

Buiding state legitimacy through community policing?

Graeme Blair, UCLA



Weber, 2009; Wilson, 1978; Tilly, 1985



Weber, 2009; Wilson, 1978; Mann, 1984; Tilly, 1985; Tarrow, 2015; Soss & Weaver, 2017



Lagos, Nigeria, 2020



Lagos, Nigeria, 2020



Ferguson, Missouri, 2014

Common state response: **Community policing**

Common state response:

Community policing



Increased legitimacy

Community policing

A strategy for encouraging the public to partner with the police in preventing crime based on the specific needs of the community

Green and Mastrofski (1988), Skogan (2004), Skogan and Hartnett (1997)

Community policing

Frequent, local beat patrols

Decentralized decision-making

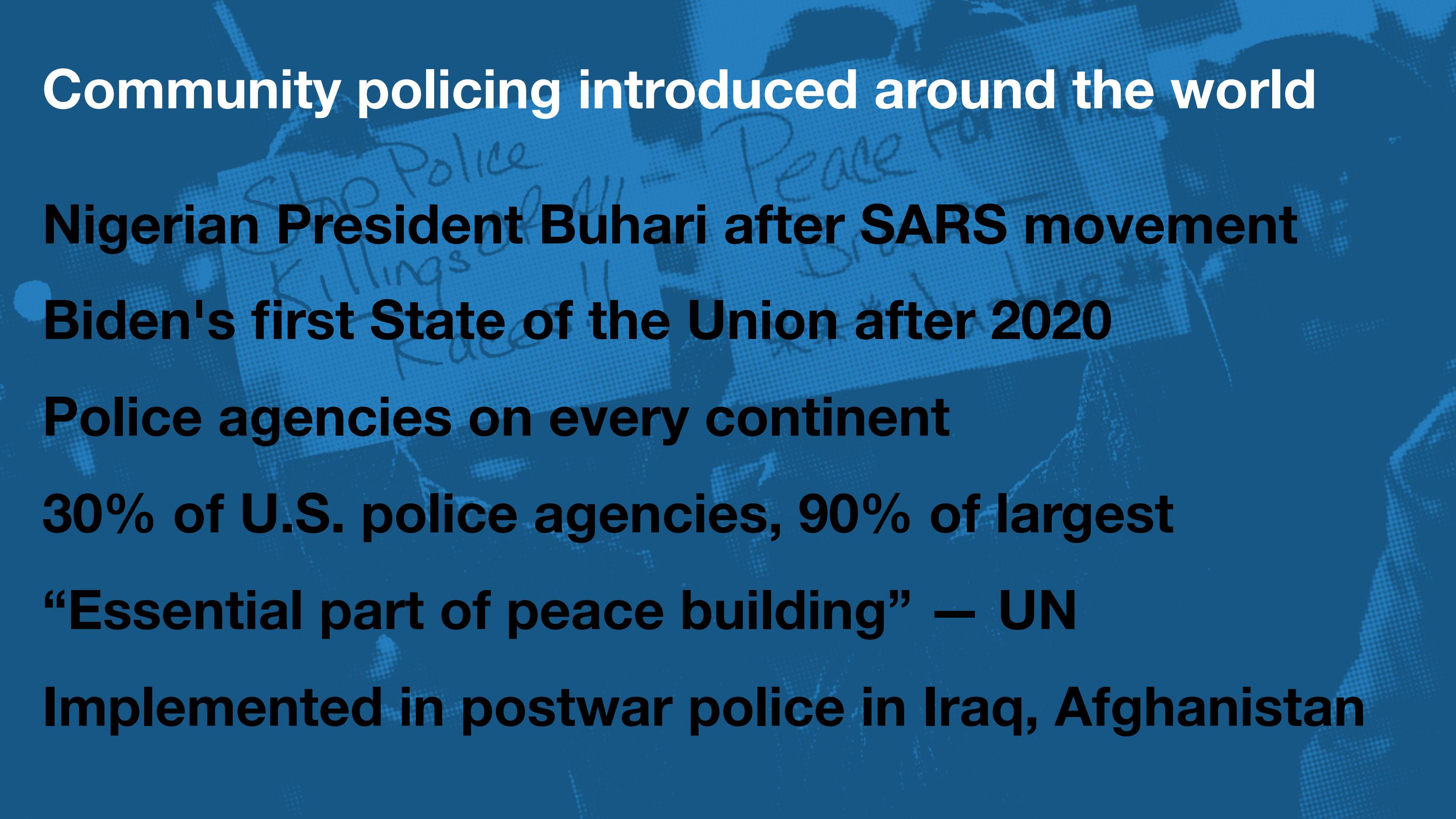
Community engagement

Problem-oriented policing

Police-citizen engagement



Virtuous cycle of
legitimacy, cooperation



Community policing introduced around the world

Nigerian President Buhari after SARS movement

Biden's first State of the Union after 2020

Police agencies on every continent

30% of U.S. police agencies, 90% of largest

“Essential part of peace building” – UN

Implemented in postwar police in Iraq, Afghanistan

Intervention

Implemented community policing
in six countries and assessed
effects on state-society relations

