town hall meeting should be more likely to view their MNAs as responsive to their community.

Additionally, because the town hall meetings also involve discussion of specific issues, including problems facing their community and plans for addressing those issues, we expect that exposure to the town hall will change citizens' prioritization of issues.

Hypothesis 6 (Priority Issues): Respondents exposed to the town hall meeting should be more likely to change the priority issues.

Finally, in designing this study we had hoped to also measure behavioral change, but all ideas were judged too risky or too artificial for the INGO to implement in the Cambodian context.

After the initial evaluation of the program submitted to the donor, we added a downstream hypothesis about potential effects of the town hall on voting behavior. INGO staff were initially reluctant to specify exactly how this program would have influenced electoral and were uncertain about whether they expected the effects to last more than a year until the next national election. Nevertheless, given that the program aims to promote democracy and given the CPP's strong hold on power, we expect that the town hall treatment may have also increased support for opposition parties, decreased support for the CPP, and increased turnout.

Hypothesis 7a (Voting Behavior): Respondents exposed to the town hall meeting event should be more likely to support opposition parties and less likely to support the CPP.

Hypothesis 7b (Voter Turnout): Respondents exposed to the town hall meeting event should be more likely to turn out to vote.

The next section discusses the data collection process before describing the analysis and presenting the results.

Design and Randomization

The INGO determined that national or regional random assignment of the town hall meetings was implausible because local partner NGOs that are active in the relevant districts are

normally charged with the village selection process, and this component was judged to be fundamental to the program. These local NGOs apply a variety of criteria in selecting villages, some of which depend on local knowledge, including level of political tension in the month before the town hall meeting, accessibility, reasonably cooperative local officials and police, and other less concrete criteria. Because criteria like political tension and cooperative local officials can change quickly, the village selection process could only be completed by the local NGO partners about one month before each town hall meeting.

To incorporate random selection of villages without disrupting the program, the local NGOs were asked to choose two candidate villages for each potential town hall meeting. INGO staff then used a coin flip to choose one of these villages to receive the treatment. Thus, within each target district for each planned town hall, the local NGO was asked to use its normal criteria to select two villages (rather than the one village it would normally select) that would be otherwise equal candidates for a town hall event. We also asked them to ensure that the two villages they selected as candidates for the town hall were sufficiently far apart as to make travel between them on the day of the event unlikely, but that otherwise met all of their criteria for selecting villages and were subjectively similar on the variables of interest. After the two village names were forwarded to the INGO's offices in Phnom Penh, a field staff member, with at least one staff witness, flipped a coin to determine which village would be treated.

All analysis must incorporate the randomization within village pairs. We refer to the villages that receive the town hall meeting as treatment villages and the unselected candidate villages as control villages. Six pairs were chosen in this manner, each containing one treatment village and one control village, and received a pre-treatment and follow-up survey. An additional three pairs were chosen to receive the town hall event using this method, but this final set did not

receive the survey and are excluded from this part of the analysis. All 18 villages (9 treatment, 9 control) received the qualitative, follow-up monitoring and are included in the analysis of election results.

Survey Data Collection

Within the six pairs of surveyed villages, as shown in Figure 1, a total of 1,440 baseline surveys were administered across three provinces.¹¹ Half were administered in six treatment villages, and the remaining 720 surveys were administered in six control villages (120 per village). In the treatment villages respondents were given written and verbal invitations to the town hall event and encouraged by the survey enumerator to attend the town hall. The baseline survey was conducted approximately one week prior to the day of the town hall event. For the baseline survey, the survey team created village maps and, after selecting a random starting point, chose every other household to receive the pre-test survey. If there were too few households in the designated villages, households in nearby villages were also interviewed until the target of 120 respondents was reached. The survey team administered a pre-test survey to one adult in each randomly-selected household. Once a house had been selected by the survey team captain, survey enumerators used a coin toss to determine whether or not to ask for a male or female household member, so that an equal number of female and male respondents would be surveyed. Because the villages targeted for town hall meeting events are relatively small, the survey firm was concerned about finding 120 respondents in each village. No other efforts were

¹¹ Data collected by the Center for Advanced Studies (CAS), Phnom Penh.

made to produce a representative sample of Cambodian citizens, nor a representative sample of the village population.¹²

Approximately one week after the town hall meeting was held, researchers followed up and resurveyed baseline participants in the treatment and control villages. The post-test panel survey was conducted relatively quickly after the intervention because the research firm's director, who had experience conducting surveys in similarly rural areas in Cambodia, judged that survey attrition due to agriculture-related travel would be too high if the post-test survey was delayed. Substantively, one week is much longer than analogous intervals between treatment and outcome measurement in survey experiments (Gaines, Kuklinski, and Quirk 2007). Few political-science studies account for the duration of treatment effects, but in one study of the lasting effects of political TV ads on voter attitudes, significant short-term effects had disappeared one week after treatment (Gerber et al. 2011). Thus, one week is a plausible amount of time to test for attitudinal changes given the potential for attrition in a longer interval.

At the time of the survey, Cambodians older than 34 were alive during the Khmer Rouge regime. Schooling was interrupted for those in the cohort of 39–54 years old. Twenty-four percent of respondents had no formal schooling. Less than 3% of respondents had completed secondary schooling or higher. Only 55% of respondents reported that they could read comfortably. Fewer than 50 percent claim ownership of either a television or a radio—both important potential mechanisms for disseminating political information; 28 percent have neither. Seventy percent of respondents name farming as their primary occupation.

Survey Attrition and Balance Tests

¹² The survey enumerators were hired and supervised by CAS; multiple training sessions were conducted by CAS, the principal investigator and the field researcher team. Additionally, the field researcher team monitored enumerators in the field during four of the survey rounds.

One concern with survey-based measures in experimental research is that respondents can become more or less likely to drop out of the post-test survey if they are assigned to the treatment group. In the treatment and control villages, respectively, 91% and 92% of pre-test survey respondents completed the follow-up survey. The test shown in Table 1 confirms that assignment to the treatment condition has no statistically significant effect on whether the respondent completed the follow up survey.

This study spanned both the planting and harvesting seasons in Cambodia. Anecdotally, this was the main reason cited for non-participation in the town hall event and for survey attrition. Of those who were in the attrition group, 62% were male, which would be consistent with agricultural work causing attrition. Figure 2 presents the baseline tests for balance between villages assigned to the treatment of the town hall event and villages assigned to the control. The expectation is that all pre-treatment covariates will be the same across treatment and control comparisons.

As shown in Figure 2, most of the demographic variables are balanced between individuals in villages receiving the town hall treatment and individuals in control villages. However, respondents in the treatment villages are about two years older, on average, and have lived in the village about two years longer. These differences are not substantively meaningful: it is not clear why individuals who are two years older, or who have lived in the village two years longer, would respond to the town hall differently. Treatment group respondents are also slightly more likely to report having attended a town hall meeting or having listened to one on the radio. The numbers are substantively small but statistically significant, and could be due to information about the planned town hall leaking to some individuals in the village, perhaps caused by the presence of the survey enumerators in the village. The appendix includes all analyses with the

pre-treatment covariates that are not balanced between treatment and control groups (*Age, Years in Commune, Prior Town Hall, Town Hall on Radio*). For simplicity and space, the models below do not include these additional covariates.

