Electoral Gender Quotas and Attitudes toward Traditional Leaders: A Policy Experiment in Lesotho

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March 28, 2014

Abstract

The adoption of electoral gender quotas has increased dramatically in the past thirty years, receiving praise for transforming the composition of political bodies worldwide. Gender quotas, however, have also been criticized as an unsuccessful tool in challenging the *de facto* power of traditional patriarchal elites. The case of Lesotho provides a natural experiment to test for changes in the influence of traditional leaders after quota adoption at the sub-national level. Between 2005 and 2011, Lesotho reserved at random 30% of all newly formed single-member local electoral divisions for only female candidates. Using a unique dataset by merging the 2008 Afro-barometer survey with the reservation status of respondents' villages, I find that having a quota-mandated female leader significantly reduces the perceived influence of traditional leaders. Further, heterogenous treatment effects within different demographic subgroups are limited, suggesting that the quota's effect is mediated through multiple channels.

Introduction

Currently, more than 100 countries have implemented some type of quota for women in their domestic political structures, leading to one of the most significant developments in the global composition of legislative bodies in the past thirty years. These quotas have emerged in every region of the world, often in surprising places, with transformative results for the number of women in politics. Rwanda, for instance, which reserves seats in both its upper and lower houses for women, has received international praise for superseding Sweden as first in the world in women's parliamentary representation, with

64% of its total seats held by women against Sweden's 45%. Gender quotas have also expanded rapidly at the sub-national level, allowing more women access to local political decision making than ever before.

Political science research examining the origins and impacts of gender quota adoption has also expanded rapidly. A healthy research agenda has emerged that examines the diffusion of quota policies and the effectiveness of quotas in increasing the number of women in politics (Dahlerup, 2006; Krook, 2009; Bush, 2011). A second wave of quota scholarship in recent years examines the potential impacts of quota adoption, including how quotas affect the substantive representation of women's interests in political bodies as well as how quotas impact public attitudes and behavior toward female leaders (see: Franceschet *et al.* , 2012). One less systematically addressed dimension of the quota literature examines the ability of quota recipients to translate their presence in decision-making bodies into political influence. Despite its unsystematic treatment, a great number of case studies have suggested that women's presence in political bodies has not usurped the *de facto* power of traditional male elites. This occurrence is perhaps most likely at the level of local governance. Particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, the historical importance of patrilineal chiefs in structuring community life suggests that male-dominated power structures may be most entrenched at the village level in comparison to more recently formed national legislatures.

This paper examines how the institution of gender quotas interacts with the power base of local traditional leaders by taking advantage of a natural experiment with reserved local electoral divisions for female community councilors in Lesotho. The results presented here indicate that the perceived influence of traditional leaders is significantly dampened in electoral divisions reserved for women, suggesting that quotas have allowed women not only *de jure* but *de facto* leadership roles in these communities. I offer hypotheses about the mediating factors that may be causing this effect, but the lack of heterogeneous treatment effects within different observational sub-groups suggests that multiple mediators are likely at play.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 1 presents the case of Lesotho as a natural experiment to test the effect of sub-national gender quotas on the influence of traditional leaders. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature examining how quotas for women in local politics might interact with traditional power structures in newly decentralized contexts. Section 3 outlines the theoretical framework of this study to understand the possible strategic and gendered interactions between traditional authorities and local councilors. Section 4 introduces the data and methods used to measure the impact of

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the quota law. Section 5 presents the model results and robustness considerations. It also assess the possibility of heterogeneous treatment effects in areas where chiefs had previously high or low levels of influence prior the quota. Section 6 offers a discussion of the findings in relation to the theoretical framework and the final section concludes.