Measurement

Citizen, police, crime responses

Findings

New citizen-police communication mechanisms were implemented

No change in legitimacy, cooperation, or crime

Weak police responses, waning police interest

1. Theory

2. Contexts

3. Methods

4. Results

5. Discussion

6. Next steps



Theory of community policing

Crime rate

Theory of community policing

Police actions

Arrest perpetrators,
preventative patrols



Crime rate

Theory of community policing



Theory of community policing



Policy problem:
Not enough citizen input

Theory of community policing



Policy problem:
Not enough citizen input

High costs to individual, diffuse benefits

Theory of community policing

Citizen input

Evidence on past crimes,
tips about future crimes



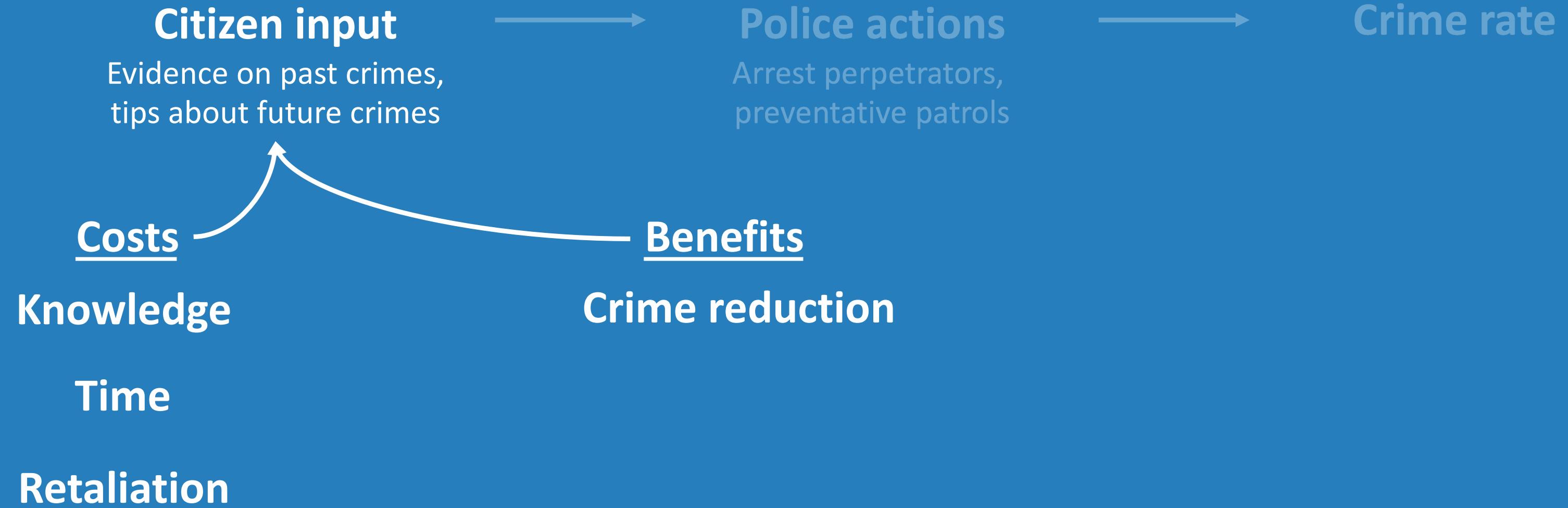
Police actions

Arrest perpetrators,
preventative patrols



Crime rate

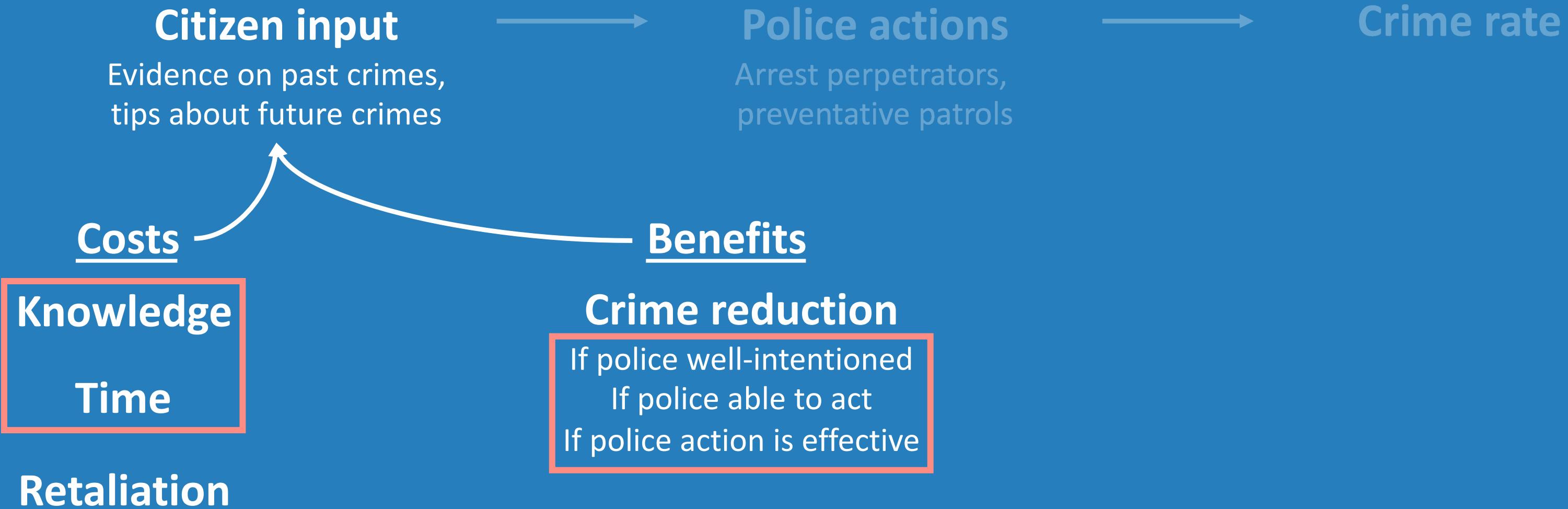
Theory of community policing



Theory of community policing



Theory of community policing



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Six diverse study sites





Santa Catarina State, Brazil

Crime low relative to Brazil, but high in absolute terms

Organized crime present

Collaborators: Fetzer, Muggah, Silva, Souza

Partner: Santa Catarina Military Police

Locations: 196 neighborhoods

Duration: 7 months

City of Medellín, Colombia

**Most violent city in world in '80s;
fearsome police reputation**

**Marked improvement in crime,
but little increase in citizen trust**

**Collaborators: Arias, Hanson,
Kronick, Slough**

Partner: Medellin Metro. Police

Locations: 347 police beats

Duration: 12 months





City of Monrovia, Liberia

New police force constituted since end of civil war in 2003

High crime and vigilantism

Limited state reach

Collaborators: Morse, Tsai

Partner: Liberian National Police

Locations: 100 neighborhoods

Duration: 11 months

Sheikhupura region, Pakistan

Lower crime, but police among least trusted institutions

Police constrained in investigating major crimes

**Collaborators: Cheema,
Hasanain, Shapiro**

Partner: Punjab Police

Locations: 108 beats

Duration: 6 months





Sorsogon Province, Philippines

**Citizens associate police with
Duterte's drug war taking place