Survey Analysis and Results

Because the randomization took place at the village level, all models include village-pair fixed effects so that we compare outcomes within village-pairs. For survey data, the analysis includes a village-level indicator of whether the respondent resides in a village that received the randomly assigned town hall event treatment. For each pair, respondents in the treatment village are compared to respondents in the control village in the same district. Because we are primarily focused on individual-level changes in attitudes, we continue to rely on individual level survey data but cluster the standard errors at the village level. Results for the survey analysis are presented from the following model:

$$\gamma_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 T_{it} + \beta_2 \gamma_{i(t-1)} + \mu_1 + \dots + \mu_5 + \varepsilon_i$$

Where γ_{it} represents each outcome variable of interest for individual i at time t . Time t indicates the follow up survey, whereas time $t-1$ indicates the baseline survey. T_{it} represents treatment status, and is equal to 1 if individual i lived in a village that received the town hall treatment. The variables μ_1 through μ_5 indicate village-pair dummies and ε_i is the error term. All comparisons are within village-pairs and robust standard errors are clustered by village-unit (technically, “commune”).

Note that many of the outcome variables in the survey are binary. Results for these variables are presented as linear probability models.¹³ When the outcome variables are ordinal,

¹³ For discussion of this application, and the use of OLS on a limited dependent variable, see (Angrist and Pischke 2008)

the results are presented from a linear model (OLS). For ease of interpretation, some of the Likert scales have been converted to binary agree/disagree (or similar) variables, and are specified as such in the tables. Each set of results is presented in a table, with combined indices also presented where appropriate.

All tables also include the baseline score for each dependent variable. It is worth noting that the pre-test surveys revealed that the participants in town hall meetings have low levels of political knowledge. For example, although most respondents have been voting since 1993, and voter turnout in Cambodia is reported to be over 90%, almost 75% of all survey respondents have never heard any of the terms used to describe the National Assembly or could not guess what the National Assembly does in an open ended question.

The coefficients on baseline measures (β_2) are omitted from the tables due to space constraints. All reported effects of the town hall meeting are “intent to treat” or ITT estimates. Because not all survey respondents actually attended the town hall event, these are likely underestimates of the effect that would have been measured if all survey respondents had attended the town hall. However, we also expect potential spillover within villages in that survey respondents who did not attend the town hall may have heard about the events in detail from family or neighbors. Across all six treatment villages, about 56 percent reported that they had attended the town hall event in the follow-up survey. Zero respondents in the control villages reported having attended the town hall event.

There are six substantive sections of the survey intended to evaluate whether the town hall influenced citizen knowledge, attitudes, or political behavior. The sections correspond with the hypotheses outlined above, labeled as (H1) Knowledge of the Political Process, (H2) Confidence in the Political Process, (H3) Familiarity with Politics, (H4) Engagement in the

Political Process, (H5) MNA Responsiveness, and (H6) Priority Issues. The analysis of the election results (H7) is presented after the survey results.

For each section of the survey corresponding to H1-H5, Tables 2-7 present the baseline average from the pre-treatment survey (pooled across all villages) and the estimated effect of the town hall treatment for each question. The results from H6 shown graphically.

To summarize the results from the survey in a manner corresponding to the hypotheses, we created a simple additive index of the percentage of questions in each section that a respondent answered positively or correctly, as appropriate to the question. These results are summarized in Figure 3. Note that although each section index varies from 0 to 1, the magnitude of the positive or negative change in the indices are not necessarily comparable across sections. The scale on which each question is coded varies, as do the number of questions. Figure 3 highlights that exposure to the town hall event caused consistent and statistically significant changes in the responses to all but one section of the survey, suggesting that the town hall meeting had some effects on knowledge and attitudes of participants, consistent with expectations. Respondents in villages exposed to the town hall were 11 percentage points more likely to respond positively to the five questions in Knowledge Index I. On the second knowledge index, respondents were 6.9 percentage points more likely to answer correctly on knowledge questions in treatment villages.

Questions on confidence in the political process were largely unaffected by the town hall meeting treatment. Although this null result was not anticipated, it may be one of the more interesting findings, in part because it indicates more generally that respondents in treatment villages were not simply more likely to give answers that they thought the enumerator wanted to hear across the survey. More importantly, the null results about confidence in the political

process may mean that citizens were not (falsely) persuaded by the town hall meeting that Cambodia is a functioning democracy. Exposure to the treatment had no effect on agreement or disagreement with statements like “I have a role to play in solving problems in my country” or “If I disagree with the government, I can vote for another party.” These null results are consistent with citizens who do not think the country’s institutions function in a democratic manner, and are aware of the limited influence they have in the governance of their country and community.

The town hall meeting treatment had statistically significant and substantively large effects on the other sections of the survey summarized in indices, including a four percentage point increase in positive responses to questions about Familiarity with Politics, 6.3 and 11.4 percentage point increases in two indices about Engagement with the Political Process, and a 21 percentage point increase in perceptions of MNA responsiveness (though this last section is nearly a manipulation check). Priority issues are not summarized in an index, though as shown below, there were large changes in the issues that respondents listed as their top three priorities caused by the treatment. In the next section these results are presented in more detail.

H1. Knowledge of the Political Process

As shown in Table 2, exposure to the town hall caused consistent and statistically significant increases in how citizens responded to questions about their political knowledge. For example, respondents in town hall villages became 15 percentage points more likely to say they have a right to talk to their MNAs about their concerns. As a sign that the knowledge changes are more than survey learning, respondents in treatment villages also become 22 percentage points more likely to be able to correctly name one or more members of the national assembly representing their province. When asked to identify whether specific items were in fact roles of the National Assembly, treated respondents became more likely to correctly identify four

responsibilities of the National Assembly, and became less likely to say that the National Assembly should “give gifts,” which was specifically stated at the town hall meeting event. There was no change in the final question item, “decide court cases,” which is not a role of the National Assembly. Presumably, being able to identify one’s MNA and awareness of the responsibilities of the National Assembly are both helpful for future electoral accountability.

