Delivering Justice to the Poor: Theory and Experimental Evidence from Liberia

Justin Sandefur[y] Bilal Siddiqi[z]

March 15, 2015

Abstract

Can progressive legal reform improve the lives of the poor in places where formal legal institutions have limited reach? We develop a simple model of forum choice highlighting the tradeo faced by poor and socially disadvantaged plainti s between repressive, but proximate customary law, and a more progressive, but expensive and punitive formal justice system. We test our predictions using new survey data on over 4,500 legal disputes in rural Liberia, and a randomized trial of legal aid using paralegals trained in mediation and the formal law. Consistent with our model, plainti s facing bias under the custom | e.g., women suing men | are more likely to opt out of the customary system in favor of formal courts or mediation, and are relatively happier when they do. On average, plainti s o ered legal aid are signi cantly more satis ed with case outcomes, pay fewer bribes, and report greater food security.

Keywords: con ict, forum shopping, legal institutions, Liberia, rule of law

JEL Classi cation Numbers: C93, K40, O17, Z13

We thank Andrew Zeitlin for helping conceive this study, and Chris Blattman for generous advice and assistance during its implementation. Oxford University's Centre for the Study of African Economies and The Carter Center provided invaluable logistical support. Deborah Isser, Steve Lubkemann, and Saah N'Tow kindly shared their qualitative data. We received excellent comments from Eli Berman, Lorenzo Casaburi, Paul Collier, Stefan Dercon, Misha Drugov, James Fearon, James Fenske, Tarek Ghani, Grant Gordon, Erica Harper, Maria Ana Lugo, Edward Miguel, Gaurav Nayyar, Laura Paler, Lant Pritchett, Gautam Rao, Tristan Reed, Jakob Svensson, Jeremy Weinstein, Alaina Varvaloucas, as well as seminar participants at Berkeley, Oxford, Stanford, APSA, CSAE, DFID, MWIEDC, WGAPE, and the World Bank. Michael Best, Gray Clevenger, Casey McHugh, Dariusz Dziewanski, Grant Gordon, Julian Graef, Yuequan Guo, Johnny Ndebe, Matthew Siakor, and Alaina Varvaloucas led various stages of data collection. The Carter Center, IDLO, the Open Society Foundation, the UN Peace Building Fund, and DFID provided generous funding for the eldwork. Siddiqi acknowledges support from AFOSR and the AMID network. The views expressed are not necessarily those of any funder, and all errors and omissions are our own.

[y]Center for Global Development. jsandefur@cgdev.org.

[z]World Bank. bsiddiqi@worldbank.org.

1 Introduction

A broad body of evidence developed in recent years suggests that the quality of formal legal institutions is a primary driver of economic growth (Acemoglu et al., 2001;

free legal assistance for legal problems or disputes of any type, including debt disputes, land disputes, criminal acts of which they were either accused or victims, and a host of family and custody-related disputes. Half the participants were randomly selected to receive three months of assistance from community paralegals trained in mediation and legal advocacy.[1]

Overall, we find significant impacts on legal and socioeconomic outcomes on the study population. Legal aid yields a large, statistically significant increase in the proportion of clients who report that their case outcome was fair, who are satisfied with the result and feel it left them better off, and who report a good relationship with the other party after the resolution of the case. The program also produced a 10 percentage-point reduction in the share of clients who paid a bribe during the treatment period.

Our findings relate to a growing literature examining the design of development programs in fragile and post-conflict environments.[2] For instance, the World Bank and other development agencies have invested heavily in "community-driven development and reconstruction" (CDD/R) programs which aim aim to increase social cohesion and reduce violence by replacing indigenous local institutions with *de novo* organizational forms that are more democratic and representative. A growing body of evidence from large-scale randomized controlled trials of this approach have shown mixed and often disappointing results in achieving lasting institutional change (Beath et al., 2012; Casey et al., 2012; Coleman and Lopez, 2010; Fearon et al., 2009).

Other efforts have focused on reforming rather than replacing customary institutions, for instance through curriculum interventions. Blattman et al. (2013) find a significant reduction in unresolved land disputes and property destruction due to community-level training in alternative dispute resolution in Liberia, but mostly null effects on economic behavior, community-level violence, and norms about legal dispute resolution. Staub and Pearlman (2009) and Paluck (2009) find positive effects from curricular interventions on survey measures of social cohesion in Rwanda, but provide no evidence of changes in behavior or real-world outcomes.

Relative to these other common programmatic models among development organizations, the legal empowerment intervention examined here seeks to "pull" rather than "push" social change by expanding the scope of meaningful institutional choice faced by rural Liberians. This emphasis on facilitating choice and competition between institutions differs from programs attempting to either reform or replace customary institutions.

In the remainder of the paper, we lay out our conceptual framework for thinking about the trade-offs faced by plaintiffs who have suffered some legal harm in rural Liberia. Section 2 provides background on customary and formal law in Liberia. Section 3 lays out a formal game-theoretic model of the interactions between plaintiffs, defendants, and customary and formal judges. The

---

1

empirical analysis is then divided into two parts. First, in Section 4 we use baseline, observational data on 4,500 disputes to test several predictions of the model. Second, in Section 5, we present the results of a randomized impact evaluation of a legal aid program designed to overcome the trade-o s discussed in the model. Section 6 concludes.

2 Context

Liberia has one of the poorest populations in the world, ranking 182 out of 187 countries in the 2011 Human Development Index. Decades of unrest and civil war have led to \an almost unanimous distrust of Liberia's courts, and a corresponding collapse of the rule of law" (ILAC, 2003). Formal courts are hard to access, expensive, and slow; few justice practitioners are legally literate; and the laws and procedures of the formal system are alien to most Liberians (Isser et al., 2009).

In contrast, the customary system is both accessible and culturally acceptable, but operates under patriarchal and communal norms rather than the notions of individual rights enshrined in Liberian statutory law (ICG, 2006). Recent anthropological research documents a range of customary practices that violate international standards, such as *sassywood* (trial by ordeal), as well as local laws and practices that run contrary to generally accepted notions of women's rights and the rights of vulnerable groups (Isser et al., 2009; Pajibo, 2008).

Since the end of the civil war in 2003, the formal law is on the march. The national government has passed progressive legislation reforming the content of the formal law (e.g., banning trial by ordeal, criminalizing statutory rape, etc.) and pushed to extend the reach of formal courts into areas previously under customary jurisdiction. Rapid changes in statutory law and in the allocation of judicial and administrative responsibilities have created widespread confusion about the substance of the law, the proper passage of appeal, and the rights and responsibilities of di erent actors in the justice system (Isser et al., 2009).

Liberians thus have to negotiate a confusing legally dualistic system that o ers starkly di erent choices in terms of the costs and quality of justice provided. To understand these choices further, we turn brie y to the history of legal dualism in Liberia, and its contemporary manifestation.

2.1 Legal dualism

The history of customary law and legal dualism in Africa is well-documented in anthropological scholarship, with scholars largely agreed that these laws were formed out of struggle between ercely competing groups. In mInmhe as

To further complicate matters, in reality there exist \a broad range of actors who have no legally or socially recognized roles in formal, state-backed-customary, or even community-based-customary justice institutions become involved in, and are perceived to be able and likely to in uence, the resolution of cases ranging from the most trivial to the most serious" (Isser et al., 2009, p. 23-24). Within the village, such actors include village elders, who advise and regulate

law may recognize the right of a husband to beat or demand sexual intercourse from his spouse, limit land rights for widows, ethnic minorities, or persons born outside the village, and so forth. For instance, among the Kwa-speaking people in Liberia, sharing a kola nut is a popular form of dispute resolution based on forgiveness, where the perpetrator o ers provide kola nuts, cane juice (a local alcoholic drink) or a chicken or goat to the aggrieved party. The aggrieved party is under tremendous social pressure to accept the o ering \[i]n most instances. . . as a result of social coercion" (Pajibo, 2008, p. 16).

Furthermore, the system \utilizes a range of practices that violate international standards, most prominently, trial by ordeal and practices that violate women's rights" (Isser et al., 2009, p. 3). Though trial by ordeal (*sassywood*) is illegal, most ethnic groups use it to settle disputes involving property theft, witchcraft/sorcery, or death. The practice is primarily used to identify the perpetrator of a crime, but in itself constitutes \cruel and inhuman punishment". In a typical case:

> The alleged perpetrator is made to imbibe a mixture or brew made from indigenous

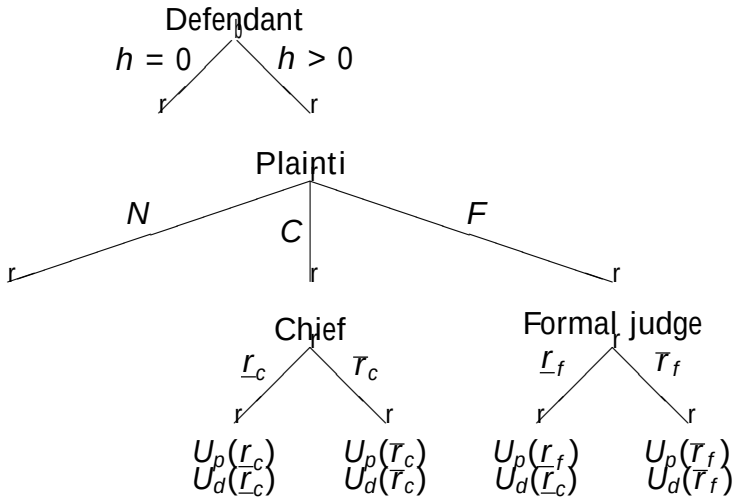


Figure 1: Game Tree

Moult (2009) notes that women in South Africa take cases to traditional authorities in part because of \power relations within their community and economic dependence on their husbands", and questions \whether informal systems can or will stop forms of violence against women" (Moult, 2009, pp. 9, 19).