in other parts of the country**

Low-level insurgency

**Collaborators: Haim, Nanes,
Ravanilla**

**Partner: Philippines National
Police**

Locations: 298 barangays

Duration: 17 months

Nationwide in Uganda

Police serve dual role: prevent crime, maintain power for Museveni

Trust in police is low, but in the middle for Africa

**Collaborators: R. Blair,
Grossman, Wilke**

Partner: Ugandan Police Force

Locations: 72 police stations

Duration: 13 months



Six diverse study sites

	Political freedoms	Regime type	Corruption score	Income group
Brazil	Partly free	Democracy	45 / 100	Upper mid.
Colombia	Partly free	Democracy	39	Upper mid.
Liberia	Partly free	Democracy	32	Low
Pakistan	Partly free	Autocracy	31	Lower mid.
Philippines	Partly free	Autocracy	46	Lower mid.
Uganda	Not free	Autocracy	26	Low

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Research design

Cluster-randomized experiments

Six contexts in the Global South

Partnerships with police agencies

Intent-to-treat effects

Standardized surveys, admin. data

Intervention design

Police were asked to decide on a set of locally-appropriate elements of community policing practices to implement

- 1. New citizen-police communication mechanisms**
- 2. Increase contact between citizens and police**

Did not control citizen action or police followup

Interventions by site

	Townhall meetings	Foot patrols	Citizen feedback	Watch forums	Duration (months)
Brazil	Semi-Annual	-	WhatsApp Groups	-	7
Colombia	Bi-Monthly	-	-	-	12
Liberia	Bi-Monthly	Bi-Monthly	-	Yes	11
Pakistan	Monthly	Frequent	Hotline	Yes	6
Philippines	Small groups	Weekly	Hotline	-	17
Uganda	Bi-Monthly	-	-	Yes	13

Ethics of working with the police

Obligations above academic review

Unit-specific assessment of risk

Risk monitoring and mitigation plan

Experimental design

Randomly-assign community policing to neighborhoods, villages, or beats within each country

Control group: status quo policing

Measurement

Face-to-face surveys

18,000 citizens, 880 officers

**Administrative data from police
(daily or monthly police blotters)**

600 neighborhoods and villages

Outcomes

1. Legitimacy of the police
2. Legitimacy of the state
3. Cooperation with police
4. Crime and insecurity
5. Police perceptions