H2. Confidence in the Political Process and Options

In contrast to the knowledge questions in which the effect of the town hall was uniformly positive, there is little evidence about whether exposure to the town hall leads to increased confidence in the political process. Respondents were asked about a series of statements, and responded on a scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. “Don’t Know,” “Can’t Choose” and “Decline to Answer” were coded as indifference, and placed in the middle of the five point scale, though this coding decision is not consequential for the core results.¹⁴

As summarized in Table 3, when asked about agreement or disagreement with various statements about politics, the effects of the town hall meeting on confidence in the political process or confidence in political options are not consistent across the section or estimated to be zero. For individual questions, there are few differences that are statistically significant. The town hall treatment has a substantively large estimated effect for one question: a 16 percentage point increase in agreement with the statement that “It is good for democracy in Cambodia to have opposition parties.” This message may have been communicated more clearly at the town hall meeting, though we expected change in the other questions as well. In hindsight, however, respondents did not change their existing views about democratic institutions in Cambodia and

¹⁴ Results are available upon request with these responses dropped from the analysis, and are consistent.

their own ability to influence politics. They do not become more likely to say that they can vote for another party if they disagree with government (though see the election results section below for conflicting behavioral evidence). They also do not become more likely to agree with the statement that “I can choose who represents me in government.” At first blush, the results in this section are disconcerting, but are in fact very realistic reactions.

H3. Familiarity with Politics

Questions in this section focused on whether respondents are willing to talk about politics, the frequency with which they talk about politics, and difficulty in talking about politics. Results are summarized in Table 4. For two of the three questions, exposure to the town hall led to significant improvements, with respondents saying they are more “interested in politics” and frequency with which they “talk about politics with other people,” but no change in their own evaluation of whether they would “have a hard time discussing controversial issues with your friends or neighbors if you had different political opinions.” In hindsight, this null finding is consistent with the prior section and respondent awareness of the repressive environment.

H4. Engagement in the Political Process

This section of the survey included a number of questions about respondent’s self-reported political behavior and their willingness to engage in activities like filing a case in court, signing a petition, or participating in a rally. Results are summarized in Tables 5-6. Overall, there are consistent and significant increases in engagement in the political process caused by the town hall in the expected sections.

This is an extensive section of the survey, and we summarize a subset of questions in the text, though note that reactions were remarkably consistent across this section, particularly in relation to actions under the control of individual citizens, even when one might perceive such

actions as risky. A small but surprising result is that exposure to the town hall caused a 5 percentage point increase in the likelihood that respondents said they had voted in the last elections, even though no election occurred between the pre- and post-test surveys. Misreporting one's own voting behavior is a well-known problem in survey data (Traugott and Katosh 1979). This may be interpreted as evidence that respondents in the treatment villages were more likely to give their perception of the "right" answer, though this is less of a concern in light of the null findings in the CPP section.

Exposure to the town hall also makes citizens more likely to report belonging to a political party (perhaps because parties recruited at town hall events) or a self-help group. Respondents are not more likely to join any other groups because of the town hall, which is not surprising and should have been more clearly specified in advance. Respondents were also asked about whether they are willing to engage in a number of "actions people sometimes take as citizens." The town hall treatment causes a 12 percentage point increase in the probability that a respondent "would" or "has already" signed a petition, an increase of 9 percentage points in willingness to write a letter to a government authority, and a 15 percentage point increase in willingness to attend a political party event.

H5. Responsiveness of Members of the National Assembly

Respondents were also asked to reflect on the degree to which they thought MNAs were responsive to their communities. Results are summarized in Figure 4. Note that these questions followed what was likely the first ever visit to each community by any MNA, and the first exposure of participants to multiple political parties representatives on the same footing. Respondents in treatment villages were much more likely to think that MNAs were communicating with their community, and more likely to name infrastructure or public goods

provided by the MNA to the community when asked if their MNAs had done anything for their community recently. These effects are close to a manipulation check, as MNAs did visit the village and met with local leaders during the town hall process. If there were not treatment effects in this section of the survey, it would be hard to argue that respondents had even noticed that the event had occurred.

In addition to the survey, the INGO, in collaboration with local-partner NGOs in each province, returned to all 18 villages in order to check up on progress made on issues raised and promises made by representatives. This follow up is done routinely two to three months after the town hall meetings as part of the normal program, but for this study we also asked the local NGOs to do the same follow up in the control villages. Issues that were identified during the pretreatment village selection process were used for the follow up in the control villages.¹⁵ Although issues were not identical across villages, there was considerable overlap. Out of 64 issues identified at the town hall meetings analyzed in this evaluation, the follow up found that in 31 instances action had been taken to address this issue (48%) by either local authorities, citizen organization, or higher authorities. Out of 55 issues identified in control villages, 19 issues had received attention at the time of the follow up (34%). This difference in follow up rates is suggestive that the town hall meetings made it more likely that issues within a community were addressed, though it is also clear that many important issues, such as illegal land seizure, remain unaddressed.

For example, in one district in Kratie province, five priority issues were identified in both treatment and control villages: infrastructure, land, education, healthcare, and security. Two

¹⁵ The research team confirmed that the issues identified during village selection were also raised during the town hall.

additional issues were raised in the treatment village during the town hall meeting: forestry issues and money to build a pagoda. At the town hall meeting in the treatment village, three participants asked for a bridge to their village pagoda, while another participant complained that it was difficult to transport agricultural goods to market because there was no road and no bridge across the river. Another asked that roads damaged by the floods be repaired. Two other participants asked for wells for clean water, and another asked the government to repair the road leading to the high school in order to facilitate school attendance.

At this town hall meeting, two participating MNAs responded to the participants' requests. The CPP MNA told the participants that the government is trying very hard to build infrastructure. He promised to bring the request for a bridge to the provincial governor. He said that the government was investigating flood damage, so the participants could raise their concerns to their local commune council. He also said that one infrastructure request had been submitted to the Ministry of Rural Development but was waiting approval from the government. The SRP MNA, an opposition party representative, told the town hall participants that the government has resources to build infrastructure, and he asked the government not to put restrictions on flood relief. He told the participants that they have the right to express their needs because they pay taxes, and he encouraged them not to support a party that doesn't fulfill their needs.

In the follow-up, three months after the town hall event, the CPP MNA stated that a request for a bridge had been submitted to the five year development plan and would be built depending on the local social and economic conditions and when private sector partners could be found to build it. However, the commune chief said that the bridge request needed a large amount of funds and so must be approved by the provincial authorities or the relevant ministry.

The requests for road repair, construction, and well construction had not been resolved although the local partner did witness a road construction of about 2000 meters in length in the commune funded by the commune budget.

In the paired control village, during the follow up, the commune chief reported that the road would be constructed in 2012. They asked again about issues identified prior to the town hall, particularly whether there had been any actions by their MNA (who could have become more responsive to their entire district), but there was no additional news or reports of progress on that or any other issue. This is not a smoking gun, but this and other similar qualitative evidence is consistent with the idea that the town hall meeting led MNAs to take some actions for the villages they visited, but that this interaction did not make them more generally responsive to the needs in their district in the three months after the town hall visit.

H6. Priority Issues

Respondents exposed to the town hall treatment were also more likely to report different priority issues, as shown in Figure 4. The issues discussed at each town hall meeting were different, so our expectations were not issue specific. Nevertheless, it is clear that infrastructure became much more likely to be mentioned as a top-three concern in treatment villages, while debt, discrimination, gangs, and a lack of transparency each became less likely to be mentioned. The increase in reference to infrastructure is consistent with notes about the substance covered at each town hall event, as this subject was often raised by MNAs in their remarks and was also referenced in many questions.