The above discussion yields two main stylized facts, which we take as the starting points for the formal modeling exercise in the next section:

1. Despite o ering recourse to more progressive, rights-based law, the formal legal system is more costly to access, and less able to provide redress to aggrieved parties or victims of crime. The punitive justice it metes out is at odds with the local emphasis on social reconciliation and harmony.

2. The customary system, though cheaper and more culturally acceptable, is highly susceptible to elite capture and operates under patriarchal, gerontocratic and communal norms that often violate the individual rights of the socially disadvantaged.

The community paralegal intervention studied in this paper attempts to address these tradeo s, by providing an alternative delivery mechanism for the formal law that bypasses the institutional constraints of the formal system, o ering lower-cost access and emphasizing reconciliation and redress over punishment.

3 A model of forum shopping

To motivate our theoretical setup, we distinguish two separate approaches towards conceptions of legal pluralism in academic and policy debates. The rst view maintains a strict hierarchy between the systems, seeing the custom as a distinctly second-best alternative to the formal law.

Initiatives promoting `access to justice' often equate justice with formal law, and implicitly assume that agents make a constrained choice between forums, where nancial costs and ignorance of the law are the most commonly cited obstacles to the formal system. This approach is what Golub (2003) terms `rule of law orthodoxy' in development thinking. This orthodox approach focuses on the promulgation of new laws and reforming formal institutions, often taking for granted the supremacy of the judiciary and central role of trained lawyers.

A second view, with a long pedigree among Western scholars of African law (Adinkrah, 1991; Allott, 1968), contrasts the punitive, \zero-sum, winner-take-all model of justice" of formal courts with an often romanticized view of customary law in which \a high value is placed on reconciliation and everything is done to avoid the severance of social relationships" (Stevens, 2000).

We organize these competing thoughts in a simple economic model of forum shopping that allows for individual agency by plainti s in choosing forums, as is implicit in policy debates about access to justice, while also allowing for the positive features of customary justice stressed by many legal anthropologists. In the model, individuals trade o the social bias of the customary system with its relative e ciency and `remedial' approach towards justice. This incorporates basic insights from the law and economics literature (Aldashev et al., 2012; Becker, 1968; Polinsky and Shavell, 2007) as well as contemporary anthropological work (Isser et al., 2009).

The model developed below attempts to capture the tradeo s listed in Section 2 | between the formal system's punitive approach and high costs, and the customary system's bias against the socially disadvantaged. The small number of recent papers examining the workings of legal dualism in a developing-country context have focused primarily on the strategic actions of judges rather than disputants. Notably, Aldashev et al. (2012) highlight the strategic actions of customary justices attempting to retain power in the shadow of the formal law. In the extreme, they posit that progressive legal reforms may back re by encouraging customary institutions to impose stronger penalties on individuals who exit. Similarly, Sterck and Aoust (2012) demonstrate how competition between forums may contribute to rent-seeking and bribery. As these issues are beyond the scope of our empirical analysis, here we focus exclusively on the strategic choices of individual plainti s.

3.1 Setup

We model three stages of a dispute between a plainti and a defendant, and the strategic verdicts of a customary chief and a formal magistrate. The timing of the game is as follows. Defendants and plainti s begin with identical utility endowments u_0. First, the defendant (D) chooses whether or not to in ict some harm $h \in [0; u_0]$ on the plainti (P). We conceive of harm broadly, to encompass both crimes and economic losses resulting in civil disputes.

Second, in response to this harm, the plainti chooses whether to carry the case to either the chief (C), the formal magistrate (F), or neither (N). Finally, the chosen judge o ers a judgment, or legal remedy (r), which is essentially an o er to redistribute resources from the defendant to

the plainti . Judges' decisions are nal and, thus, judges lack any ability to commit to deviations from their ex post optimal remedies.[3] We assume that all parties possess full information about each other's utility functions and the structure of payo s.

In addition to the forum shopping decision, there are just two choice variables in the model to consider, denoted by roman letters: h denotes harm in icted on the plainti by the defendant, and r_j denotes the remedy granted by judge j to the plainti . Subscripts i and j index the disputants and judges (or forums), respectively. The exogenous parameters of the model that will determine players' strategies are denoted by Greek letters: $_j$ denotes the bias of judge j; $>$ 1=2 denotes pro-defendant bias; and $_j$ measures `leakage' in the judge's remedy, with $>$ 0 implying the plainti 's utility from r_j is less than the cost to the defendant. can be conceived of simply as an endowment of personal characteristics (sex, wealth, power, ethnicity) that the custom is more likely to reward. can be conceived of as a cost to access the formal court paid by the plainti that does not accrue to the defendant. Conversely, but also consistent with our model, may capture the punitive nature of remedies in the formal system, in which the cost borne by the defendant (say physical punishment) does not deliver material gain to the plainti .

The core conceit of the model rests on two key assumptions about institutional di erences between the customary and formal courts, which derive from the stylized facts listed at the end of Section 2.2. Our rst basic assumption relates to judges' preferences or biases.

Assumption 1 *The custom is biased against certain identi able social and demographic groups.*

Judges choose remedies r to maximize social welfare, u_j, subject to their own biases. Biases, denoted by $_j$ 2 $[0;1]$, may be pro-defendant ($_j$ $>$ 1=2) or pro-plainti ($_j$ $<$ 1=2). In the empirical analysis the direction of the bias will hinge on disputant characteristics. In accordance with the full information assumption, players also know each judge's biases in advance of making decisions about in icting harm or choosing a forum. Judges are primarily concerned with rectifying inequalities between the disputants:

$$\max_{r_j} u_j = (1 \quad _j) \ln u_p(r_j) + \quad _j \ln u_d(r_j) \tag{1}$$

Assuming *ex ante* equality, this amounts to repairing harms in icted by defendants on plainti s. All other things being equal, judges prefer peace to con ict, and reparation to impunity. We assume that imposing remedies is costless to judges.

Our second basic assumption is technological, relating to the remedies at the judges' disposal.

Assumption 2

This ine ciency comes both from the overall higher costs borne by the plainti in accessing the formal system, and the punitive nature of formal justice that is less able to provide redress. It is re ected in the structure of the payo s to the two disputants. Defendants derive bene t from the harm h, and experience the full disutility of the remedy r_j in both systems:

$$u_D = \begin{cases} u_0 + h & \text{if } j = N \\ u_0 + h & \end{cases}$$

biased chief imposes a smaller penalty on the defendant ($\frac{r_C}{} = 2u_0$), and the formal remedy increases with the `leakiness' of the formal system ($\frac{r_F}{} = 1$). In both systems, greater harm necessitates a higher remedy ($\frac{r_C}{h} = 1$ and $\frac{r_F}{h} = 2$) .

Stage 2: Plainti chooses forum. In the second stage, a forward-looking plainti with knowledge of the judges' remedies chooses $j\ 2\ (N; C; F)$ by comparing her utility in each potential forum. This is equivalent to comparing the remedy she would receive from the chief, r_c, and the remedy from the magistrate accounting for `leakage', . Remedies in turn depend on and (equations 4 and 5). Comparing the utilities implied by these options and simplifying, the thresholds at which P switches between systems are given by

$$= \quad 4u_0 \qquad 2u_0 \tag{6}$$

$$= \quad 2h \tag{7}$$

$$= \quad \frac{1}{2} + \frac{h}{2u_0} \tag{8}$$

Equation 6 determines the choice between F and C, equation 7 between F and N, and equation 8 between N and C. Figure 3 plots each of these conditions in (;) space. Each region displays P's ordering of utilities for the combination of conditions that de ne the region. Given the structure of the game, P will choose her rst-best choice of forum in every instance. The shaded regions correspond to conditions under which P

and socio-economic characteristics. Prediction (3) is driven by levels of bias in the customary system, which are determined by the *gap* between the wealth or privilege of the plainti and defendant.

Prediction 3. *As pro-defendant bias in the customary system ( ) increases, the probability of reporting declines, and the probability of carrying the case to the formal system increases.*

Thus we would expect, for example, a female plainti to face greater bias in the customary system when pursuing a case against a male defendant, and consequently be more likely to take a male defendant to the formal system than a female defendant, or else not report the dispute at all. Similarly, we expect poor or otherwise disempowered plainti s to be more likely to take wealthier and more powerful peers to the formal sector. The source of this prediction can be seen by comparing the solutions to the judges' maximization problem in Equations 4 and 5.