Analysis

Country-level ITT effects

**Average effect across countries
(weighted by precision)**

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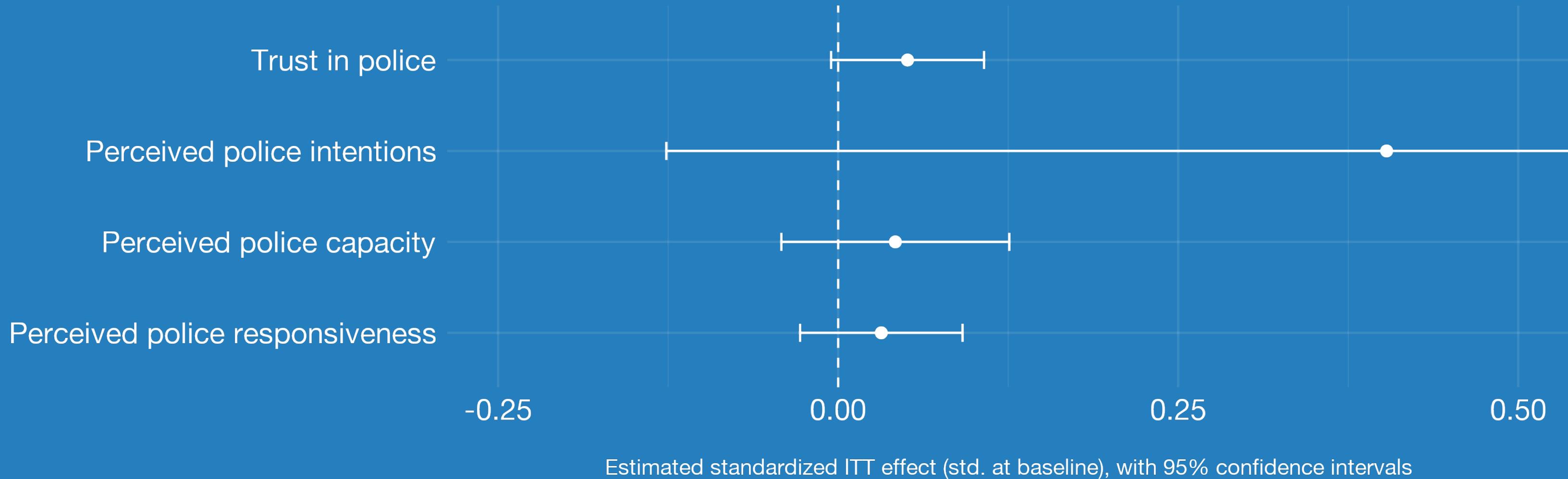
Overall findings