H7: Downstream 2013 Election Analysis and Results

The final analyses include the only behavioral indicators in the study: more than a year after the study's final town hall meeting, Cambodia held national parliamentary elections. At the

time of the study and the initial report, it was unclear that these data would be made available. We ultimately collected commune-level election results for 2013 and 2008 (pretreatment). Communes are an administrative unit slightly larger than the village that hosted the town hall meeting. Note that it was not clear how long any treatment effects from this type of intervention should be expected to last, and the event was explicitly organized outside of the campaign season. Any effects on election results would be indirect and likely resulting from a combination of the town hall meeting treatment and subsequent behavioral changes on the part of elected officials and individual villagers.

Because there are only nine village-pairs in this portion of the analysis these results should be considered suggestive. Figure 5 illustrates change in vote share in 2013 from 2008 for opposition and incumbent parties. In treatment villages, the 2013 opposition increase in vote share is positive in seven of the nine village pairs. In control villages, opposition parties improve their performance in just five of nine pairs. Figure 5 also suggests wider variance in control villages. The gains in vote share for CPP or opposition parties are not significant in a Wilcoxon signed-rank test ($z = 0.178$; $p = 0.859$), though the (nondirectional) change in vote share from 2008 is significant in the same test for both CPP ($z = -2.073$; $p = 0.0382$) and opposition parties in the same test ($z = -2.429$; $p = 0.0152$), suggesting heterogenous differences in the long term effects of the town hall on voting behavior between treatment and control villages.

With caveats for the small-N, we also estimate the following regression using raw vote totals rather than change in vote share from 2008:

$$V_{p,13} = \alpha + \beta_1 T + \beta_2 V_{p,08} + X_{13} + \mu_1 + \dots + \mu_8 + \varepsilon_i$$

Where V represents the total votes cast for party p in the 2013 elections, T is an indicator equal to one if the commune received the town hall meeting treatment, $V_{p,08}$ is the 2008 vote total for

party p , X_{13} represents total registered voters (as of 2012) from the 2013 election results, and village pair dummies are included.

As shown in Table 8, opposition political parties (combined) performed systematically better in treated communes, receiving an estimated 130 additional votes communes receiving the town hall. In contrast, the incumbent CPP performed worse in communes that received the town hall meeting treatment (about 220 fewer votes), though this estimate is not statistically distinguishable from zero with a 95% confidence interval. There is no difference in voter turnout, though given historically high rates of political participation this should have been anticipated. Election results in these nine village pairs suggest a possible increase in vote share for opposition parties, though also other difference in treatment and control villages that remain unexplained. The long interval between the town hall meetings and the 2013 election leave room for many downstream changes associated with the town hall meeting that are unlikely to be uniform across all treated villages, such as differences in responses by MNAs or variation in political mobilization within specific communities. This is not smoking gun evidence, but indicates that the treatment likely triggered some behavioral change.

Discussion and Conclusion

The evidence from this field-experimental study of an ongoing democracy-promotion program in Cambodia suggests that foreign attempts to promote democracy by increasing citizen interactions with the representatives can have positive effects on individual-level knowledge, attitudes and self-reported behaviors. Furthermore, after participating in the town hall meeting, survey respondents were more likely to know something about what their elected representatives do, more likely to report a willingness to take a variety of political actions, become somewhat more willing to discuss politics, develop improved views of the MNAs responsiveness, and

change which issues they believe should be priorities for MNAs. The 2013 election results and are suggestive of longer-term behavioral change. One of the more surprising and potentially informative findings of the study is that the town hall intervention had little effect on citizen confidence in the political process. Even after meeting directly with their elected officials and witnessing multiparty deliberation, citizens remain skeptical about the quality of democracy in Cambodia. Although they report being much more willing to take a variety of individual level actions and report higher levels of individual activity, this does not translate into any optimism about their ability to influence the political process in Cambodia, despite the formal existence of democratic institutions. Although this was not anticipated, in hindsight, it seems much more apparent that this is a very realistic view in the Cambodian context, and informative for practitioners interested in the dynamics of democracy promotion within repressive regimes.

Ideally, this study and others like it will feed into more general theories about the efficacy of democracy promotion as a part of the democratization process and as a tool of foreign policy. Citizens who experienced this program are more likely to be aware of how democracy should function, and of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, even if they are not particularly optimistic about their ability to influence politics within the existing institutions. In the event that there is an opening for political liberalization in Cambodia, they may be better equipped to hold their leaders accountable and demand more democratic political institutions.

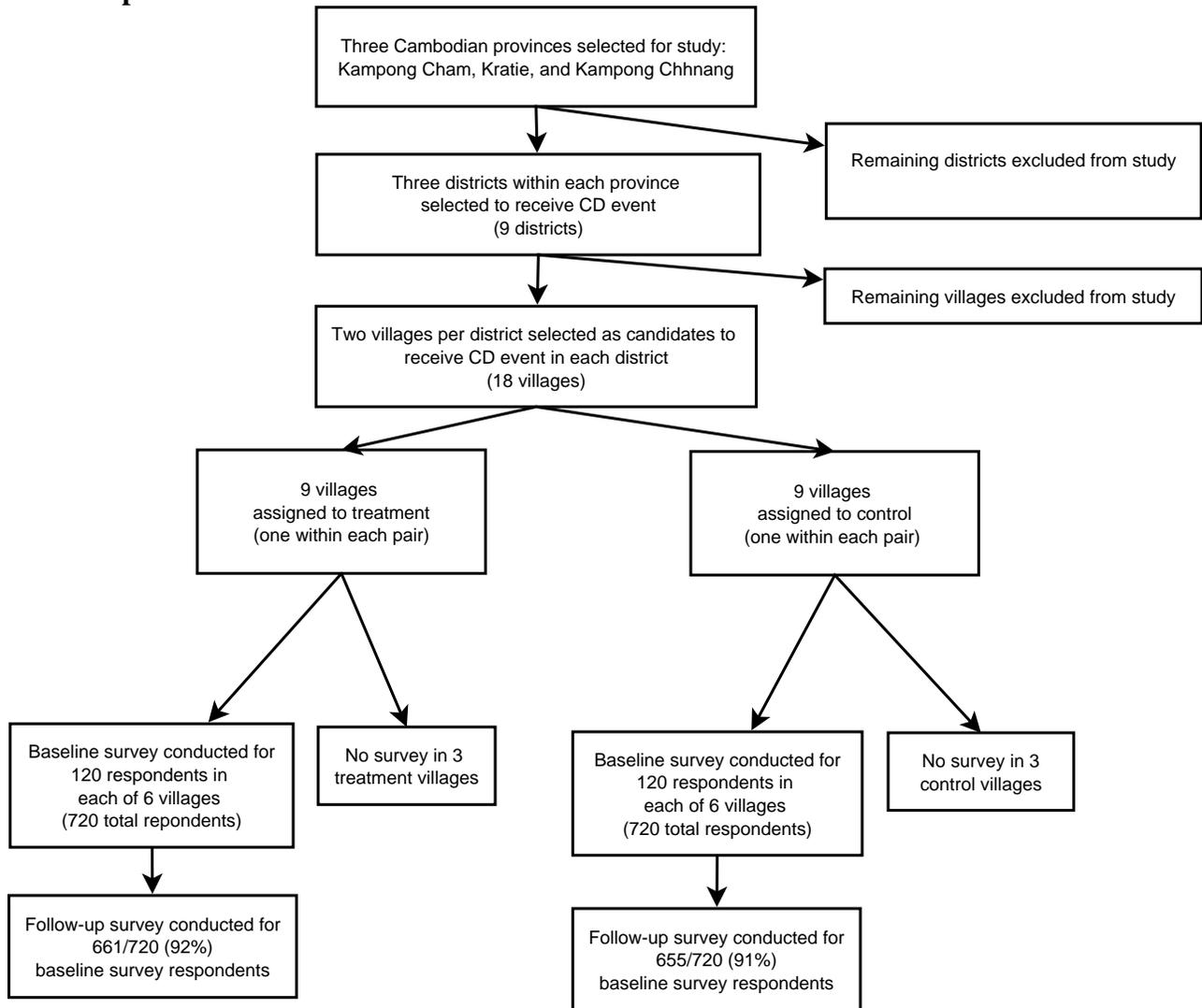
Overall, in terms of existing research on democracy promotion, there is a fairly large disconnect between the on-the-ground practice of democracy promotion and academic studies that assume a more monolithic policy. Although it is clearly important to systematically examine whether the enterprise of democracy promotion ultimately brings about full democratization, in the near term, the individual and subnational consequences of democracy promotion can be