1 Case Selection: A natural experiment in Lesotho

This study takes advantage of a nationwide randomized natural experiment in the southern African nation of Lesotho. In 2005, similar to other African nations at the time and in part guided by international organizations and the South African Development Community (SADC), Lesotho began a protracted process of decentralization. At this time, the Ministry of Local Government divided the country's ten main local administrative districts into 129 newly created community councils. Each community council was divided into 9 to 13 single-member electoral divisions (EDs), each of which elects a community councilor through a first-past-the-post election. The community councils are charged with village level maintenance issues such as land allocation (including livestock grazing rights), managing the local water supply, and maintaining village markets and local roads (Shale, 2004).[1]

The experimental nature of the quota is as follows: Between 2005 and 2011, the Local Government Elections Act required that 30% of all newly created single-member electoral divisions (distributed across the newly-created councils) be reserved for only female councilors. Women still competed with other women in these EDs, but men were not allowed to compete. Importantly, the all-women constituencies were assigned completely at random (SADC, 2011: 59).[2] Therefore, between April 2005 and October

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[1] The community councilors elected from each electoral division are mandated to represent the villages in their district at community council meetings, which typically meet once a month. The electoral divisions are relatively small, with constituencies consisting on average of around 600 adults over the age of 18. Before each council meeting, each councilor customarily has a separate meeting with residents from the villages in his/her electoral division in order to better represent his/her constituents in the community council.

[2] Reservation status was randomly assigned by selecting every third ED (or at times every 4th ED) from the complete list. Tangential to this study, in 2011 the Local Government Elections Act was amended to replace the women-only single-member districts with a different type of quota system that now allows open contestation in all electoral divisions. The new system sets aside a separate number of additional seats on each council for women. The electoral law now stipulates an additional ballot in each of the electoral divisions run on a proportional representation system in which voters choose a party that supplies an all-women list. The vote share that each party receives corresponds to the number of women on their list that join the council.

2011, electoral law required that Basotho[3] citizens in 30% of all local electoral divisions be exposed to quota-mandated women as political leaders, whereas the remaining 70% of electoral divisions had open arenas of contestation. It should be noted, however, that despite the 30% legal requirement, in actuality only 29.1% of EDs were selected for reservation. Importantly, women also won in EDs that were not reserved by the quota. In total during this period, quota-mandated women held 29.1% of community councilor positions, non-quota-mandated women held 26.3%, and men held 44.6%. Section 4 presents various tests for true random assignment as stipulated by the quota law, including balance diagnostics on observable characteristics between future reserved and unreserved EDs prior to the quota.

Lesotho's randomized natural experiment has several advantages. First, cross-national comparisons do not address the possibility that countries that adopt quotas are also more likely to be otherwise evolving toward more inclusive governance structures. These countries may simultaneously contain a citizenry with changing views about the appropriateness and capabilities of women in the political sphere that challenge the primacy placed on male-dominated traditional authorities. The use of time-series data also does not ameliorate this problem; the key concern being that countries that adopt quotas may be doing so as a response to an ongoing nationwide change in attitudes towards appropriate gender roles. In such instances, correlations between quota-induced increases in female leadership and changes in attitudes toward traditional authorities may not reflect the causal impact of quotas. The random allocation of reserved single-member electoral divisions in one national setting, however, implies that a difference in citizens' perceptions between reserved and unreserved EDs captures the causal effect of having experienced a quota-mandated female leader.

1.1 Traditional Leaders in Lesotho

As in most African countries (Lund, 2006), the chieftaincy has historically been interconnected with the governance structures of Lesotho. By law, Lesotho's upper parliamentary house is composed of 24 high-level chiefs and nine non-chiefs appointed by the King. The King (a direct descendant of King Moshoeshoe I, Lesotho's founding chief/ king) also serves as the Paramount Chief of Lesotho. There are over 1000 lesser chiefs, who have traditionally served as the main form of governance at the village level

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[3]Basotho is Lesotho's predominate ethnic group and is a term that has become synonymous with the Lesotho nationality.

(Quinlan & Wallis, 2003: 148). Indeed in the first round of the Afrobarometer Lesotho survey, over 99% of respondents reported having a traditional leader, chief, or headman (Logan, 2009: 109).