No impact on crime, legitimacy, or cooperation

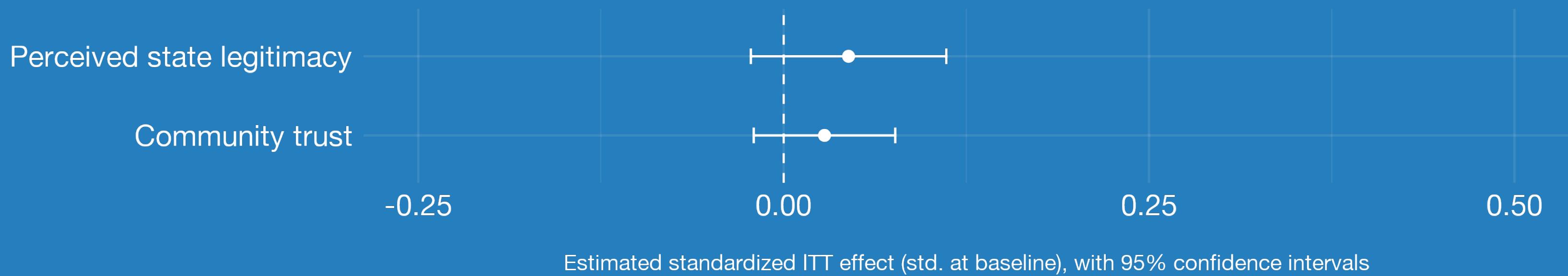
Limited changes in citizen perceptions

Weak implementation by police

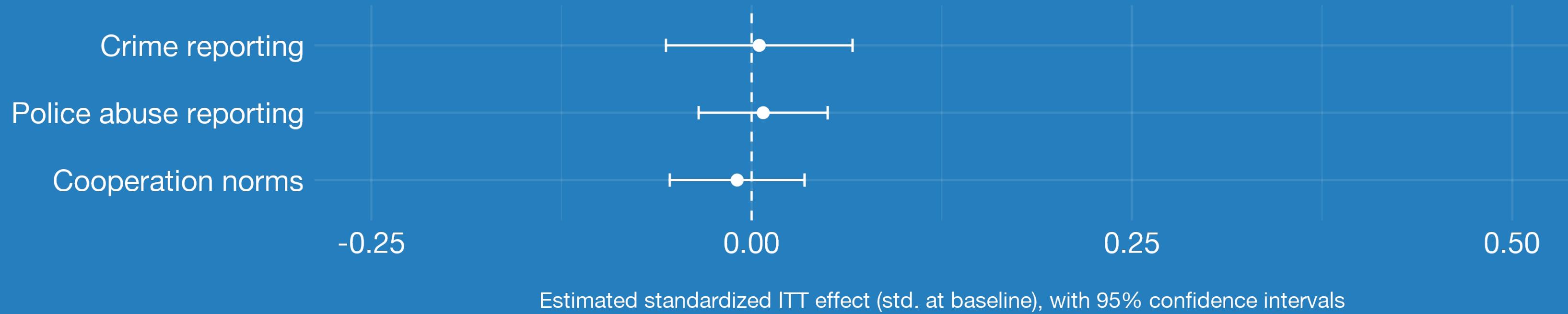
Legitimacy of police



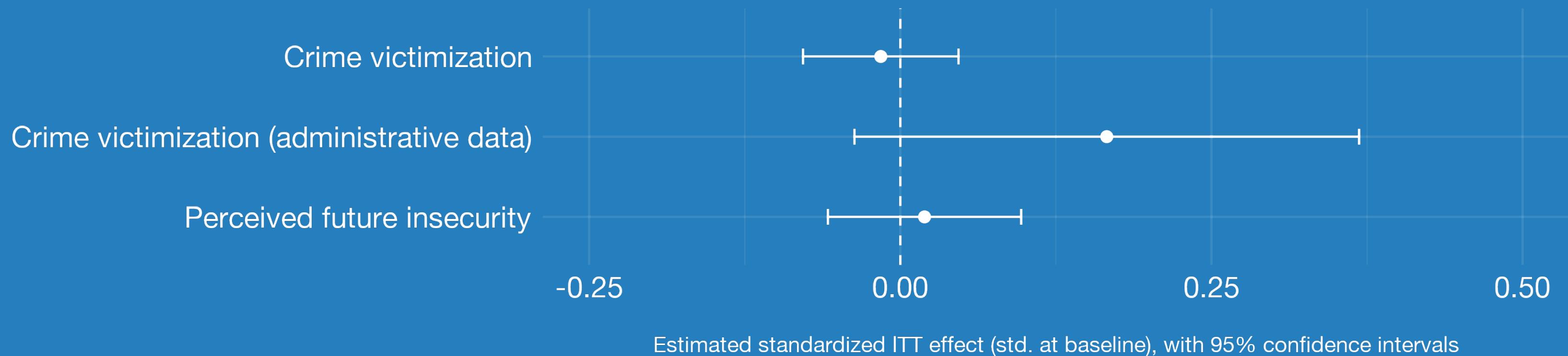
Legitimacy of the state



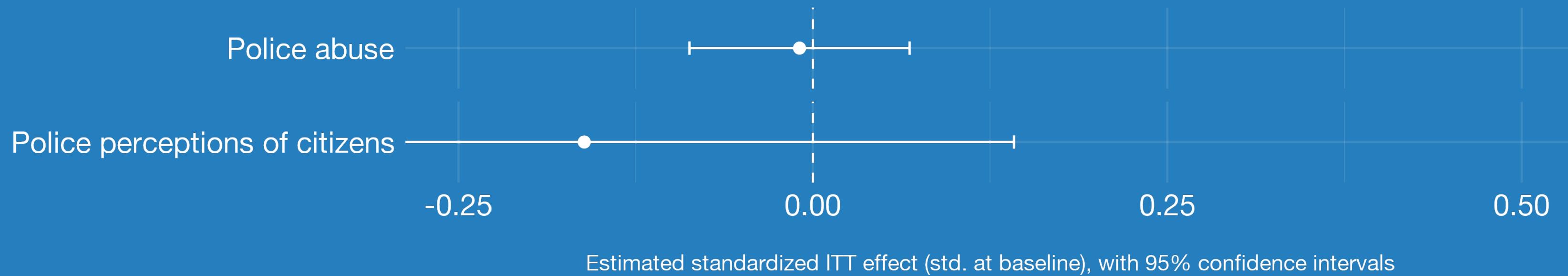
Cooperation with police



Crime and insecurity