tested more systematically, and contribute significantly to the debate about what democracy promotion can and should do.

Thus far, the tools of existing analyses obscure many of the moving parts in democracy assistance, and the assumed link between specific democracy promotion activities within a non-democracy and their intermediate effects on attitudes and behavior of individuals have been rarely evaluated systematically, with randomized control trials. Yet micro-level theorizing about the effects of democratization is possible, and could follow the path of a similar trend in development economics. Whereas much of development economics focused primarily on national level macroeconomic changes (GDP, economic growth, etc.), a recent move toward micro-level randomized interventions aimed at reducing poverty has contributed significantly to the debate (see Rodrik 2008; Karlan and Appel 2011). Thus, one plausible research agenda would, like international efforts to relieve poverty, shift some of the focus from national level theorizing and indicators, to randomized control trials and field experimental studies of specific programs and their effects at a more micro-level. The context also matters, and thinking about subnational studies of democracy promotion within different regimes types and under different levels of repression could be a fruitful research agenda.

FIGURES

Figure 1: Province to Individual Flow Chart of Potential Observations During the Course of the Experiment¹⁶



¹⁶ This method of presenting the case selection process in an experiment is based on the CONSORT standards in medical research (Gerber and Green 2012).

Figure 2: Baseline Balance Tests

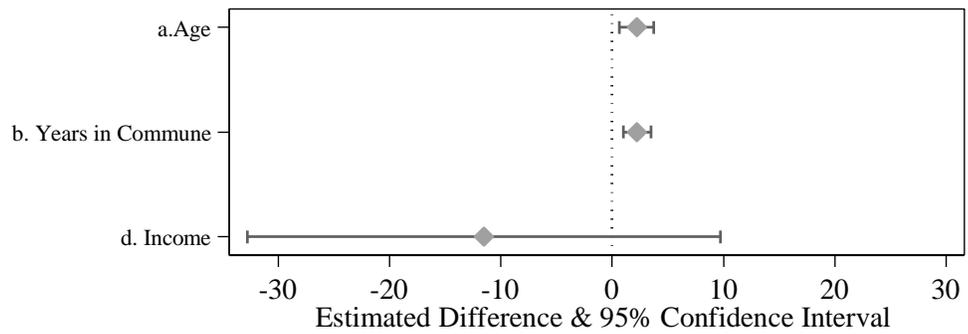
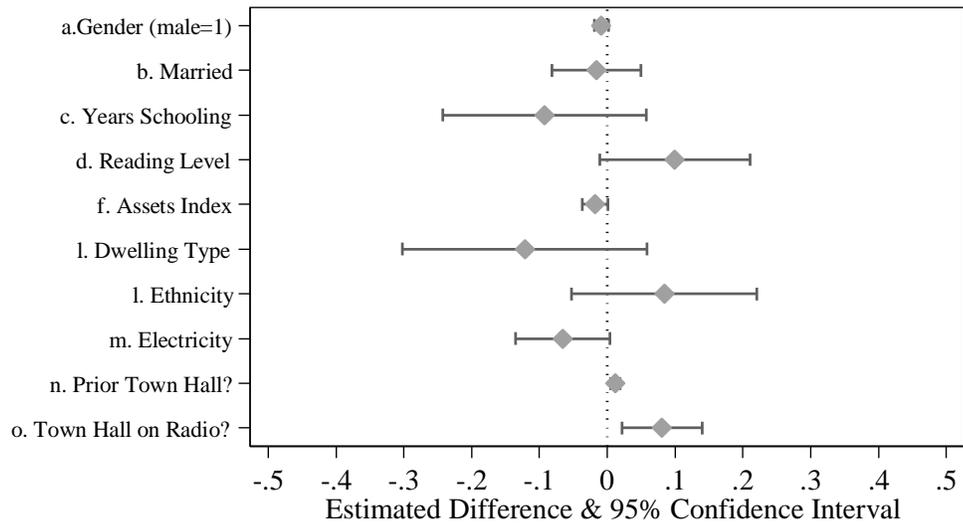
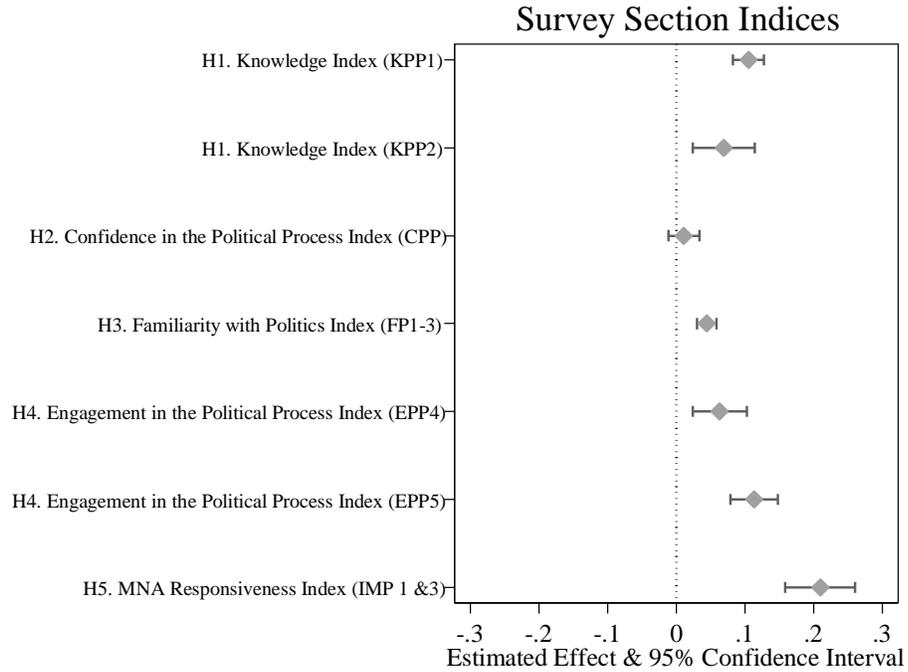
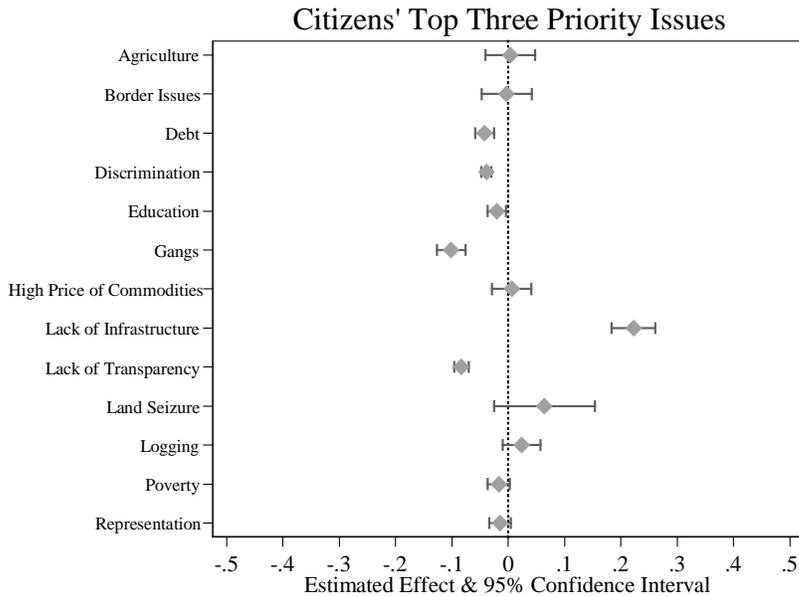


