African Political Institutions and the Impact of Colonialism[*]

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February 14, 2023

Abstract

What impact did colonialism have on African political institutions? We provide a new perspective by demonstrating the persistence of precolonial executive constraints, at the local level. Africans, prior to European rule, had innovated various forms of constraints on rulers. They recreated such institutions in various forms under colonialism. In areas with centralized states, existing institutions (including executive constraints) were largely preserved. In areas with more decentralized institutions, colonial governments generally scaled up local participatory institutions rather than imposed new despotic institutions. To test these theoretical ideas, we compiled two original datasets on the presence of executive constraints in the precolonial and colonial periods across 463 local government units in British Africa. Our novel data enables us to understand the inherent heterogeneity in local "indirect" rule and to demonstrate that precolonial institutional forms (in particular the presence of executive constraints) are highly correlated with the structure of colonial Native Authority institutions.

Keywords: Africa, Authoritarianism, Colonialism, Executive Constraints, Political Institutions, Precolonial states

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1   INTRODUCTION

What impact did colonialism have on African political institutions? A growing consensus has emerged that, although European colonizers affected postcolonial outcomes in Africa, they did not inherit an institutional "blank slate." Yet if there is general agreement that both precolonial and colonial institutions mattered in some sense, the extent of continuity versus change in local political institutions during colonial rule remains hotly debated. Two widely cited works present diametrically opposed positions. On the one hand, Mamdani (1996) contends that all colonizers, and particularly the British, acted with a single model of traditional governance in mind that was monarchical and authoritarian, anchored by naming a single chief as the Native Authority in every local governance unit.[1] Consequently, colonizers routinely created artificial institutions of "decentralized despotism" that stripped away any existing mechanisms of consultation and consent. On the other hand, Herbst (2000) stresses continuities with the precolonial period. Europeans did not solve the problem of broadcasting power in areas with low population densities, and instead left existing institutions in place to govern on the cheap.

In between these extreme positions, social scientists have offered more nuanced views highlighting the diversity of the colonial experience and the conditions under which we would expect continuity or change. In particular, Europeans governed more indirectly in areas with more centralized precolonial states (Boone 2003; Gerring et al. 2011; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou 2013; Archibong 2018; Müller-Crepon 2020), whereas governance was more direct in areas with large white settlements (Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson 2001; Paine 2019; Boone 2014, 19–51).[2] The empirical basis for these arguments is mixed. In general, this debate has relied on either the detailed study of selected cases in specific countries or on distant proxy measures for larger geographical units, which helps to explain divergent conclusions.

We offer two contributions. First, we provide a new theoretical framework to understand what

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[1]See in particular p. 39.

[2]These debates are not limited to colonialism in Africa; see, for example, Iyer (2010) and Naseemullah and Staniland (2016) on colonial South Asia and Garfias and Sellars (2021) on Spanish America.

changed and what remained similar among local institutions under colonialism by focusing on the institutional constraints to which rulers were subjected in the precolonial and colonial eras. Second, we test our theoretical implications using original large-N datasets on precolonial and colonial institutions within British Africa, which enable us to study local-level institutions directly. Our central finding is that institutional constraints persisted at the local level.

Theoretically, we argue that African political cultures were typically suspicious of despotic power. This idea follows a large literature in African studies, which we discuss later. Consequently, precolonial political institutions with powerful, authoritarian rulers were relatively rare. Instead, most precolonial polities were either decentralized or tended to feature executive constraints, usually in the form of councils. Colonial powers constructed administrations with limited resources, which necessitated a reliance on indigenous intermediaries. Broadly, their goals were to promote fiscally effective administration while preventing revolts. In centralized polities, the efficient solution was to institutionalize the political status quo, including the existence of councils where present. In decentralized polities, which typically featured highly participatory institutions, the best solution was to scale these (to achieve fiscally effective administration) up by creating higher-level councils and encouraging participation by a wider range of actors. This contrasted with the more commonly discussed alternative strategy of arbitrarily granting authoritarian powers by "inventing tradition." This was rarely effective as it prompted discontent and costly revolts. Consequently, our theory anticipates that local-level colonial political institutions should exhibit considerable variance in the presence of chiefs and/or councils, which reflects variation in precolonial polities.

To test this theoretical implication, we use archival and anthropological sources to develop original measures of rulers and councils across 463 local political units within British Africa, for both the precolonial and colonial periods. We refer to these units by their colonial title, Native Authorities.[3] For the colonial period, we drew on a comprehensive survey of British District Officers conducted

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[3]As we explain later, our statistical unit of analysis is the Native Treasury, each of which comprised one or several Native Authorities. Administrative considerations about the scale of effective authority applied to fiscal units, which were the Native Treasuries.

in the late 1940s, now housed in the UK National Archives. These surveys formed the empirical basis for Lord Hailey's *Native Administration in the British African Territories* (Hailey 1950*a*,*b*, 1951*a*,*b*, 1953), a five-volume comparative study of systems of African local government. Our statistical sample includes units from eleven countries for which the Hailey books and surveys provide quantitative information on the structure of local institutions and other contextual information at local level. In Appendix E, we provide qualitative evidence on three additional cases for which these sources lack any, or sufficiently detailed, information: South Africa, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and Sierra Leone. Collectively, we address almost every British colony in Africa. Although British colonies were not necessarily representative of the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa, the countries included in our quantitative sample comprised around 37% of the total population of the region in 1950 (Frankema and Jerven 2014).

Our main variable denotes whether the Native Authority consisted of a chief only, a chief and council, or a council only, although we also collected information about numerous other aspects of local institutions such as the composition of councils and of local expenditures. This improves upon existing measures for colonial institutions of indirect rule in large-N samples. Many are somewhat distant proxies and the scale of the units (usually ethnic groups or entire colonies) is much larger than the actual level at which local institutions operated. Even among the notable exceptions, none measure the chief/council dimension of local institutions and the composition of councils for a comprehensive sample of British Africa.[4]

For the precolonial period, we consulted the thirty-eight relevant volumes of the *Ethnographic Survey of Africa* (edited by Daryll Forde), which cover close to 200 African societies. To cross-check, we also drew on dozens of historical and ethnographic monographs and articles. Using these sources, we constructed a three-valued variable for precolonial political institutions: state with an authoritarian ruler, state with a constrained ruler, or decentralized political institutions. We

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[4]Examples of more fine-grained units are precolonial African states (Müller-Crepon 2020; Dasgupta and Johnson-Kanu 2021; Paine, Qiu and Ricart-Huguet 2022), colonial districts (Huillery 2009; Ricart-Huguet 2022), Native Treasuries in four British African colonies (Bolt and Gardner 2020), and paramount chieftaincies in Sierra Leone (Acemoglu, Reed and Robinson 2014).

thus code not only whether a state existed at all, but also information about executive constraints, which helps to open up a black box in quantitative research on precolonial institutions. For reasons discussed later, our variable improves significantly upon quantitative measures of precolonial institutions used in previous research, in particular Murdock's (1967) *Ethnographic Atlas*.

Our main empirical finding supports our theory: local institutional constraints were highly persistent. Areas with precolonial institutional constraints rarely had colonial institutions without executive constraints, in the form of legally recognized council. Solo-chief Native Authorities (NAs) were mostly confined to the few areas with authoritarian states prior to colonial rule. Conversely, council-only NAs were exclusive to stateless areas, as the existence of a chief executive was perpetuated in areas with historical states. A corollary of these two patterns is that constrained states usually had chief-and-council NAs. Even the basic descriptive patterns of NA institutions defy conventional characterizations, as these institutions were highly heterogeneous and largely not authoritarian. Only 17% of NAs consisted solely of a chief. Instead, NAs that consisted of *only councils* were more prevalent (48%), and NA institutions that included both a chief and a council were common as well (35%). We also provide evidence that the councils themselves reflected precolonial precedents in terms of the composition of their members and that the presence of councils influenced local government spending patterns.

In sum, in areas with and without centralized states, British officials had compelling incentives to promote institutional constraints, which built upon institutional constraints that Africans had innovated prior to colonialism. In areas with precolonial states, they largely preserved existing institutions, including councils. In areas with less centralized governance, they scaled up local participatory institutions. Our findings thus do not support characterizations of decentralized despotism (Mamdani 1996) or the contention that British governance made no changes (Herbst 2000). Other theories take seriously variation based on the degree of precolonial centralization, but cannot explain variation in (nor the overall prevalence of) institutional constraints during colonialism. In the conclusion, we discuss the implications of our findings for studying postcolonial legacies.

2 THEORY: PERSISTENCE OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Precolonial African polities varied not only in their size and degree of centralization, but also in the strength of executive constraints. This was also true of colonial Native Authorities. Despite having the same nominal title across British Africa, Native Authorities varied widely in their organization and structure. The broad goals of British administrators were to establish fiscally effective administration while preventing revolts. In areas with precolonial states, colonizers could achieve both goals by largely replicating existing institutions. This yielded the persistence of institutional constraints in areas with such historical precedents. In areas with decentralized precolonial governance, innovation was needed to scale-up institutions to achieve fiscal efficiency. However, delegating authority to councils rather than local despots was more effective at preventing revolts.

2.1 PRECOLONIAL INSTITUTIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

Precolonial Africa was populated by numerous political units, most likely thousands, across the continent. Although most were very small, some larger and more centralized states did emerge. This source of heterogeneity is well known among social scientists, but one aspect of precolonial institutions that has received less attention is variation in executive constraints on precolonial rulers.[5] The ease of exit in regions where population density was low and land readily available (Stasavage 2020) and a commonly held desire to maintain the "internal autonomy of the local community" (Vansina 1990, 119) made it difficult to concentrate autocratic powers in precolonial Africa. Often, these tendencies resulted in small-scale political units with significant checks on unilateral authority. For example, in Igboland in Eastern Nigeria, each village had an elaborate structure of councils that, in addition to other types of societies such as lineage groups and secret societies, collectively made decisions for the community (Afigbo 1981). Villages tended to be divided into two halves that existed in "balanced opposition" to each other. For example, the Abaja village group was divided between Ama and Owerri, where "the working of village affairs was considerably bound up with the system of checks and balances and of institutionalized rivalry

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[5]Although see Baldwin (2015), Ahmed and Stasavage (2020), and Stasavage (2020).

introduced by this dualism" (Green 1947, 16). Farther north in Nigeria, the Tiv were organized through descent groups and lineages. Cults and diviners often used witchcraft allegations to prevent any individual from becoming too powerful, which would disrupt the lineage system and the principle of egalitarianism (Bohannan 1958, 3). In East Africa, many societies were organized around a rotating sequence of age grades that diffused and rotated power. Bernardi (1985) argues that such institutions specifically aimed to prevent centralized authority from emerging.

General pressures against autocratic power concentration also meant that, even when more centralized polities emerged, their rulers usually faced significant checks on their power. This was true, for example, of the major states of Yorubaland in Western Nigeria, including Benin, Egba, Ife, Ijebu, and Oyo. Although the obas of each state claimed divine powers, in practice they made all important decisions in consultation with a council of elders (Usman and Falola 2019, 25). In the Asante region of the Gold Coast, the council (Mpayimfo) consisted of elders who were senior members of their kindred groups. The Asantehene did not reach decisions without gaining agreement from these elders, who "acted as advisers of the 'house-father'" (Rattray 1929, 77). In both Yorubaland and Asante, the council was influential in determining leadership succession and for dethroning (in Asante, "destooling") unpopular rulers.

More autocratic states were rarer. Many can be attributed to increased access to European guns in the nineteenth century, which upset the balance of power in areas such as Northern Nigeria and the kingdoms of the Great Lakes (Reid 2012). In the emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate, councils existed but most exerted little influence (Johnston 1970, 172). Prior to the nineteenth century, the Kabaka of Buganda was effectively checked by bataka elites (clan, sub-clan, and lineage heads), whereas by the nineteenth century the kabakas had amassed sufficient power to remove bataka chiefs whom they opposed, even from posts that historically had been hereditary (Fallers 1960, 64).

2.2   CREATION OF NATIVE AUTHORITIES AND NATIVE TREASURIES

Variation in precolonial institutions meant that European colonial governments could not adopt a single strategy for expanding and governing their territory, particularly because they remained

dependent on African intermediaries throughout the colonial period. In the beginning, the sheer pace of territorial claims during the Scramble for Africa made effective governance impossible without local consultation (Berry 1992, 329). Furthermore, European officials were scarce because their salaries, set in metropolitan capitals, were extremely high relative to local incomes (Gardner 2012). Few Europeans on the ground increased the necessity of local collaboration (Kirk-Greene 1980). Iliffe (2007, 193) argues that colonial states were "mere skeletons fleshed out and vitalized by African political forces."

In the British empire, power decentralization had long been a core tenet for administering far-flung territories, and British officials delegated substantial authority to Africans from the onset of colonial rule.[6] Early laws passed by new colonial administrations in Africa outlined the terms of this delegation, which varied according to the structure of precolonial states. In Northern Nigeria, for example, this delegation took the form of treaties in which the newly established British colonial administration recognized the broad jurisdiction of existing Emirates over "'natives' and matters of customary law." In other areas, such as the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, Kenya, and Nyasaland, chiefs and village heads were employed by the colonial government and given specific responsibilities for maintaining law and order, constructing and maintaining roads, and regulating local markets and access to land (Bolt and Gardner 2020).

Native Authorities remained pivotal to colonial governance throughout the colonial era. During the interwar period, economic volatility prompted the rise of organized protests again the colonial state and its failure to invest in African living standards (Gardner 2012; Broadberry and Gardner 2022). Colonial governments responded to this pressure through deliberate policies of decentralization, hoping to channel political opposition to local levels of government. Native Authorities gained expanded responsibilities for providing local services such as education and local infrastructure. To support these efforts, Native Treasuries were established throughout British Africa, and granted additional powers to raise local taxes. According to Perham (1935, 14), a scholar of

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[6]The main exceptions were cases with large white settlements. We discuss South Africa and Zimbabwe in Appendix E.

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colonial administration and frequent advisor to the Colonial Office, "the treasury system has enabled the native administrations to make all kinds of new activity their own." The types of services provided included council halls, schools, roads, bridges, model farms, medical dispensaries, and local market management. By the 1930s, Native Treasuries had become nearly universal across British Africa, although they varied widely in their capacity to raise revenue and to provide these services. In 1937, a report by the colonial government of Nyasaland (Malawi) described the Native Authority as "the executive government in all matters pertaining to natives" (quoted in Bolt and Gardner 2020).

2.3 Precolonial States and Persistent Institutional Constraints

In the context of decentralization and expanded powers of local taxation, the broad goals of British administrators were to establish fiscally effective administration while preventing revolts. In areas with precolonial states, governance institutions already existed with sufficient territorial scope to facilitate fiscal efficiency. Consequently, where states existed, Native Authorities and Native Treasuries typically corresponded with precolonial units. We provide new evidence to confirm this idea, which appears in existing research on precolonial states and the directness of rule (Boone 2003; Gerring et al. 2011; Müller-Crepon 2020), with our comprehensive sample of local governance units in British Africa.[7] *All but two* (out of sixty-three) precolonial states in our dataset had a Native Authority and Treasury named for the precolonial state. In *all* these cases, the chief of the Native Authority encompassing the precolonial state was chosen from the same ruling famil(ies) as in the precolonial era.[8] These Native Authorities governed roughly the same territory as before colonialism, which we assess with spatial data on precolonial states and Native Treasury areas. Moreover, these Native Treasuries were usually exclusive to the Native Authority that corresponded to the precolonial state, with an average of 1.2 Native Authorities per Treasury. This indicates a high degree of unilateral authority for precolonial-state Native Authorities over local finances. As we will see later, in areas with more decentralized polities, Native Treasuries typically

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[7]Appendix B.3 provides details.

[8]In two cases, British intervention broke the line (Asante 1900–26 and Benin 1897–1914) before later restoring the traditional dynasty to improve administration.

amalgamated many more local authorities.

However, existing discussions focus exclusively on the persistence of *chief executives* in areas with precolonial states. Another important dimension, which we expound, is the perpetuation of *executive constraints* such as councils, where they existed previously. This was a dynamic process that unfolded as British administrators collected more intelligence about precolonial institutions and realized the failures of earlier policies. For example, in Yorubaland, early British administrators bolstered the autocratic powers of the Alafin of Oyo. These choices not only made him unaccountable to his people, but also inflated his powers (compared to precolonial precedents) relative to other Yoruba rulers (Atanda 1973). Later, British administrators shifted their approach to local administration to emphasize "the doctrine that the jurisdiction of any Native Authority must be based on the consent of the people over whom such authority would be exercised," largely due to a fear of a repeat of the 1929 Women's War in Eastern Nigeria (p. 249), which we discuss below. Reforms in the 1930s reorganized the Oyo Province into five independent Native Authorities, and further reforms in the 1940s integrated their councils into the Native Administration. These reforms brought de jure institutions in line with de facto practices: "[t]he term 'Sole Native Authority' has an autocratic sound that was in fact divorced from the realities of the situation [in Yorubaland]. No action which was going to affect the local community would normally have been taken by a Sole Native Authority without full consultation with the council" (Brown 1950, 17; see also Atanda 1973, 285).

Policies in Asante (Gold Coast/Ghana) also perpetuated precolonial executive constraints. After conquering and dissolving the traditional Asante kingdom, the British later reversed course to improve governance. In 1926, they reinstalled the traditional ruler as the Omanhene of Kumasi (the historical capital) and in 1935 they officially restored the Asante Confederacy and its head of state, the Asantehene (Hailey 1951*a*, 232–33). Native Authorities throughout the Asante region consisted of chiefs and their State Councils, who were comprised primarily of traditional elites. The Hailey surveys emphasize the degree to which councils such as that in the Kwahu Native

Authority constrained chiefs: "In practice the President has only one vote and though his personal influence and hereditary position go a long way towards producing decisions, these factors can only be exercised in a direction in which he considers his councillors likely to follow."[9] The opinions of the populace more broadly were also important because of the threat of destoolment: "The Chiefs and their Councils were unwilling or unable to make Bye-laws which would meet with any opposition from their people, for if they attempted to enforce them, this might result, and did result in some cases, in their destoolment" (Hailey 1951a, 200).

Yet institutional continuity did not always foster constraints on colonial chiefs. The same goals of effective local governance units and minimizing prospects for revolts encouraged British officials to keep autocratic institutions in place when doing so reflected the precolonial status quo. In the former emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate, emirs from traditional dynasties became solo-chief Native Authorities. Their councils were purely advisory and many council members were selected by the emir. These arrangements perpetuated the precolonial status quo of strong rulers and weak councils in Northern Nigeria. In Buganda, the Kabaka remained powerful throughout the colonial era, although in this case the colonial administration officially recognized his council, the Lukiko, as well. The foundational Agreement of 1900 "conferr[ed] on the Kabaka *and Lukiko* the power to make, with the consent of the Governor, laws which were to be binding on natives in Buganda" (Hailey 1950a, 6; our emphasis).

Colonial political institutions did not, of course, *fully* replicate precolonial political institutions. An obvious way in which colonial rule loosened popular accountability was to make each traditional ruler an agent to two principals: their people and the British administration. Currying favor with the latter could help a ruler to remain in power even upon losing popular support.[10]

Yet the net balance of changes does not support the basic idea of "decentralized despotism." Other broad changes portended less despotic rule. One important change was that rulers lost control over the means of coercion. Although many precolonial African societies were communities-in-arms

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[9]Survey CO 1018/10.
[10]See, for example, Ayandele's (1970) discussion of the Ijebu in Western Nigeria.

(Smith 1976), more authoritarian rulers often had standing armies. In the Sokoto Caliphate, emirs had a permanent corps of titled officers that commanded enslaved persons and had discretion to call up reserves to pursue war (Smaldone 1977, 39–41). Under colonial rule, Sokoto emirs, the Kabaka of Buganda, and rulers in Mendeland and Temneland (Sierra Leone) all lost their standing armies and "war boys."

Another change was that councils tended to become broader based over time in their membership. To prevent nationalist movements, in the 1940s, British officials attempted to encourage the participation of mission-educated Africans and popularly selected members on councils. For example, of the thirty-nine Treasuries in our sample within Western Nigeria, we code that 64% experienced reforms to broaden participation beyond the traditional elites who traditionally dominated the councils. In Buganda, demands from Africans prompted British administrators to add thirty-six popularly selected members (for a total of ninety-four members) to the elite-dominated Lukiko (Hailey 1950a, 10).

2.4 NON-STATE AREAS AND SCALED-UP PARTICIPATORY INSTITUTIONS

In contrast to areas with precolonial states, small-scale political organizations such as village councils, kinship systems, and age grades were incompatible with British notions of effective administration. Native Treasury areas needed to be large enough to sustain a minimal level of services. When Native Treasuries were established in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), for example, officials warned that some of the original Native Authorities "controlled so few people that they were unable to support independent treasuries and could never become effective units of local government."[11] Consequently, in areas lacking centralized institutions, British officials expanded the scale of local administration.

The need to invent new, larger-scale authority structures departs from the simple persistence story stressed by Herbst (2000). But colonial innovation did not typically yield the types of authoritarian structures suggested by Mamdani (1996) and others. Authoritarian rulers tended to be ineffective

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[11]"Notes on African local government in Northern Rhodesia," in UK National Archives CO 1015/524.

11

where they lacked a traditional basis. Colonial authorities "were forced to realise that to rule indirectly, one had to use an indigenous person or group of persons with real traditional claims to rule rather than a man who seemed capable of it" (Crowder and Ikime 1970, xix). Therefore, "the instances of chiefs being appointed to thrones to which they had no traditional claims . . . were rare" (xii).

Over time, British officials learned that the better solution was to instead scale up local participatory institutions, in particular councils. Hailey (1944, 284) argued that "it is an essential feature of the Native Treasury system that it should be sufficiently 'local' to give proof to the ordinary man that some of his tax-money is coming back to him in the form of local services." This ideal typically manifested itself in hierarchical structures with local councils or headmen at the bottom and larger, usually district-wide councils, that made decisions for the entire Native Treasury area. Such institutions varied widely in their fiscal efficacy (e.g., Hailey 1951*a*, 165), but served the purpose of broadening the scope of authority while limiting opportunities for corrupt authoritarian officials to create grievances that could stimulate revolts. By the 1940s, Britain's explicit policy had become to promote popularly elected councils where traditional authority structures were weak (African Studies Branch 1949, 18).

Whatever high-minded ideals British officials may have espoused about this approach, it was a practical reaction to earlier, failed policies, in particular the Warrant Chief system in Eastern Nigeria. For several decades, the primary African agents in Igboland and neighboring areas were individuals with warrants (hence called "warrant chiefs") to serve on the Native Court. However, the Warrant Chief system was ineffective at raising taxes because many of the chiefs were highly corrupt and perceived as illegitimate. Britain abandoned the system after the 1929 Women's War, in which hostility was principally directed against the Warrant Chiefs and the Native Courts (Afigbo 1972). Fearing another costly conflict, British officials collected hundreds of Intelligence Reports throughout Nigeria to learn more about traditional institutions (Hailey 1950*a*, 159). In the 1930s, clan councils and district councils replaced the Warrant Chiefs throughout Eastern Nigeria.[12] These

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[12]Our data from the 1940s demonstrate that ninety-one of ninety-five Native Treasuries in Eastern Nigeria

higher-level councils sat atop a hierarchy that included group councils and, at the most local level, village councils that comprised the precolonial governance unit. To gain a sense of the magnitude of scaling up under these new institutions, there were approximately 76,000 people per Native Authority in Owerri Province.[13] By contrast, Meek (1933, 5) estimated that the contemporaneous population in the village of Owerri was 1,730. Thus, if the Owerri village was typical for its eponymous province, the scaled-up Native Authorities were more than forty times larger than the traditional village units.