Stage 1: Defendant chooses harm. In the rst stage, D will choose a level of harm that gives him the greatest utility conditional on his knowledge of P's future forum choice. We can rank D's utilities from each forum in a similar manner to P's. Figure 4 overlays a partial ranking of D's utilities onto Figure 3. Depending on the exogenously determined values of and , D will be located at some combination of (;) in one of three relevant regions X, YY' or ZZ'. Before we examine D's choice of h, it is worth noting that the only region where D could end up in the formal system is ZZ', and in this region his utility is strictly less than if he were in N or C. In contrast, since P always chooses the forum that maximizes her utility, at the margin we expect P to be indi erent between forums. Thus we can make another prediction:

Prediction 4. *The customary system provides greater aggregate welfare than the formal system, in that the sum of the utilities of P and D are higher. Furthermore, for above some threshold (i.e., a costly, ine cient, or punitive formal sector), D is strictly worse o if P chooses the formal sector.*

Note that we make no unambiguous prediction about the utility of the plainti in the formal versus the customary system. Plainti s rationally choose their forum conditional on exogenously determined and as such, we would expect utility-maximizing agents to be indi erent at the margin.

But prediction (4) suggests clearly that the subjective satisfaction of defendants would be lower in the formal system. Furthermore, the combination of (*a*) being taken to the formal system, and (*b*) demographic characteristics that suggest the defendant would have received a favorable outcome in the customary system should produce a strongly negative outcome in defendants' eyes.

We return now to D's choice of harm. In the world of pro-plainti bias, X, where $< \frac{1}{2}$, D's choice of h will not in uence P's forum choice | P will always choose the chief and D will always receive $u_D(r_C) = 2\ u_0$. Thus if $< \frac{1}{2}$, D's choice of harm is irrelevant, and P always chooses $j = C$.

If bias is pro-defendant ($> \frac{1}{2}$), D's choice of h will allow him to determine the region he occupies, by moving the $= 2h$ and $= \frac{1}{2} + \frac{h}{2u_0}$ lines along the $= 4u_0 \quad 2u_0$ line | an increase in h will reduce the \no reporting" region $Y'Z'$.

In this world, if D nds himself in region YY', his choice of h will determine whether | for a given combination of (;) | P will choose the chief or not report at all. By setting a low h, D can increase the size of the \no reporting" region su ciently to ensure that P does not report, and vice versa. However, no matter what he does he cannot get his rst-best choice because P's interests are dramatically opposed to his. In sub-region Y, where $j = C$, the chief's bias towards D is not high enough to make up for the loss of the remedy transferred to P, so $u_D(r_N) > u_D(r_C)$. Conversely in Y', where $j = N$, the chief's bias is high enough to more than make up for the remedy, so $u_D(r_N) > u_D(r_C)$. Thus while D can in uence P's forum choice, no matter what level of h he sets he will always get suboptimal utility.

Finally, assume that D is in region ZZ'. His choice of h will determine whether | for a given combination of (;) | P will choose the magistrate or not report at all. In both subregions Z and Z', $u_D(r_N) > u_D(r_F)$, i.e. that D always prefers non-reporting. This implies that D will choose a low enough h to expand the \no reporting" region so that he ends up in region Z', where $j = N$. Simply p.f 10.641 0 Td [(will)-326(16oZd [1-431.u3.02 T0)-313([1TJ/F179(wh]TJ/F20 11.9552 Tf 41here)cF2

3.3 Introducing legal aid

We consider now the predictions of the model for the randomized impact evaluation. Specifically, we introduce into the model an informal legal-aid program which, on the one hand, is based on statutory legal principles (i.e., exhibiting low bias,) and, on the other hand, is *pro bono* and focuses on non-punitive resolution of disputes (i.e., low leakage,). This description is in line with our *pro bono* paralegal program, which is described more fully in Section 5.1.

Clearly, such a program would strictly dominate the F for both P and D, since neither has to bear the costs associated with the formal system. Similarly, P would now prefer the customary system if and only if she is in region X, where bias is pro-plaintiff. D would have the exact opposite preferences. It is worth noting that in this simple setup, the result is identical whether we consider legal aid to be a new forum L, with $= \frac{1}{2}$ and $= 0$ that strictly dominates F, or simply a resource transfer to P equal to that effectively sets formal system `leakiness' to zero.

This generates the following three predictions for the randomized evaluation.

Prediction 5. *Take-up: A disproportionate share of disputes taken to the program would, absent legal aid, not have been taken to any forum.*

The model is not unambiguous on this point, but prediction (5) emerges from a combination of the theoretical model and what we know about actual forum-shopping behavior in the observational data { i.e., a parameterized version of the model. Of cases taken the customary system, legal aid will only be attractive when is low. For cases taken to the formal system, it depends on whether we conceptualize legal aid as a substitute for the formal system (i.e., as a competing forum L) or as an input into it (i.e. as a resource transfer). In the first case, *pro bono* legal aid is always a better option, so the number of cases going to the formal system would go down. In the second, legal aid lowers formal system costs, thereby increasing reporting to the formal system. Thus predictions on formal system reporting are ambiguous. In contrast, there is a large number of disputes not reported, and *pro bono* legal aid lowers the two hurdles to reporting in the model: bias and cost.

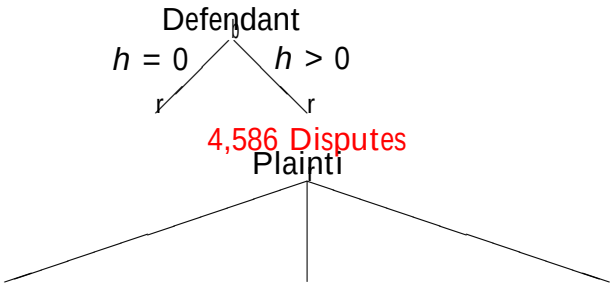
Turning from take-up patterns to the effect of the program conditional on take-up, the model generates two predictions about treatment effects on the treated.

Prediction 6. *Treatment effects: Legal aid will increase plaintiffs' payoffs.*

Prediction 7. *Heterogeneous treatment effects: Plaintiffs facing disadvantageous bias in the customary system will benefit more from legal aid.*

Prediction (6) is fairly obvious and in no way unique to our theoretical setup. The primary function of empirical testing is (*a*) to establish the magnitude of the potential welfare gains at stake here, and (*b*) to explore, beyond the narrow predictions of the model, the scope of impacts, i.e, on case outcomes, subjective satisfaction measures, material well-being, etc.

In contrast, prediction (7


Defendant
h = 0
h > 0
4,586 Disputes
Plainti

estimation sample { restricted to those with full socioeconomic data on both parties to any dispute { reported 4,586 separate disputes, with 98 percent of households reporting at least one dispute. Disputes were solicited through a 60-90 minute interview focusing on respondents' experience of a wide range of crimes and con icts, including assault, sexual violence, murder and theft, as well as disputes involving land, debt, property, and family. Respondents were asked whether any member of their household had been a ected by each dispute type, and if so, whether the other party was

from the theoretical model, there is a clear tendency for violent crimes to be taken to the formal system (25.8 percent of murders, 21.2 percent of rapes and cases of sexual abuse) while the civil cases that dominate the sample are very rarely taken to the formal system (1.5 percent of the debt disputes and 1.4 percent of the family or marital disputes, which together comprise almost two-thirds of the sample).

Table 2

4.2 Testing the model

The fundamental premise of our modeling framework is that plaintiffs exercise agency in choosing a forum to hear their case, and that these choices are made strategically to maximize plaintiffs' own welfare, possibly at the expense of defendants. An extreme alternative hypothesis would be that agents are bound by laws or norms to one system or another: legal dualism as legal apartheid. At the other extreme (more in keeping with our rational choice approach but taking its logic further than we feel is warranted), one might speculate that rational forum shopping and strategic behavior by judges could lead to an equilibrium where judgments are indistinguishable between forums, something analogous to the race to the middle in a Hotelling model.

This section econometrically tests the predictions of our model, implicitly weighing it against these alternative approaches. As detailed below, we find that individuals likely to suffer negative bias in the customary system are more inclined to exit to the formal system | consistent with rational forum shopping. We also show that plaintiffs bearing these (disadvantaged) characteristics receive greater differential utility from the formal versus the customary system. Furthermore,

Our model predicts that when $j = C$, $\hat{}_1 < 0$; $\hat{}$

F is a dummy for cases taken to the formal system. The empirical results in Table 5 are broadly consistent with the theoretical predictions. Column 1 shows that plaintiffs are generally indifferent between forums, but defendants are significantly less happy in the formal system. This is entirely in keeping with a customary system that produces greater aggregate welfare (prediction 4), as the sum satisfaction scores for the plaintiff and defendant is negative in the formal system ($0.43 + 0.51 - 1.13 = -0.19$) and positive in the customary system ($0.43 + 0.51 = 0.94$).