Figure 3: Summary Results by Survey Section



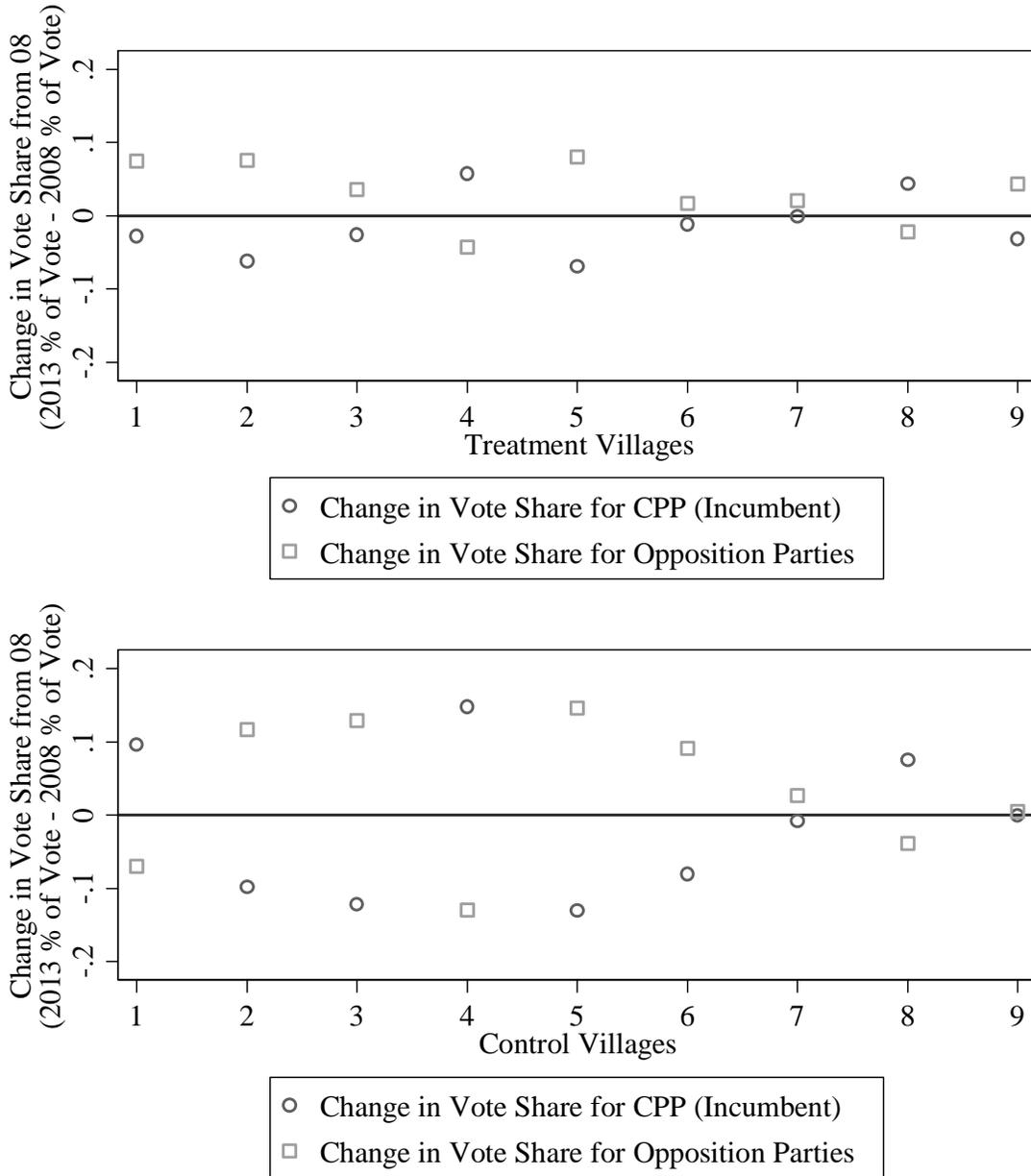
Note: This summary figure is included for purposes of highlighting the topline results from each section. Estimates across sections may not be comparable.

Figure 4: Citizen's Top Three Priority Issues



Note: This figure represents the estimated change in the probability that the listed item would be in the top three issues highlighted by respondents as priorities.

Figure 5: Change in Vote Share from 2008 to 2013



Note: Vote shares are based on total votes cast (including invalid votes), and represent change in vote share between 2008 and 2013 (2013 vote share – 2008 vote share).