In Kenya, where precolonial institutions were also highly decentralized, the initial Native Authorities were local Headmen. The territorial scope of these Headmen tended be small, as the average Treasury unit in Kenya contained 15.1 Headmen. In the 1930s, the British created a series of Local Native Councils (LNCs). They explicitly sought to increase the scale of local government and to expand representation in a context of widening local fiscal powers, and consequently the LNCs were given responsibilities over the Native Treasuries. Expanding beyond councils of traditional elders, the new institutions sought to "represent as large a range of relevant interests as possible" (Hicks 1961). Across the twenty-one LNCs in Kenya, the average number of members was 27.9, with 61% elected members, 23% nominated Headmen, and 16% other nominated members.[14] In every case, nominated members were a minority, and in almost every LNC, Headmen were eligible only for nomination (but not election). Instead, in the South Nyanza LNC for example, the elected members were school teachers, traders, and farmers (Hailey 1950a, 155).

Local institutions were also scaled up across Tanganyika and Nyasaland. In most districts, higher-level federal councils were created to pool together local-level chiefs (whose jurisdictions more closely resembled precolonial precedents) into a common Native Treasury. In these two colonies, the average Native Treasury comprised 6.9 lower-level Native Authorities. For example, in the Bukoba District of Tanganyika, eight bakama (chiefs) were recognized as NAs. They were joined

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consisted of council-only Native Authorities.

[13]Population data from Hailey (1951a, 147) and number of clan councils from p. 161. In this province, essentially every Native Authority clan/district council had its own Native Treasury.

[14]Tallied by authors from Hailey (1950a, 95).

in a federation, the Council of Bukoba Chiefs, and the only NT in Bukoba was the "Treasury of the Council of Bukoba Chiefs."

2.5 HYPOTHESES

Our theoretical framework makes sense of the goals of British administrators and the constraints they faced, which varied based on pre-existing governance institutions. Moving beyond the motivating examples, this framework yields expectations for variance in the structure of Native Authority institutions that we should observe in the large-N data. Hypothesis 1 incorporates the idea that Native Authorities should contain institutional constraints in the form of councils in areas with either of two characteristics. First, institutional persistence in areas with constrained precolonial states should yield influential councils under colonialism. Second, considerations of fiscal efficiency in areas with decentralized institutions should have led British administrators to scale up councils rather than to invent despotic chiefs. Conversely, areas with authoritarian precolonial states should more frequently have solo-chief NAs. Hypothesis 2 reflects the contention that areas with precolonial states had extant ruling structures, including chief executives, that British administrators could repurpose as a Native Authority. More broadly, this discussion also establishes that institutions of indirect rule, even if all nominally referred to as Native Authorities, should exhibit vast diversity in their precise institutional form.

> **Hypothesis 1** (Persistence of institutional constraints). *Areas with precolonial constraints (either precolonial states with executive constraints or decentralized areas) should more frequently have a council as part of their Native Authority than areas with authoritarian precolonial institutions.*

> **Hypothesis 2** (Persistence of chief executives). *Areas with precolonial states should more frequently have a chief as part of their Native Authority than areas with decentralized precolonial institutions.*

3   DATA

3.1   UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The British administrative scheme featured, in descending order of size: provinces, divisions, districts, Native Treasuries (NTs), and Native Authorities (NAs). Throughout, our unit of analysis is the NT. Our sample consists of 463 NTs across British Africa, including 203 in Nigeria, 87 in Gold Coast (Ghana), 52 in Tanganyika (Tanzania), 42 in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), 26 in Kenya, 16 in Nyasaland (Malawi), 13 in Uganda, 13 in Gambia, 9 in Bechuanaland (Botswana), and one in each of Lesotho and Swaziland (Eswatini).

Our theoretical discussion motivates the use of NTs as the unit of analysis, despite measuring colonial political institutions at the level of the NA (see below for details). British considerations about the scale of effective authority applied to fiscal units, which were the NTs. In areas with precolonial states, NTs were nearly synonymous with NAs. However, areas with decentralized institutions usually had a single scaled-up NA (such as clan councils, Local Native Councils, and federal/district councils) and/or numerous smaller NAs (such as Headmen and petty chiefs). Comparing NT units, rather than observations that include many small NAs, in some sense helps to make the units in the data set more easily comparable to each other, although NTs nonetheless varied in their perceived importance and population within and across colonies. Practical limitations also inform our choice of NTs over NAs as the unit of analysis: it is difficult enough to collect covariate data at the level of the NT, and we unfortunately lack sufficient information to do so at the level of the NA. Although we were able to compile comprehensive maps of NTs from the UK National Archives in London, we lack comparable maps for individual NAs.

3.2   PRECOLONIAL INSTITUTIONS

We coded an original variable for precolonial institutions, using colonial NTs as the unit of analysis. Our coding proceeded in three steps.

First, we distinguished between states and decentralized areas.[15] To do so, we built upon a recent

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[15]Appendix B.1 provides details.

dataset of precolonial African states from Paine, Qiu and Ricart-Huguet (2022). They draw in large part from the work of eminent historians of Africa, J.F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder. The underlying conceptualization of precolonial African states is Fortes and Evans-Pritchard's (1940, 5) criteria of "Group A" societies, meaning they have "centralized authority, administrative machinery, and judicial institutions—in short, a government." This yields a list of sixty-three states.

Our innovation was the second step: measuring institutional constraints for each state.[16] Based on extensive historical and anthropological sources, we coded a binary variable for whether the rulers of each precolonial state were institutionally constrained by an effective council. Did the chief regularly consult a council? Did a council regularly influence policy decisions? Was the chief unable to regularly override the desires of the council? The scholarly literature suggests many ways in which rulers could be constrained and made accountable, but we chose this definition because it is concrete and relatively straightforward to measure. We consulted the relevant volumes of the *Ethnographic Survey of Africa* (edited by Daryll Forde), which we cross-checked using dozens of additional books and articles about individual cases.

Third, we matched each precolonial state to a Native Treasury.[17] This was straightforward. In all but two cases, the associated Treasury was named after the historical state, and in all cases, the location of the (last) capital for the state was located within the associated NT.[18] Overall, the precolonial institutions for each NT are scored as either (a) a state with an authoritarian ruler, (b) a state with a ruler constrained by an influential council, or (c) decentralized institutions. The latter are NTs without any precolonial state matched to it. Although we do not directly measure institutions in areas with decentralized institutions, extensive anthropological and historical evidence catalogs the prevalence of political constraints on rulers and of village governance entirely through councils. Earlier we discussed village councils in cases such as the Igbo in Nigeria and various

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[16]Appendix B.2 provides details on the coding rules. Appendix C.1 provides excerpts from our codebook and addresses concerns about using colonial-era anthropological accounts.

[17]Appendix B.3 provides details.

[18]Appendix Table B.1 lists each precolonial state and associated NT(s).

age-grade-based societies in East Africa. Thus, we interpret NTs with decentralized institutions as ones with historical institutional constraints (and thus, on this dimension, similar to states with constrained rulers).

By measuring precolonial institutions at the level of the colonial NT, our data are uniquely suited to assessing hypotheses about institutional persistence between the precolonial and colonial eras. Existing datasets that measure aspects of precolonial institutional constraints use the ethnic group units from anthropologist George Murdock, either the *Ethnographic Atlas* for Africa or the Standard Cross-Cultural Survey (SCCS). Several scholars have amended the SCCS to code constraints on the powers of precolonial rulers and the influence of councils (Murdock and Wilson 1972; Tuden and Marshall 1972; Ross 1983; Ember, Russett and Ember 1993; see Baldwin 2015 and Ahmed and Stasavage 2020 for recent uses in political science of these council variables). However, these data are not suitable for our purposes. The SCCS contains only 186 polities across the world, and only six located within the eleven African colonies in our dataset. By contrast, our dataset incorporates 463 NTs in these colonies. Furthermore, the ethnic units from Murdock (1959) constitute a much more highly aggregated unit than actual polities in precolonial Africa, and his list and polygons exhibit little overlap with colonial district and Treasury boundaries. Therefore, despite broad coverage of Africa, using this source to measure precolonial institutions would induce an unacceptable amount of measurement error for our units, which motivates our original data collection. We illustrate this for Ghana in Figure 1.

3.3   COLONIAL INSTITUTIONS

To measure characteristics of colonial Native Authority institutions, we incorporated information from surveys of local administration in British colonies in the late 1940s. Our primary sources are the five volumes of Lord Hailey's *Native Administration in the British African Territories* (Hailey 1950*a*,*b*, 1951*a*,*b*, 1953) and the extensive primary source material that Hailey used to construct these volumes, which we accessed from the UK National Archives in London.[19]   These surveys

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[19]The surveys are from the TNA CO/1018 series; see Bolt and Gardner (2020) for a lengthier description of these surveys. Using colonial sources raises natural questions about bias. However, available evidence

Figure 1: Native Treasuries and Murdock Ethnic Groups in Ghana
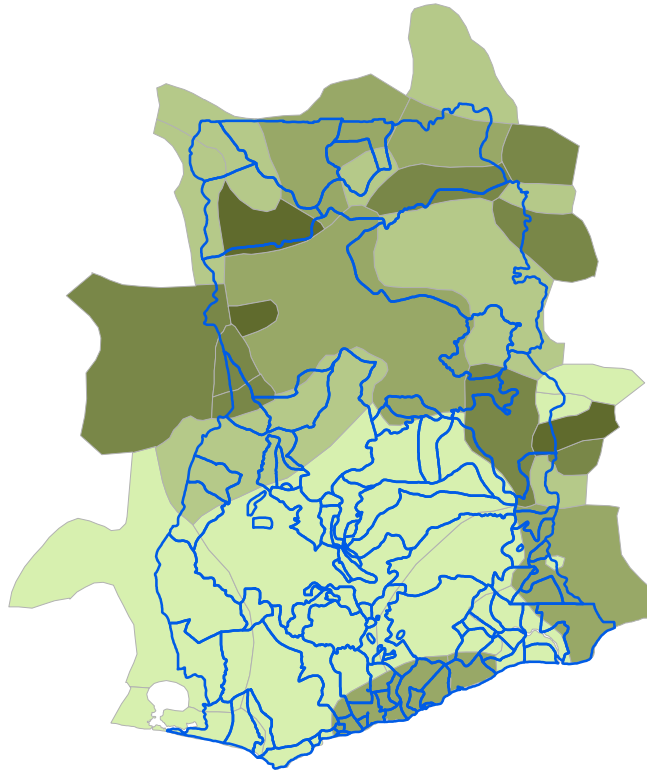
Notes: Murdock ethnic groups in green and NT borders in blue.

constituted the first attempt to systematically characterize Native Administration in British Africa, in contrast to fragmentary information on earlier periods.[20] Beyond practical limitations to measuring local institutions earlier in the colonial period, our theoretical discussion suggests the virtue of examining institutions in this period. The expansion of the system of NAs and NTs across British Africa in the 1930s accompanied a broader push to align colonial institutions with precolonial precedents, as the British realized the failure of their earlier policies and collected intelligence about precolonial institutions. Although the surveys were collected at the beginning of what later became known as the post-WWII decolonization period, they are nonetheless early enough that,

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suggests that Hailey attempted to accurately characterize local political institutions—even where such characterizations were inconvenient to local officials, some of whom complained about the reports. See Memorandum on "Lord Hailey's Report on Native Administration and Political Development," 7 November 1944, in Kenya National Archives BW1/1/559.

[20]Nor are we aware of comparable surveys for other empires.

in almost all areas, the institutions described were implemented prior to the war. Some discrepancies between ours and prior findings may arise from studying different time periods. However, the more likely reason is our comprehensive and highly disaggregated coverage of British Africa, which improves upon the anecdotal sampling of cases in work such as Mamdani (1996) and Herbst (2000).

We code each NA as one of three institutional types: solo chief, chief and council, or council only.[21] The three institutional types differ in whether a chief and/or council is gazetted (that is, legally recognized in the colonial *Gazettes*) as part of the Native Authority. In most cases, the distinction is easily discerned from the name of the NA. For example, the Emir of Kano was a solo-chief NA in Northern Nigeria (despite having an advisory council), the Ada Manche and the State Council was a chief-and-council NA in the Gold Coast, and the Ndoki Clan Council was a council-only NA in Eastern Nigeria. Other cases were more complicated. Their district contained numerous minor chiefs or headmen that were legally recognized as NAs, but the highest-level NA was a council, as in the aforementioned examples of Local Native Councils in Kenya and federal councils in Tanganyika. We code these cases as council-only NAs because the higher-level council corresponded with the jurisdiction of the NT. This is not only our unit of analysis, but is the relevant unit for assessing the form of scaled-up institutions that controlled local finances.[22]

To compute institutional values at the level of the NT, we calculated the fraction of NAs within the NT that had each type of institution. In 444 of 463 NTs (96%), every NA within the NT had the same type of institution (that is, either solo chief, chief and council, or council only). This observation alleviates concerns that using NAs as the unit of analysis would yield qualitatively different findings.

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[21]Appendix C.2 provides excerpts from our codebook.

[22]However, we also present a robustness check in which we recode these cases as chief-and-council NAs. A small number of NAs were a confederacy of chiefs, which we code as council-only NAs because no chief was individually recognized as an NA.

4 ANALYSIS

4.1 CROSS TABULATIONS

Cross tabulations and visual evidence establish the high correspondence between the form of precolonial and colonial institutions. In Table 1, we distinguish NTs by precolonial institutions along the rows and by colonial institutions across the columns. The basic summary statistics for Native Authority institutions are striking in their own right. Across the entire sample, solo chiefs were rare: only 17% of cases. The remaining NAs included councils, either chief and council (35%) or council only (48%). This descriptive observation contrasts starkly with the standard portrayal of "decentralized despotism" and unchecked chiefs everywhere, and also underscores the extreme heterogeneity in institutions of indirect rule.[23]

Table 1: Cross Tabs: Persistence in Institutional Form

	Solo chief	Chief and council	Council	Totals
Authoritarian state	89%	11%	<1%	7%
Constrained state	15%	85%	0%	13%
Decentralized	11%	30%	59%	80%
Totals	17%	35%	47%	N=463

The cross-tabs demonstrate the high correspondence between precolonial and colonial institutions with regard to the presence of chief executives and/or councils. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, Native Authorities without a council (solo-chief NAs) are highly prevalent in areas with authoritarian precolonial states (89%), but quite rare in areas with a constrained state (15%) or decentralized institutions (11%). Consistent with Hypothesis 2, Native Authorities without a chief (council-only NAs) were common in areas with decentralized institutions (59%), but essentially absent in NTs containing precolonial states. A corollary of these two patterns is that constrained states usually had chief-and-council NAs (85%).

Nigeria, which accounts for the largest number of NTs in our sample and exhibits substantial within-colony variation, illustrates the overall pattern (Figure 2). The Sokoto Caliphate was the

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[23]For precolonial institutions, our tally of 20% of NTs corresponding to precolonial states is very similar to the calculation in Henn and Robinson (2021) despite using different units of analysis. See Appendix Tables A.1 and A.2 for summary statistics disaggregated by colony.

predominant political influence in precolonial Northern Nigeria. Authoritarian governance persisted under colonial rule, as every constituent emirate in the Caliphate had a solo chief as its NA. Western Nigeria contained various constrained precolonial states in Yorubaland, which by the 1940s were reflected in chief-and-council NAs. Eastern Nigeria largely lacked states before colonialism. Under British rule in the 1940s, Eastern Nigeria consisted almost entirely of council-only NAs, after replacing the older and ineffective Warrant Chief system.

Figure 2: Comparing Institutions Over Time in Nigeria

Precolonial institutions   Native Authority institutions

☐ No state / council-only NA
▨ Constrained state / Chief-and-council NA
■ Unconstrained state / Solo-chief NA
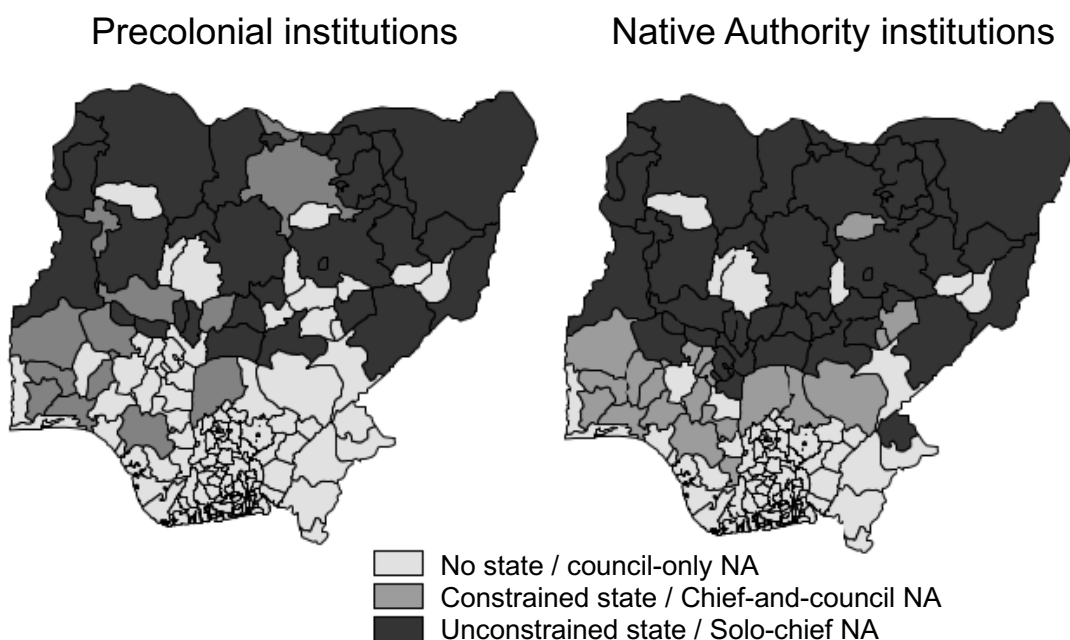
4.2 REGRESSIONS: PERSISTENCE OF INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS

We test H1 in a regression framework by examining NA councils as an outcome. In Columns 1–3 of Table 2, the dependent variable is the fraction of NAs that included a council (that is, either a chief-and-council or council-only NA) in each NT. In Columns 4–6, we examine correlates of council-only NAs. The estimating equation, which we estimate with OLS, is:

$$\text{NA COUNCIL}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_N \cdot \text{NO PCS}_i + \beta_C \cdot \text{CONSTRAINED PCS}_i + \beta_X \cdot X_i + \epsilon_i.$$

The main explanatory variables are CONSTRAINED PCS and NO PCS, where PCS stands for "pre-colonial state." We thus compare the two types of precolonial areas with meaningful councils and executive constraints to the type without, as AUTHORITARIAN PCS is the omitted reference category. Columns 1 and 4 are the baseline specifications that contain only these variables. We add different covariates, X_i, in the subsequent models. In Columns 2 and 5, we control for colony fixed effects to account for idiosyncratic differences in the implementation of Native Administration ordinances across colonies. In Columns 3 and 6, we add various substantive covariates.[24] Numerous factors could have influenced the structure of colonial institutions. For example, economies of scale could have made certain types of institutions more efficient, which motivates controlling for population and population density. We also control for numerous variables that pick up the major sources of colonial economic activity, which in turn could have influenced the importance of each NT and perhaps the form of local institutions: total value of cash crops (the source of export revenue); fraction of land alienated for Europeans (because Europeans, where they settled, were major economic and political actors); and distance from the center of each NT area to the nearest railroad, coastline, and colonial capital (all sites of major economic activities). Finally, we control for whether a Christian mission was located within the area of the NT.[25] For each specification, we present robust standard error estimates in parentheses.

Column 1 provides a basic specification that recovers the cross tabs presented earlier while demonstrating the statistical significance of the precolonial-institutions variables. This conclusion is unaltered when adding colony fixed effects or covariates in Columns 2 and 3. However, the significant positive coefficient on the value of cash crops variable might support anecdotal evidence that commercialization empowered new interest groups at the local level. In Columns 4–6, we analyze council-only NAs, for which (as anticipated by the cross tabs) the no-PCS cases are distinct from authoritarian-PCS cases but constrained-PCS cases are not.[26]

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[24]Appendix A.1 presents details on our digitized NT maps, measurement of variables, sources, and missing observations. Appendix Table A.3 provides summary statistics.

[25]All covariates are logged except the mission indicator.

[26]The statistical significance of CONSTRAINED PCS in Columns 5 and 6 is a statistical artifact of fitting a linear model with a dependent variable that is 0/1 for almost all observations. As Table 1 shows, no NT

Table 2: Persistence of Institutional Constraints

	DV: NA includes a council			DV: Council-only NA		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
No PCS	0.777***	0.810***	0.674***	0.584***	0.756***	0.655***
	(0.0559)	(0.0420)	(0.0621)	(0.0256)	(0.0305)	(0.0438)
Constrained PCS	0.736***	0.629***	0.569***	-0.00438	0.307***	0.117**
	(0.0713)	(0.0745)	(0.0873)	(0.00432)	(0.0509)	(0.0512)
Population			-0.0888***			0.0567**
			(0.0193)			(0.0224)
Population density			0.0487***			0.00520
			(0.0161)			(0.0184)
Value of cash crops			0.0588***			-0.0115
			(0.0153)			(0.0207)
% alienated land			0.0196*			-0.0531**
			(0.0104)			(0.0214)
Distance from rail line			0.000293			-0.130***
			(0.0146)			(0.0197)
Distance from capital			-0.0415**			0.0917***
			(0.0189)			(0.0316)
Distance from coastline			0.0268*			-0.0378*
			(0.0153)			(0.0211)
Missionary station			0.00191			0.0702
			(0.0320)			(0.0430)
Intercept	0.112**	0.351***	1.065***	0.00438	-0.357***	-0.489*
	(0.0536)	(0.0727)	(0.208)	(0.00432)	(0.0717)	(0.271)
NTs	463	463	422	463	463	422
Provinces	61	61	60	61	61	60
R-squared	0.284	0.449	0.379	0.223	0.412	0.348
Colony FE		✓			✓	

4.3 REGRESSIONS: PERSISTENCE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVES

We test H2 in a regression framework by examining NA chiefs as an outcome. In Columns 1–3 of Table 3, the dependent variable is the fraction of NAs that included a chief (that is, either solo-chief or chief-and-council NA) in each NT. In Columns 4–6, we examine correlates of solo-chief NAs. The estimating equation is qualitatively similar to that presented above except here the main explanatory variables are CONSTRAINED PCS and AUTHORITARIAN PCS. We thus compare the two types of precolonial areas with states to the type without, as NO PCS is the omitted reference category. The order of specifications is identical to those in Table 2.