Columns 2–5 provide further interactions with each of our measures of bias and provide some tentative supporting evidence for our predictions regarding the interaction of forum choice and bias. For example, plaintiffs facing gender bias are significantly happier in the formal system (column 2, $\hat{}_4 > 0$, significant at 1%), while plaintiffs facing ethnic bias are significantly unhappier in the customary system (column 4, $\hat{}_2 < 0$, significant at 5%). Defendants in the formal system are consistently significantly unhappy ($\hat{}_7 < 0$, significant at 1% across all specifications) – but significantly unhappier in the formal system when they would have had gender or ethnic bias going in their favor (columns 2 and 4). This pattern is consistent with punitive formal system remedies that harm defendants to a greater extent than they benefit plaintiffs, in a system where the custom is biased towards some types of people and not others.

4.3 Discussion

On the whole, this pattern of results suggests not only that forum choices are made rationally to benefit the interests of the plaintiff, but that the judgements received in the chosen forum have utility consequences which are not bargained away or overridden through appeal. It provides evidence of individual agency (and, in particular, forward-looking rational choice) in forum shopping, running counter to starker depictions of legal dualism such as in Mamdani (1996), and fits well with our anthropological understanding of justice choices in Liberia (Isser et al., 2009) and elsewhere.

Our claim that plaintiffs exercise strategic choice in forum shopping confronts a *prima facie* tension between (a) well-documented bias in Liberian customary law, depriving women and marginalized groups of basic rights, and (b) the the simple empirical fact documented here that

provided by community paralegals.

5 Experimental evidence on *pro bono* legal aid

This section presents the results of a randomized controlled trial of a mobile paralegal intervention. The program's design, as noted earlier, is consistent with the broad implications of our analysis of forum shopping for the design of legal empowerment initiatives | paralegals reduce both the direct costs of accessing the formal law as well as the costs associated with punitive formal system remedies, thereby increasing competition between formal and customary law. However, we are unable to directly test the model's predictions in the experimental analysis, due to constraints imposed by the nature of program implementation. As such, the discussion in previous sections should be seen as a motivating framework for the intervention.

5.1 The community paralegal program

The Carter Center's access to justice initiative in Liberia, active since 2006, is a part of the larger push towards strengthening the rule of law. Implemented in partnership with local civil society organizations, the Ministry of Internal A airs and the Ministry of Justice, the initiative aims to support formal legal reform, educate Liberians of their rights under the law, and provide them everyday access to justice and legal settlement of disputes.

The agship component of the Carter Center initiative is a community paralegal program, meant to provide an immediate alternative to other local justice mechanisms, both formal and customary. Community-based paralegals are recruited from the counties in which they work, and typically possess secondary school or college education. They are trained periodically in mediation, advocacy, formal law, and the roles of the di erent legal agencies. They are mandated to provide free-of-cost legal advice and services to local residents. In particular, they assist individuals and communities with a wide range of disputes, by providing information about the law and their individual rights, advocating on their behalf to customary and formal authorities, and directly mediating disputes if so requested.

With some exceptions, paralegals generally wait for potential clients to approach them with live disputes or grievances. These may range from child and spousal support cases, to disputes over land, debt, labor, or property, to violent crimes such as assault and gender-based violence. Paralegals assess the client's initial story to see if it constitutes a `case', i.e. where action of some sort is viable (as opposed to, for example, clients coming to talk about losses during the war, or crimes committed by unknown parties who cannot be identi ed or tracked down). If the dispute or grievance constitutes a `case', paralegals decide whether or not to accept it depending on their existing caseload and the merits of the case. Paralegals encourage their clients to state what action they would like to take | for example, take the case to court, arrange a mediation to attempt to

paralegals. `Mobile paralegals' were deployed on motorbikes to 160 villages across ve of Liberia's fteen counties: Bong, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Maryland, and Nimba. Program communities included mining towns and plantations, border towns with high refugee populations, and a large number of remote towns inaccessible by road. Each paralegal was assigned to ten communities in her or his county, and required to make two visits per month to each community, during which they would conduct information sessions, take new cases, follow up on ongoing cases, or check in on resolved cases.

Paralegals follow a strict protocol when arriving in the village. They begin by greeting the local leaders, who over time have become familiar with the aims and objectives of the program. They then follow up on ongoing cases, e.g. meeting with either party to a dispute, providing information to a client, etc. Depending on their workload, they also conduct information sessions that typically take the form of a community meeting. Each session covers a broad topic, typically related to women's rights (domestic violence, rape, spousal and child support, inheritance, etc.), or rights to land, labor rights, etc. On occasion they make forays into laws governing witchcraft and `sassywood' (trial by ordeal), the structure of the legal system and local administration, political participation, etc.

This expansion means that, in principle, the program can bring (the content of) the formal law literally to the doorstep of those it serves. Furthermore, the `mobile' model allows a relatively small number of paralegals to cover a large number of communities on a exible schedule, making it a relatively cost-e ective, labor-intensive approach to extending the reach of the formal legal system | and one with potential for scaling up.[11] Finally, this expansion provided a unique opportunity for a randomized evaluation of the program, expanding as it was into communities that had little prior experience of this sort of intervention and that were typically far from the reach of the formal legal system.

5.2 Evaluation design

The evaluation design follows a baseline and follow-up survey structure, combining di erence-in-di erences analysis with individual-level randomization of the Carter Center's mobile paralegal program. The evaluation was launched in July 2011 and extended through December 2011. The main objective was to explore e ects on paralegal clients.[12] Client-level randomization was conducted in villages that were already part of the community paralegal program. As clients typically approach the paralegal with questions or requests for assistance, the sample was entirely self-identi ed from within the village population. Given the nature of the cases and intervention, the program NGO and the authors considered it unethical to deny paralegal services to any `poten-

[11] Indeed, neighboring Sierra Leone is at the time in the midst of a government-sponsored national expansion of a very similar program

[12] A second tier of the evaluation, launched in February 2009, involved community-level randomization aiming to assess longer-term community-level impacts, but the broader study is beyond the scope of this paper.

tial' client beyond a three-month period. Thus clients were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups, with those assigned to the control group (\control group applicants") guaranteed the paralegal's attention three months after rst contact.

In addition, to ensure that the sample of clients was large enough for analysis and selected transparently and representatively from the community program, a few innovations had to be made in the way the paralegals dealt with clients. First, each paralegal was asked to work in only six of their ten communities in order to deal with the anticipated increase in cases. In each community, paralegals conducted a civic education session on salient aspects of the laws dealing with land law, gender-based violence, female inheritance, spousal and child neglect, etc. After this session, the paralegal met with potential clients and veri ed that the client actually had a case that needed resolving. Each client was then interviewed by an enumerator using a handheld survey device programmed to randomly allocate clients to treatment and control groups based on a pre-determined algorithm. Once clients were allocated, the paralegal explained to the control group applicants that her/his time was limited, and encouraged them clients to take whatever actions they deemed necessary to resolve their cases | apart from being a basic ethical consideration, this was key to avoiding anticipation or `queuing' e ects, which could have arti cially lowered outcomes in the control group and upwardly biased our impact estimates. The data collected at this stage provided a baseline measure for the individual randomization.

Due to privacy considerations | which in this case had direct implications for the relationship between paralegals and clients, as there was a fear that were clients to discover that enumerators were interviewing the other party, they would opt out of treatment | as well as logistical constraints, we were not able to collect dyadic data as in previous sections. This is one main limitation of the data presented in this section, as we cannot measure the sum impact of the paralegal treatment on both parties to a dispute, nor can we discuss in depth the composition of the plainti -defendant pairs that the paralegals treated.

For the subsequent three-month period, till November 2011, paralegals conducted follow-up activities on treatment cases only. For ethical reasons, paralegals were also provided a `veto' option to be used in serious or urgent cases, for example cases that involved an immediate threat of violence or serious economic or social harm. Such cases were excluded immediately from the baseline sample. While this a ects the representativeness of the client sample, it is not immediately clear whether paralegals would have had greater or less impact on the vetoed cases, so the direction of bias is hard to estimate. In November 2011, follow-up surveys were administered to the baseline sample of clients. Of 420 clients surveyed in the baseline, we were able to locate and re-interview 398 clients, for an attrition rate of just over ve percent.

Based on this experimental design, the most general empirical strategy that we use to estimate the impact of the intervention on mean outcomes is

$$y_i = \quad _0 + \quad _1 Z_i + \ ''_i \tag{11}$$

where y_i is the outcome for individual i, Z_i is the treatment dummy, and ε_i is the random error term, clustered at the village level.

For indicators for which we have both baseline and endline data, we exploit the panel structure of the data by looking at the impact of the treatment on a change in outcomes, using three common specifications: ANCOVA (Equation 12), difference-in-differences (Equation 13) and fixed effects (Equation 14).

$$y_{i1} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Z_i + \beta_2 y_{i0} + \varepsilon_{i1} \tag{12}$$

$$y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Z_i + \beta_2 P_t + \beta_3 (Z_i \times P_t) + \varepsilon'_{it} \tag{13}$$

$$y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Z_i + \beta_2 P_t + \alpha_i + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{14}$$

where y_{it} is the outcome at time $t \in (0; 1)$, and P_t is the post-treatment dummy.

