

Compete or Cooperate: How Institutional Choices Shape the Interaction Between Traditional Leaders and the State in Africa

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Motivation

- How does the central state interact with local political actors?
- The state's capacity to implement policies and to cooperate or compete with local actors varies considerably both across and within countries.
- Traditional leaders are important local actors in Africa. But how are they affected by the weakness of the state?

Research Question

- How does the capacity of the central state change the power of traditional leaders?
- What consequences does this relationship have?

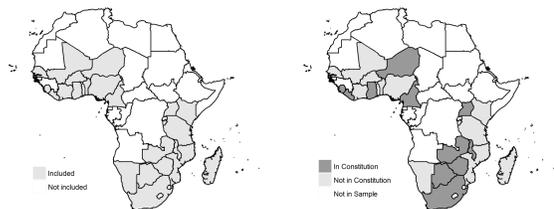
Theory

- If chiefs are independent of state → substitution
- If chiefs and state are institutionally connected → complementarity

Data

Sample

- Afrobarometer survey — Rounds 3, 4, 5, 6 (geocoded by Aiddata)
- DHS survey — health and demographic data
- Administrative shapefiles
 - Boundaries
 - Headquarters
- Constitutions data set (Baldwin 2016)
 - Whether chiefs are mentioned in a country's constitution
 - Whether the chiefs' power is protected in the constitution



Challenges

- How to measure state capacity?
- How to obtain exogenous variation?

Empirical Strategy

Steps

1 Distance to admin. capitals as measure

- States struggle to control the “periphery” (Herbst. 2000)
- Distance increases the cost of administrating and implementing (Stasavage. 2010). E.g. police, taxes etc.
- Strong correlation between distance and state capacity

2 Use border region to obtain variation

- Compare villages at admin. borders to obtain discontinuity in state capacity while keeping other factors constant.
- While people, goods, and services move freely across these admin. borders, gov. officials, that are usually tasked with administrating specific districts, however, do not.
- Restrict sample to villages close to admin. border (within 5 km)

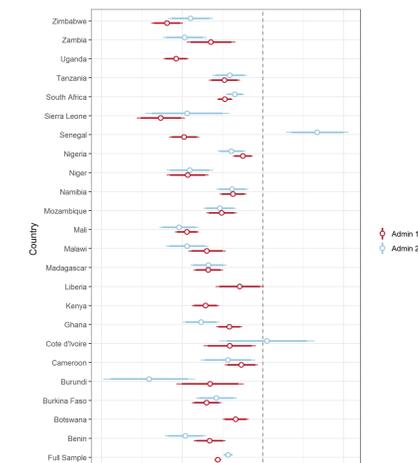
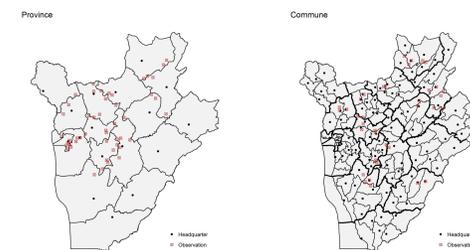
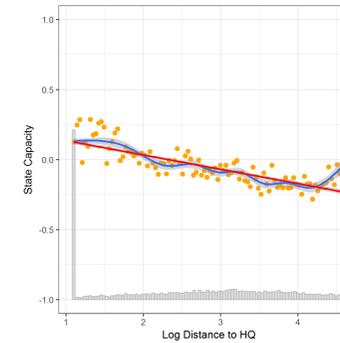
3 Specification

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Tint + \beta_2 DB + \beta_3 T \times DB + \beta_4 \chi + \beta_5 BR + \epsilon$$

- Y is a measure of the strength of local institutions
- T is the binary treatment variable indicating whether the average distance on the respondent's side of the border region is larger than on the other side
- $Tint$ is the treatment intensity
- DB is the distance to the administrative border
- χ is a vector of geographical and historical controls
- BR are the border region fixed effects

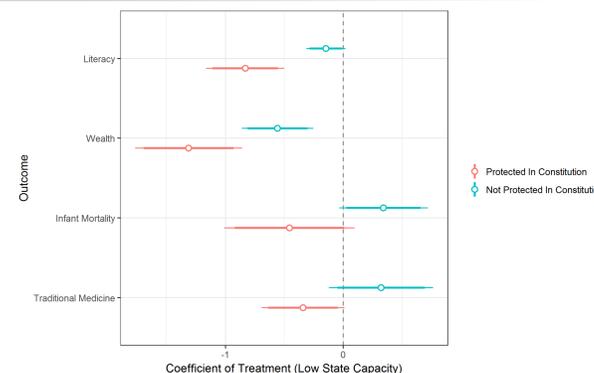
4 Scaling

- Distance has a different effect on state capacity depending on the country and administrative division.
- So I will scale the treatment by the inverse of the coefficient β in $SC = \alpha + \beta Distance + \epsilon$ which I run by country and administrative division.



Results

	Chief Z-Score	
	Not Protected	Protected
	(1)	(2)
Intensive Treatment	1.236** (0.488)	-0.347 (0.216)
Fixed effects?	Yes	Yes
Cluster	Admin. Unit	Admin. Unit
Observations	172	399
R ²	0.705	0.690
Adjusted R ²	0.457	0.572



Interpretation

- In countries where chiefs are protected by the constitution (i.e. institutionally linked to the state) → complementarity
- In countries where chiefs are independent → substitution
- This has implications for other outcomes. Areas with institutional linkages are worse off in terms of wealth and literacy when the state is weak.
- I theorize that this is because when independent chiefs can step in and provide some public goods when the state is weak.
- Reverse for health outcomes, presumably because chiefs are not good at providing health care.

Robustness Checks

- Varying the bandwidth
- Travel Time
- Cubic Long/Lat specification
- Instrumented HQs

Discussion

Next Steps

- Formal Model
- Case Study: Ghana vs Nigeria
- Micro-data from the DRC

Contribution

- Causal evidence for the effect of state capacity on chiefs → institutional context determines whether substitution or complementarity
- This matters for development outcomes
- Empirical strategy that provides fine-grained measure of state capacity and exogenous variation
- Data set of administrative boundaries and hqs