As with the previous table, Columns 1 and 4 provide basic specifications that recover the cross tabs presented earlier while demonstrating the statistical significance of the precolonial-institutions

with a constrained PCS had any council-only NAs.

Table 3: Persistence of Chief Executives

	DV: NA includes a chief			DV: Solo-chief NA		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Authoritarian PCS	0.568***	0.730***	0.620***	0.777***	0.810***	0.674***
	(0.0261)	(0.0326)	(0.0461)	(0.0559)	(0.0420)	(0.0621)
Constrained PCS	0.572***	0.438***	0.527***	0.0407	0.181***	0.105*
	(0.0257)	(0.0470)	(0.0428)	(0.0496)	(0.0580)	(0.0563)
Population			-0.0475**			0.0888***
			(0.0229)			(0.0193)
Population density			-0.00749			-0.0487***
			(0.0188)			(0.0161)
Value of cash crops			0.00641			-0.0588***
			(0.0215)			(0.0153)
% alienated land			0.0506**			-0.0196*
			(0.0214)			(0.0104)
Distance from rail line			0.130***			-0.000293
			(0.0212)			(0.0146)
Distance from capital			-0.0763**			0.0415**
			(0.0323)			(0.0189)
Distance from coastline			0.0326			-0.0268*
			(0.0216)			(0.0153)
Missionary station			-0.0631			-0.00191
			(0.0443)			(0.0320)
Intercept	0.428***	0.611***	0.703***	0.112***	-0.161***	-0.739***
	(0.0257)	(0.0680)	(0.254)	(0.0158)	(0.0561)	(0.172)
NTs	463	463	422	463	463	422
Provinces	61	61	60	61	61	60
R-squared	0.207	0.380	0.322	0.284	0.449	0.379
Colony FE		✓			✓	

Notes: The DV in columns 1–3 of this table is the inverse of the DV in columns 4–6 of Table 2. The DV in columns 4–6 of this table is the inverse of the DV in columns 1–3 of Table 2. However, the estimates differ because the set of PCS indicators differs.

variables; and the other specifications add covariates. Both types of precolonial-state areas are more likely to have any chief in the NA, whereas only NTs with authoritarian PCS are robustly more likely to have solo-chief NAs (also note the discrepancy in the magnitude of the coefficient estimates between authoritarian and constrained PCS in Columns 4–6).

4.4 ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

In Appendix A.2, we present various robustness checks for Tables 2 and 3. In Table A.4, we demonstrate that our results are not sensitive to unobserved covariates, using a metric from Altonji, Elder and Taber (2005). In Table A.5, we recode certain council-only NAs as chief-and-council NAs, following the earlier discussion about tiered systems of councils in colonies such as Kenya

and Tanganyika. We address the possible non-independence of NA institutions within provinces in two ways. First, in Table A.6, we re-run every specification from the original tables with robust standard errors clustered at the province level. Second, in Table A.7, we average each variable at the provincial level and re-estimate the models using provinces as the unit of analysis. Finally, in Table A.8, we replace the linear link with a logit link after making each dependent variable binary, based on whether at least half the NAs in the NT had the specified type of institution.

5 THE AUTHORITY OF COUNCILS

Additional pieces of evidence suggest that Native Authority councils exerted meaningful constraints on rulers. The composition of council members reflected precolonial precedents, and NTs with councils spent a lower fraction of expenditures on salaries for officials.

We were able to compile data on the composition of nearly every council in our dataset, coding each member into four categories: traditional elite, popularly selected (e.g., via elections), NA chief-appointed, or appointed by the British District Officer. Table 4 overviews the main patterns for which type of member constituted a plurality on each council; Appendix D.1 provides details on the data and Appendix D.2 presents regression tables. Authoritarian states had the highest relative frequency of NA chief-appointed members, which suggests the general weakness of these councils and their dependence on the ruler. Elsewhere, members were more independent of the NA chief. Constrained states had the highest relative frequency of traditional-elite members, which suggests continuity in the individuals who sat on the council before and during colonialism. Non-state areas had the highest relative frequency of popularly selected members. This suggests a greater need in such areas to recruit new members to colonially created scaled-up councils, although even here elite-plurality councils were most common. Finally, District Officer-appointed members were rare in all cases, which suggests that counselors were not mere mouthpieces of the administration.

We also verified another source of meaningful variation across Native Authorities: spending patterns. To do so, we compiled data on the public expenditures of NTs. Budgets recorded in colonial

Table 4: Cross Tabs: Composition of Councils

	Elite	Popular	Chief	DO
Authoritarian state	52%	7%	41%	0%
Constrained state	71%	17%	12%	0%
No state	53%	34%	9%	4%
Totals	56%	30%	12%	3%

archives distinguish between expenditures on administration (which included the salaries of chiefs, counselors, and lower-level officials) and on public goods such as education, medical services, and road maintenance. Given the difficulty of compiling this data, it has not been widely used in political science or economics. We find that NAs which included councils spent a lower fraction of their budget on salaries for officials, which suggests that councils acted as a check against chiefs using treasuries to reward themselves; Appendix D.3 provides details on the data and presents regression tables.

6 CONCLUSION

This paper provides a new perspective on the nature of African political institutions and the impact of colonialism. We document and explain the persistence of institutional constraints at the local level. Native Authority institutions, by and large, did not consist of autocratic solo chiefs. Where they did was largely confined to areas with authoritarian precolonial states. Elsewhere, Native Authorities usually featured influential councils either in conjunction with chiefs (constrained precolonial states) or without a chief entirely (decentralized precolonial institutions). We document these patterns using originally compiled large-N datasets on precolonial and colonial institutions within British Africa. Our evidence does not support influential theses about decentralized despotism (Mamdani 1996) or simple institutional persistence (Herbst 2000). Instead, we emphasize that British administrators often preserved institutions in areas with precolonial states (including institutional constraints, where they existed) and usually invented new, larger-scale participatory institutions in areas with decentralized institutions. We thus provide a new theoretical understanding for why the resultant colonial institutions generally constrained local executives—in areas

with or without precolonial states. We also provide new, finer-grained data that facilitates richer descriptive characterizations and statistical testing on the most theoretically appropriate local unit of analysis.

Our conclusions open several frontiers in the history of African institutions and the legacies of colonialism. First, many claim that the French ruled more directly than the British (Lange 2004; Huillery 2009; Müller-Crepon 2020; Letsa and Wilfahrt 2020; Ricart-Huguet 2022), although anecdotal accounts of French colonialism point to significant variation. We do not know of a comparable data source for other colonial powers in Africa, but a comparative study would offer a new perspective on arguments about the extent to which different colonizers yielded distinct legacies. Another frontier is to understand more about what Native Authorities (and their equivalents) actually did and how local policies shaped development outcomes. Finally, we lack a systematic understanding of how the transfer of power and process of decolonization affected these institutions. Post-independence governments were frequently hostile toward colonial-era Native Authorities, who nonetheless continue to exercise local influence despite attempts to replace them (Baldwin 2015).

We conclude by discussing implications for postcolonial institutions. Many draw a direct link from colonial indirect rule to postcolonial authoritarian regimes (see Lange 2004 for an overview of such arguments). This conclusion is difficult to substantiate on the basis of our evidence. African institutions were not a blank slate that Europeans could wipe away, at least not without concerted effort. Africans had innovated various forms of institutional constraints on rulers that, despite many challenges during the colonial era, they were able to recreate at least in part at the local level because of British decentralization practices. In neither the precolonial nor the colonial era was it generally true that "the person of the chief signifies power that is total and absolute, unchecked and unrestrained" (Mamdani 1996, 54).

By contrast, national-level institutions were indeed a blank slate. In the late nineteenth century, Europeans invented artificial states that were much larger than traditional polities, even compared

to the larger precolonial states (Wesseling 1996; Herbst 2000; Englebert 2002; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou 2016). Traditional constraints on local rulers that worked effectively could not usually be scaled up successfully to the national level. This was particularly so because of their heterogeneity. For example, in Nigeria, the methods of accountability differed among the Yoruba, Tiv, and Igbo. Indeed, different parts of Igboland had different mechanisms of accountability and constraint. At the same time, these societies were merged with those of Northern Nigeria, which had few constraints on rulers. We conjecture that the sheer difficulty of forging a social contract over new institutions that would impose accountability and constraints at the national level enabled postcolonial rulers to act despotically. They exploited internationally created ideas about sovereignty and the colonial centralization of institutions, such as the fiscal system and the army, which local institutions could not discipline. This alternative agrees in a sense with some existing work, yet is fundamentally rooted in our observation about the prevalence of executive constraints at the local level in precolonial and colonial Africa. Perhaps the roots of modern African authoritarianism are largely centralized rather than decentralized, a vital avenue for future research.

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Online Appendix for
"African Political Institutions and the Impact of Colonialism"

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A   Supplemental Information: Main Regression Results

Appendix A.1 presents details on our digitized NT maps, measurement of variables, sources, and missing observations. Appendix A.2 provides summary statistics tables and supplemental regression tables referred to in the text.

A.1   Spatial Data and Covariates

We have a digitized map at the Native Treasury (NT) level for all colonies in our sample except Botswana and Gambia. Given the small geographical size of the Gambia, we assume that the covariates are identical for each NT in the colony. However, we are missing every spatial covariate for Botswana (9 NTs). We are also missing maps for 10 NTs in the Gold Coast and 42 NTs in Nigeria. For the missing cases, we used district maps where possible and assume that all covariates take the same value for every NT in the district; Carl Müller-Crepon graciously shared the shapefiles for colonial districts that he used in Müller-Crepon (2020). Ultimately, given the broad coverage of our maps, we lose only 9% of observations when we control for substantive covariates (e.g., Table 2, Column 3).

Bolt and Gardner (2020) digitized maps at the NT level for Gold Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, and Nyasaland, which we use here. Lesotho and Swaziland are straightforward because each had one NT that covered the entire colony. The maps for Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia came from several sources, which we then digitized.

Additional sources

Tanganyika:

- "Provinces and districts," in Atlas of the Tanganyika Territory (Survey Division, 1948), p. 15.
- Tribal and ethnographic map 1950, Royal Geographic Society archives Tanzania VFS/G1.

Northern Rhodesia:

- "Population Map," in Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Federal Atlas (Salisbury: Federal Department of Trig and Topo Surveys, 1960), map no. 9.
- Tribal Areas 1933, Royal Geographical Society, Zambia Gan VFS 3.
- Gardner (2012), map 5.2.

To illustrate the digitization, Figure A.1 depicts the original map for the Gold Coast and the digitized polygons.

Figure A.1: Digitizing NTs in the Gold Coast
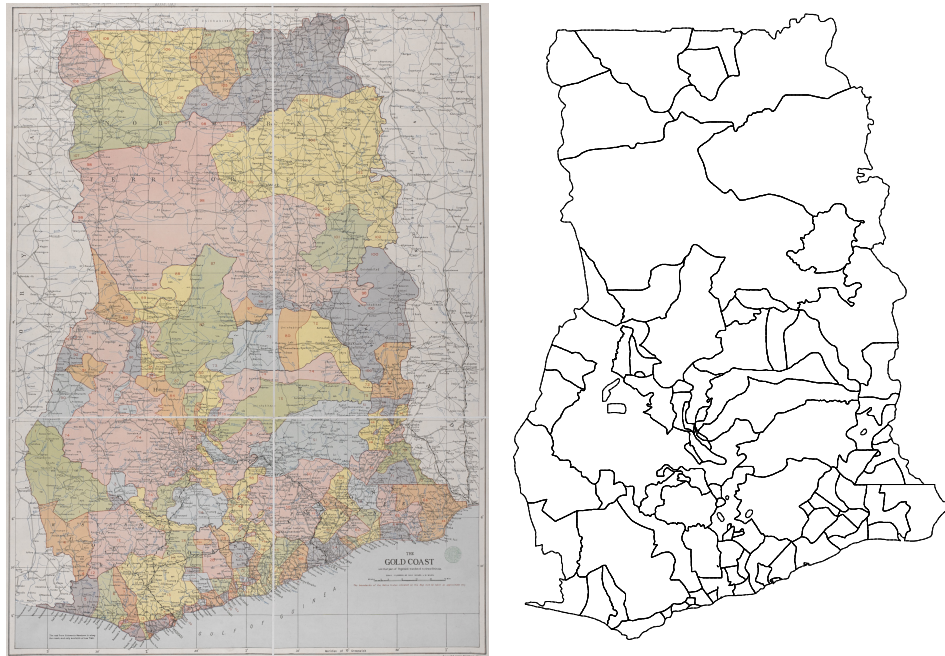
We used these digitized maps to compute many of our covariates, specifically, by merging other spatial data sets with our NT polygons. Details on each covariate follow.

- **Population.** We used two sources. First, Bolt and Gardner (2020) collected census data at the NT level in the 1950s that covers most NTs in Nigeria, Gold Coast, Kenya, and Nyasaland. Second, the Hailey books provide nearly complete coverage of population data in the late 1940s, although measured at a higher level of aggregation: usually at the district level, but in a few cases only at the province level. We use the most disaggregated data point available for each unit. For observations in which population is measured at a more aggregate level than the NT, we assume that the population was distributed evenly across the NTs covered at the given census unit; with "evenly" meaning that we assume population density was constant across NTs.

- **Population density.** In addition to the population data just described, we compiled data on area in square kilometers from our spatial polygons.

- **Value of cash crops.** We first digitized a map from Hance, Kotschar and Peterec (1961). They measure the value of crops in 1957, but it is unlikely that the distribution of values over areas is very different than in the late 1940s. One dot on the map represents $289,270 of exports by value. We use the sum of these dots within each NT as the variable. When taking the log, we add 1 to each observation because of the many NTs with zero points. The only missing observations are for Bechuanaland because we lack NT maps.

2

- **European alienated land.** For districts with a substantial European presence, the Hailey books provide information on the percentage of land area alienated for European use. We assume this percentage is the same for every NT within the district. We assume this percentage is 0 in areas where Hailey does not discuss land alienation. When taking the log, we add 1 to the percentages.

- **Distance variables.** We used ArcGIS to calculate the distance between the centroid of the NT and the specified feature, either rail lines, capital city, or coastline. Data on capital cities from colonial Blue Books, and data on railroads from Jedwab, Kerby and Moradi (2017).

- **Mission station.** The variable indicates whether a mission was located within the area of the NT. Spatial data on the location of missions from Nunn (2010).

A.2 ADDITIONAL TABLES

Table A.1: Summary Statistics: Precolonial Institutions

Colony	# NTs	Authoritarian state	Constrained state	No state
Nigeria	203	0.11	0.08	0.81
Eastern	95	0.00	0.00	1.00
Northern	59	0.49	0.17	0.34
Western	39	0.00	0.15	0.85
Colony	10	0.00	0.00	1.00
Gold Coast	87	0.00	0.34	0.66
Tanganyika	52	0.00	0.00	1.00
N Rhodesia	42	0.00	0.07	0.93
Kenya	26	0.00	0.00	1.00
Nyasaland	16	0.00	0.00	1.00
Uganda	13	0.23	0.00	0.77
Gambia	13	0.00	0.00	1.00
High Commission*	11	0.00	0.91	0.09
Averages	**463**	**0.07**	**0.13**	**0.80**

Notes: The cells in the table present the fraction of NTs for each colony with each of the three types of precolonial political institutions: authoritarian state, constrained state, or no state.

*The High Commission territories included nine NTs for Bechuanaland and one for each of Basutoland and Swaziland.

Table A.2: Summary Statistics: Native Authority Institutions

Colony	# NTs	Solo chief	Chief & council	Council only
Nigeria	203	0.24	0.15	0.61
Eastern	95	0.02	0.02	0.96
Northern	59	0.78	0.11	0.11
Western	39	0.00	0.56	0.44
Colony	10	0.00	0.00	0.98
Gold Coast	87	0.01	0.83	0.16
Tanganyika	52	0.36	0.04	0.60
N. Rhodesia	42	0.00	0.76	0.24
Kenya	26	0.12	0.00	0.88
Nyasaland	16	0.54	0.00	0.45
Uganda	13	0.00	0.31	0.62
Gambia	13	0.00	0.92	0.08
High Commission	11	0.00	1.00	0.00
Averages	463	0.17	0.35	0.48

Notes: For each NT, we calculate the fraction of NAs with each of the three types of institutional arrangements (solo chief, chief and council, council only); and each cell reports the average of these scores by colony. Four NAs in the dataset consist of a British District Officer or District Commissioner gazetted as the NA. This was the only NA in the Kigezi District/Treasury of the Western Province of Uganda; and in the three other instances, the District Officer NA was one of several NAs within an NT in Northern Nigeria, the Colony area of Nigeria, and Nyasaland. This is why the fractions do not sum to 1 (even after accounting for rounding error) in these rows.

Table A.3: Summary Statistics: Covariates

Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Population (log)	441	10.97	1.20	7.37	14.87
Population density (log)	440	3.01	1.45	-1.53	6.74
Value of cash crops (log)	454	0.92	1.19	0.00	5.41
European alienated land (log)	463	0.58	1.22	0.00	4.52
Distance from rail line (log)	446	4.19	1.21	0.00	6.71
Distance from capital (log)	446	5.67	0.89	0.00	7.15
Distance from coastline (log)	446	5.18	1.40	0.00	7.27
Missionary station (binary)	446	0.50	0.50	0	1

Table A.4 shows that the coefficient estimates from Tables 2 and 3 are relatively insensitive to unobserved covariates. Therefore, although it is impossible to control for every possible confounder, if the covariates included in these tables are substantively relevant, then there is less reason to believe that omitted covariates would overturn the results. We analyze a commonly used metric from Altonji, Elder and Taber (2005) that estimates how large the bias from unobserved covariates would need to be for the true coefficient to be 0 in a statistical model, given the degree by which adding observable covariates changes the estimates from a baseline model without covariates. Table A.4 compares the coefficient estimates for the precolonial indicators in specifications without covariates (Columns 1 and 4 in both tables; the baseline specifications) and with covariates (Columns 2, 3, 5, and 6). Negative numbers in Table A.4 (marked by "neg.") express that the coefficient estimate in the specification with covariates exceeds in magnitude the coefficient estimate in the baseline specification. This indicates an estimate highly robust to omitted covariates because, to drive the coefficient estimate to 0, the magnitude of the bias from unobserved covariates would need to go in the opposite direction as the bias from omitting observables. This is the case for six of the twelve estimates presented in Table A.4. In the other specifications, the estimates are positive but large in magnitude. For example, for CONSTRAINED PCS in Table 2, we can see that the coefficient estimate in Column 2 (with covariates) is only slightly smaller in magnitude than that in Column 1 (the baseline specification). The Altonji et al. metric formalizes this intuition by expressing that, to eliminate the positive coefficient estimate, the bias from unobservables would need to be 5.4 times larger in magnitude than the bias from omitting the covariates contained in this specification. For comparison, Altonji, Elder and Taber (2005) calculate a corresponding figure of 3.55 for their own analysis, which they interpret as large in magnitude.

Table A.4: Sensitivity to Unobserved Covariates

	Column in Table 2				Column in Table 3			
	(2)	(3)	(5)	(6)	(2)	(3)	(5)	(6)
No PCS	neg.	6.7	neg.	neg.				
Constrained PCS	5.9	4.1			3.3	27.2		
Authoritarian PCS					neg.	neg.	neg.	6.7

Notes: Columns 3 and 6 in each table contain the set of substantive covariates. The sample is smaller in these specifications because of some missing data in the covariates (only 422 of 463 NTs). To calculate the Altonji et al. metric for these models, we re-ran the baseline specifications (Columns 1 and 4) on the restricted sample and used those coefficient estimates (unreported) as the basis for comparison.

Table A.5: Alternative Council Measure

	DV: Council-only NA (alt.)			DV: NA includes a chief (alt.)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Constrained PCS	-0.00438	0.243***	-0.0310	0.405***	0.434***	0.355***
	(0.00432)	(0.0562)	(0.0516)	(0.0255)	(0.0466)	(0.0409)
No PCS	0.417***	0.688***	0.335***			
	(0.0257)	(0.0402)	(0.0446)			
Authoritarian PCS				0.401***	0.662***	0.301***
				(0.0259)	(0.0410)	(0.0452)
Population			-0.0386*			0.0478**
			(0.0225)			(0.0227)
Population density			0.0353*			-0.0376**
			(0.0186)			(0.0188)
Value of cash crops			-0.0255			0.0204
			(0.0202)			(0.0204)
% alienated land			-0.0811***			0.0786***
			(0.0193)			(0.0192)
Distance from rail line			-0.0833***			0.0830***
			(0.0218)			(0.0222)
Distance from capital			0.126***			-0.111***
			(0.0304)			(0.0303)
Distance from coastline			-0.0994***			0.0943***
			(0.0223)			(0.0222)
Missionary station			0.0514			-0.0443
			(0.0410)			(0.0417)
Intercept	0.00438	-0.292***	0.563**	0.595***	0.615***	-0.0303
	(0.00432)	(0.0753)	(0.263)	(0.0255)	(0.0673)	(0.243)
NTs	463	463	422	463	463	422
Provinces	61	61	60	61	61	60
R-squared	0.127	0.475	0.329	0.117	0.442	0.314
Colony FE		✓			✓	

Notes: When discussing how we coded Native Authority institutions, we mentioned that council-only NAs came in two main varieties: (1) a clan council was the NA and no chief was recognized as a NA at any level, (2) double-decker systems in which a district contained numerous minor chiefs or headmen that were legally recognized as NAs, but the highest-level NA was a council. In this table, we recode all cases in the second category as chief-and-council NAs, which acknowledges the existence of lower-level NA chiefs. We re-estimate the specifications for which this recoding alters values of the DV: Columns 4–6 of Table 2 and Columns 1–3 of Table 3.