5.3 Data

Table 6 provides a snapshot of dispute incidence and forum choice | notably, choice between the formal system, the customary system, and paralegals. Columns 1 and 2 show the number of disputes experienced in the past three months by type of dispute (including disputes reported both in the baseline and the endline) as well as the percent of disputes of each type. Columns 3{6 display forum shopping decisions for the most recent dispute respondents experienced during the three-month intervention period (including the original dispute they brought to the paralegal), and whether they took the dispute to the customary system, the formal system, or the paralegal, respectively. Disputes taken to more than one forum were counted as having gone to both forums. As noted above, this is a snapshot of potential paralegal clients, and therefore not representative of Liberians as a whole { comparing to the numbers displayed in Table 1, for example, there are

We use ve measures of case outcome, based on the following survey questions.

\Did you think the outcome was fair or unfair?"

\How satis ed are you with the outcome of this case?"

\After this case, do you think you are...[better or worse o]?"

\After this case, is your relationship with the other party...[better or worse]?"

\After this case, is your relationship with other members of the community...[better or worse]?"

Responses for the rst two questions are measured on a four-tiered Likert scale, and the last three questions on a ve-tiered Likert scale. While we analyze these ve outcomes separately, they re ect the same underlying hypothesis.

Category 2. *Legal knowledge and experience of the legal system*

Our second set of outcome measures stems from the hypothesis that informal legal aid | delivered by semi-skilled paralegals rather than lawyers, working primarily outside the formal court system | will increase con dence in Liberia's formal legal system, by (a) improving knowledge of formal law and (b) lowering the informal costs of seeking justice (e.g. by reducing bribery and harassment).

To measure impacts on legal knowledge, we ask eight questions about the formal law developed in consultation with the Carter Center. Questions cover a range of issues, including inheritance rights, spousal abandonment, *sassywood*, domestic violence, statutory rape and corruption, such as \According to the formal law: Do married women have the right to inherit part of the property from their late father?", \According to the formal law: It is illegal for an adult to have sex with someone below a certain age. What is that age?", etc. We code each question into an indicator variable for a correct response, and generate an index using the rst principal component from a factor analysis.

Finally, we also look at other objective measures of clients' experiences with the legal system, including the proportion who reported being harassed or forced to pay a bribe during the past three months. We anticipate that the particular form of legal aid being evaluated here will reduce reliance on formal legal institutions, while simultaneously reducing the incidence of these abuses such as harassment and bribe payment.

Category 3. *Pro-social attitudes and subjective happiness*

We hypothesize that better, fairer resolution of legal disputes will improve clients' subjective wellbeing and attitudes towards others. We measure impacts threethirermonts' subT053,ch as clients66in

\When you think about your whole life, do you think you are. . . ?"
Responses: \Very happy"; \Happy small"; "Not so happy"; \Not happy at all".

\All in all, you can say that most people can be trusted, or that you need to be very careful when we doing things with people?"
Responses: \Most people can be trusted"; \Need to be very careful."

The third is measured by the principal component from a factor analysis of the ve standard

\Loving problems", usually referring to marital in delity and often a loss of nancial support, and \child neglect" constitute a large share of the cases in our database. We also examine the impact of the program on (a) child support payments received, and (b) child-speci c food security. Child support payments are measured conditional on whether the respondent's household has at least one single mother with an absentee partner, and the response to the question \Does the father living outside regularly send food or money to care for the children living in this household?"

We focus on two types of food security, one related to households on average and one focused on children. Paralegals receive a large number of cases that relate directly to child welfare (child support, child custody, and support for wives or girlfriends), and we hypothesize that such cases would likely directly impact child welfare. Our measures are based on the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale(HFIAS) developed by the United States Agency for International Development USAID (2007) and the child nutrition module in the ERS's US Household Food Security Survey Module USDA (2012). Together, these consist of a battery of eighteen questions that focus on uncertain or anxiety over food access, perceptions that food is of insu cient quantity or quality, reported reductions in food intake, and reported consequences of reduced food intake. We combine these into two separate indices using principal components: an aggregate household measure of food insecurity focused on adults, using the HFIAS questions, and a child-speci c measure using the ERS questions.

We also explore

signi cantly, and attrition is quite low at 5.4% (22 respondents). Nonetheless, given the relatively

multiple hypotheses and so we implement the family-wise error rate correction procedure proposed by Bonferonni and Sidak (Abdi, 2007), both within each hypothesis and across the mean effects indices. These are discussed further in Section 5.7.

One possible concern with the design of the experiment would have been a kind of anticipation effect, where applicants for legal aid that were assigned to the control group deliberately withheld making progress on their cases while waiting for the paralegal to intervene. Such "control group applicants" could then have looked worse off than otherwise, which would have biased treatment effects upwards. The first row of Table 10 provides some reassurance: there was no significant difference in case progression, in terms of average level of response to the question "What is the status of this case now?" with the options "Case pending, no agreement reached yet", "Unable to reach agreement or resolution", "Reached agreement, yet to be implemented" and "Reached agreement, successfully implemented". There is also no evidence of any difference in the average respondent's relationship with the community.

The remainder of Table 10 shows that paralegal clients were overall much happier with the outcome of the case: relative to the control group, our measure of fairness went up by 34.8 percent, satisfaction by 37 percent, whether the client considered themselves better off by 26.7 percent, and whether the relationship with the other party was now better by 23.3 percent. The mean effects index is strongly significant at the 5% level.

Turning to those outcomes for which we have panel data, we provide the results all four specifications listed above in Table 11. We find, firstly, convincing evidence that the quality of interaction with the overall justice system has changed | treated respondents reported a 10 percent decrease in having to pay a bribe to a police officer or public official, suggesting that paralegal involvement lowers the corruption costs of accessing justice. There was however no accompanying impact on harassment by public officials. Treatment also strongly impacted legal knowledge, which is measured as the first principal component of eight questions regarding respondents' knowledge of the formal law. The PCA of treated respondents' knowledge of the law improved significantly by 0.31 standard deviations over the course of the three months of interaction with the paralegal.

Moving further down the table, we find no impacts on any of our three measures of attitudes | generalized trust, subjective happiness, and attitudes towards gender-based violence. Neither do we find any impacts on behavior related to actions taken to protect property rights (land titling and demarcation) or engage in credit market activity (lending and borrowing). It is somewhat striking that there is absolutely no hint of an impact on any of these measures, suggesting by implication that any downstream impacts on household wellbeing do not come from changes in attitudes, credit market behavior, or greater security of property.

The intervention does, however, show significant downstream impacts on household wellbeing | in particular, on three measures: household food security, child food security, and proportion of households with single mothers receiving child support payments from absentee fathers. Clients were 22.8 percent more likely to receive child support payments, and reported large increases

household and child food security of 0.24 and 0.38 standard deviations, respectively, as measured by our aggregate indices. The intervention did not appear to have any impact on the remaining two measures of household wellbeing: the amount of land respondents farmed on, and the incidence of gender-based violence.

Figure 6 summarizes the key outcomes. The vertical axis displays all the main outcome indicators, and the horizontal axis measures the size of the impact and the precision of the estimate. All outcomes are normalized by subtracting the mean and dividing by the standard deviation, to provide comparable impact measures | thus the horizontal axis simply measures the standard e ect size, i.e. the number of standard deviations of impact. Circles provide the point estimate, while the length of the line displays a 90% con dence interval around the point estimate. Thus if a line crosses the vertical origin, the estimate is not statistically di erent from zero. Statistically signi cant outcomes are presented in red and insigni cant outcomes in blue.

5.5 Case interactions

To further investigate the mechanism underlying the e ects we observe, we interact our vector of outcome variables with the disputes brought to the paralegal by each respondent during the three months of the intervention period. This provides some indication of whether a given downstream impact was associated with taking a relevant case to the paralegal. Thus for each outcome and case type, we run the following speci cation:

$$y_{it} = \quad _0 + \quad _1 Z_i + \quad _2 P_t + \quad _3 \quad _i + \quad _4 (Z_i \quad P_t) + \quad _5 (Z_i \quad \quad _i) + \quad _6 (P_t \quad \quad _i) + \quad _7 (Z_i \quad P_i \quad \quad _i) + \&_{it} \quad (15)$$

where y_{it} is the outcome for individual i in period t, $Z_i \ 2 \ [0;1]$ is a dummy indicating treatment for individual i, $P_t \ 2 \ [0;1]$ is the post-treatment dummy, and $_i$ is a measure of whether individual i experienced at least one dispute of a given category during the intervention period.

For the sake of parsimony, we examine three categories of cases: \family case" (wife or child neglect, `loving problems', and child custody disputes), \violence case" (rape, domestic violence, and generalized assault), and \economic case" (disputes related to land, labor, property, and debt). Table 12

violence goes down di erentially for individuals who brought a violence case (involving assault,

5.7 Robustness

Given our large vector of outcome variables, we need to address the risk of over-rejecting the null hypothesis due to the problem of multiple inference, which arises when testing multiple hypotheses simultaneously (Anderson, 2008). We therefore implement a multiple comparisons correction using the procedure proposed by Bonferonni and Sidak to Abdi (2007) to control the family-wise error rate (FWER), de ned as the probability of making any false discovery. These tests are generally considered overly conservative.