TABLES

Table 1: Evaluation of Survey Attrition

	(1) Town Hall--Was Follow-Up Survey Completed?
<i>Assignment of Village to Town Hall Treatment</i>	0.008 (0.007)
Constant	0.913 (0.005)
N	1440
F	8.85
Prob > F	0.0011
R-squared	0.0075
Root MSE	0.2816

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses, with standard errors clustered by village. Coefficients for village-pair fixed effects omitted.

Table 2: Knowledge of the Political Process

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	INDEX
Survey Question:	KPP1: What does the National Assembly do?	KPP2: What does a MNA do?	KPP3: Can you name one or more MNAs from your province?	If yes (KPP3), is the answer correct?	KPP4: What are three things you believe your MNAs are supposed to do for you and your community?	KPP5: Do you have the right to talk to your MNAs about your concerns?	Index combining KPP1-5
Outcome Variable:	Response? Yes/No	Response? Yes/No	Response? Yes/No	Response Correct/Incorrect	Response? Yes/No	Yes/No	Percent positive out of five
Baseline Average	.23	.35	.26	.07	.68	.55	.39
Town Hall	0.036** (0.014)	0.184*** (0.017)	0.093** (0.032)	0.220*** (0.019)	0.107*** (0.012)	0.146*** (0.025)	0.105*** (0.010)
Constant	0.167*** (0.018)	0.215*** (0.018)	0.169*** (0.025)	0.075*** (0.012)	0.400*** (0.040)	0.343*** (0.026)	0.158*** (0.021)
Observations	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316
R-squared	0.325	0.288	0.315	0.254	0.465	0.264	0.533
Rmse	0.394	0.423	0.397	0.350	0.330	0.429	0.250
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	INDEX
Survey Question:	Are the following roles all responsibilities of the National Assembly?						Index combining all KPP6 responses, with “court” and “gifts” inverted.
	Make/ Approve Laws	Decide Court Cases	Represent the people	Give gifts	Enforce Laws	Provide Oversight of Gov’t	
Outcome Variable:	Yes/No	No/Yes	Yes/No	No/Yes	Yes/No	Yes/No	Percent correct
Baseline Average:	.63	.46	.64	.5	.63	.59	.58
Town Hall	0.089*** (0.025)	-0.004 (0.018)	0.089*** (0.023)	-0.093*** (0.026)	0.078*** (0.022)	0.087*** (0.021)	0.069*** (0.020)
Constant	0.463*** (0.046)	0.482*** (0.058)	0.455*** (0.044)	0.410*** (0.035)	0.503*** (0.053)	0.401*** (0.057)	0.250*** (0.046)
Observations	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316
R-squared	0.340	0.144	0.301	0.210	0.325	0.300	0.436
Rmse	0.376	0.376	0.396	0.400	0.385	0.405	0.234

Notes: Estimates for village-pair dummies and baseline measures of each dependent variable omitted. Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered by village. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1 For the index, the responses to “Decide Court Cases” and “Give Gifts” are inverted so that the direction of the correct answer is consistent across all components of the index.

Table 3: Confidence in the Political Process

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Survey Question:	CP1: For each statement, tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree? CP1_1: If I tell my MNAs about issues in my community, they will take action to help solve the problem.			
		CP1_2: I have a role to play in solving problems in my community.	CP1_3: I have a role to play in solving problems in my country.	CP1_4: None of the MNAs from my province are aware of issues facing the local people.
Outcome Variable:	Strongly Disagree\Somehat Disagree\Don't Know\Somehat Agree\ Strongly Agree (-2 to 2)			
Baseline Average	.92	.53	.30	.13
Town Hall	0.102 (0.057)	-0.075 (0.073)	0.020 (0.088)	0.014 (0.060)
Constant	0.243*** (0.047)	0.268 (0.165)	0.105 (0.149)	0.259*** (0.051)
Observations	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316
R-squared	0.286	0.253	0.258	0.131
Rmse	1.117	1.344	1.407	1.480

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	INDEX
Survey Question:	For each statement, tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?						Ten question index (CP1 & CP2).
	CP2_1: It is good for democracy in Cambodia to have opposition parties.	CP2_2: All the opposition parties do is just 'criticize.'	CP2_3: I can discuss political issues openly in my community.	CP2_4: If I disagree with the government, I can vote for another party.	CP2_5: It does not matter how I vote, nothing will change.	CP2_6: I can choose who represents me in government.	
Outcome Variable:	Strongly Disagree\Somehat Disagree\Don't Know\Somehat Agree\ Strongly Agree (-2 to 2)						% of 10 scored "Strongly Agree" or Somewhat Agree"
Baseline Average	.62	.26	.57	.8	.31	1.03	.64
Town Hall	0.162** (0.065)	-0.041 (0.056)	-0.047 (0.085)	0.107 (0.090)	-0.036 (0.089)	0.089 (0.052)	0.011 (0.010)
Constant	0.120** (0.044)	0.152*** (0.045)	0.231 (0.181)	0.512*** (0.045)	0.369** (0.158)	0.314*** (0.086)	0.244*** (0.030)
Observations	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316
R-squared	0.344	0.118	0.229	0.271	0.146	0.292	0.416
rmse	1.231	1.487	1.357	1.260	1.519	1.151	0.189

Notes: Estimates for village-pair dummies and baseline measures of each dependent variable omitted. Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered by village. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. For the CP1 and CP2 Index, all variables are converted to such binary measures such that somewhat and strongly agree are coded as one, and all other responses are zero. CP2_2 and CP2_5 were inverted for consistency.

Table 4: Familiarity with Politics

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Survey Question:	FP1: How interested are you in politics?	FP2: How often do you talk about politics with other people, such as friends or neighbors?	FP3: Would you have a hard time discussing controversial issues with your friends or neighbors if you had different political opinions?	Familiarity with Politics Index
Outcome Variable:	I reject politics/ Not Interested/ Don't Know/ Somewhat Interested/ Very Interested (-2 to 2)	Don't Know/ Never/ Rarely/ A few times a month/ A few times a week/ Everyday (0-5)	Don't Know/ Very hard/ A bit hard/ Not too hard/ Not hard at all (0-4)	Percent of three questions with positive response
Baseline Average	1.1	1.8	2.4	.90
Town Hall	0.228*** (0.063)	0.168*** (0.041)	0.005 (0.053)	0.044*** (0.006)
Constant	0.241** (0.103)	0.641*** (0.097)	1.464*** (0.096)	-0.055** (0.022)
Observations	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316
R-squared	0.254	0.361	0.210	0.134
Rmse	0.939	0.774	0.979	0.247

Notes: Estimates for village-pair dummies and baseline measures of each dependent variable omitted. Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered by village. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5: Engagement in the Political Process