Table A.6: Province-Clustered Standard Errors

Panel A. Table 2

	DV: NA includes a council			DV: Council-only NA		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
No PCS	0.777***	0.810***	0.674***	0.584***	0.756***	0.655***
	(0.0794)	(0.0637)	(0.0833)	(0.0706)	(0.0709)	(0.0707)
Constrained PCS	0.736***	0.629***	0.569***	-0.00438	0.307***	0.117
	(0.116)	(0.114)	(0.108)	(0.00436)	(0.102)	(0.0734)
Population			-0.0888***			0.0567*
			(0.0296)			(0.0328)
Population density			0.0487*			0.00520
			(0.0260)			(0.0262)
Value of cash crops			0.0588***			-0.0115
			(0.0176)			(0.0232)
% alienated land			0.0196			-0.0531
			(0.0137)			(0.0346)
Distance from rail line			0.000293			-0.130***
			(0.0241)			(0.0318)
Distance from capital			-0.0415*			0.0917
			(0.0245)			(0.0641)
Distance from coastline			0.0268			-0.0378
			(0.0289)			(0.0370)
Missionary station			0.00191			0.0702
			(0.0379)			(0.0533)
Intercept	0.112	0.351***	1.065***	0.00438	-0.357***	-0.489
	(0.0720)	(0.104)	(0.271)	(0.00436)	(0.0943)	(0.473)
NTs	463	463	422	463	463	422
Provinces	61	61	60	61	61	60
R-squared	0.284	0.449	0.379	0.223	0.412	0.348
Colony FE		✓			✓	

Panel B. Table 3

	DV: NA includes a chief			DV: Solo-chief NA		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Authoritarian PCS	0.568***	0.730***	0.620***	0.777***	0.810***	0.674***
	(0.0715)	(0.0771)	(0.0762)	(0.0794)	(0.0637)	(0.0833)
Constrained PCS	0.572***	0.438***	0.527***	0.0407	0.181*	0.105
	(0.0710)	(0.0935)	(0.0696)	(0.107)	(0.107)	(0.0889)
Population			-0.0475			0.0888***
			(0.0339)			(0.0296)
Population density			-0.00749			-0.0487*
			(0.0278)			(0.0260)
Value of cash crops			0.00641			-0.0588***
			(0.0245)			(0.0176)
% alienated land			0.0506			-0.0196
			(0.0346)			(0.0137)
Distance from rail line			0.130***			-0.000293
			(0.0338)			(0.0241)
Distance from capital			-0.0763			0.0415*
			(0.0645)			(0.0245)
Distance from coastline			0.0326			-0.0268
			(0.0372)			(0.0289)
Missionary station			-0.0631			-0.00191
			(0.0538)			(0.0379)
Intercept	0.428***	0.611***	0.703	0.112***	-0.161*	-0.739***
	(0.0710)	(0.0831)	(0.446)	(0.0340)	(0.0949)	(0.229)
NTs	463	463	422	463	463	422
Provinces	61	61	60	61	61	60
R-squared	0.207	0.380	0.322	0.284	0.449	0.379
Colony FE		✓			✓	

Notes: The specifications are otherwise identical to those in Tables 2 and 3, but here we cluster standard errors by province.

Table A.7: Province as Unit of Analysis

Panel A. Table 2

	DV: NA includes a council			DV: Council-only NA		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
No PCS	0.872***	0.870***	0.751***	0.627***	0.689***	0.662***
	(0.216)	(0.201)	(0.154)	(0.0654)	(0.114)	(0.105)
Constrained PCS	0.868***	0.774***	0.685***	-0.0391	0.0531	0.103
	(0.238)	(0.246)	(0.219)	(0.0585)	(0.179)	(0.147)
Population			-0.0771			0.0756
			(0.0850)			(0.0666)
Population density			0.0103			0.0485
			(0.0478)			(0.0493)
Value of cash crops			0.0799			-0.104**
			(0.0631)			(0.0501)
% alienated land			-0.0189			-0.000299
			(0.0332)			(0.0756)
Distance from rail line			-0.00378			-0.142***
			(0.0374)			(0.0435)
Distance from capital			-0.117**			-0.0252
			(0.0543)			(0.0660)
Distance from coastline			0.0176			0.00713
			(0.0387)			(0.0529)
Missionary station			0.0706			-0.0189
			(0.115)			(0.191)
Intercept	-0.00819	0.218	1.414	-0.0329	-0.111	-0.226
	(0.207)	(0.238)	(0.859)	(0.0329)	(0.169)	(0.526)
Provinces	61	61	61	61	61	61
R-squared	0.492	0.585	0.635	0.482	0.607	0.625
Colony FE		✓			✓	

Panel B. Table 3

	DV: NA includes a chief			DV: Solo-chief NA		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Authoritarian PCS	0.636***	0.678***	0.665***	0.872***	0.870***	0.751***
	(0.0721)	(0.118)	(0.116)	(0.216)	(0.201)	(0.154)
Constrained PCS	0.642***	0.594***	0.546***	0.00440	0.0968	0.0656
	(0.0686)	(0.133)	(0.103)	(0.0965)	(0.162)	(0.139)
Population			-0.0702			0.0771
			(0.0691)			(0.0850)
Population density			-0.0406			-0.0103
			(0.0528)			(0.0478)
Value of cash crops			0.0885			-0.0799
			(0.0556)			(0.0631)
% alienated land			-0.00187			0.0189
			(0.0749)			(0.0332)
Distance from rail line			0.139***			0.00378
			(0.0454)			(0.0374)
Distance from capital			0.0353			0.117**
			(0.0657)			(0.0543)
Distance from coastline			-0.00668			-0.0176
			(0.0554)			(0.0387)
Missionary station			0.0338			-0.0706
			(0.197)			(0.115)
Intercept	0.422***	0.460***	0.458	0.136***	-0.0880	-1.165
	(0.0494)	(0.121)	(0.515)	(0.0321)	(0.148)	(0.745)
Provinces	61	61	61	61	61	61
R-squared	0.466	0.586	0.601	0.492	0.585	0.635
Colony FE		✓			✓	

Notes: We change the unit of analysis from NTs to provinces. Each variable is an average over the values for every NT within the province. The specifications are otherwise identical to those in Tables 2 and 3.

Table A.8: Logit Regressions

	DV: Any council (binary)			DV: Solo chief (binary)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Constrained PCS	3.661***	3.296***	2.876***	0.374	2.946***	0.710
	(0.646)	(1.147)	(0.782)	(0.399)	(0.602)	(0.484)
No PCS	3.929***	5.756***	3.464***			
	(0.558)	(1.059)	(0.644)			
Authoritarian PCS				4.034***	6.027***	3.560***
				(0.560)	(1.071)	(0.643)
Population			-0.899***			0.848***
			(0.183)			(0.185)
Population density			0.449***			-0.470***
			(0.157)			(0.170)
Value of cash crops			0.564***			-0.508***
			(0.181)			(0.178)
% alienated land			0.354			-0.494
			(0.256)			(0.373)
Distance from rail line			-0.0324			0.0413
			(0.161)			(0.166)
Distance from capital			-0.445			0.557**
			(0.305)			(0.276)
Distance from coastline			0.231			-0.260
			(0.179)			(0.199)
Missionary station			0.0698			-0.0342
			(0.327)			(0.341)
Intercept	-1.946***	-5.286***	8.105***	-2.089***	-0.552*	-11.65***
	(0.535)	(1.097)	(2.297)	(0.166)	(0.288)	(2.170)
NTs	463	384	422	463	297	422
Provinces	61	46	60	61	42	60
Colony FE		✓			✓	

Notes: This table replaces the continuous dependent variables with binary outcomes, based on whether at least half the NAs in the NT had the specified type of institution. No NTs with a precolonial state (either authoritarian or constrained) had a majority of NAs with council-only NAs, and hence we omit the uninformative specifications for council-only NA or any-chief NA (in which the precolonial-institution variables are dropped from the regression).

B SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: CODING PRECOLONIAL INSTITUTIONS

We coded institutional constraints for precolonial states in three steps. First, we compiled a list of precolonial states (Section B.1). Second, we coded whether each precolonial state had meaningful executive constraints (Section B.2). Third, we matched precolonial states with Native Treasuries. While doing so, we compiled several pieces of evidence for institutional persistence in precolonial states (Section B.3). Table B.1 lists every precolonial state and the accompanying Native Treasury.

B.1 STEP 1: DISTINGUISHING STATES FROM DECENTRALIZED AREAS

To distinguish states from decentralized areas, we built upon a recent data set of precolonial African states from Paine, Qiu and Ricart-Huguet (2022), which draws in large part from the work of two eminent historians of Africa, J.F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder. Specifically, Ajayi and Crowder (1985) present a series of detailed regional maps of the location of major African polities in the nineteenth century. Paine, Qiu and Ricart-Huguet (2022) consulted various sources to verify which polities in these maps met the basic criteria for a state laid out in Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940, 5), who define "Group A" societies as those with "centralized authority, administrative machinery, and judicial institutions—in short, a government." The main sources they used were Stewart (2006), Butcher and Griffiths (2020), and Paine (2019), in addition to numerous country-specific monographs. Paine, Qiu and Ricart-Huguet (2022) also provide detail on how their data set differs from and improves upon the widely used set of ethnic groups from Murdock (1959, 1967).

We include every state from the list in Paine, Qiu and Ricart-Huguet (2022). We also add states in two regions for which the maps in Ajayi and Crowder (1985) are not sufficiently precise.

1. Ajayi and Crowder (1985) depict the entire Sokoto Caliphate as a single state, yet in reality the Caliphate was governed as numerous largely independent emirates, allied states, and hostile enclaves. We include all twenty-six emirates plus eleven additional states (four of which were traditional Hausa states) that survived within the broad domain of the Sokoto Caliphate. We identified these states using detailed maps of the Sokoto Caliphate from Johnston (1970, Map 2) and Smaldone (1977, 55) as well as the list of emirates in Northern Nigeria from Hogben and Kirk-Greene (1966).

2. Ajayi and Crowder (1985) provide a large and less detailed map of all of Africa in which they depict several Tswana states: Kwena, Ngwato, and Rolong. However, their detailed regional map for southern Africa does not depict any Tswana states. Following Schapera (1940, 1955), we distinguish the eight main Tswana states and include each in our data set.

B.2   STEP 2: CODING INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Given our list of precolonial states, we coded a dichotomous variable for whether the ruler of each precolonial state was authoritarian or constrained by a council. We collected information on three criteria. The first is the most important and provides the primary basis for our coding decisions. The last two were supplementary. We did not use either as the sole basis for coding any cases as constrained absent any evidence suggestive of the first criterion.

1. **Relationship vis-a-vis council.** Did the ruler regularly consult a council? Did a council regularly influence policy decisions? Was the ruler unable to regularly override the desires of the council?

2. **Choosing and deposing chiefs.** Did the council play a role in selecting new rulers? Did a council have the formal right to depose rulers who committed transgressions or were otherwise deemed unworthy? If so, did they use those powers frequently?

3. **Selecting counselors.** Did any influential counselors gain their positions independent of the ruler?

Additional important distinctions that inform our coding decisions are:

- **Despotic vs. infrastructural power.** We are interested in constraints on despotic power, that is, the presence of elites organized at the center that could influence the rulers's decisions. Another source of constraints arises from the generic difficulty for any pre-modern ruler to project authority over space, hence limiting infrastructural power. There is no variation in the latter source of constraints for any precolonial African polity with political organization above the village level, as all were severely constrained on this dimension. Thus, if the sources indicate constraints but only with regard to projecting authority across space, that information is insufficient to code the ruler as constrained.

- **De facto vs. de jure power.** In many cases, the ruler was theoretically absolute (and perhaps divine), but in practice constrained by other elites. In such cases, the information about the extent of de facto rather than de jure power informs our coding decision.

- **Legislative vs. judicial constraints.** Our first (and main) coding criterion takes into account information about information about legislative power (i.e., making policy decisions) rather than judicial power. We document instances in which the ruler faced some constraints on his ability to unilaterally decide court cases yet a council did not constrain his legislative power. We code such cases as authoritarian.

- **Councils vs. other constraining positions/institutions.** In most cases, the most notable constraining institution was a regularly constituted council of elites. In some cases, the main constraint mentioned in the sources was a Queen Mother or other officials acting in an individual capacity rather than as a council. To consider such information as constituting executive constraints, we require the leading officials to be non-royal (i.e., not part of the royal family or appointed by the ruler or ruling family); although to feel confident about the coding, we prefer when there is information specifically about a council. Another form of non-council constraints came from secret societies. We code these as constraints when present because of the source of influence comes from outside the ruling family.

B.3 STEP 3: MATCHING PRECOLONIAL STATES WITH NATIVE TREASURIES

The final step was to match each precolonial state with a Native Treasury, which we summarize in Table B.1. This was straightforward to do because of the high overlap in names. Among the sixty-three precolonial states in our dataset, all but two had a Treasury named for them. The two exceptions were Zamfara (incorporated into the Sokoto NT; thus, Zamfara does not affect our scoring because the Sokoto NT is already coded as having a precolonial state because of the Sokoto Caliphate) and Wase (incorporated into the Shendam NT), both in Northern Nigeria. In these exceptions we matched precolonial states with NTs by intersecting the location of the (last) capital with the NT polygons (data mostly from Stewart 2006). Note that this procedure yields a perfect match for every case in which the names of the precolonial state and NT line up. Among the sixty-one precolonial states with named treasuries, for all but two we code a one-to-one correspondence between precolonial state and Native Treasury. The exceptions are the Asante state, which we link to all twenty-nine Treasuries in the Crown Colony of Ashanti; and Borgu, which we link to the two NTs in the Borgu district of Northern Nigeria. These two NTs are Bussa and Kaiama, and the best evidence suggests these were independent political entities within the constellation of precolonial Borgu states (Crowder 1973). In sum, we code 91 NTs (out of 463 total) in our dataset as having a precolonial state.

In the theory section, we discussed two additional pieces of evidence of persistence in precolonial-state institutions: royal lines and territory. For the persistence of royal lines, we followed the approach of Müller-Crepon (2020) in using data from Stewart (2006), who presents information on rulers in the precolonial, colonial, and postindependence areas. We additionally consulted Cahoon (n.d.), who presents similar although seemingly more comprehensive information. Using this additional source enabled us to verify that numerous royal lines about which Stewart is ambiguous did indeed persist until independence, which yields differences in some of our coding relative to Müller-Crepon (2020). For territorial continuity, we merged our NT shapefiles with spatial polygons of precolonial states from Paine, Qiu and Ricart-Huguet (2022) to assess the overlap between the areas governed by states on the eve of colonialism and the areas of NTs. We have shapefiles for most, but not all, states in our data set. On average, 70% of the area covered by a precolonial state lay within the area covered by the corresponding NT, and 75% of the area covered by an NT lay within the area covered by the precolonial state. We interpret these percentages as very high, especially considering the inevitable error associated with measuring the reach of historical states. Appendix Figure B.1 depicts several typical cases of high overlap: Bornu and Oyo in Nigeria, Buganda in Uganda, and Barotse in Northern Rhodesia.

Figure B.1: Comparing Areas of Precolonial States and Native Treasuries

Buganda

Bornu

Oyo

Barotse

Native Treasury area
Precolonial state
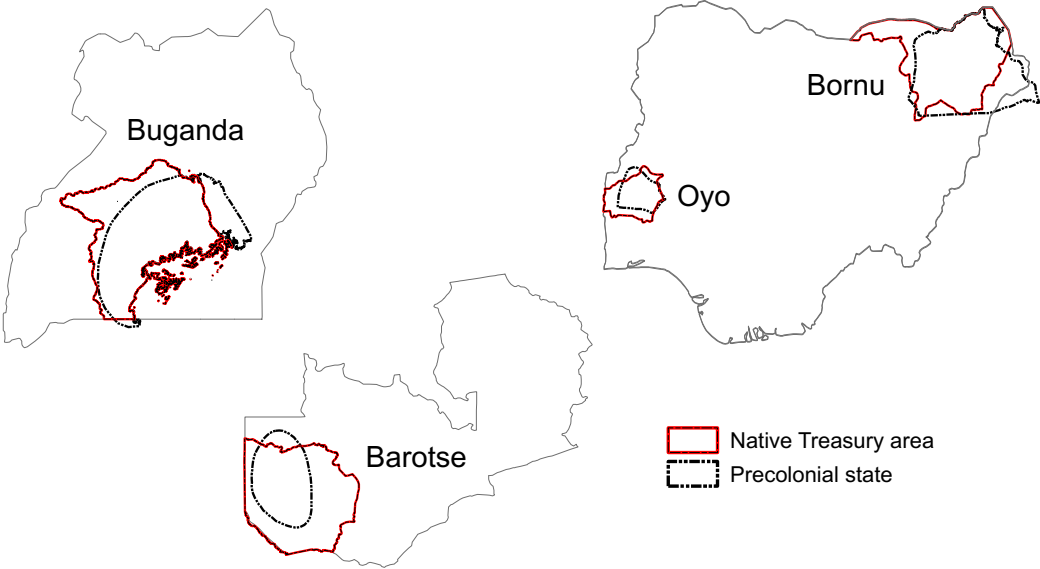
Table B.1: Matching Precolonial States with Native Treasuries

State	IC*	Colony	Province	District	NT	% NT in PCS	% PCS in NT
Adamawa**		Nigeria (N)	Adamawa	Adamawa	Adamawa	97%	32%
Muri**		Nigeria (N)	Adamawa	Muri	Muri	90%	78%
Bauchi**		Nigeria (N)	Bauchi	Bauchi	Bauchi	80%	73%
Gombe**		Nigeria (N)	Bauchi	Gombe	Gombe	76%	73%
Jemaari**		Nigeria (N)	Bauchi	Katagum	Jamari	86%	48%
Katagum**		Nigeria (N)	Bauchi	Katagum	Katagum	86%	87%
Misau**		Nigeria (N)	Bauchi	Katagum	Misau	80%	49%
Lafia**		Nigeria (N)	Benue	Lafia	Lafia	89%	74%
Keffi**		Nigeria (N)	Benue	Nasarawa	Keffi	71%	80%
Nasarawa**		Nigeria (N)	Benue	Nasarawa	Nasarawa	87%	78%
Bedde		Nigeria (N)	Bornu	Bedde	Bedde		
Biu		Nigeria (N)	Bornu	Biu	Biu		
Bornu		Nigeria (N)	Bornu	Bornu	Bornu	81%	80%
Dikwa		Nigeria (N)	Bornu	Dikwa	Dikwa		
Fika		Nigeria (N)	Bornu	Potiskum	Fika		
Borgu	✓	Nigeria (N)	Ilorin	Borgu	Bussa/Kaiama	77%	80%
Ilorin**	✓	Nigeria (N)	Ilorin	Ilorin	Ilorin	89%	82%
Lafiagi**		Nigeria (N)	Ilorin	Pategi-Lafiagi	Lafiagi	79%	62%
Pategi**		Nigeria (N)	Ilorin	Pategi-Lafiagi	Pategi	63%	78%
Igala	✓	Nigeria (N)	Kabba	Igala	Igala	41%	76%
Kano**	✓	Nigeria (N)	Kano	Kano	Kano	93%	90%
Gumel		Nigeria (N)	Kano	Northern	Gumel		
Kazaure**		Nigeria (N)	Kano	Kano	Kazaure		
Hadejia**		Nigeria (N)	Kano	Northern	Hadejia	76%	93%
Daura**	✓	Nigeria (N)	Katsina	Katsina	Daura	63%	74%
Katsina**		Nigeria (N)	Katsina	Katsina	Katsina	94%	91%
Abuja	✓	Nigeria (N)	Niger	Abuja	Abuja	75%	59%
Lapai**		Nigeria (N)	Niger	Abuja	Lapai	90%	57%
Agaie**		Nigeria (N)	Niger	Bida	Agaie	64%	73%
Nupe (Bida)**	✓	Nigeria (N)	Niger	Bida	Bida	80%	89%
Kontagora**		Nigeria (N)	Niger	Kontagora	Kontagora		
Jema'a**		Nigeria (N)	Plateau	Jemaa	Jemaa	74%	77%
Wase		Nigeria (N)	Plateau	Shendam	Shendam		
Argungu (Kebbi)	✓	Nigeria (N)	Sokoto	Argungu	Argungu		
Gwandu**		Nigeria (N)	Sokoto	Gwandu	Gwandu	71%	42%
Yauri	✓	Nigeria (N)	Sokoto	Gwandu	Yauri		
Sokoto**		Nigeria (N)	Sokoto	Sokoto	Sokoto	95%	90%
Zamfara	✓	Nigeria (N)	Sokoto	Sokoto	Sokoto	-	-
Zaria**		Nigeria (N)	Zaria	Zaria	Zaria	93%	79%

*IC: institutional constraints

**Emirate within the Sokoto Caliphate

State	IC*	Colony	Province	District	NT	% NT in PCS	% PCS in NT
Basuto	✓	Basutoland			National	88%	68%
Malete	✓	Bechuanaland		Gaberones	Malete		
Tlokwa	✓	Bechuanaland		Gaberones	Tlokwa		
Kgatla	✓	Bechuanaland		Kgatleng	Kgatla		
Kwena	✓	Bechuanaland		Kweneng	Kwena		
Rolong	✓	Bechuanaland		Lobatsi	Barolong		
Tawana	✓	Bechuanaland		Ngamiland	Tawana		
Ngwaketse	✓	Bechuanaland		Ngwaketse	Ngwaketse		
Ngwato	✓	Bechuanaland		Ngwato	Ngwato		
Asante	✓	Gold Coast	Asante		29 NTs in Ashanti Colony		
Dagomba	✓	Gold Coast	Northern	Dagomba	Dagomba	75%	74%
Barotse	✓	N. Rhodesia	Barotse	Barotse	Barotse	40%	89%
Bemba	✓	N. Rhodesia	Northern	Kasama	Chitimukulu & Bemba	83%	36%
Kazembe	✓	N. Rhodesia	Western	Kawambwa	Kasembe & Lunda		
Egba (Abeokuta)	✓	Nigeria (W)	Abeokuta	Egba	Egba	24%	41%
Benin	✓	Nigeria (W)	Benin	Benin	Benin	46%	51%
Ijebu	✓	Nigeria (W)	Ijebu	Ijebu	Ijebu	34%	81%
Ibadan	✓	Nigeria (W)	Oyo	Ibadan	Ibadan	81%	25%
Ife	✓	Nigeria (W)	Oyo	Ife	Ife		
Oyo	✓	Nigeria (W)	Oyo	Oyo	Oyo	59%	89%
Swaziland	✓	Swaziland			National	87%	67%
Buganda		Uganda	Buganda	Buganda	Buganda	72%	83%
Nkore		Uganda	Western	Ankole	Ankole	37%	46%
Bunyoro		Uganda	Western	Bunyoro	Bunyoro	91%	69%

*IC: institutional constraints

C Excerpts from Codebook

Here we present excerpts from the detailed coding notes we compiled for each case to code both precolonial and Native Authority institutions. The case notes will be available in full upon publication.

C.1 Precolonial Institutions

Our information about precolonial institutions draws heavily from anthropological accounts compiled during the colonial era. We briefly address concerns about our sources before providing excerpts from the codebook. Although the use of such sources has become standard practice in social scientific work on precolonial states in Africa, some criticize this trend because many dates of observation occurred after significant economic change and European intervention had taken place (Henderson and Whatley 2014). This undoubtedly created challenges to constructing accurate accounts. However, we believe that, if anything, the bias induced by inaccuracies would tend to go against our characterization of widespread institutional constraints. Qualitative histories of Africa in the late nineteenth century suggest that there was a tendency for African states to become increasingly autocratic over this period. For example, in Buganda, anthropologists highlight that governance had become more autocratic over time prior to colonization. This is not an isolated case, as the drift towards increasingly authoritarian rule in the nineteenth century was observed in several regions of Africa. Given the difficulty of constructing oral histories farther back in time, it is natural that anthropologists would attempt to characterize the most accurate snapshot of precolonial politics possible, which would be on the eve of colonization. Yet to the extent that the late nineteenth century was an unusually autocratic period in African governance, this would make it more difficult to find evidence of institutional constraints.

C.1.1 Bornu (Northern Nigeria)

Coding: Bornu, ruled by the Shehu, had become an *authoritarian state* by the nineteenth century as prior checks on the executive had weakened.