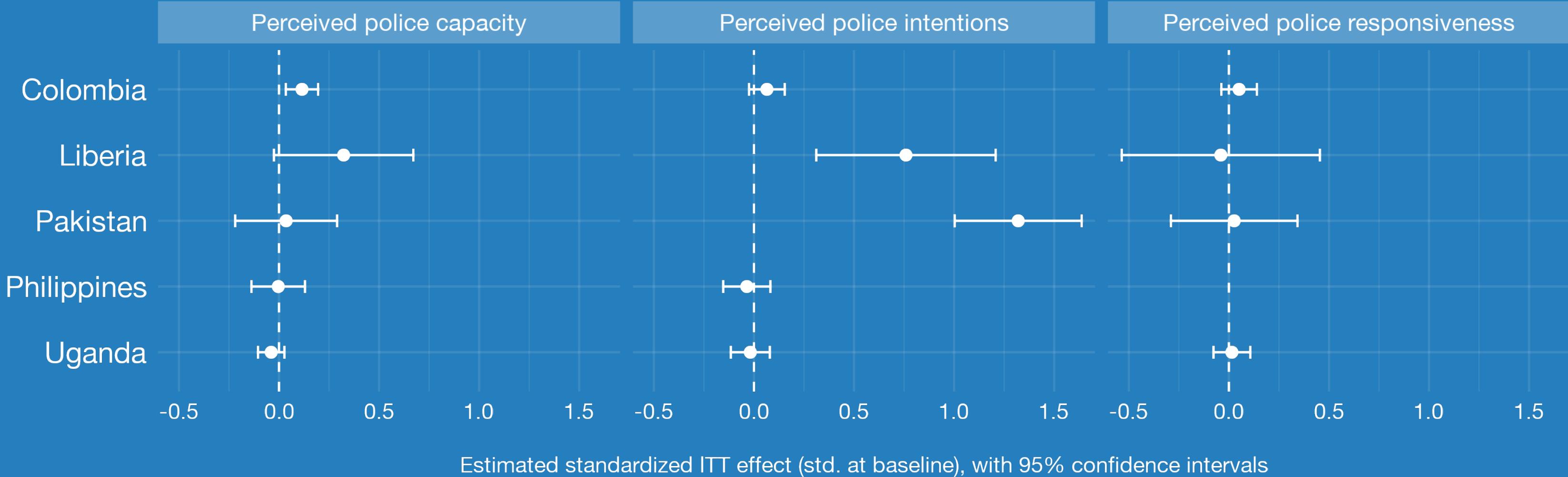
Police behaviors and perceptions of citizens



No heterogeneous effects

- Crime victimization
- Legitimacy of police or of state
- Communal trust
- Unmeasured heterogeneity

Mixed citizen perceptions results

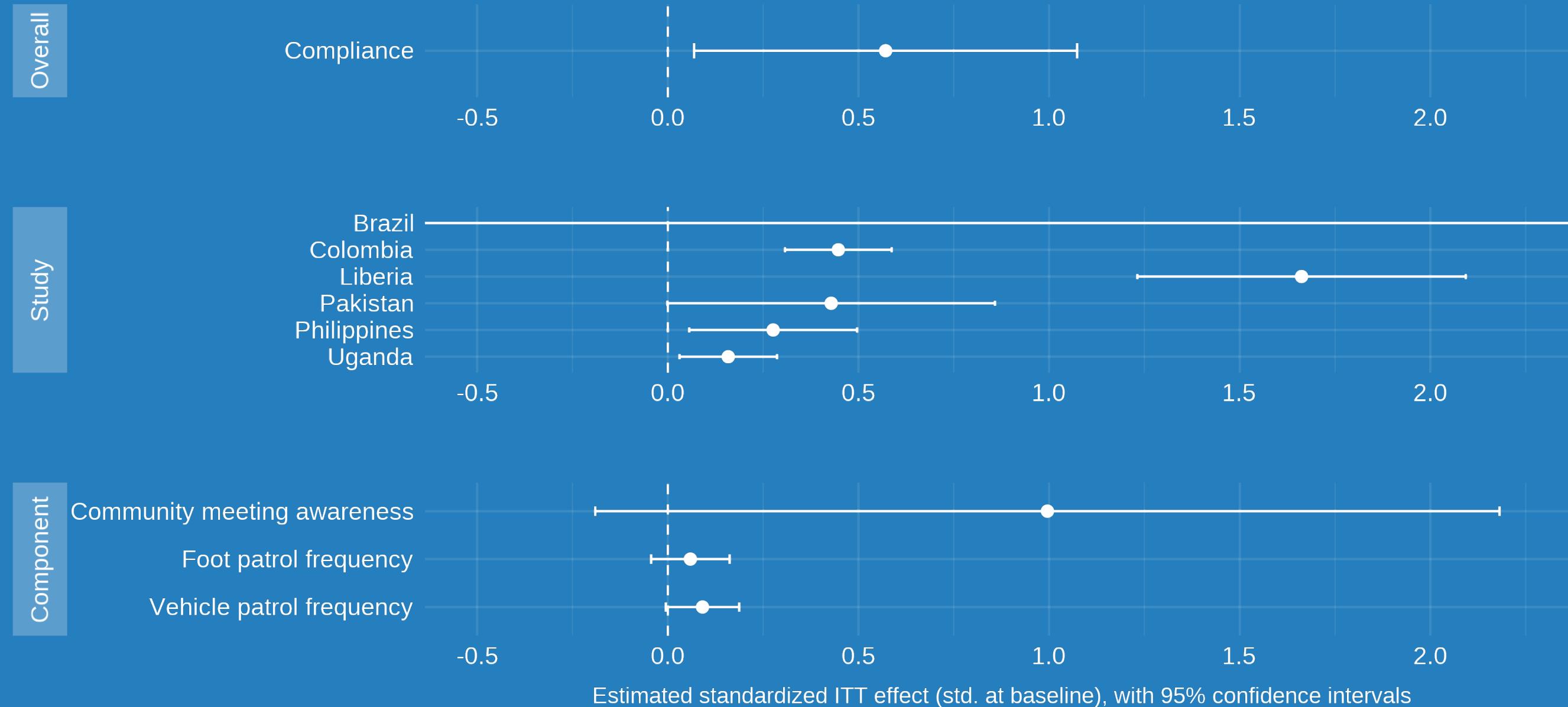


Significant results shown survive multiple comparisons adjustment.