We conduct the multiple comparisons correction across the mean e ects indices for those hypothesis that were signi cant, as well as on the variables within each hypothesis. Figure 7 presents the results for each correction. The horizontal axis in each panel plots the parameter estimate, while the vertical axis plots the *p*-value. The horizontal red lines indicate the cut-o for 90% signi cance ($p = 0.10$) as well as the `critical' or corrected *p*-value that re ects the Bonferonni-Sidak corrections. Outcome variables above both the red lines indicate p-values that survive the correction procedure. Figure 7 shows, somewhat remarkably, that all our signi cant mean e ects indices and the majority of our individual outcome measures survive the corrections tests.

Finally, we address the issue of attrition. In principle this type of intervention could easily generate di erential attrition, if for example individuals with poor justice experiences become less inclined to speak to outsiders. On the face of it, however, we have no reason to be concerned | Table 7 showed that the attrition rate was only around ve percent, and Table 8 showed that it was balanced across treatment and control groups. However, given our relatively small experimental sample, even a ve percent rate could be signi cant, and it is conceivable that di erent types of

6 Conclusions

We began with the question of whether progressive, statutory legal reform could be made to meaningfully a ect the lives of the poor and socially disadvantaged, given that they tend to remain outside the ambit of formal law and rely on customary institutions for their justice needs. In the

Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S. H., and Robinson, J. A. (2001). The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation. *American Economic Review*, 91(5):1369{1401.

Adinkrah, K. O. (1991). \We Shall Take Our Case to the King": Legitimacy and Tradition in the Administration of Law In Swaziland.

Chemin, M. (2010). Does Court Speed Shape Economic Activity? Evidence from a Court Reform in India. *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, 28(3):460{485.

CLEP (2008). Making the Law Work for Everyone, Vol. I. Technical report, Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor / United Nations Development Programme, New York.

Coleman, E. A. and Lopez, M.-C. (2010). Reconstructing Cooperation from Civil Con ict: Experimental Evidence from Colombian Development Policy.

Sterck, O. and Aoust, O. D. (2012). Who Bene ts from Customary Justice? Rent-seeking, Bribery and Criminality in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Stevens, J. (2000). Access to Justice in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of Traditional and Informal Justice Systems. Technical Report November, Penal Reform International, London.

Table 1: Where do disputes go?

			% of all cases taken to:		
	Cases	%	None	Customary	Formal
Family dispute	728	15.9	61.1	37.5	1.4
Economic dispute	2676	58.4	60.1	36.3	3.7
Land	339	7.4	37.8	56	6.2
Debt	1374	30	69.9	28.6	1.5
Labor	125	2.7	61.6	38.4	0.0
Property (incl. theft)	838	18.3	52.9	40.5	6.7
Violent dispute	712	15.5	52.1	40.3	7.6
Assault	561	12.2	53.8	42.8	3.4
Rape/GBV	85	1.9	47.1	31.7	21.2
Murder	66	1.4	43.9	30.3	25.8
Other disputes	470	10.2	52.1	43.8	4.0
Total	4,586		58.2	37.9	3.9

Note: Columns 1 and 2 display the number and relative proportion of

Table 2: Who uses the customary system?

			% of all cases taken to		
Plainti		#	No forum	Customary	Formal
Gender	Female	939	55.4	41.5	3.1
	Male	3,647	59.0	36.9	4.1
Occupation	Farmer	4,128	58.2	38.2	3.6
	Non-farmer	458	58.3	35.2	6.6
Ethnicity	Minority	501	55.7	37.9	6.4
	Majority	4,085	58.5	37.8	3.6
Kinship	No	3,721	56.1	40.0	3.9
	Yes	865	67.4	28.7	3.9
Total		4,586	58.2	37.9	3.9

Note: Column 1 displays the total number of disputes faced by plainti s with particular characteristics across the 2,081 households in our household survey sample. Columns 2{4 show the percentage of disputes that plainti s of each type took to \No forum", \Customary", and \Formal", respectively.

Note:

Table 3: Subjective satisfaction measures

	Customary	Formal
Outcome was fair	92.3	85.0
Outcome was in respondent's favor	70.3	59.0
Satis ed with outcome	89.3	78.2
Satis ed with respect shown	89.2	75.7
Would return to this forum	90.5	76.4
First principal component	0.315	-0.243

Note: Columns 1 and 2 present respondents' average levels of subjective satisfaction for disputes taken to \Customary", and \Formal", respectively, across the 2,081 households in our household survey sample

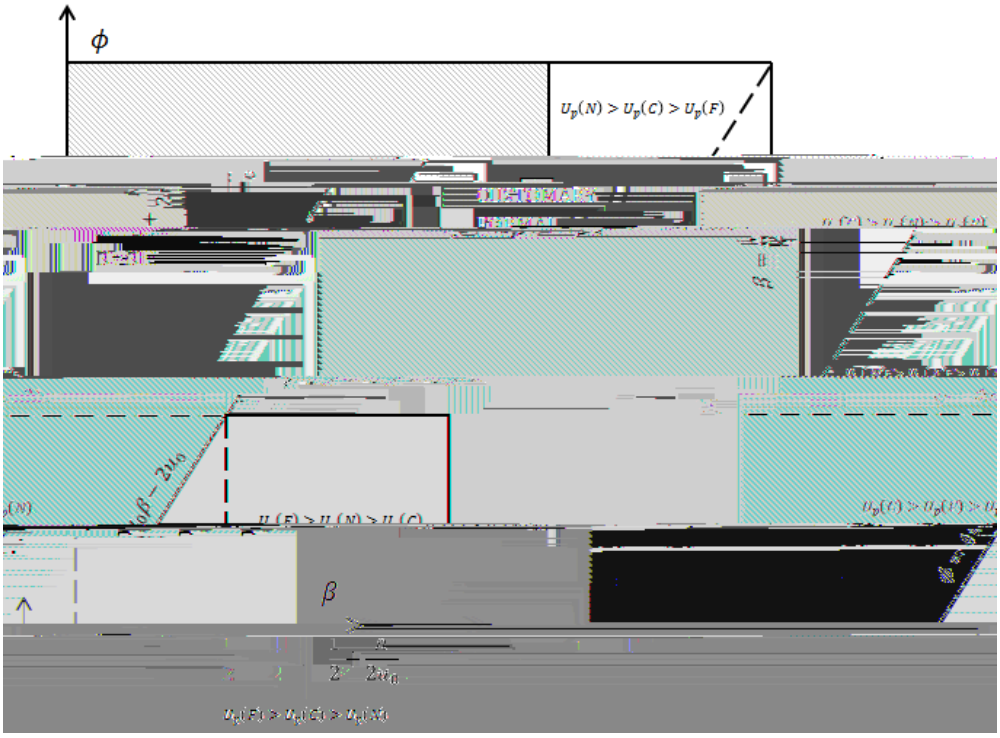


Figure 3: Plainti chooses forum (stage 2)

Figure 4: Defendant chooses harm (stage 1)