Details: Bornu was an ancient state in West Africa. It was part of the historical Kanem-Bornu empire before breaking off to form its own empire. The sources indicate that constraints on the Shehu weakened considerably over time. "The whole Council of State (Nokena) is only a shadow nowadays, surviving from the aristocratic constitution of an earlier period, and has no longer any effective power . . . Now it is only the will of the sovereign and the influence of his favorites that count" (Hogben and Kirk-Greene 1966, 333). The council members "gradually came to regard themselves as princes, and at the end of the fifteenth century Ali Dunama greatly curtailed their powers" (Temple 1922, 435). The Bornu Council of State "is composed of members of the royal family, the brothers and sons of the Shehu, together with the state councillors . . . who themselves fall into two categories: the free-born representatives of different national groups, and the military commanders . . . who are of slave origin" (Hogben and Kirk-Greene 1966, 332).

C.1.2 Buganda (Uganda)

Coding: Buganda, ruled by the Kabaka, had become an *authoritarian state* by the nineteenth century as prior checks on the executive had weakened.

Details:

- The Bataka, the class of notables, were originally able to check the king when they had ruled alongside him as a hereditary chiefly council. However, they lost their power during the "growth of royal despotism during the eighteenth century," as one king began replacing hereditary chiefs with new chiefs loyal to him (Kiwanuka 1971, 100-101). "There is no doubt that the authority of the Kabaka was greater in the nineteenth century than it had previously been. Previously there had been many checks on his authority," such as the bataka (clan, sub-clan, and lineage heads), national gods, and officers who "could suggest and advise, and were expected to do so" (Fallers 1960, 64). "Before the reign of Mutebi, a king could have his wishes blocked by the opposition of the chiefs. But by the eighteenth century a strong king could easily ignore the protests of the notables as demonstrated by the policies of Tebandeke ..." (Kiwanuka 1971, 100). In the nineteenth century, "the central authority of the Kabaka was increasing at the expense of the bataka and the spokesmen for the gods ... By the time of first recorded history, the Kabaka had an absolute right to rule the country—symbolized by his 'eating Buganda' at the time of his coronation" (Fallers 1960, 64).

- Later chiefs could replace bataka at will, including previously hereditary positions. "As royal despotism expanded, it became easier for the kings to get rid of unwanted chiefs." By the nineteenth century, Bataka had lost their ancient privileges and "the balance of political power had shifted more into the royal hands than it had ever done before" (Kiwanuka 1971, 101-102). "It was said that the Kabaka was the head of all the bataka." One Kabaka replaced the clan heads with administrative chiefs, while another substituted "direct appointments to some ssaza [county] chieftainships which had previously been hereditary" (Fallers 1960, 64). "The Kabaka, once established, had great power in his own right, which he exercised throughout the kingdom through his court officials and his chiefs ... in the nineteenth century the power of the Kabaka increased and he became strong enough to appoint chiefs where previously the position had been inherited" (Fallers 1960, 61-63). Hailey (1950a, 14) also describes how at least six of the saza (county) posts were hereditary at the beginning of the eighteenth century but that changed during that century. "The reason for the change was doubtless the expansion of Buganda and the growing authority of the Kabaka vis-a-vis the hitherto powerful families."

C.1.3 Oyo (Western Nigeria)

Coding: Oyo, ruled by the Alafin, was a *constrained state* throughout the nineteenth century. Councils influenced day-to-day policy decisions and affected the selection and replacement of Alafins.

Details:

- A Council of Seven, called the Awyaw Mesi, drew its members from seven lineages; these members are referred to as semi-hereditary nobility (Talbot 1926, 571). The chief of the counselors was called the "terrestrial chief" whereas the Alafin was the "celestial chief" (Forde 1951, 22). According to Talbot (1926, 571), "No law could be promulgated" without the consent of the Awyaw Mesi.

- Another powerful council was the Oyo Mesi, the council of head chiefs. In theory, "the king was supposed to have the last word" in disagreements. Yet in practice, "the king was reduced to the position of figure head" and "real power fell to the Oyo Mesi who were the civil lords of the commoners" (Imoagene 1990, 25). "Thus the king was very effectively checked not only by the Ogboni cult but also by the Oyo-Mesi" (Imoagene 1990, 26).

- The Awyaw Mesi chose and could depose the Alafin. The three "Fathers of the King" nominated elections, among whom the Awyaw Mesi chose. The new Alafin typically came from a different branch than the late Alafin (Talbot 1926, 568). The head of the council "had the right to demand the [king's] death if he proved to be a failure or a tyrant." Supposedly, this event was fairly common (Talbot 1926, 571).

C.1.4 Barotse (Northern Rhodesia)

Coding: Barotse was a *constrained state* throughout the nineteenth century. The main council (which was divided into sub-councils) influenced day-to-day policy decisions and could replace the king.

Details:

- The kuta, or council, was the main ruling body and had many sub-councils, where "matters of national importance might originate . . . Attempts were made to get agreement between the three councils before the king was called on to give the final decision" (Turner 1952, 37). "The councils of the two real capitals interlock into a single council in which councillors of Lwambi rank below those of Namuso. This council was until 1947 the real ruling body of Loziland" (34). "In all routine matters the Kuta worked as one composite body . . . In other matters, and particularly those involving issues of major importance to the Lozi, the Kuta was divided formally into the three Councils"—the Sikalo, Saa, and Katengo (Hailey 1950*b*, 96). The first council was comprised of minor commoner councillors and the king's stewards. The second was comprised of all the other councillors (princes and commoners) except for the two most senior ones, and the third consisted of the senior councillors of the second council and the two most senior officials, the Ngambela and the Natamayo (Caplan 1970, 3-4).

- The council could not act without the king's approval, but the king could not in practice override the council if its opinion was united. "If all three Councils agreed a decision was taken. If not, the Councils sat again, this time having the advantage of knowing each other's views, including those of the Sikalo, which were reported to the other Councils. If they could not

agree the Sikalo's decision had the greatest weight, but the Paramount and Ngambela might follow the Katengo's decision against both upper Councils. It is said that they respected the Katengo 'as speaking for the mass of the people'" (Hailey 1950b, 96). "Because of the different interests into which all these members of the ruling class were divided, it was difficult for them to unite against the King. But if they did reach a consensus of opinion, it was hazardous for the King to adopt an opposing policy" (Caplan 1970, 4).

- The counselors depended on the king for their positions and promotion. However, because the king could be any member of the royal family, they also could choose to support a rival candidate for king at any time, in hopes of gaining a better position. "The King could appoint any commoner to any place in the established hierarchy of council titles, or to the Ngambelaship. This both augmented and diminished the power of the King, for while his subjects depended on him for promotion, he was perpetually open to the threat that, if antagonized, they would rally behind a prince whom they would attempt to substitute for the incumbent" (Caplan 1970, 3). "In this way, then, permanent intrigue at every level of government inhered in the system, no man from King to the most subordinate councillor enjoying secure tenure of office" (Caplan 1970, 3). "As the Lozi themselves say, the state is always on the verge of revolt" (Caplan 1970, 3). The system of territorial division, however, ensured that no councillor or prince could accrue "a solid localized block of men." Power was instead concentrated in the capital (Caplan 1970, 4-5).

- The Ngambela was the chief minister who wielded considerable power (Hailey 1950b, 96; Turner 1952, 37). The Ngambelaship was the highest position a commoner could aspire to, and was "greatly dependent on the King's favour" for his position. However, it was also his duty to represent the nation and perform "his function to oppose a King who ruled unjustly" (Caplan 1970, 3).

C.2 NATIVE AUTHORITY INSTITUTIONS

C.2.1 Bornu (Northern Nigeria)

Coding: Bornu was a NA/NT in the eponymous district and province in Northern Nigeria. The Native Authority was a solo chief with an entirely chief-appointed council.

Details. From Hailey (1951a, 55): "In the Bornu Division the Shehu, who is sole Native Authority, has an Advisory Council of six, the Waziri (£1,000) who is in charge of District affairs and prisons; the Mukaddam (£600) who is in charge of the police and of Maiduguri town; Mainia Kanandi (£540), the first legal member; the Wali (£450) the second legal member and in charge of agriculture and forestry; the Ma'aji (£450) who is the Treasurer and supervises the co-operative societies; and Shettima Kashim (£510) who is the Education Officer. Two of the Council (Mukaddam and the Ma'aji) are Shuwa Arabs appointed on merit; the Waziri and the Mainia Kanandi come from traditional families. The Advisory Council is appointed by the Shehu and approved by the Resident."

C.2.2 Buganda (Uganda)

Coding: Buganda was a Native Government in Uganda with its own treasury. The NA was chief and council, and the council had a plurality of chief-appointed members with a minority of each of elite and popularly selected members.

Details. From Hailey (1950*a*): Britain's foundational treaty with the Kabaka of Buganda, the Agreement of 1900, provided the constitution for Buganda. Hailey stresses the unique extent of autonomy in Buganda given the Agreement of 1900, which "contemplated that the Kabaka should, subject to certain conditions, exercise direct control over the natives of Buganda. Given the circumstances existing in 1900, that provision clearly applied primarily to requirements such as the maintenance of law and order or the administration of justice . . . As the picture presents itself to-day, the Native Government provides a large part of the machinery for the administration of law and order and of justice, while the Protectorate Government provides the greater part of the services ministering to the social and economic needs of the Province" (8).

The NA was a chief and council. "The Native Government has been gazetted as the Native Authority . . ." (18). Later he clarifies that the "Native Government" refers to both Kabaka and Lukiko: "As has been shown, not only are the laws enacted by the Kabaka and Lukiko subject to the assent of the Governor, but it is expressly provided that in this respect the Native Government must explicitly follow the advice tendered to it through his representatives" (22).

Hailey provides extensive detail on the composition and powers of the council:

- "The Kabaka was to 'exercise direct rule over the natives of Buganda,' to whom he was to administer justice through the Lukiko or Native Council . . . The Kabaka's Council of the Lukiko was to discuss and pass resolutions on all matters concerning the native administration of Buganda; but the Kabaka was to consult the representative of the British Government in Uganda before giving effect to such resolutions . . . Subsequent Agreements of 1910 and 1937 made it clear that this Article of the 1900 Agreement was to be interpreted as conferring on the Kabaka and Lukiko the power to make, with the consent of the Governor, laws which were to be binding on natives in Buganda" (6). Later he states: "The machinery for effecting Buganda legislation is the Kabaka and Lukiko. The Great Lukiko at Mengo . . . is a body which, as will be seen, has also important functions in the field of administration, and supplies the members of the supreme judicial court of Buganda. Its legislative business was formerly concentrated at its annual session, but arrangement have now been made for it to hold quarterly sessions" (9).

- Hailey then describes how the membership of the Lukiko evolved over time. Before 1939, the council consisted almost entirely of Kabaka-selected chiefs, who served as official members. The Kabaka agreed to reforms in 1939 that added non-official members, and in 1945 he assented to further reforms to introduce elected members. On p. 10, Hailey provides an exact composition since 1946, which we use to code the council composition variables in the dataset. Overall, despite these changes, chief-appointed members remained the plurality on the council.

- 38 chief-appointed members: The Kabaka selected the ministers (3), Kabaka's nominees (6), Gombolola chiefs (15), and Miruka chiefs (14).

- 20 elite members: The saza (county) chiefs formed "the higher ranks of the civil service in Buganda and are appointed by promotion or transfer or on merit" (14). We code these members as meeting both criteria for elites because they gained their positions *ex officio* and many of the positions had recently been hereditary. However, given the rise of royal absolutism in Buganda in the century prior to colonization, the historical status of some of these appointments was in flux. As Hailey notes, appointment by merit "has not always been the case. Whilst there is insufficient evidence to speak with certainty of all the nine posts which existed up to the reign of Junju in the late eighteenth century, it is clear that at least six posts, those of Mugema, Kago, Kasuju, Kangawo, Kitunzi and Katambala, were hereditary in accordance with Buganda rules of succession. As examples, the titles of Mugema dating from Kintu and Kasujju dating from Kimera were hereditary (for former in one and the latter in two families) for possible five hundred years and only ceased to be so in modern times, as did that of Katambala, which had been hereditary in one family since its establishment three hundred years before."

- 36 popularly selected members. These "unofficial" members are elected by the following process: "The 20 Sazas [counties] elect for the Kabaka's selection the 36 unofficial representatives, in numerical proportion according to the population of each Saza. The representatives of each Saza are elected by the representatives of the Gombololas [next administrative level down], and the representatives of the Gombololas are elected by the Muluka [smallest administrative unit] representatives. Each Muluka elects 2 representatives from among its registered voters" (10). The Kabaka plays a role in the selection of these unofficial representatives, but his influence was "largely nominal." Instead, it represented "the attempt to combine the Kabaka's right of selection with the element of popular representation introduced by the 1945 Law."

C.2.3 Oyo (Western Nigeria)

Coding: Oyo was a NA/NT in the eponymous district and province of Western Nigeria. The Native Authority was chief and council with an elite-plurality council and some popularly selected members.

Details. From Hailey (1951*a*, 120): "The administration was until 1945 vested in the Alafin, assisted by an Advisory Council of 12 Chiefs from Oyo Town. In 1945 the Alafin abandoned his status as sole NA, and the composition of his council was changed to 11 Chiefs from Oyo, eight Chiefs from other towns in the Division and five nominated members. As the result of a further reorganization in 1949 the Council now consists of 13 Oyo Chiefs, 17 Chiefs from other towns, and 18 elected members, making, with the Alafin, a total membership of 49. The Council includes two women; all the elected Councillors are literate. The Council has six working Committees. The composition of the Councils of the five NAs has also been revised, with the purpose of increasing the number of elected Councillors, and nomination by Chiefs or Societies has been abolished."

C.2.4 Barotse (Northern Rhodesia)

Coding: Barotse was a NA/NT in the eponymous province of Northern Rhodesia. The Native Authority was chief and council. The council was elite-plurality with a minority of chief-appointed members and non-hereditary elite members.

Details. From Hailey (1950*b*, 95); see also survey CO 1018/55:

- "It will be simplest to state at once the form which the native administration has now taken. It consists of the Paramount Chief and his Council at Lealui, as Superior Native Authority, with five Subordinate Native Authorities, consisting of a Chief (or District Head or President) and the local Kuta."

- "The chiefdom of the Paramount is hereditary, in the patrilineal line. The present Paramount Chief, Mwanawina, is a son of Lewanika and a half-brother of Imwiko the late Paramount. The headquarters Council at Lealui, which, as shown above, is now known as the Saa-Sikalo, has no rigidly prescribed membership, but the nucleus consists of a body of some 25 office holders, described as 'sitting on the Right,' though it may be attended also by certain members of the ruling family and others holding traditional Court posts described as 'sitting on the Left,' so that the numbers normally entitled to attend may be taken as between 30 and 40 in all."

- "The office holders are (1) the Chief Minister (Ngambela) whose appointment has always been a prominent feature of the Lozi organization, seven of the nine holders of the post having been 'commoners' or of commoner descent, one a member of the ruling family, and one the son of a former Leashimha of Sesheke. The present occupant of the post was an interpreter in the Protectorate. (2) The Administrative Secretary—a comparatively recent creation. He is well educated and has served in the Protectorate. (3) The Chief of the judicial side (Natamoyo), traditionally the 'Keeper of the King's Conscience,' and always a member of the ruling family. (4) The Mukulwakashiko, the traditional Chairman of the former Saa Council. (5) Three Indunas, holding the senior posts of Education, Agriculture and Development. (6) Fifteen Councillors, of whom five are Indunas seconded in rotation from each of the five District Kutas, this being an innovation since 1946. (7) Five Indunas, holding less important 'departmental' posts. The non-traditional appointments are now made on merit and educational qualifications, but the narrow range of higher education in Barotseland tends to involve a preference for persons brought up at Lealui, who are mainly of Lozi or mixed Lozi descent."

C.2.5 Kwahu (Gold Coast)

Coding: Kwahu was a NA/NT in the Birim district of the Gold Coast Colony. The Native Authority was chief and council, and the council was plurality elite and with a minority of popularly selected members.

Figure C.1: Excerpt of Survey from Kwahu

Details. From Survey CO 1018/10:

Question 7. (a) The Kwahu Native Authority comprising the Omanhene of Kwahu and his state Council. This State Council comprises:

1. Nana Akuamoa Akyeampon, Omanhene of Kwehu (President)

2. Kwasi Abora, Odikro of Atibie and Gyasehene of Kwahu

3. Kwame Sei, Krontihene of Abene

4. Kwabena Adueni, Gyaseshene of Abene

5. Kwasi Amoa, Kyidomhene of Abene

6. Kwasi Banah, Odikro Sadan

7. Ntri Amponsam II, Adontenhene of Kwahu, Abetifi

8. Owusu Mensah II, Kyidomhene of Kwahu, Pepease

9. Diawuo Afari II, Odikro of Akwaseho and Twafohene of Kwahu

10. Kwaku Kunnipa III, Ohene of Twenedurase

11. Kwakye Ababio, II, Odikro of Nteso

12. Agyepon Baadu II, Ohene of Bukuruwa

13. Yao Ntim, Benkumhene of Kwahu, Aduamoa

14. Dwamena Ayiripe II, Ohene of Bukuruwa
15. Kofi Ampadu, Ohene of Mpraeso
16. Kwasi Ameyao, Odikro of Kwahu Tafo
17. Kwabena Fofie, Okyeame, Abene
18. Kwasi Nyako, Nifahene of Kwahu, Obo
19. Ohene of Obomeng
20. Kwasi Bosompem II, Odikro of Bepong
21. Kwasi Mireku II, Odikro of Asakraka
22. E.Abednego Mensah, Councillor, Nkawkaw
23. E.J.O.Ababio, Councillor, Nkwatia
24. Kofi Nkansah, Councillor, Abetifi
25. Kwaku Domfe, Councillor, Nkawkaw
26. D.B.Asante, Nominated member, Abetifi
27. Yao Appa, Councillor, Pepease
28. Yao Fori, Councillor, Obomeng
29. Kwahu Amo, Councillor, Abene

(b) The chiefs within the Native Authority are traditional rulers inheriting their position in the matrilineal line. Selection within the line is made by the stool family who present their selection to the Gyase or keeper of the household.

(c) In Kwahu the Council mainly composed of traditional members of the State Council but is leavened by number of selected intelligentsia from various walks of life. This selection is made by the State Council. There has been no occasion for the Administration to intervene in prescribing or influencing the composition of the Council, except in the general way of advising that non-traditional members would be of help in running affairs.

(d) The Native Authority is a body with in this case the Paramount Chief as its President. In practice the President has only one vote and though his personal influence and hereditary position go a long way towards producing decisions, these factors can only be exercised in a direction in which he considers his councillors likely to follow.

(e) In only a few cases are the chiefs literate. All non-traditional members are literate, comprising about 25 per cent of the Native Authority.

C.2.6 Ada (Gold Coast)

Coding: Ada was a NA/NT in the Ho district of the Gold Coast Colony. The Native Authority was chief and council, and the council was comprised entirely of elites.

Details. From Survey CO 1018/10:

Question 7. (b) The Chiefs and Elders who constitute the Native Authority are traditional and hereditary (patrilineal).
(c) The Native Authority consists of the Ada Manche and the State Council which is constituted as follows

State Mankralo
9 Asafoatse-ngwa from the 9 tribes
6 Wornors (2 from the Tekperbiawe tribe)
1 Chief Linguist
4 Elders and Headmen
2 Djasetses of Kabiawe Tribe
1 Asafoatse
1 Paramount Stool Father
9 Private gentlemen.
The names of members of Native Authority are approved by Government and therefore in theory intervention by the administration is possible. In practice, no intervention has in fact taken place. The Chiefs who are members of the Native Authority are very greatly dependent on their own tribes for advice and support.
(d) Ada Manche gets £3-2-6 per month. (about £37.5 per year).
(e) While it is becoming increasingly common for educated men to be appointed as Chiefs, the standard of literacy in the Native Authority is at present very low.

C.2.7   North Nyanza (Kenya)

Coding: North Nyanza was a NA/NT in the eponymous district of the Nyanza Province of Kenya. The Native Authority was council-only; this coding is based on the higher-level Local Native Council, although there were also lower-level NA headmen. The council was primarily popularly selected members, with some DO-appointed members.

Details.   From Hailey (1950*a*, 151–55):

- "In North Nyanza District the Locations, which originally took account of tribal divisions, were at one time more numerous, but have since been reduced in number as a matter of administrative convenience. Though the status of 'Chiefs' is not hereditary (save possibly in the exceptional case of Mumia's chiefdom) there is no doubt that in a number of cases they represent an inherited tradition, and have been selected from what are recognized locally as 'chiefly' families. Some of the present Headmen claim that there have been chiefs in their families for many generations, and of only two could it be said that they belong to families who have previously had no such connection. The method of selection is elastic; in some cases a man is clearly indicated by family position, while others are appointed after a process of consultation with the inhabitants of a Location, which has something of the character of election. But in each case the final choice is that of Government, and there is no traditional body of Elders, such as are found in the Bantu areas of some other territories, who are recognized as entitled to select a chief. Fourteen of the present Headmen are literate."

- "The system of Local Native Councils has now been in force for nearly a quarter of a century in the Province, and has become an important feature in the administration of native affairs, more especially in the three Nyanza Districts."

- "In North Nyanza District the election of members is arranged so as to secure one representative for roughly 13,000 inhabitants, and the 20 Locations are sub-divided into electoral units for this purpose. The names of candidates are put forward at locational meetings, and election, which is sometimes keenly contested, follows the 'line-up' procedure. It has, however, been proposed that a list of candidates should in the future be nominated at meetings of the Locational Advisory Councils. The tendency has been to select younger educated men, and there are several Makerere students among the present members."

- "There is a general agreement that the Councils, as now constituted, provide an effective representation of different aspects of local opinion, including that of the younger element in the population, and their deliberations are marked by free and open discussion. This on occasion takes the form of strong criticism of Government measures, but the Nyanza Councils have not developed the tendency, noticeable in some of the Kikuyu Councils, to exhibit a standing opposition to the Government on political grounds. While the District Commissioner remains the central and most responsible figure in the Councils, his position has tended to become one of guidance rather than control. Most of the routine deliberations of the Councils take place under the chairmanship of the African Deputy Vice-Presidents; the Councils sit once a quarter, and much of their detailed work is transacted in Standing Committees."

C.2.8 Bukoba (Tanganyika)

Coding: The Treasury of Council of Bukoba Chiefs was a NT in the eponymous district in the Lake Province of Tanganyika. There were eight solo-chief NAs who were federated into a district-level council that controlled the treasury, creating a council-only NA. The council consisted solely of the constituent NA chiefs, which we code as elite only.

Details. From Hailey (1950*a*, 227):

- "In the Bukoba District the eight Chiefs (Bakama) who, as already indicated, are of Hima stock, have an hereditary status. They administer their areas through sub-chiefs (Bami) who have not necessarily a traditional standing, but are selected by the Bakama, and it is said that the latter have a tendency to keep the post as far as possible in the family."

- "The Chiefs have no regular Councils, and it was frequently said in the past that they paid less regard to consultation with responsible and representative bodies of Elders than is usual elsewhere."