Did police implement community policing?

	Bra.	Col.	Lbr.	Pak.	Phl.	Uga.
Total mtg.	109	456	221	412	808	427
Mtg. / unit	1	3	5	11	11	1.4
People / mtg.	30	18	25	11	10	51

Did police implement community policing?



Did police implement community policing?

Fewer than 25% of problems identified in townhalls followed up in Pakistan

Officers in the Philippines referred complaints to other agencies known to be unresponsive

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Causes for weak implementation

Lack of prioritization by police

“We take these problems to our [station lead officer] and instead of helping us implement the agreed actions, he ignores them and gives us other tasks.”

— Community policing officer in Pakistan

Causes for weak implementation

Lack of prioritization by police

High rate of officer rotation

**Limited resources to follow up on
citizen concerns**

Why does the state introduce community policing?

Costly:

Less state control, less time for enforcement

Risky:

Police abuse → less legitimacy

Why does the state introduce community policing?

Effective: builds legitimacy of police and the state

Disarming: not effective, but defuses civil society

Regaining control: tool to control police via citizens

Police funding: police use it to hire police

Compelled: imposed by external actors

Movement: whole-of-society support for reform

Can community policing build state legitimacy?

No detectable effects

Implementation weak without structural changes

Instead, a policy to disarm social movements, fund police?

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New project: Does community policing work in the US?

- 1. Effects of DOJ COPS grant spending**
- 2. Effects of community policing in Boston, Chicago**
- 3. Meta-analysis of components, bundles of community policing interventions**

Research agenda

What causes violence, and what can prevent it?

- 1. Why natural resources are correlated with conflict**
- 2. Why former fighters struggle to reintegrate**
- 3. How exposure to violence affects civilians**

What are effective methods for studying violence?

- 1. Studying sensitive questions in surveys**
- 2. Selecting strong prospective research designs**

Thank you!

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Hyp.	Outcome index	Index components	Data source
Primary outcomes			
1a.	Crime victimization index ^a	Violent crime (personal); Nonviolent crime (personal); Violent crime (community); Non-violent crime (community)	Citizen survey
1b.	Perceived future insecurity index	Feared violent crime; Feared walking	Citizen survey
2.	Overall perceptions of police index	Trust in police; Trust in service of police	Citizen survey
3a.	Police perceptions of citizens index ^b	Abuse index; Accountability index; Corruption index; Empathy index	Officer survey
3b.	Police abuse	Abuse (binary); Bribe amount; Bribe frequency	Citizen survey
4a.	Crime reporting index	Violent crime (personal); Violent crime (community); Nonviolent crime reporting (community); Nonviolent crime reporting (personal); Resolution of crime index	Citizen survey
4b.	Crime tips index	Crime tips index	Citizen survey
		Tips count (hotline); Tips count (comment box)	Administrative
4c.	Police abuse reporting index	Beating community member; Verbal abuse	Citizen survey
Mechanism outcomes			
M1a.	Perceived police intentions index	Corruption; Treat fairly; Treat seriously	Citizen survey
M1b.	Knowledge of criminal justice ^c	Legal knowledge; Knowledge of how to report crimes	Citizen survey
M1c.	Cooperation norms index	Reporting norm (theft); Reporting norm (domestic abuse); Obey police norm	Citizen survey
M2a.	Perceived police capacity index	Police timeliness; Police investigation capacity	Citizen survey
M2b.	Perceived police responsiveness		Citizen survey
Secondary outcomes			
S1.	Perceived state legitimacy ^d		Citizen survey
S2.	Community trust		Citizen survey
C.	Compliance index	Foot patrol frequency; Vehicle patrol frequency; Community meeting awareness	Citizen survey