Figure 5: Map of surveyed counties

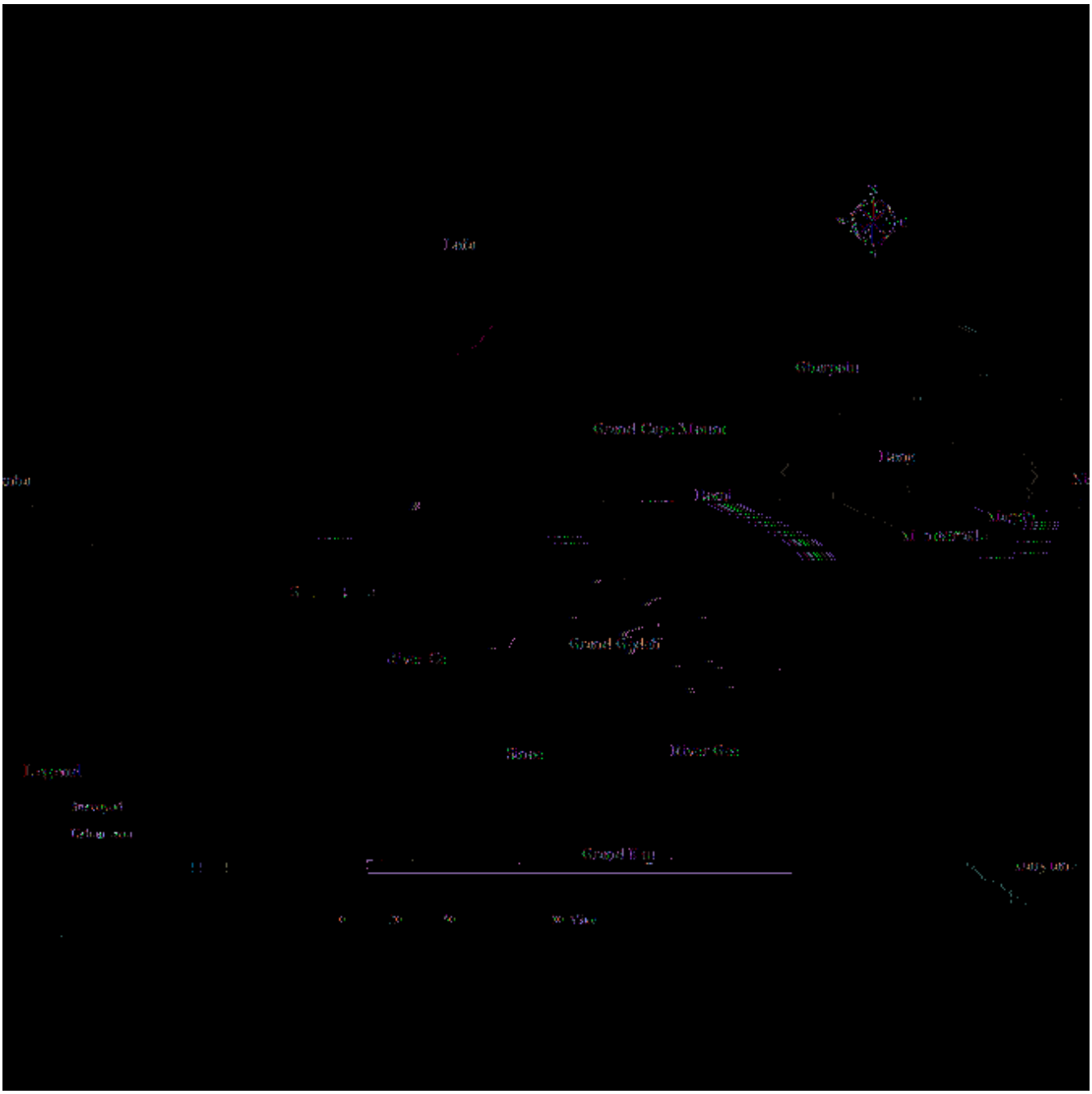


Table 4: Plainti s facing high (Prediction 2) or with high u_0 (Prediction 3) exit the customary system

	Formal over Customary	None over Customary	Formal over None
Defendant - Plainti ( )			
	(+)	(+)	(?)
Gender bias	1.111***	-0.276***	1.387***
	(0.262)	(0.074)	(0.261)
Income bias	0.550**	0.268**	0.282**
	(0.201)	(0.103)	(0.199)
Elite bias	0.400	0.040	0.360
	(0.197)	(0.119)	(0.203)
Ethnic bias	0.092	-0.015	0.107
	(0.205)	(0.085)	(0.204)
Plainti (*u*0)			
	(+)	(+)	(?)
Male	1.446***	-0.195***	1.641***
	(0.318)	(0.107)	(0.318)
Non-farm employment	1.050	0.343	0.708
	(0.271)	(0.142)	(0.269)
Related to chief	0.732**	0.365**	0.367**
	(0.249)	(0.135)	(0.252)
Ethnic majority	-0.191	0.009	-0.201
	(0.239)	(0.114)	(0.240)
Dispute type			
Economic dispute	1.703	-0.012	1.715
	(0.339)	(0.111)	(0.340)
Violent dispute	1.106	0.066	1.040
	(0.323)	(0.087)	(0.323)
Other dispute	0.856*	-0.288*	1.144*
	(0.486)	(0.176)	(0.493)

Note: Coe cients displayed for each pair of choices from a single multinomial logit regression on

Table 5: The customary system provides greater aggregate welfare (Prediction 4)

		Benchmark	Male	Non-farm employment	Related to chief	Ethnic majority
Plainti		.43	.45	.43	.44	.40
		(.12)	(.12)	(.12)	(.12)	(.12)
Plainti			.11	.08	.10	-.25
			(.09)	(.17)	(.13)	(.12)
Plainti	Formal	-.16	-.25	-.15	-.28	-.12
		(.21)	(.21)	(.21)	(.25)	(.21)
Plainti	Formal		1.68	-.29	-.40	.54
			(.56)	(.51)	(.41)	(.65)
Defendant		.51	.53	.51	.60	.52
		(.16)	(.16)	(.16)	(.17)	(.16)
Defendant			-.03	-.11	-.34	-.10
			(.18)	(.28)	(.23)	(.29)
Defendant	Formal	-1.13	-1.17	-1.14	-1.20	-.91
		(.28)	(.28)	(.28)	(.32)	(.30)
Defendant	Formal		-1.15	-.05	.22	-1.36
			(.57)	(.52)	(.54)	(.75)
Observations		940	940	940	940	940
Adj. R^2		0.070	0.082	0.067	0.075	0.070

Note:

Table 6: Forum shopping in experimental sample

	All disputes		Most recent dispute			
	Any (%)	Paralegal (%)	Unreported (%)	Formal (%)	Customary (%)	Paralegal (%)
Family case	42.8	32.2	12.3	2.0	23.2	13.9
Child neglect	29.4	23.7	6.7	1.4	12.6	12.1
Child custody	10.8	8.2	2.3	0.5	4.8	3.4
`Loving problem'	20.5	11.9	5.4	0.3	12.3	3.5
Violence case	23.6	6.0	11.8	0.9	9.0	0.9
Assault	6.3	1.8	2.3	0.4	3.1	0.5
Rape	1.8	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.3	0.0
Domestic violence	19.8	5.0	9.4	0.1	7.3	0.4
Land	14.3	8.9	2.9	0.6	6.4	5.5
Economic case	41.2	22.6	17.0	2.6	20.1	9.3
Labor	7.0	3.4	3.5	0.3	1.4	2.1
Property	10.9	6.4	4.1	0.1	6.5	1.1
Debt	19.8	6.9	8.2	1.6	9.7	1.6

Note: Columns 1 and 2 display the number and relative proportion of disputes of di erent types faced by the 420 households in our experimental sample. Columns 4{6 show the percentage of the most recent disputes of each type that went unreported, or were reported to the customary system, the formal system, and the paralegal, respectively. Disputes taken to more than one forum are counted as having gone to both forums.

Table 7: Summary statistics for experimental sample

	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.

Table 8: Balance in experimental sample

	Treatment	Control	Di erence	Std. Err.
Forum choice				
Report to formal	0.08	0.05	0.035	(0.024)
Report to custom	0.54	0.50	0.032	(0.049)
Legal knowledge	0.08	-0.04	0.115	(0.104)
Not harassed	0.99	0.98	0.012	(0.013)
Did not bribe	0.93	0.92	0.006	(0.027)
Oppose GBV	-0.09	-0.05	-0.039	(0.110)
Happiness	1.23	1.32	-0.093	(0.096)
Trust	0.11	0.13	-0.024	(0.033)
Land papers	0.21	0.27	-0.062	(0.049)
Land demarcated	0.32	0.33	-0.006	(0.056)
Lending	0.31	0.29	0.029	(0.046)
Borrowing	0.39	0.37	0.018	(0.049)
HH food security	-0.14	-0.13	-0.010	(0.101)
Child food security	0.01	-0.09	0.097	(0.103)
Land gained	0.01	0.06	-0.056	(0.060)
Child support	0.17	0.13	0.050	(0.064)
Less GBV	-0.17	-0.12	-0.050	(0.132)
Respondent attrited	0.05	0.05	-0.001	(0.022)

Note: Columns 1 and 2 present the treatment and control means for all outcome variables with baseline data, as well as mean attrition rates for each group. Columns 3 and 4 report the coe cient and standard error, respectively, from a t-test of each variable across the paralegal treatment group.

Table 9: Latent demand for formal law (Prediction 5)

	Formal over Customary	None over Customary	Formal over None
Plainti (*u*0)			
Male	0.004	0.040	-0.037
	(0.142)	(0.069)	(0.139)
Non-farm employment	0.483	0.059	0.424
	(0.171)	(0.095)	(0.165)
Ethnic majority	-0.160	-0.029	-0.131
	(0.179)	(0.089)	(0.176)
Take-up	(+)	(+)	(?)
Control group applicants	3.573***	0.599***	2.974***
	(0.226)	(0.180)	(0.183)
Dispute type			
Economic dispute	0.795	0.115	0.680
	(0.219)	(0.094)	(0.215)
Violent dispute	0.745***	0.513***	0.232***
	(0.203)	(0.083)	(0.199)
Other dispute	0.449	0.165	0.284
	(0.256)	(0.151)	(0.240)

Note: Coe cients displayed for each pair of choices from a multinomial logit regression on the categorical variable of forum choice (\None", \Customary", \Formal"). \Control group applicants" indicates that the respondent opted into the paralegal intervention, but was assigned to the control group. The omitted dispute category is \Family dispute". Speci cation includes a dummy for whether the respondent was the plainti or defendant. *** is signi cant at the 1% level, ** is signi cant at the 5% level and * is signi cant at the 10% level.

Figure 6: Treatment e ect estimates (Prediction 6)

Table 10: Case results (Prediction 6)

	Coe .	Std. Err.
Case progression		
Case status	0:122	(0:114)
Case results		
Fair judgment	0:348	(0:142)
Satis ed	0:370	(0:149)
Better o	0:267	(0:123)
Other party relations	0:233	(0:133)
Community relations	0:134	(0:110)
Mean e ect index	0:219	(0:092)

Note: Each row reports the coe . and std. error for Z in a separate regression based on Equation 11, where Z 2 [0; 1] indicates treatment. Std. errors are clustered at the village level. ***, ** and * denote signi cance at 1%, 5% level and 10%, respectively.