- "The eight Chiefs are federated in the Council of the Chiefs of Bukoba (the Council of Bakama) which is gazetted as a Native Authority, and is in practice a deliberative and financial body whose legislative functions are limited to making Orders under Section 8 and Rules under Section 15 of the Ordinance for the whole of the chiefdoms and controlling the Treasury of the District. In these respects it has been more effective than many of the other federated Councils in the Province, partly because of the relatively large revenue of the Treasury, but perhaps even more because the Council had for some years the advantage of the service of an outstanding African Secretary."

C.2.9 Calabar (Eastern Nigeria)

Coding: The Calabar Province of Eastern Nigeria contained 28 NTs and 46 NAs, all of which were council-only. The councils had a plurality of non-hereditary elite members with a minority of popularly selected members.

Details. From Hailey (1951*a*, 160–61):

"In the Calabar Province the great majority of Native Authorities are normally Clan Councils, which were in fact at one time meetings of family Heads. But their attendance was irregular, and it at times consisted largely not of family Heads, but of their representatives, so that the Councils tended to deteriorate into mass meetings, and to fall into the hands of undesirable elements. They have now been reorganized so that only recognized members attend, and are composed of Village or family representatives. Some of the Councils are very large, but efforts are being made to reduce them in size; an example is the Efik-qua-Efut Council, which was reduced in 1947 from 165 to 80 members, including roughly 50 per cent. representing the educated and professional classes. Similarly the Aro Council now includes one traditional member for each village, together with 23 elected representatives, while the Enyong Council has been reduced from 100 to 33, some of whom are traditional and some are elected members. All these Councils include a fairly high proportion of literate members and the percentage is continually increasing."

D SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: AUTHORITY OF COUNCILS

In the text, we briefly described two pieces of evidence that help to substantiate the contention that Native Authority councils imposed meaningful constraints on chiefs. In Appendices D.1 and D.2, we provide details on the composition of councils. In Appendix D.3, we provide details on Native Treasury expenditures.

D.1 COMPOSITION OF COUNCILS: DATA

For each council in our dataset, we classified members based on who selected the counselor: elites, popularly selected, chief-appointed, or appointed by a British District Officer (DO) or District Commissioner. To do so, we used the descriptions of the councils from the Hailey volumes and surveys, from which we present excerpts in Appendix C.2. In some cases, the sources provide sufficient information to calculate the precise fraction of seats held by each type of member. However, we are usually only able to code which type of member comprised the plurality on the council, and this is the variable we use in the regressions reported later. We also recorded whether each council had any members of each type.

A typical elite member on a council was an individual who (a) gained a local title by hereditary means and (b) held an *ex officio* seat on the council, that is, the traditional title automatically qualified them for a seat on the council. For example, the State Council in the Ada NT in the Gold Coast included the Asafoatse-ngwa (army captain; see Lawler and Wilks 2008, 7) for each of nine recognized sub-groups (referred to in the sources as "tribes"). Yet some individuals met one but not both of these conditions. Suppose that a lower-level council such as a village council selected all members for the higher-level NA council, a common selection procedure. In such cases, any hereditary title holder on the NA council gained this seat because the village council selected them, as opposed to their hereditary title automatically qualifying them for a seat. Such individuals met the first but not second condition outlined above for an elite member. By contrast, in areas such as Igboland, individuals gained traditional titles by popular acclamation or by purchase, as opposed to by hereditary selection. Any non-hereditary titleholder who gained an *ex officio* position on the NA council met the second but not first condition for an elite member. In the main version of the elite-member variable, we coded an individual who met either condition as an elite. For a robustness check, we code an alternative version in which an "elite" member must hold a hereditary title (see Table D.4). Finally, note that the following type of council member did not meet either condition, and thus we code them as popularly selected rather than elite: holders of non-hereditary local titles who gained their position on the NA council via selection by a lower-level council.

Elite council members contrasted with individuals who gained their seats by a popular selection process. Some popularly selected members gained their seats through direct means, typically a local election. Others gained their positions indirectly, often via selection by a lower-level council. The Egba Central Council included elites as well as both types of popularly selected members. After reorganization in 1948, the council "consist[ed] of 13 ex-officio titled members and 73 elected members, including four women. The elected members, originally appointed by their respective towns and villages, were in June 1949 elected by taxpayers, at elections supervised by Administrative Officers, voting being by show of hands. The four women were elected by the Councils of

28

the four Sections into which the Egba Native Authority is divided" (Hailey 1951*a*, 113–14). This was in fact a rare exception to the general pattern of male counselors. In five areas in Western Nigeria (including Egba), women gained elected seats on the NA council or a Subordinate Native Authority council. Queen Mothers held seats on the Ashanti Confederacy Council, Divisional Councils in Ashanti, the Fante Confederacy Council, and the Liqoqo in Swaziland. The latter cases reflected the traditional importance of Queen Mothers, who also played a role in selecting a new ruler.[1]

The final two types of members were those appointed by the Native Authority chief and those appointed by British administrators such as the District Officer. These members were straightforward to code and involved minimal coder discretion. In general, we would assume that such council members lacked independence from authoritarian figures such as chiefs and colonial officers. However, chiefs and colonial officials sometimes followed formal or informal guidelines to choose members with specific traits, for example, a NA chief selecting "progressive" members educated in English. For example, in the Kawambwa district of Northern Rhodesia, "The Chief has the power of appointment though many of the old appointments were traditional or hereditary. Chiefs have, however, in recent years been pressed by Government to modernize their Councils and a certain proportion of the chiefs' appointments today consist of progressive, educated and non-hereditary Africans" (Survey CO 1018/54). Because our coding criterion is based on who selects the members, rather than who is selected, we code these "progressive" members as NA chief-appointed rather than as popularly selected.

Table D.1 summarizes the patterns. Councils were typically dominated by either elites (56% of all councils) or popularly selected members (30%). By contrast, councils were rarely dominated by members appointed by either the NA chief (12%) or British officials (3%). Furthermore, councils dominated by NA chief-appointed members were mostly confined to areas with solo-chief NAs, where councils served only in an advisory capacity to the NA chief without formal discretion over policy decisions. Therefore, these summary statistics also establish that whether a council was gazetted as part of the NA correlates with the composition of the council. Where an NA included a council, the NA chief (if there was one) rarely appointed the plurality of members (8% of cases). By contrast, such appointments were more common in councils that lacked the legal distinction as a NA (22%).

D.2 Composition of Councils: Results

Colonies varied greatly in the composition of their councils, which leads us to examine the systematic components of this heterogeneity. Consider the variation present in Nigeria, Gold Coast, and Kenya. Elites dominated councils in areas where many NTs coincided with a precolonial state: the Gold Coast (plurality on councils in 98% of NTs), Western Nigeria (79%), and Northern Nigeria (61%). By contrast, popularly selected members pervaded councils in stateless areas: Kenya (70%)

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[1]Similarly, almost every NA chief was a male, although the Hailey documents mention four chieftainesses: Tawana in Bechuanaland, Isoka in Northern Rhodesia, Kalolo in Nyasaland, and Unyanyembe in Tanganyika. Additional examples outside our statistical sample include female paramount chiefs in Mendeland in Sierra Leone (Day 2016) and a female warrant chief in Eastern Nigeria in the early twentieth century (Achebe 2011).

Table D.1: Summary Statistics for Composition of Councils

Colony	# NTs	Elite		Popular		Chief appointed		DO appointed	
		Any	Plurality	Any	Plurality	Any	Plurality	Any	Plurality
Nigeria	185	0.72	0.49	0.74	0.41	0.09	0.09	0.02	0.01
Eastern	85	0.71	0.34	1.00	0.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Northern	51	0.61	0.61	0.20	0.06	0.33	0.33	0.02	0.00
Western	39	0.92	0.79	0.79	0.21	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.00
Colony	10	0.70	0.00	1.00	0.90	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.10
Gold Coast	86	0.99	0.98	0.09	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.00
Tanganyika	32	0.63	0.56	0.28	0.19	0.19	0.13	0.19	0.13
N. Rhodesia	40	0.80	0.45	0.15	0.08	0.78	0.48	0.00	0.00
Kenya	23	0.00	0.00	0.91	0.70	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.30
Nyasaland	13	0.69	0.69	0.08	0.00	0.46	0.31	0.00	0.00
Uganda	13	1.00	0.23	0.92	0.69	0.31	0.08	0.69	0.00
High Comm.	11	0.18	0.09	1.00	0.82	0.09	0.09	0.00	0.00
Solo-chief NA	107	0.54	0.47	0.36	0.23	0.24	0.22	0.32	0.07
Other NA	296	0.80	0.59	0.56	0.32	0.14	0.08	0.03	0.01
Averages	**403**	**0.73**	**0.56**	**0.51**	**0.30**	**0.17**	**0.12**	**0.11**	**0.03**

Notes: The table presents the frequency of each type of council member, averaged across NTs. The top rows disaggregate by colony and the bottom rows by whether the NA was a solo chief or not. To calculate the composition of the council for each NT, we first coded whether each Native Authority had any and/or a plurality of such members, and then averaged these scores for any NT that contained multiple NAs. The sample size for each colony is smaller than in Table A.2 either because some NTs lacked a council or we lack information about its composition. We lack information about any of the councils in the Gambia.

and Eastern Nigeria (66%). Only in Northern Nigeria, which had many authoritarian emirates, did chiefs dominate many councils (33%). Finally, only in Kenya did British officials routinely influence the composition of the councils. Due to the nature of traditional authority structures, every Local Native Council contained at least one member appointed by the administration, and such members constituted the plurality on 30% of councils.[2] Even in this case, however, the councils often acted independently despite the presence of administration-appointed members. Most appointed members were local chiefs and council members frequently criticized official policy (Hailey 1950a, 95).

Replacing the proper nouns with variables and using our entire sample, we show in Table D.2 that differences in precolonial institutions correlate highly with the composition of councils. The following regression tables accompany the cross-tabular evidence shown in Table 4. In each column, the dependent variable indicates whether a plurality of members on a council belonged to a specified category.[3] For most outcomes, our clearest expectations are for non-state areas. The weakness of traditional authority figures in such areas should lead to fewer chief-appointed and elite members

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[2]In four cases, there were an equal number of DO-appointed and popularly elected members, and we coded DO appointments as the plurality because our sources suggest that elections were held to be of low importance in these areas.

[3]Except in Column 4. There are so few cases of DO-appointed plurality councils that we instead use the variable for any DO-appointed members.

and more popularly selected and DO-appointed members. Thus, most columns estimate NO PCS, leaving NTs with either type of state as the omitted reference category. The exception is that for chief-appointed members, we anticipate a difference between authoritarian and constrained states. The stronger prerogatives of chiefs in authoritarian PCS areas should yield more chief-appointed members in these areas compared to each of the other categories. Hence in Column 3, we estimate AUTHORITARIAN PCS.

We confirm these expectations in the table, in which we present a series of bivariate regressions. The following tables provide robustness checks. In Table D.3, we present the same sequence of specifications as in the preceding tables: controlling for colony fixed effects or controlling for various covariates. In Table D.4, we use an alternative procedure for distinguishing between elite and popular council members. The estimates are largely similar in the robustness tables.

Table D.2: Precolonial Correlates of Council Members

	DV: Elite	DV: Popular	DV: Chief appoint	DV: DO appoint (any)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
No PCS	-0.121**	0.201***		0.109***
	(0.0587)	(0.0460)		(0.0251)
Authoritarian PCS			0.312***	
			(0.0960)	
Intercept	0.651***	0.140***	0.0957***	0.0233
	(0.0515)	(0.0375)	(0.0152)	(0.0163)
NTs	403	403	403	403
Provinces	57	57	57	57
R-squared	0.010	0.032	0.059	0.021

Table D.3: Adding Covariates to Table D.2

Panel A. Colony FE

	DV: Elite	DV: Popular	DV: Chief appoint	DV: DO appoint
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
No PCS	-0.0700	0.265***		0.0288
	(0.0540)	(0.0397)		(0.0278)
Authoritarian PCS			0.369***	
			(0.0970)	
Intercept	0.00778	0.971***	0.000	-0.00320
	(0.00948)	(0.0281)	-	(0.00432)
NTs	403	403	403	403
Provinces	61	61	61	61
R-squared	0.289	0.323	0.267	0.656
Colony FE	✓	✓	✓	✓

Panel B. Covariates

	DV: Elite	DV: Popular	DV: Chief appoint	DV: DO appoint
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
No PCS	-0.206***	0.295***		0.139***
	(0.0605)	(0.0417)		(0.0322)
Authoritarian PCS			0.256**	
			(0.103)	
Population	-0.0837***	0.0349	0.0138	0.0697***
	(0.0278)	(0.0217)	(0.0189)	(0.0183)
Population density	0.00159	0.0762***	-0.0411***	-0.0206
	(0.0253)	(0.0218)	(0.0144)	(0.0184)
Value of cash crops	0.0716***	-0.0151	-0.0391**	0.00526
	(0.0240)	(0.0190)	(0.0166)	(0.0156)
% alienated land	0.0460**	-0.0783***	0.0186	0.0230
	(0.0213)	(0.0200)	(0.0135)	(0.0166)
Distance from rail line	0.0877***	-0.0667***	0.000697	-0.0370**
	(0.0276)	(0.0222)	(0.0161)	(0.0182)
Distance from capital	0.0353	-0.0645*	-0.00530	-0.0523**
	(0.0397)	(0.0351)	(0.0224)	(0.0264)
Distance from coastline	-0.0519*	0.0267	0.0423***	0.0452**
	(0.0265)	(0.0253)	(0.0135)	(0.0224)
Missionary station	-0.0715	0.0406	0.0750**	-0.0347
	(0.0545)	(0.0441)	(0.0360)	(0.0327)
Intercept	1.299***	-0.0383	-0.120	-0.488***
	(0.266)	(0.227)	(0.177)	(0.147)
NTs	367	367	367	367
Provinces	56	56	56	56
R-squared	0.118	0.231	0.178	0.155

Notes: Table D.2 presents the baseline models. In Panel A of the present table, we add colony fixed effects to every specification. In Panel B, we add the set of covariates to every specification.

Table D.4: Alternative Coding of Elite/Popular Council Members

	DV: Elite (alt.)			DV: Popular (alt.)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
No PCS	-0.252***	-0.224***	-0.310***	0.331***	0.420***	0.399***
	(0.0587)	(0.0522)	(0.0619)	(0.0479)	(0.0440)	(0.0451)
Population			-0.0732***			0.0244
			(0.0274)			(0.0223)
Population density			-0.00370			0.0815***
			(0.0242)			(0.0214)
Value of cash crops			0.0354			0.0211
			(0.0251)			(0.0210)
% alienated land			0.0977***			-0.130***
			(0.0221)			(0.0209)
Distance from rail line			0.0484*			-0.0274
			(0.0274)			(0.0229)
Distance from capital			-0.0105			-0.0186
			(0.0369)			(0.0331)
Distance from coastline			0.0237			-0.0490**
			(0.0247)			(0.0249)
Missionary station			-0.113**			0.0817*
			(0.0536)			(0.0445)
Intercept	0.640***	0.0249	1.239***	0.151***	0.953***	0.0220
	(0.0519)	(0.0242)	(0.258)	(0.0387)	(0.0442)	(0.220)
NTs	403	403	367	403	403	367
Provinces	57	57	56	57	57	56
R-squared	0.043	0.439	0.156	0.076	0.511	0.333
Colony FE		✓			✓	

Notes: For our main measure, either of the following two characteristics were sufficient to code a council member as an elite: the individual (a) gained a local title by hereditary means or (b) held an *ex officio* seat on the council, that is, the traditional title automatically qualified them for a seat on the council. We also coded an alternative version in which elite members must have gained their titles by hereditary means, and otherwise they are coded as popular members. In this table, we re-run the models from Tables D.2 and D.3 using these alternative versions of the elite and popular counselor variables.

D.3 PUBLIC EXPENDITURES

Differences in local institutions actually affected political outcomes, as we show that NAs that included councils spent a lower fraction of their budget on salaries for officials. To assess this, we compiled data on the public expenditures of NTs. Budgets recorded in colonial archives distinguish between expenditures on administration (which included the salaries of chiefs, counselors, and lower-level officials) and on public goods such as education, medical services, and road maintenance. Spending data for individual NTs is only sporadically available, and thus we can test this only for a single year for a subset of colonies. As a result, local spending has been neglected by research on the history of colonial fiscal systems.[4] This paper is one of the first to use data on the allocation of spending by individual Native Treasuries.

We provide more detail on the data before presenting the results. Data on spending by Native Treasuries was not reported consistently or in the same format across all colonial governments. Often, as in the Hailey reports (Hailey 1950*a*,*b*, 1951*a*,*b*, 1953), data are reported at a higher level of aggregation, either by district or province. We compiled estimates at the NT level from various sources listed below. Data were collected as close as possible to 1948, the year the Hailey surveys were conducted, but due to data constraints we were not able to obtain data for the same years for all colonies.

Categorizations of NT spending varied by colony. The most common categories were those used in the Gold Coast: Administration, Medical, Education, Works, Extraordinary, and Agriculture. The main items of spending under Administration were the salaries of chiefs, councillors, and other local officials. Nigeria had a more detailed disaggregation scheme that distinguished between central Native Treasury administration, district heads and village heads, as well as categories like Police, Judicial, Surveys, and Forestry. To make consistent comparisons across colonies, we collected data on administration as a share of total spending. For Nigeria, we included central administration, district heads, and village heads. We also added together works, medical, and education spending to create a combined measure of the share of expenditures on public goods.

Not all colonies reported spending in a format which we could use. Northern Rhodesia, for example, only distinguished personal emoluments from other spending. Although this would have allowed us to measure the amount spent on salaries as opposed to other forms of spending, we did not use it because the categorization was inconsistent with the others. Our sources are as follows, and Table D.5 provides summary statistics disaggregated by colony.

- Ghana: Gold Coast, *Report on Local Government Finance* (Accra, 1952).

- Kenya: Kenya, *Report on Native Affairs 1946-7* (Nairobi, 1947).

- Malawi: Nyasaland, *Report on Native Affairs and Administration* (Lilongwe, 1951).

- Nigeria: Eastern Provinces, *Native Financial Statements* (Lagos, 1940); Northern Provinces, *Native Treasury Estimates* (Lagos, 1940); Western Provinces, *Native Financial Statements* (Lagos, 1940).

- Tanzania: Hailey Surveys CO 1018/68-75.

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[4]As exceptions, Bolt and Gardner (2020) use revenue per capita as a measure of local government capacity and Gardner (2012) reports spending by Native Treasuries for select years in Kenya and Zambia.

Table D.5: Summary Statistics for NT Expenditures

Colony	# NTs	Administration	Medical/education/roads
Nigeria	155	0.22	0.30
Eastern	64	0.15	0.32
Northern	59	0.31	0.26
Western	32	0.22	0.32
Gold Coast	82	0.14	0.35
Tanganyika	47	0.52	0.30
Kenya	25	0.24	0.48
Nyasaland	16	0.48	n/a
Averages	**325**	**0.26**	**0.33**

Notes: The cells in the table present the average fraction of expenditures on either administration or medical/education/roads by NT, disaggregated by colony.

We expect NTs that lacked councils to spend a higher fraction of expenditures on administration, given the greater discretion for chiefs to reward themselves. Conversely, we expect lower expenditures on public goods. The role of councils in budgetary considerations was not a formal power laid out in the Native Authority Ordinances. However, the information from Hailey's surveys suggest that councils often influenced the budgeting process. In the Gold Coast, we have information on the budget-setting process for thirty-three of the eighty-seven NTs. The vast majority of these, thirty-one, report some form of council involvement in setting budget estimates. For example, in the Mampong district, "Preparatory drafts are now, in most cases, drawn up by Finance Boards and Area Committees. These are then discussed with the District Commissioner before being placed before the Chiefs. The final draft is approved at a full meeting of the Divisional or Sub-Divisional Council."[5]

To assess these expectations, we compare NT units composed primarily of solo-chief NAs to those whose NAs included councils.[6] Table D.6 contains six columns. The fraction of expenditures on administration is the dependent variable in the first three, and the fraction of total expenditures on education, medical care, and roads is the dependent variable in the last three. The sequence of columns for each outcome mirror those in Tables 2 and 3.

We confirm our expectation about expenditures on administration, but not for public good spending. In Column 1, we show that the fraction of the budget spent on administration was more than twice as high in NTs with solo chief-NAs, and this correlation is statistically significant in all specifications. However, the findings are null for public-good expenditures (except the specification with colony fixed effects). We speculate that administration is measured with less error than public goods. In addition to the expenditure categories included in the data we present, the colonial budget reports also include categories for agriculture and forestry that are not easy to interpret. For example, we do not know if investment in a borehole is public or on the chief's land. We also exclude extraordinary expenditures because they are lumpy, although anecdotal evidence suggests that Native Authorities often saved up across years for big projects like the construction of schools or clinics that, when realized, would constitute public goods.

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[5]Survey CO 1018/7.

[6]Specifically, we include an indicator for whether at least half of the NAs in a NT were solo chiefs.

Table D.6: Public Expenditures

	DV: Administration %			DV: Public goods %		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Solo-chief NA	0.211***	0.122***	0.167***	-0.00334	-0.0349**	-0.00340
	(0.0158)	(0.0165)	(0.0240)	(0.0155)	(0.0163)	(0.0195)
Population			0.0265***			-0.00584
			(0.00854)			(0.00873)
Population density			-0.0319***			0.0136*
			(0.00847)			(0.00807)
Value of cash crops			0.00491			0.00260
			(0.00794)			(0.00647)
% alienated land			-0.00436			0.00724**
			(0.00328)			(0.00286)
Distance from rail line			0.00375			0.00625
			(0.00941)			(0.00811)
Distance from capital			0.0152			-0.0333**
			(0.0144)			(0.0158)
Distance from coastline			-0.0163*			0.0214**
			(0.00936)			(0.00870)
Missionary station			0.0132			0.0194
			(0.0147)			(0.0141)
Intercept	0.178***	0.140***	-0.0607	0.329***	0.352***	0.456***
	(0.00912)	(0.00719)	(0.0790)	(0.00840)	(0.0137)	(0.0916)
NTs	325	325	309	309	309	293
Provinces	45	45	45	42	42	42
R-squared	0.370	0.620	0.434	0.000	0.178	0.084
Colony FE		✓			✓	

E ADDITIONAL CASES: SOUTH AFRICA, ZIMBABWE, AND SIERRA LEONE

The statistical sample we analyze in the paper includes eleven countries for which the Hailey books and archives provide extensive details on local institutions. Here we provide qualitative details on three additional cases for which our source lacks any, or sufficiently detailed, information at the local level: South Africa, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and Sierra Leone. Colonial historians and anthropologists have dedicated extensive attention to these cases, which enables us to consider in detail how they relate to our argument. The secondary sources on other British African colonies—Sudan, Somaliland, and Zanzibar—are more fragmentary, which makes it difficult to construct a systematic picture of their administration.[7]

Existing accounts do not convincingly explain these cases. Precolonial African polities in both South Africa and Zimbabwe exhibited strong executive constraints and various types of councils, contrary to the *precolonial authoritarianism* accounts described in the introduction. The large white settlements in these cases prompted European officials to rule more directly, which disrupted local precolonial institutions more than in the cases in our statistical sample. Yet for most of the colonial period, direct rule weakened precolonial rulers rather than empowered despotic local officials, contrary to the *colonial authoritarianism* accounts. Most dramatically, the largest and most powerful state in Zimbabwe, Ndebele, vanished as an institution during colonial rule. As in other colonies we have discussed, councils were often created to fill the institutional void. The picture changed somewhat after far-right parties gained power in South Africa (1948) and Zimbabwe (1962). In both cases, new policies emphasized the autonomy of African societies and bestowed renewed powers upon chiefs to counter nationalist sentiments. However, these cases departed from the standard template only after the establishment of autonomous and hardline white settler rule, and do not generalize to other parts of British Africa.