	(1)	(2)
Survey Question:	EPP1: Did you vote in the last national election in 2008?	EPP2: Do you intend to vote in the Commune Council election in 2012?
Outcome Variable:	Yes/No	Yes/No
Baseline Average	.84	.97
Town Hall	0.048*** (0.012)	0.013** (0.005)
Constant	0.185*** (0.033)	0.645*** (0.06)
Observations	1,316	1,316
R-squared	0.582	0.130
Rmse	0.244	0.159

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	INDEX
Question:	EPP3: Do you belong to any groups or associations in your neighborhood?										
	Religious Assoc.	Cultural Assoc.	NGO	Develop. Assoc.	Farmers Assoc.	Fisher's Assoc.	Forest Comm. Assoc.	Political Party	Self-Help Group	Other	Percent "yes"
Outcome:	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	
Baseline Av.	.06	.02	.05	.06	.1	.3	.12	.18	.16	.01	.08
Town Hall	0.018 (0.011)	-0.003 (0.003)	0.007 (0.012)	0.021 (0.013)	-0.010 (0.018)	-0.017 (0.014)	-0.038 (0.023)	0.063*** (0.012)	0.095** (0.041)	0.009 (0.006)	0.010 (0.009)
Constant	0.018 (0.010)	0.003 (0.003)	0.002 (0.006)	-0.002 (0.008)	0.006 (0.011)	0.009 (0.009)	0.019 (0.018)	0.059* (0.030)	0.095 (0.068)	-0.004 (0.006)	0.015 (0.011)
Obs.	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316
R-squared	0.217	0.046	0.226	0.173	0.172	0.494	0.504	0.327	0.294	0.490	0.422
Rmse	0.188	0.101	0.187	0.202	0.264	0.138	0.236	0.292	0.325	0.0785	0.0872

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Question:	EPP4: I'm going to list some other actions people sometimes take as citizens. I will mention some of these actions and ask you to please tell me if you have already done it (in the last ten years), would do it, it is not allowed, or would never do it?					
	File a case in court	Attend a political party event	Participate in a peaceful demonstration	Participate in a strike in the workplace	Sign/thumb-print a petition	Write a letter/complaint to a government authority
Outcome Variable:	Probability of "I would do it" or "I have already done it."					
Baseline Average:	.37	.5	.22	.17	.5	.34
Town Hall	0.090*** (0.020)	0.149*** (0.014)	0.044** (0.017)	0.025* (0.014)	0.118*** (0.024)	0.090*** (0.028)
Constant	0.357*** (0.044)	0.326*** (0.033)	0.158*** (0.020)	0.159*** (0.011)	0.327*** (0.022)	0.248*** (0.061)
Observations	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316
R-squared	0.215	0.166	0.214	0.162	0.158	0.211
Rmse	0.444	0.458	0.396	0.384	0.459	0.440

Notes: Estimates for village-pair dummies and baseline measures of each dependent variable omitted. Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered by village. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6: Engagement in the Political Process

	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	INDEX
EPP4 continued from previous table							
	Attend a Commune Council meeting	Speak at a Commune Council Meeting	File a Complaint with the Commune Council	Write a letter or contact a MNA	Visit the NA or the provincial office of the NA	Distribute information on political issues.	Index of 12 potential actions
Outcome Variable:	Probability of "I would do it" or "I have already done it."						Percent =1 across the 12 actions
Baseline Average:	.83	.5	.35	.28	.34	.3	.34
Town Hall	0.040* (0.022)	-0.021 (0.030)	0.042 (0.029)	0.105*** (0.022)	0.114*** (0.026)	0.083*** (0.016)	0.063*** (0.018)
Constant	0.478*** (0.049)	0.351*** (0.046)	0.245*** (0.029)	0.155*** (0.012)	0.185*** (0.014)	0.160*** (0.020)	0.247*** (0.018)
Observations	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316
R-squared	0.177	0.223	0.220	0.194	0.187	0.202	0.288
Rmse	0.356	0.441	0.437	0.427	0.440	0.412	0.259

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	INDEX
	EPP5: People sometimes need help to resolve personal, family, or village problems, or problems with government officials and government policies. For the following people and offices please tell me if you have already, would consider, are not allowed, would never, or do not know if you would contact them about these types of problems.								
	Village Chief	Commune Councilor/ Chief	District official/ District Council	Provincial official/ Provincial Council	NGO office	Political Party Office	Commune or District Administrative Police	Member of the National Assembly	Index
Outcome Variable:	Probability of "I would do it" or "I have already done it."								Percent of 8 actions
Baseline Average:	.89	.86	.68	.62	.65	.48	.74	.61	.69
Town Hall	0.068*** (0.014)	0.099*** (0.018)	0.147*** (0.025)	0.133*** (0.023)	0.177*** (0.017)	0.186*** (0.024)	0.094*** (0.018)	0.222*** (0.025)	0.114*** (0.016)
Constant	0.625*** (0.047)	0.610*** (0.049)	0.566*** (0.066)	0.471*** (0.076)	0.449*** (0.025)	0.290*** (0.015)	0.455*** (0.047)	0.349*** (0.018)	0.369*** (0.041)
Observations	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316	1,316
R-squared	0.174	0.184	0.186	0.236	0.228	0.254	0.245	0.327	0.425
rmse	0.251	0.285	0.393	0.409	0.407	0.432	0.360	0.391	0.239

Notes: Estimates for village-pair dummies and baseline measures of each dependent variable not reported. Robust standard errors omitted, clustered by village. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 7: MNA Responsiveness

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Survey Question:	IMP1: Do your MNAs communicate with your community about what they are doing in parliament?	IMP3: Can you think of any MNAs activities on behalf of your community in the last 6 months?	MNA Responsiveness Index
Outcome Variable:	Yes/No	Yes/No	Percent positive response of two questions
Baseline Average	.16	.085	.49
Town Hall	0.271*** (0.027)	0.150*** (0.03)	0.210*** (0.023)
Constant	0.047 (0.030)	0.459*** (0.045)	0.258*** (0.023)
Observations	1,316	1,316	1,316
R-squared	0.178	0.167	0.239
Rmse	0.379	0.348	0.269

Notes: Estimates for village-pair dummies and baseline measures of each dependent variable not reported. Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered by village. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 8: Downstream Effects on 2013 Election Results

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Total Votes for All Opposition Parties. '13	Total Votes for Incumbent '13	Total Votes Cast '13
Town Hall	131.556** (45.324)	-219.438 (179.821)	-102.805 (199.736)
Total Registered Voters (as of '12)	0.248*** (0.029)	0.186 (0.103)	0.371* (0.159)
Total Votes for All Opposition Parties '08	0.246* (0.108)		
Total Votes for CPP (incumbent) '08		0.133 (0.469)	
Total Votes Cast '08			0.327 (0.335)
Constant	-202.343** (59.908)	1,485.512* (749.881)	1,147.136 (705.533)
Observations	18	18	18
R-squared	0.997	0.927	0.977
rmse	70.94	346.2	362.6

Notes: Estimates for village-pair fixed effects not reported. Robust standard errors omitted. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

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