Table 11: Treatment e ect estimates (Prediction 6)

	Cross-section		ANCOVA		Di -in-di .		Fixed e ects	
	Coe .	Std. Err.	Coe .	Std. Err.	Coe .	Std. Err.	Coe .	Std. Err.
Justice system								
Legal knowledge	0:003	(0:022)	0:008	(0:023)	0:040	(0:033)	0:040	(0:033)
Report to custom	0:061	(0:048)	0:056	(0:048)	0:018	(0:064)	0:018	(0:064)
Mean e ect index	0:058	(0:082)	0:038	(0:082)	0:050	(0:091)	0:050	(0:091)
Justice system								
Legal knowledge	0:190	(0:090)	0:231	(0:094)	0:316	(0:119)	0:323	(0:117)
Not harassed	0:015	(0:013)	0:017	(0:013)	0:027	(0:017)	0:028	(0:018)
Did not bribe	0:094	(0:028)	0:089	(0:028)	0:100	(0:035)	0:095	(0:035)
Mean e ect index	0:184	(0:046)	0:208	(0:046)	0:275	(0:073)	0:281	(0:073)

Adq1 0 0 1 SQB5 9.962 261.84 2.766 00 Td [68 08eq1 0.9623.3 0ndex

Table 12: Case interactions

	Family case		Economic case		Violence case	
	Coe .	Std. Err.	Coe .	Std. Err.	Coe .	Std. Err.
Forum choice						
Report to formal	-0.005	(0.043)	-0.064	(0.050)	0.170**	(0.076)
Report to custom	-0.324***	(0.117)	-0.145	(0.121)	-0.793***	(0.163)
Mean e ect index	-0.309*	(0.162)	-0.297*	(0.175)	-0.423*	(0.244)
Justice system						
Legal knowledge	-0.011	(0.282)	-0.026	(0.254)	-0.200	(0.295)
Not harassed	0.043	(0.034)	-0.036	(0.036)	0.051	(0.057)
Did not bribe	0.256***	(0.058)	-0.098	(0.064)	0.030	(0.092)
Mean e ect index	0.373**	(0.148)	-0.185	(0.152)	0.004	(0.179)
Attitudes						
Oppose GBV	-0.081	(0.178)	-0.228	(0.183)	0.422	(0.335)
Happiness	0.382*	(0.213)	-0.012	(0.194)	0.206	(0.261)
Trust	0.028	(0.072)	0.056	(0.061)	0.056	(0.130)
Mean e ect index	0.122	(0.131)	-0.016	(0.126)	0.268	(0.210)
Behavior						
Land papers	0.183	(0.118)	0.083	(0.131)	0.142	(0.180)
Land demarcated	0.154	(0.125)	-0.338***	(0.104)	0.191	(0.180)
Lending	0.008	(0.099)	0.005	(0.076)	0.308**	(0.152)
Borrowing	0.236**	(0.103)	-0.059	(0.117)	0.331*	(0.174)
Mean e ect index	0.269**	(0.113)	-0.146	(0.122)	0.511***	(0.161)
Household wellbeing						
HH food security	0.484*	(0.276)	0.041	(0.268)	0.231	(0.378)
Child food security	0.706**	(0.270)	-0.158	(0.270)	-0.054	(0.402)
Land gained	-0.097	(0.134)	-0.152	(0.123)	-0.198	(0.240)
Child support	0.578**	(0.228)	0.093	(0.186)	0.518**	(0.250)
Less GBV	0.525**	(0.228)	-0.487***	(0.175)	2.861***	(0.919)
Mean e ect index	0.333***	(0.116)	-0.151	(0.106)	0.470**	(0.210)

Note: The leftmost column lists dependent variables grouped by hypothesis. Rows report interactions between the dependent variable and three categories of case type: \Family case" (wife or child neglect, `loving problems', and child custody), \Economic case" (land, labor, property, and debt), and \Violence case" (rape, domestic violence, and assault). Each element in columns 1-4 is the coe cient on $_i \quad Z_i \quad P_t$ in a separate regression on each case category , following the speci cation in Equation 15. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. *** is signi cant at the 1% level, ** is signi cant at the 5% level and * is signi cant at the 10% level.

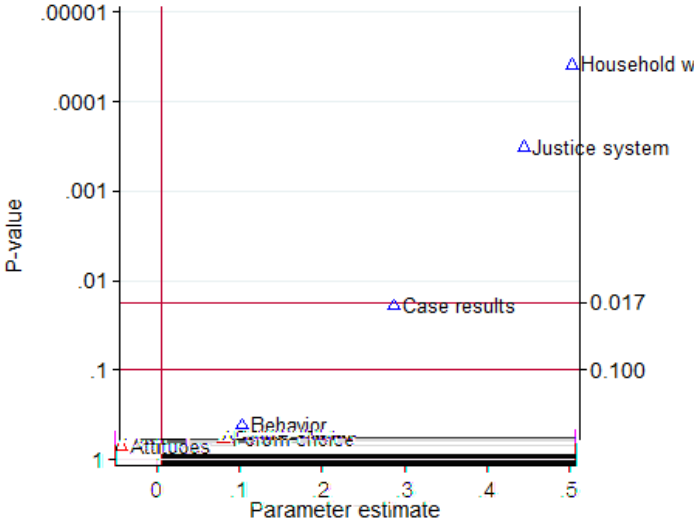
Table 13: Attrition

	Attritors minus non-attritors			
	Treatment	Control	Di erence	Std. Err.
Justice system				
Legal knowledge	-0.051	-0.088	0.037	(0.026)
Not harassed	0.024	0.011	0.013	(0.014)
Did not bribe	0.083	0.076	0.007	(0.027)
Attitudes				
Oppose GBV	0.510	-0.165	0.675	(0.434)
Happiness	0.142	-0.087	0.229	(0.391)
Trust	-0.046	-0.115	0.069	(0.095)
Behavior				
Land papers	-0.052	-0.011	-0.042	(0.238)
Land demarcated	-0.045	-0.336	0.291*	(0.167)
Lending	-0.205	-0.179	-0.026	(0.181)
Borrowing	-0.197	-0.402	0.205*	(0.105)
Household wellbeing				
HH food security	-0.149	0.045	-0.194	(0.357)
Child food security	-0.281	-0.058	-0.223	(0.728)
Land gained	0.051	-0.008	0.058	(0.324)
Child support	-0.131	-0.180	0.049	(0.078)
Less GBV	0.329	0.495	-0.166	(0.145)

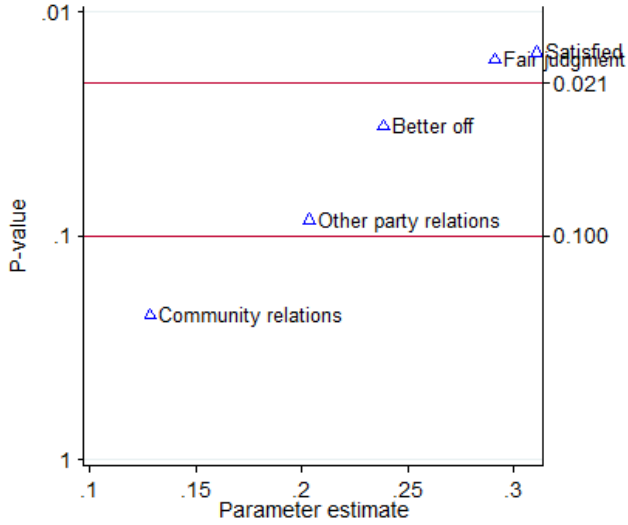
Note: Columns 1 and 2 report di erences between the mean of each variable for attritors and non-attritors in the treatment and control groups, respectively. Column 3 reports the coe cient on the Z A interaction, where Z 2 [0; 1] is the treatment dummy and A 2 [0; 1] is a dummy for whether the respondent attrited. Column 4 displays robust standard errors clustered at the village level.

Figure 7: Bonferroni-Sidak Family-Wise Error Rate (FWER) Correction

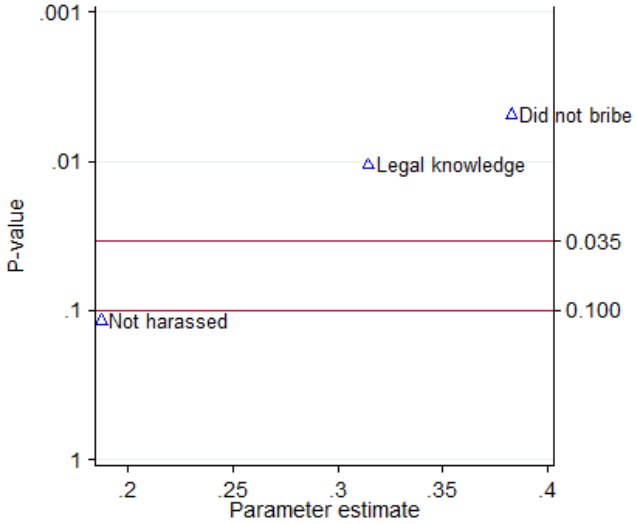
(a) Mean e ects index



(b) Case results



(c) Justice system



(d) Household welfare