Sierra Leone, like most of the cases discussed in the paper, lacked a large white settlement. This case offers some support for the precolonial authoritarianism thesis. The larger precolonial states lacked strong executive constraints and institutionalized councils, like the Sokoto Caliphate and Buganda. However, in Sierra Leone, the constituent "countries" (see Abraham 2003) that comprised each larger state could check the power of ruling "big men" and "big women" by withdrawing their support. Local institutions persisted throughout the colonial period. The most obvious change during British rule was to weaken the ruling states. In the 1890s, the British created a precocious and independent model of indirect rule in which they broke up the system of larger states. The constituent countries became chieftaincies whose rulers were recognized as paramount chiefs (PCs) and whose local elites became ruling families from whom subsequent chiefs were chosen. Although other changes under British governance reduced constraints on chiefs, the bulk of the evidence from Sierra Leone rejects the colonial authoritarianism thesis.

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[7]However, the information we do have about these cases supports our main claim about precolonial institutions persisting throughout the colonial period. In Somaliland, the social and political organization of society has been based on clans in the post-independence period, and it is clear that these clans have deep historical roots. For example, Lewis (1961) documents the inability of British officials to levy taxation on the clans of Somaliland, which now has a senate that represents clan elders. In Zanzibar, the traditional sultan persisted throughout the colonial period.

E.1 SOUTH AFRICA

Precolonial political institutions. Contemporary South Africa consisted of several large cultural areas prior to European expansion and colonial rule. The Ngoni peoples were located in modern Natal and down into the Eastern Cape in the 19th century.[8] The most well known of the Ngoni groups are now the Xhosa, Swazis, and Zulus. The Sotho peoples were also important. Their descendants formed the modern states of Lesotho (Basotho peoples) and Botswana (Tswana peoples), and Sotho also spread east into the Transvaal, where the Pedi people resided. North of Johannesburg, the Venda and Tsonga made up two distinct cultural groups. Non-Bantu peoples, such as the Khoisan, were indigenous to the Cape.[9] While also acknowledging important differences, Schapera (1956, 208) observes, "All South African forms of government share certain basic features."

The predominant polity in the area was, in our terminology, a constrained state, which goes against precolonial authoritarianism accounts. Neither the Nguni nor Sotho peoples were ever unified politically, and they instead formed various chieftaincies. Some became quite large centralized states, particularly the Zulu, Swazi, and Basotho in the 19th century.[10] Hereditary chiefs governed these domains (Schapera 1937*a*, 174). Chiefs governed with, and were effectively constrained by, various types of councils. Although "the chief is the executive of his tribe ... he must always consult with his council, both private and public" (Schapera 1937*a*, 178). Schapera (1937*a*, 182–84) emphasizes that the council acted as a check on the chief and was "expected to warn and even reprimand him if he goes wrong." The inner council of a chief tended to be informal and was made up of elders, trusted advisors, and relatives. But the chief occasionally had to consult a "much wider, more formal council" that examined all the chief's decisions, which they could "freely discuss and criticize ... They may accept, modify or reject." Consequently, the popular council "exercises the greatest check upon his behaviour."[11] These councils were often so powerful that "[a]mong the Nguni, Shangana-Tsonga and Venda this council is in effect the governing body of the tribe."[12] Schapera concludes that in the Nguni and Sotho worlds, a chief was "very seldom absolute ruler and autocratic despot ... The existence of these councils greatly limits the Chief's

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[8]Our information is much better for the 19th century. Historian broadly agreed that large migrations and populations movements occurred through the early 19th century.

[9]We provide only a brief overview of the large literature on precolonial South Africa. The essays in Schapera (1937*b*), Hammond-Tooke (1959), and Thompson (1969) provide useful, if dated in many ways, overviews of the different cultural groups. Schapera (1956) is an incisive overview of many of the political systems. Soga (2013*b*,*a*) provides important overviews of the main Nguni groups, and Sheddick (1953) does so for the Southern Sotho peoples. Many important studies analyze specific peoples, polities, and their institutions, for example Beinart (1984) on the Mpondo of the Eastern Cape.

[10]See Duminy (1989) and Eldredge (2018) on the emergence of the Zulu state and Eldredge (2015) for a regional and comparative perspective.

[11]"His" with the exception of the famous kingdom of the Lovedu, which was ruled by a Rain Queen (Krige and Krige 1943).

[12]Lestrade (1930) and Stayt (1931) describe the traditional political system of the Venda, which differed in some ways from nearby polities. For example, Lestrade (1930, 311) points out when discussing the Venda chief that "greater stress is laid on the sacred as opposed to the secular character of [his] person." By contrast, "[a]mong the Cape Nguni and Southern Sotho the chief has comparatively little ritual significance" (Schapera 1956, 214).

actual exercise of his power." Schapera (1956, 144) reproduces the oft-quoted Tswana proverb, "A chief is chief by grace of his people." He compares this to the Tsonga version: "The elephant is the trunk," meaning "just as the elephant cannot seize anything without it's trunk, so the chief cannot do his work without his subjects."[13]

European administration before apartheid. Two facts about European governance prior to the onset of the apartheid regime go against colonial authoritarianism accounts. First, European rule was more direct than in the cases in our statistical sample. European magistrates and, later, Native Commissioners exercised executive authority at the local level. Greater European interference not only resulted in less institutional persistence (our predominant finding for the cases in our statistical sample), but also weakened the powers of chiefs. Second, laws regarding African affairs tended to focus more on councils than on chiefs.

European magistrates dominated the initial administration of the Cape Colony, which caused chiefs to "disappear as the recognized authority over the tribe" (Hailey 1957, 420). The Glen Grey Act 1894 changed this situation by implementing "a practical system of Local Government in Native areas" (Hailey 1957, 420). One key reform was to introduce District Councils, which continued to de-emphasize the role of chiefs. "Measures such as the Glen Grey Act fundamentally altered such vital matters as access to land and marginalized chiefs" (Evans 1997, 166). A contemporary administrator noted, "Many of the chiefs look upon councils as designed to supplant them" (Herbst 1930, 482). The councils were particularly developed in the Transkei, where the District Councils sent representatives to a general council, the Bunga. Yet these councils did not reproduce the precolonial councils mentioned above.[14] They were more like the innovations we described in the text in Kenya, and they covered areas much larger than precolonial polities.

Cape, Natal, Orange, and Transvaal were amalgamated into the Union of South Africa in 1910, which led the other regions to adopt policies similar to those in the Cape.[15] In 1920, a uniform

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[13]This assessment is overwhelmingly shared by the existing scholarly literature and standard textbooks. For example, Sansom (1959, 267) proclaims, "The traditional ruler faced his people or their representatives in the councils of the tribe or nation ... A ruler was, therefore answerable to his people." In Davenport's (2000, 46) characterization, "Chiefs had councils but these "were of various kinds, formal and informal ... All societies, even the Zulu in normal times, laid stress on the principle of government by discussion and consent. The pitso of the Sotho, the imbito (imbizo) of Nguni chiefdoms, the libandla of the Swazi ... provided a sounding-board for the ruler as he tried to determine the big issues of state." See also Hammond-Tooke (1969) and Davenport (1991).

[14]Some works, however, see some loose connections: "Bodies modeled to some extent on the old informal Council have been created and developed with a great amount of success in the Cape" (Brookes 1924, 252).

[15]In the pre-Union period, British administrators played a more important role in the colonies neighboring the Cape. In Natal, from 1850 onwards, the reforms of Theophilus Shepstone yielded a policy in which "newly appointed Chiefs had to be given jurisdiction" (Hailey 1957, 423) because many areas had no chiefs as a consequence of Zulu conquest. These "[c]hiefs exercised judicial powers, but were ...subject to the general control of the Magistrates" (Hailey 1957, 421). The general balance of the literature is that this period in Natal was a fairly textbook type of indirect rule though with quite intrusive colonial authority. By contrast, the Transvaal and Orange Free State republics more directly ruled Africans by appointing Native Commissioners (Hailey 1957, 425–26).

system of administration was created with the Native Affairs Act 23. It extended to the entire country the system of District Councils that had originated in the Cape under the Glen Grey Act. The membership was partially elected and partially appointed. The district Magistrate served as the head of the council, and the councils had broad powers to raise local rates to fund medical and educational services. "Each district council was composed of twelve members, of whom six were nominated by the magistrate and six were elected by Africans, subject to the magistrate's approval" (Evans 1997, 185).

Later reforms granted some powers to chiefs, albeit very limited relative to Native Authorities elsewhere in British Africa. The Native Affairs Act of 1920 was greatly augmented in 1927 by the Native Administration Act. The Act "made some concession to ...the principle of using Native Authorities as part of the machinery of rule. It not only provided for the appointment of Chiefs and Headmen but gave them some measure of executive authority" (Hailey 1957, 428). In principle, the appointed chiefs had to have traditional authority. The Act states, "As a rule chieftainship ...vests in a particular family and the person who is entitled under Native custom to the office is appointed to the position" (Rogers 1949, 12). Yet the powers of chiefs were nonetheless limited. The main reform in the 1927 Act was to appoint Native Commissioners, whose primary duty was to "exercise control over and supervision of the Native people for their general and individual welfare" (Rogers 1949, 9). The Native Commissioners and their deputies were authorized to "collect taxes due and payable by Natives" and to "exercise such civil and criminal jurisdiction as may be conferred upon them, and shall carry out all laws and regulations applying to Natives" (Rogers 1949, 9). Chiefs merely "render[ed] assistance in tax collection" (Rogers 1949, 13) and "had no judicial powers unless these were expressly conferred, and it was mainly in Natal that such powers were given" (Hailey 1957, 428).

Overall, European governance of rural Africa was undoubtedly more direct than in the cases from our statistical sample, even if scholars disagree about how this system worked in practice and about the extent to which the councils wielded authority.[16] The 1927 legislation restored some power to chiefs, yet they continued to lack powers common elsewhere for chiefs in British Africa.

Native governance under apartheid. In 1948, the National Party gained power and began to implement intensive apartheid policies. Scholars concur that European governance changed radi-

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[16]Hailey (1957) contends that "the Council system, while providing for a measure of Local Government, has been largely a projection of the system of magisterial rule" (426). Nonetheless, Africans could clearly exercise some authority in the District Councils, and "powers of a somewhat similar character [as Native Commissioners in South Africa] have been exercised by the Executive in many of the British dependencies" (432). Evans' view is, "State policy condensed all the authority of the central state in the local Native Commissioners, bestowing upon them with considerable power to demand the submission of Africans in the reserves" (Evans 1997, 163). Later he concludes, "The council system, which formed the basis of local government in the Transkeian territories, is perhaps best viewed as a parallel but subordinate institution to magisterial authority" (Evans 1997, 184). See also Perham (1934) on direct rule policies, Dubow (1989) on the evolution of local administration in this period, and Hammond-Tooke (1975) and Ntsebeza (2005) for case studies set in the Eastern Cape.

cally,[17] and in a manner more consistent with colonial authoritarianism accounts.[18]

The centerpiece policy for administering Africans was the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, which was "an attempt to restructure the government of the reserves on more traditional lines, but in practice came to mean the establishment of a system of indirect rule through the medium of subservient . . . chiefs" (Davenport 1991, 347). Hailey pointed out that the 1951 Act "has assigned to the chiefs a role which . . . had not previously been regarded in the Union as appropriate to them—namely, as chairman of Native Councils entrusted with the expenditure of funds for local services" (Hailey 1957, 430). This Act began the transition towards the separate ethnic homelands, or Bantustans, that the Apartheid government would start to make self-governing in the 1960s (following the Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959). The 1951 Act also sidelined or disbanded the previous councils. In 1955, the Bunga (general council) of the Transkei disappeared and was replaced by "a bastardized mimicry of tribal government in pre-conquest society." The act "introduced a pyramidical structure composed of three levels, with each level controlled by chiefs and headmen: a single Transkeian Territorial Authority to replace the Bunga, with a Paramount Chief instead of the (white) Magistrate" and "numerous Tribal Authorities would form the base of the entire edifice" (Evans 1997, 250). "Closing down the Ciskei bunga and finding chiefs to place in charge of people accustomed to elected representatives meant silencing the voices of respected, educated men and riding roughshod over the wishes of ordinary people" (Mager and Mulaudzi 2011, 394). Many studies emphasize the extent to which the apartheid state manipulated "tradition." For example, "The Bantu Authorities Act augmented the powers of the chiefs and headmen. In some instances, the act necessitated creating chiefs and tribal affiliations where none existed or where their authority had collapsed" (Mager and Mulaudzi 2011, 389).

The 1951 Act and the new strategy by the National Party government seems to have created clear instances of the type of "decentralized despotism" that Mamdani (1996) highlighted. Unlike typical British colonies, the goal was identify local leaders who could suppress nationalist agitations by younger and more educated individuals. Kaiser Matazima is a famous example. In 1963, self-government was given to the Transkei with a legislature organized to give chiefs a majority and to elect the Chief Kaiser Matazima, Pretoria's favored candidate, as premier (Davenport 1991, 362–63). The rise of chief Mangosutho Buthelezi in KwaZulu is another notorious case (Mare and Hamilton 1987).[19] Yet the case of Buthelezi is also notable because it coincided with the sidelining of his cousin, the Zulu king, which contrasts with the pattern elsewhere of favoring traditional royal lineages. Consequently, Buthelezi "prevented the royalist lobby from securing an executive king" (Mager and Mulaudzi 2011). Nevertheless, below the king, numerous cases support the contention that the 1951 Act allowed chiefs to take control in way which they had not done previously, and "it was only through an alliance with segregationists and the forces of state and capital that Zulu

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[17]See Posel (2011) for an up-to-date overview of this project and the historiography.

[18]Africans contested the administrative transition and the intensification of apartheid, which is well-covered in the academic literature. Mager and Mulaudzi (2011) provide an overview and discussion of the historiography, and Beinart and Bundy (1980) provide an earlier discussion. Seminal studies are that of Delius (1997) in Pediland, with the Pondoland uprising in the 1950s being perhaps the most famous instance, discussed by Mbeki (1964). See also Kepe and Ntsebeza (2011) and Kelly (2015) for nuanced discussions.

[19]Murray (1992) presents case studies from the Orange Free State.

chiefs secured their control of the reserve political economy" (MacKinnon 2001, 590).[20]

Nevertheless, we reiterate that whatever the support for colonial authoritarianism accounts, these developments occurred nearly four decades after South Africa gained dominion status. It is unclear how to compare the political project of the National Party to British colonialism, given the vastly different goals and constraints faced by European policymakers.

E.2   ZIMBABWE (SOUTHERN RHODESIA)

Precolonial political institutions.   Prior to the colonial period, Zimbabwe was primarily divided into two large cultural areas, Matabeleland in the west and Mashonaland to the east. In the 19th century, Matabeleland was united politically under the guise of the Ndebele state, which was a product of a great migration from South Africa in the 1830s. Chief Mzilikazi, originally an ally of the powerful Zulu king Shaka, fell out and migrated north with his followers, eventually settling around Bulawayo (Omer-Cooper 1978). Along the way, he incorporated many peoples, similar to the creation of the Ngoni "snowball" state in Malawi (Barnes 1954).[21] Mashonaland was far less uniform. In fact, the notion of being 'shona' seems to have emerged only in the colonial period. What became Mashonaland was united by broad cultural and linguistic features and was the residue of different local polities: Karanga, Mutapa, or Rozvi (Mazarire 2009; Holleman 1951).

We characterize Ndebele as a constrained state, which is inconsistent with precolonial authoritarianism accounts. The political institutions of the Ngoni resembled those we discussed for precolonial South Africa, given their shared origins. Descendants of Mzilikazi created a line of hereditary kings that governed the Ndebele state. One of his sons, Lobengula, was king at the time of the invasion of the British South Africa Company in 1890. Beneath the king was a hierarchy of councils and administrative positions. For example, "Assisting the king was a hierarchy of the three great councillors of the nation, and of two councils, the *izikulu* and the *umpakati*" (Kuper and van Velsen 1954, 64). The state was divided into provinces, which were themselves divided into regiments that were each based in a "town" with a system of chiefs and "a sort of 'town council'" (Kuper and van Velsen 1954, 65).

The Shona peoples, who we do not categorize as a precolonial state, were divided into many different polities but appeared to have shared some important characteristics.[22] "The tribe under the hereditary chief is the widest functioning political unit," and Shona tribes "appear to have no formal councils comparable to those of the South-Eastern Bantu" (Kuper and van Velsen 1954, 28–29). Nevertheless, there were important executive constraints. "The chief, however, is assisted and to a large extent controlled by the heads of wards and villages and by a panel of personal advisers" (Kuper and van Velsen 1954, 28–29). Chiefs were also constrained by spirit mediums who played important religious but also political roles. Bucher (1980, 37) notes, "A chief in whose area a powerful spirit medium resides has to be careful to avoid incurring negative sanctions of the

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[20]Parcells (2018) is an interesting study of the impact of the 1951 Act on Zulu chiefs.

[21]Kuper and van Velsen (1954, 47-53) provides a condensed history of the migration and founding of the Ndebele state in Zimbabwe.

[22]Beach (1980) and Beach (1994) are seminal overviews of Shona history and society; see also Holleman (1951).

territorial spirit for disobeying his orders," and spirit mediums intermediated between the people and chiefs (Garbett 1969).

Colonial administration.   The patterns of governance in Southern Rhodesia were similar to those just described in South Africa. Prior to the rise of the National Front in 1962, direct rule by white settlers suppressed the powers of chiefs, who had to compete with councils in the limited domain for local autonomy exercised by Africans. The empowerment of chiefs began only after 1962, and was largely ineffective at containing nationalist agitations. Overall, the evidence is at best weakly supportive of the colonial authoritarianism thesis, and even then only after whites had established de facto independence.

Until 1923, Zimbabwe was governed by the British South Africa Company, and became self-governing afterwards. This gave the local white settlers a degree of autonomy from the British government and Colonial Office over the design of political institutions that did not exist in most British African colonies. The country was divided into provinces, each of which was divided into six or eight districts (Weinrich 1972, 5). These "native districts, [had] a Commissioner in each, and subdivisions where necessary" (Jollie 1935, 975). These districts did not conform in a simple way into precolonial polities, and sometimes cut across them (Hughes 1974, 16). Underneath the districts were chiefdoms. In 1974, there were 252 of these units led by government-recognized chiefs (Hughes 1974, 16).

The autonomous settler government rejected the model of indirect rule prevalent in British Africa. The likely reason was that the white government wanted greater control over the African population to force them to work on the white-owned farms. As Howman, a senior administrator in the Ministry of Native Affairs, put it, "There was no building up of 'native authorities,' no 'tribal treasuries,' no reconstruction of 'native courts' with criminal jurisdiction, and the masses of thought and action necessary to implement such ideas" (Howman 1959, 133). A contemporary commentator stated, "We do not envisage building up native States within our State; we are not trying to preserve a social system which is obsolete and inefficient in a modern world" (Jollie 1935, 982). Writing later, Hughes was adamant that "Rhodesia never adopted the theory of 'indirect rule'" like the colonies administered by the British Colonial Service (Hughes 1974, 124). More recent scholarship concurs with these assessments. For example, Karekwaivanane (2017, 47) noted how Southern Rhodesia contrasted with "other British colonies in Africa which adopted 'Indirect Rule' in the 1920s and 1930s." Alexander even directly compares the nature of administration in Zimbabwe in this period to Mamdani's thesis, concluding that it was "a far cry from a system of 'indirect rule' on the model propounded by Mahmood Mamdani" (Alexander 2006, 22).

The destruction of the Ndebele kingdom provides the clearest example of how Rhodesian settlers approached governance over Africans differently than in most British colonies. Elsewhere, large and more institutionalized states such as the Sokoto Caliphate and Buganda facilitated indirect rule. In Zimbabwe, the opposite happened. After the Second Matabele War in 1896,[23] the state was destroyed institutionally. Kuper and van Velsen (1954, 18) note that "no Ndebele king was recognized in place of Lobengula and the Government refused to permit any resurgence of a strong

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[23]This was known as the First Chimurenga in Zimbabwe; see Ranger (1967) for a seminal analysis.

centralized kingship. Instead, many subsidized chieftainships were established. Shona and Ndebele were put on the same footing, and the chiefs (Shona and Ndebele) were permitted to exercise limited jurisdiction under the control of Native Commissioners." Writing in the 1950s, they conclude, "Today there is no distinct central authority for Ndebeleland as such. The kingship is no longer recognized" (Kuper and van Velsen 1954, 69). The same situation holds true today.

Rather than relying on Africans for local governance, provincial and district commissioners were the primary administrators in native areas (Weinrich 1972, 5). "The native commissioners' authority extended over the whole economic and political life of the African people. The most important powers which the African chiefs had traditionally exercised were transferred to native commissioners." Native commissioners were in charge of land allocation, settlement, cattle permits, labour procurement for European settlers, and contact with missionaries and businessmen (Weinrich 1972, 10). Moreover, "The extensive powers granted to native commissioners were intended to limit the influence of chiefs among their people and to make Africans directly dependent on European administrators" (Weinrich 1972, 11). Weinrich's assessment that "The real rulers of tribal trust lands are not chiefs but European bureaucrats" (Weinrich 1972, 165), and that the heightened power of white officials tended to reduce the power of chiefs, is standard in the literature. A typical assessment is that the tribal authority "found itself permanently crippled by the loss of its two principal sources of power: the secular custody of the land and the right to punish criminals . . . It was only in the 1960s, under entirely different and for them immeasurably more difficult circumstances, that chiefs and headmen were again officially given some use of these powers" (Holleman 1969, 17). Kuper and van Velsen (1954, 69) conclude in 1954 that "rule is still fairly direct."

The initial institutionalization of local government came with the Native Affairs Ordinance of 1910. This act defined the role of chiefs, who were given limited authority to assist with the collection of taxation and as constables. Chiefs had no judicial powers until 1937 and then were not given jurisdiction over criminal cases (Hailey 1957, 441). With the 1927 Native Affairs Act, the responsibilities of chiefs were increased, as with the 1927 Act in South Africa. However, their powers seem to have been fewer in practice than in South Africa. Hailey comments, "In the present practice the use made of chiefs varies widely, but is largely of an informal character" (Hailey 1957, 441).