	Brazil	Colombia	Liberia	Pakistan	Philippines	Uganda
Unit of assignment	Neighborhoods	Beats	Communities	Beats	Barangays ^a	Police stations (CP); villages (alt.)
Random assignment strategy	Two-arm (control, CP ^b)	Factorial (control, CP, alt. ^c , CP + alt.)	Two-arm (control, CP)	Three-arm (control, CP, alt. ^d)	Two-arm (control, CP) with addl. cross-randomizations ^e	Three arm (Control, CP, CP+alt. ^f)
Blocking variables ^g	Municipality	Police station	Police zone	Police station	Municipality, baseline crime rate	Baseline covariates
Officers randomized ^h	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Duration of treatment	7 months	12 months	11 months	6 months	17 months	13 months
Citizen surveys						
Design	Panel	Panel	Cross-section	Panel	Cross-section	Panel
Baseline	✓	✓	✓	✓	Partial	✓
Endline	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Officer surveys						
Design	Cross-section	Cross-section	Cross-section	Cross-section	Cross-section	Panel
Baseline	✓	✗	✗	✓	Partial	✓
Endline	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Administrative crime data	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Site	Experimental condition	Town hall meetings	Foot patrols	Problem-oriented policing	Citizen feedback	Watch forum
Brazil	Control	Never	Occasional	No	No	No
	Treatment	Semi-annual	Occasional	Yes	WhatsApp	No
Colombia	Control	None	Daily	Yes	Hotline; Mobile application	No
	Treatment	Bi-monthly	Daily	Yes	Hotline; Mobile application	No
Liberia	Control	Occasional	Occasional	No	No	Some
	Treatment	Bi-monthly	Bi-monthly	No	No	Yes
Pakistan	Control	No	Occasional	No	Hotline	No
	Treatment	Monthly	Frequent	Yes	Hotline (use encouraged)	Yes
Philippines	Control	No	Occasional	No	No	No
	Treatment	No	Weekly	Yes	Hotline ^a	No
Uganda	Control	Never	Occasional	No	No	Some
	Treatment	Bi-monthly	Occasional	No	No	Yes

	Brazil	Colombia	Liberia	Pakistan	Philippines	Uganda
Political freedoms ^a	Partly free	Partly free	Partly free	Partly free	Partly free	Not free
Regime type ^b	Democracy	Democracy	Democracy	Autocracy	Autocracy	Autocracy
Corruption score ^c	45 / 100	39	32	31	46	26
Criminal justice score ^d	34 / 100	34	31	35	31	31
Income category ^e	Upper mid.	Upper mid.	Low	Lower mid.	Lower mid.	Low
Inequality (Gini coef.) ^f	54	50	35	33	44	42
Study site	Santa Caterina	Medellín	Monrovia	Punjab Province	Sorgoson Province	-
Type	State	Large city	Large city	Two districts	Province	Country
Rate of crime victimization (pct.) ^g						
Simple assault	1	5	6	5	3	6
Burglary	4	15	17	16	2	19
Armed robbery	0	6	3	10	0	2
Murder	1	9	7	21	1	19
Trust in police (pct.) ^h	79	47	46	23	86	62
Officer intentions (pct.) ⁱ	-	78	-	64	-	79
Citizen cooperation (pct.) ^j	1	5	-	2	1	5
Police capacity indicators ^k						
Vehicle	✓			✓		
Motorbike	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Gun	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Radio	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Computer	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Printer	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Camera	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Officers per capita	1:473	1:333	1:950	1:560 ^l	1:991 ^o	1:910 ^p
Budget per officer	\$56,000	\$18,000	\$3,642	\$3,400 ^l	\$18,000	-
Citizens per station	-	143,000 ^m	21,428	500,000 ⁿ	800,000	-
Officer rotation rate	-	15 months	-	1 month	2.75 months ^q	17 months

Group formed var.	Estimate	S.E.	p-value	Conf. Int.	F test statistic	F test p-value
Presence of meeting: June 2018	0.022	0.127	0.866	(-0.237, 0.281)	0.029	0.865
Presence of meeting: Oct 2018	-0.018	0.141	0.902	(-0.306, 0.271)	0.015	0.901
Share of area under RdV: June 2018	0.020	0.054	0.714	(-0.091, 0.131)	0.137	0.711
Share of area under RdV: Oct 2018	0.044	0.056	0.439	(-0.070, 0.158)	0.617	0.432
Know about RdV	-0.005	0.057	0.935	(-0.122, 0.113)	0.007	0.934

Intervention Effect direction	Crime incidence	Perceptions of safety	<i>Outcome measure</i>			Citizen reporting
			Perceptions of police	Police accountability		
<i>Community Fora</i>						
Increase	–	–	1	–	–	–
Null	–	1	–	–	–	–
<i>Community Presence</i>						
Increase	–	2	2	1	1	1
Null	4	3	4	–	–	1
Decrease	10	–	–	–	–	–
Mixed	8 (7 -/o; 1 -/+)	1 (+/o)	1 (+/o)	1 (+/o)	1 (+/o)	–
<i>Citizen Feedback</i>						
Null	–	–	1	–	–	–
Mixed	–	–	1 (+/o)	–	–	–
<i>Problem-Oriented Policing</i>						
Increase	–	2	1	–	–	–
Null	1	1	1	–	–	–
Decrease	6	–	–	–	–	–

Brazil study design:

Encouragement: one community meeting, encouragement to form police-community WhatsApp group

Treatment: group actually formed

Compliance rate below 5%

IV estimates of complier average causal effect