A system of councils, mirrored roughly on South Africa, was also adopted. In 1923, the sentiment was to "let the chiefs and headmen, with a few more natives elected by the heads of kraals and a few nominated by the Government, be constituted a Council" (Annual 1923, 89). In 1930, Advisory Boards for the local administration were constituted with an equal number of elected members and of chiefs and headmen, with the Native Commissioners as chairmen. These boards were given no power, however. They were replaced by councils in 1937 with the passage of the Native Councils Act. This established Councils in the Native Reserves consisting of Chiefs or Headmen, other Africans approved by the Governor and elected by the people, and the Native Commissioner as chairman (Hailey 1957, 442; Weinrich 1972, 14). The councillors were elected "by the inhabitants, men and women," of the area. "The method of election is left to the people" and can range from a preference for traditional leaders to a group acclamation or a secret ballot (Howman 1959, 135). Yet these councils lacked powers typical of Native Authorities elsewhere in British Africa. Even after 1937, "This was not a recipe for the creation of powerful 'native authorities': chiefs had no budgets, no trained staff, no criminal jurisdiction in their courts, no law

making authority" (Alexander 2006, 23). The 1937 act was superseded by the African Councils Act of 1957, largely the work of Howman (Alexander 2006), which increased the powers of the councils. Chiefs and headmen were *ex officio* members.

In 1962, the Rhodesian Front (RF) came to power. Ian Smith led the party with an explicit agenda to declare independence. This marked the rise of a more apartheid-type regime and the RF government adopted a similar strategy to the South African National Party for governing Africans. They attempted to increase the powers of chiefs as a tool for controlling nationalism. Weinrich notes, "One act after another was passed by parliament to increase their power" (Weinrich 1972). These included the 1967 Tribal Trust Land Act which returned to the chiefs the power to allocate land to their subjects and the 1969 African Law and Tribal Courts Act which greatly strengthened their judicial powers extending them to include criminal cases (see Chapter 4 of Karekwaivanane 2017). In 1973, it was stated in parliament, "Government regards chieftainship as the traditional local government . . . he (the Chief and his various 'councils') is the development authority . . . it is desirable to bring the chiefs more fully into the administrative structure of the local government machine" (Hughes 1974, 129). The consensus of the academic literature, however, is that in the face of mounting national mobilization and eventually an armed insurgency, these policies were a failure. Alexander sums them up by stating, "The Rhodesian state did not 'win' the struggle for chiefs' allegiance and it transformed the chieftaincy into neither an effective instrument of control nor a legitimating stamp for settler rule" (Alexander 2006, 84).

A reasonable summary of this secondary literature offers limited support for colonial authoritarianism accounts. Instead of Native Authorities found elsewhere in British Africa, native administration involved a combination of district commissioners, chiefs, and councils in each local area. District commissioners had authority over the most important issues—land and criminal law—and the power to override the chiefs and councils. Chiefs retained a limited amount of authority over "traditional" issues, such as civil disputes, but were generally not used by the administration until the 1960s. Councils, consisting of a combination of elected and nominated officials and traditional chiefs, were created to oversee public services and other administrative issues. However, they lacked local legitimacy and only began to have access to resources by the 1940s and after the 1957 Act.

E.3   SIERRA LEONE

Precolonial political institutions.   For our purposes, the colonial era in Sierra Leone began when Britain declared a Protectorate over the interior in 1896. Previously, a colony had existed in Freetown since 1806, and residents of Sierra Leone engaged in centuries of trading relations with Europe. As a consequence, institutions had certainly changed as a result of trade, especially the slave trade. Nevertheless, our the main empirical questions concern the impact of colonialism on institutions as they stood prior to British governance. Therefore, we characterize political institutions in the 19th century in the interior of Sierra Leone. We discuss Mendeland in the south and Temneland in the north, the two areas for which we have the most detailed information about institutional history.[24] These areas offer mixed evidence for the precolonial authoritarianism the-

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[24]For Mendeland, Abraham (2003) reconstructs the state system as it existed in the middle of the century (see also Little 1951). Jones (1979, 1983) provides a uniquely detailed history of the Galinhas state on

sis. Although leaders were checked in some important ways, constraints were less institutionalized than in many precolonial African states.

In Mendeland, Abraham (2003) identifies nine distinct larger states. All were weakly institutionalized and lacked a central administration. Instead, they were a loose amalgam of lower polities, what he calls the "countries." The larger states were recent creations by charismatic "big men" (and one "big woman," Madam Yoko) and were held together by expedience and patronage (e.g., Galinhas/Vai state under Siaka and Mana) or charisma (e.g., Luawa state under Kai Londo). Higher kings consulted with lower chiefs, but there do not seem to have been more formal councils as with the Nguni and Sotho peoples. There were other constraints, such as the Poro Society, which was a secret society which spanned the entire country. At the level of the states, there was a lack of an established hereditary principle for choosing rulers, though as we will see, hereditary succession occurred nonetheless.

In the Galinhas area in the eighteenth century,[25] "it seems improbable that any ruler controlled more than a handful of towns" (Jones 1979, 246). The first written description of the system of government in Galinhas dates back to 1796. The slave trader Dalton gave an oral account to Governor Macaulay, who noted

> "This [the Vai] Country is divided into a great many towns or districts, each of which has a voice by a delegate in a congress which assembles for the purpose of regulating the affairs of the Kingdom. These also elect a King who becomes their organ and who is invested with unlimited power to execute their resolves, but he cannot go beyond these" (Jones 1979, 188-9).

The sources paint a picture of a bottom-up federation with a "minister ... who in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would have been called the speaker ... who announced the decisions and judgements ... of the king in his absence" (Jones 1979, 192).

In the 19th century, King Siaka centralized the Galinhas polities. He was a newcomer to the area and probably managed to take control over trade, particularly the slave trade. As late as 1808, he was just one of numerous competing chiefs. By the 1830s, however, chiefs of different sections (countries) came together at his capital of Gendema to consider "legislation" that would apply to all of them and to resolve disputes. Siaka's power stemmed from several sources. In addition warfare and selling slaves, he pursued a strategy of fostering kinship ties by marrying (him and his son Mana) into elite families in Sakrim, Bari, Soro, Perri, Kpanga, and Tewa. In 1853, Mana succeeded Siaka. Mana died in 1872 and was succeeded by his brother Jaia. The state fell into civil war and Jaia was killed in 1884, just prior to the formalization of British control over the interior. Overall, starting in the early 19th century, "Siaka managed to create a sort of confederation, in

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the border with Liberia; and see Hollins (1929) and Wylie (1969) for the Luawa state. For Temneland, we rely primarily on Dorjahn (1960), Ijagbemi (1968), Howard (1972), Wylie (1977), and Bangura (2017). Many standard works, such as McCulloch (1950), claim to present evidence on all of Sierra Leone but, in effect, have information only on the Mende and Temne. Useful evidence on the Limba is contained in Finnegan (1965), Fyle (1979*a*), and Fanthorpe (1965); and Fyle (1979*b*) discusses the Yalunka. However, little systematic evidence exists about precolonial institutions of other groups, such as the Kono or Susu (although see tangential references in Wylie 1977).

[25]Note that Galinhas is often spelled Gallinas, and is alternatively referred to as Vai.

which chiefs of different sections occasionally came together to agree on legislation which would apply to them all and to hear disputes affecting the different sections. Dalton's account from 1796 demonstrates that this was not a totally new arrangement. However, in Siaka's reign, the scale was larger and the position of the king more important" (Jones 1979, 246).

Northeast of the Galhinas state, Kai Londo ruled the Luawa state in the second half of the 19th century.

> "He ruled with a heavy hand. He was so powerful and his intelligence network so efficient, that nothing of consequence occurred without coming to his ears ... he was hardly merciful to his enemies; on the contrary, he was ruthless with them and understandably so. He could have inspired love in the people he defended, but in the ordinary people, he seems to have inspired more fear and terror than love. Above all, Kai had many personal slaves" (Abraham 2003, 94).

Despite some gains in centralization during the 19th century, neither the Galinhas or Luawa states were very institutionalized. Jones (1979, 412–13) argues that "Neither Siaka nor Mana can be said to have formed a bureaucracy or hierarchy of officials to administer their kingdom: even at its peak, Galinhas was little more than a confederation held together by respect for a particular chief and by common economic interests." He also notes

> "The traditional territorial unit throughout this area ... was merely a group of towns linked by kinship and historical ties and ruled by a landowner. Occasionally a war chief unattached to a particular descent group might bring together several clans under his rule; but his control never became institutionalized, because the religious power of the ancestors (represented by the Poro) could be turned against him" (Jones 1979, 245).

Here Jones identifies the Poro Society as a significant constraint on executive power. This political society for men, along with the Bundu and Sande societies for women, stretched across Sierra Leone. It was highly important politically as a check on the power of chiefs and as a supra-chieftaincy institution that linked not just Mendeland, but the whole of Sierra Leone (see Little 1965*a*,*b* on the political importance of the Poro). Chiefs were members, but "it does not follow that they govern or influence the concerned action of the Poro," which "can act independently of the chiefs" (Goddard 1945, 31; see Warren 1926 for an early colonial view).

As another constraint on the executive, rulership of larger states such as Galinhas and Luawa was not based on a deep hereditary ideology. Instead, Siaka and Kai Londo became kings because of personal achievements; that is, they were "big men." Abraham (2003, 74) notes that in choosing a precolonial chief, "The election was carried out after due consultation with the country and provincial chiefs and the 'Big Men' or 'elders.'" Similarly, in Gaura, another large state that emerged in the 19th century, he describes: "the people of Gaura were still mourning the death of their late king Gbatekaka when the Governor asked them to elect a successor. Meetings were then held by the sub-chiefs and leading men to come to a unanimous decision." It seems that Hollins (1928, 26) is discussing this level of governance when he says about Mende chiefs that "it may be confidently stated that a Mende chief is not a despot, but a constitutional ruler—custom rather than strict law framing the constitution. Custom forbids him certain acts and insists that in an important matter he should only act after consultation with his 'big men.'" Nonetheless, in Galinhas, hereditary

succession occurred in practice; Siaka was succeeded by two of his sons.

The hereditary principle was more established at the lower level of "countries." Hollins (1928, 28) noted in the 1920s, "The office of chief in Mende country is usually regarded as the property of the family of the traditional founder," suggesting a hereditary principle. While discussing precolonial Mende political institutions, McCulloch (1950, 16) reports, "In former days the position of *ndomahei* [paramount chief] followed in direct line of descent from the founder of the chiefdom." Further, "The Chief was formerly assisted by an advisory council as today in chiefdoms still run under the old system . . . As these persons were often members of the Chief's kin group, his power was more or less autocratic" (McCulloch 1950, 17).

Overall, the sources paint a mixed picture, which is perhaps inevitable because of heterogeneity within Mendeland, a cultural area that lacked a single centralized polity. Evidence for councils is missing at the level of the more aggregated state, but is present in the lower-level countries. However, even these seem to have been largely informal and not as broadly representative as the types of councils we saw with the Nguni or Sotho peoples of southern Africa, or indeed many cases discussed in the text such as in southern Nigeria.

In Temneland, the situation was similar. Many traditional polities governed by hereditary rulers were, in the 19th century, absorbed into larger states. The main difference was that invasions influenced the creation of larger states. The countries in Temneland were coerced into joining larger entities, whereas in Mendeland the larger polities emerged through a more cooperative process.

In Port Loko, Wylie (1977, 33) notes that "the chief was chosen from among the candidates of a royal patrician . . . He held office for life." He was "selected from among eligible candidates by certain of the titled sub-chiefs." But elsewhere, there appear to have been multiple families with the right to advance candidates. McCulloch (1950, 61) says, "The Paramount Chief is chosen from among the oldest suitable male member of the ruling house or houses, i.e., the kin group that traces descent from the first settlers of the chiefdom." McCulloch emphasizes the possibility that several families will have legitimate claims (see also Biyi 1913 and Thomas 1916 and the discussion in Dorjahn 1960, 126-8). As in Mendeland, chiefs had relatively informal councils composed of the sub-chiefs, and a speaker who came from a particular family and section chiefs (McCulloch 1950, 63-64).

In the 19th century, most of Temneland was challenged militarily and larger polities emerged. Wylie documents how Moriba Kindo emerged as a *santigi*, a Muslim title for a town chief. By 1816, he had set himself up as king of Port Loko with a new title of *Alkali*. Previously, independent chiefs were integrated into Moriba's state with the title of *almami* and were appointed by him. The type of state that emerged was clearly more centralized than in Mendeland. Referring to the authority of kings under new model, Wylie notes that "the traditional checks on his power might be gradually undermined, if not wholly subverted" (Wylie 1977, 171). Nevertheless, the picture is complicated. There was clearly a lot of heterogeneity, and some parts of Temneland better preserved their previous institutions (Dorjahn 1960).

Colonial administration. Under British rule, the main pattern is institutional persistence. The most obvious change from British rule was to weaken the ruling states. In the 1890s, the British

created a precocious and independent model of indirect rule in which they broke up the system of larger states. The constituent countries became chieftaincies whose rulers were recognized as paramount chiefs (PCs) and whose local elites became ruling families from whom subsequent chiefs were chosen. Although other changes under British governance reduced constraints on chiefs, the bulk of the evidence from Sierra Leone rejects the colonial authoritarianism thesis.

Colonial administration spread into the interior of Sierra Leone gradually in the 19th century as British officials signed numerous treaties with African rulers. In 1896, Britain declared a Protectorate and incorporated African rulers as paramount chiefs (PCs) into a system of chieftaincies (Abraham 1979). This system of indirect rule emerged not as the outcome of a political philosophy on the lines later developed by Lord Lugard in Nigeria, but instead because this arrangement reflected the equilibrium balance of power. British officials deemed it not possible to do anything else. Harris (2014) discusses various proposals to take over the interior (see also Fyfe 1964, 13-15). Influential Krio intellectuals such as Sir Samuel Lewis and J.C.E. Parkes discussed similar plans.[26] Despite in principle favoring a governance structure akin to direct rule, they recognized the likelihood of destabilizing consequences and of other difficulties (Fyfe 1964, 196, 259; Wylie 1977, 181).

After the British annexed the interior, they recognized individual elites in each lower-level country unit as elites of the new chieftaincies. In the south, this resulted in the fragmentation of the Mende state system. Comparing Abraham's (2003, 70) reconstruction of pre-existing states to the contemporary paramount chieftaincies reveals that the paramount chieftaincies were much smaller. The paramount chieftaincies that map onto precolonial states, such as Galinhas, Banta, Bumpeh, and Tikongoh, were much reduced compared to the states that preceded them. The precolonial Kpaa-Mende state illustrates this pattern of fragmentation (see the map in Abraham 2003, 136). Here, a group of pre-existing countries with well-defined rulers united loosely in the 19th century into the bigger Kpaa-Mende state. As Abraham (2003, 71) describes

> A number of provinces with a distinct historical, geo-political or cultural identity formed what might be called a 'country,' ruled by a country chief, which was generally recognized as a chiefdom during the colonial period. ... The identities of these countries were forged in more peaceful times in their history, and long pre-dated the war era [second half of the 19th century] ... the tier above this comprising a number of countries, may be labelled the state proper, over which a king ruled.

In 1896, the British recognized these country chiefs as paramount chiefs alongside the local elites whom they recognized as "ruling families" (Fenton 1932, 3 calls them "crowning houses"). There is an almost one-to-one mapping between the 19th century countries that collectively formed the Kpaa-Mende state and modern chieftaincies in the Moyamba district.

In the institution that subsequently emerged, PCs were elected for life by the Tribal Authority (TA) and only members of the designated ruling families were eligible. This system remains today. Historically, the TA comprised elites and elders. The system is more democratic today because there is one member of the TA for every twenty taxpayers in the chieftaincy. Nevertheless, this

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[26]Krio refers to the Creole peoples of Freetown. They descended from many different African groups, but had formed a distinct culture and identity by the late 19th century.

only determines the number of members of the TA, and the specific individuals are appointed by the likes of elites, elders, and local counselors. When the sitting PC dies, an election is held. Anyone from a ruling house can run and the electors are members of the Tribal Authority. Fenton (1932, 5) describes the system as follows

> The Tribal Authority is defined as the Paramount Chief and his councilors and men of note, or sub-chiefs and their councilors and men of note ... one might expect the average chiefdom to have a TA of between thirty and forty persons.

The system of chieftaincies did not become institutionalized until the 1930s. In 1937, systematic Ordinances defined the powers of chiefs as Native Authorities with Native Treasuries (Hailey 1957, 534). Earlier, Goddard (1926, 83) noted, "The chiefs are territorial rulers and have jurisdiction, derived from their former pure native jurisdiction and confirmed by the Government." According to Hailey (1957, 534), "Previous Ordinances ... had not gone farther than to lay down the general principle that local administration should be carried on through Chiefs." Overall, it does not seem that much changed in practice, and this trend was strengthened by the fact that the British allowed the PCs to decide whether to opt into the new system. It took over a decade before they all did so (Kilson 1966, 29). British officials applied Native Authority labels to local officials in Sierra Leone that resembled those used elsewhere in British Africa, but this seems to have simply formalized a system that already existed.

This system yielded a high degree of institutional persistence in the lower-level countries. Many, although not all, changes lessened the authoritarian powers of rulers. Colonial PCs were weaker than precolonial big men in several clear ways. First, they controlled far less territory and fewer people. Second, they seem to have been much less rich. Consider, for example, Siaka's successor and son Mana. "As the supreme political authority, he owned the largest number of slaves; and he was widely thought to have about 500 wives" (Jones 1979, 313). Third, slavery—clearly a large source of wealth of kings like Siaka and Mana—was abolished in 1927 (Grace 1975). Fourth, precolonial rulers had independent large armies of "war boys" (Fenton 1932, 3), which vanished after 1896 (see Alldridge 1910, 174 for a photograph of a contemporary Mende village surrounded by fortifications, or "war fences").

Moreover, even with the more rigid system of ruling families, many precolonial constraints persisted. This included not only the Poro society, but also the system of landowning families. Most chieftaincies in Sierra Leone have histories in which various families claim ownership stemming from the original occupation. The creation of colonial chieftaincies did not disrupt the strength of these families.

> "A chief holds land just as any individual does—that is, he has his share in the land belonging to his family. As regards all other lands in the chiefdom, he is the guardian of the rights of the different families ... owning these lands. ... In none of the districts of the Protectorate is there any evidence that any land was set aside for the office of chief" (Goddard 1926, 88, 89).[27]

Councils also persisted in the same form, albeit relatively weak and informal, in which they existed in the 19th century. Prior to the institutionalization of the TA, PCs had "a Council of the

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[27]See also McCulloch (1950, 27).

form recognized by local custom . . . The membership of the Council depended in practice partly on selection by the Chief, but they were seldom a formally constituted body, and often consisted only of members of the Chief's family" (Hailey 1957, 534). This assessment resembles that of McCulloch (1950, 17) for the precolonial era, who additionally contends, "Under the Native Administration system the council has been placed on a wider basis." Unlike in many places we have analyzed in this paper, for example Eastern Nigeria or Kenya, Sierra Leone did not have a system of formally gazetted councils until the 1940s and 1950s, and even then they were dominated by the PCs. But precolonial chieftaincies either in Mendeland or Temneland, as we have seen, do not seem to have had a formal council either. The available accounts suggests that the TA was in fact closely modeled on precolonial institutions.

In contrast to the many ways in which changes under colonialism reduced the powers of chiefs, the institutionalization of indirect rule freed chiefs from other constraints. Abraham (1979) argues that colonial rule, by institutionalizing the ruling houses, reduced the scope for upward social mobility into politics. He concludes that one consequence of indirect rule was that "the traditional democratic basis of Mende chiefship was radically undermined" (Abraham 1979, 305). In his view, the types of informal councils we have seen became much less effective in the colonial period. Wylie (1977, 195) makes a similar argument for Temneland. Yet Abraham (1979, 272) also points out that as a consequence of colonial rule, the chiefs in many ways became less powerful and "were unable to enforce their authority over their subjects in the traditional fashion." In a similar vein, Wylie (1977, 205) concludes that "the resulting transformation in the chiefly power base hardly makes up for the loss of independence or for the transformation in prerogatives, rights, and duties."

Ultimately, whether Sierra Leone supports the colonial authoritarianism hypothesis depends to some extent on which mechanisms one wants to emphasize. Generally, PCs were less powerful than the rulers of larger precolonial states in Mendeland or Temneland. They ruled much smaller territories and fewer people, and lacked slaves or independent military forces. The real argument, then, is about the lower chiefs of countries. There seems to be a great deal of persistence in the way they were chosen and who was eligible to stand. To some extent, more informal councils were formalized and broadened under the TA, but there is also a lot of continuity here. Chiefs lost many powers, particularly judicial ones. Other institutions that placed checks and balances on chiefs, like landownership and secret societies, also persisted. Yet it is not clear if they stayed as powerful as they had been in the 19th century. For example, Dorjahn (1960) discusses a case in Temneland in which Poro authority over a PC had weakened. We have also seen that Abraham and Wylie argue that democratic mechanisms were weakened because PCs gained backing from the colonial state. Trying to assess the balance of evidence, Dorjahn (1960, 132) notes

> "Informants insisted that in pre-Protectorate times chiefs were 'good,' that they were loved and respected, and that corruption and extortion became rampant only with the coming of the British. These same informants on different occasions, however, provided ample documentation that excesses occurred then as well as in more recent times."

Harris' conclusion is, "All in all, chiefs lost some powers and gained others." He references Mamdani's thesis when highlighting that "[o]ne observer has gone as far as labelling these new era chiefs . . . as 'decentralized despots.'" Yet Harris contends that "the Sierra Leonean institutions of

chieftaincy had survived and retained a good proportion of its legitimacy during the transition" (Harris 2014, 22).

Harris' observation here is key and suggests one way of assessing the balance of the forces at work, at least today. Despite the end of colonialism sixty-one years ago in Sierra Leone, the chieftaincy is still a vibrant institution. The 2009 Chieftaincy Act reconfirmed the institution along the lines that emerged in the colonial period. Perhaps this can be dismissed as a case in which institutions persisted simply because of the generic difficulty of switching institutions, but more likely it points to the legitimacy of the institution in Sierra Leone. One simple way of demonstrating this is via data in the 2020 Afrobarometer.[28] Sierra Leoneans were asked "How much do you trust each of the following?" among a specified list of institutions. There are four possible answers in addition to "refused to answer" and "don't know": "Trust a lot, trust somewhat, just a little, not at all." Aggregating the answers to "a lot" and "somewhat" and calling it trust for short, we find that a mere 33% of people trust parliament, 43% trust the anti-corruption commission, and 56% trust the president. By contrast, 63% trust traditional leaders, and this figure rises to 78% in rural areas. It seems improbable that PCs would be despotic but still evince such overwhelming levels of trust among the population.

Overall, as our discussion shows, the Sierra Leone case is complicated. There was a classic form of indirect rule in which the British worked with legitimate traditional rulers. With regard to larger states, colonial chiefs were undoubtedly less powerful than their precolonial predecessors. Regarding the lower-level country chiefs, there is contradictory evidence about the impact of colonialism on the power and behavior of these rulers. The British did not innovate institutions like the councils in Kenya, and there was no need for the type of Warrant Chief system created in southern Nigeria. But even here we have seen that many countervailing mechanisms were at work. Some potentially led towards despotic practices, but many others worked in the opposite direction.

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[28]https://afrobarometer.org/countries/sierra-leone-0.

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