The chieftaincy's role in structuring local governance in Lesotho predates colonial control, but the authority of chiefs was first put into writing by the British as a way to formalize customary law. Among other things, the written code requires that chiefly lineage be patrilineal. This tradition was recently upheld by the Lesotho High Court, which ruled that the sole daughter of a deceased paramount chief could not inherit his title. Patrilineal heritage, however, is not as strictly observed among lesser chiefs, and a limited number of female village-level chiefs exist, although they have less standing than their male counterparts by customary law (Petlane & Mapetla, 1998: 250). Lesotho then by many accounts is similar to other southern African experiences with traditional authorities (Beall *et al.* , 2005; Beall, 2004; Molutsi, 2004) that are largely structured around patriarchal authority, which tend to limit the leadership roles of women.

The chieftaincy serves myriad functions in structuring Basotho rural life. Chiefs have *de facto* authority over land allocation, grazing control, burial grounds, and the maintenance of minor roads. They also serve as the primary source of conflict resolution, both in major disputes, for instance over livestock and land, as well as more mundane policing and judicial functions, including arbitrating family disputes (Quinlan & Wallis, 2003: 170). In the lead up to the devolution of local authority to community councilors in 2005, the proposed division of responsibilities between the two groups was not clearly defined, causing one observer to note: "people are not yet very clear on the distinction between the functions of the proposed Community Councils versus those of the chief (Shale, 2005: 4)." In council focus groups conducted in the country two years after the quota's adoption, participants report that the opaque delegation of responsibilities has caused tensions between the two groups. Morna & Tolmay (2007: 117) note:

> One councilor commented: 'working with the chiefs is very difficult because there is a lack of understanding about the roles and responsibilities of both the chiefs and councilors'... [Council focus group] participants complained that at best there is a lack of support and at worst obstruction by chiefs. Complaints included the fact that chiefs continue to levy charges on the community and in some cases intentionally misallocate land belonging to community members to sabotage councilors.

2 Subnational Gender Quotas, Decentralization, and Traditional Leaders

For the most part, the gender quota literature and the literature on decentralization and traditional influence have not met. Both these literatures, however, add insight to possible power dynamics between newly implemented gender quotas and the entrenched influence of traditional elites in structuring local governance.

The gender quota literature concerning the extent to which the *de jure* power of quota recipients has translated into *de facto* power has for the most part examined parliamentary politics. With a few notable exceptions, quotas that reserve parliamentary seats for women have been criticized for creating an additional vote bank for ruling parties without allowing quota recipients actual decision-making authority (see, for instance, Panday (2008) on Bangladesh, Meena (2004) on Tanzania, and Longman (2006) on Rwanda). In these cases, a reserved seat system, including those with special districts for women, leaves quota recipients not only in practice but also in the public perception as lesser politicians.

In large part because of lack of data, there has been less research on gender quotas at the local level, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. What research there has been often mirrors the lessons from parliamentary politics in relation to reserved seat systems. For instance, Kawamara-Mishambi & Ovonji-Odida (2003) document local quota provisions in Uganda in which new seats for women have been added onto local councils to avoid a situation where women might unseat male councillors. The authors argue that in districts where women have been detached from normal arenas of competition, they are often treated as lesser politicians. The Lesothan sub-national quota system, however, provides a unique case in which reserved electoral divisions do unseat potential male councillors thereby offering a test of the effects of female leadership in an instance in which they are not redundant to their male equivalents.

The most developed work on quotas in subnational governments has come from India, specifically because the Indian local-level quota design allows for causal analysis. Similar to Lesotho's sub-national quota, India has reserved one-third of leader positions in local-level single-member districts for women since 1993, and has rotated these districts at random in each election cycle. Driven primarily by economists, a great deal of research has emerged demonstrating largely positive female leadership effects. There is evidence that female leaders have different policy preferences than male leaders (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004); that female citizens participate more in village meetings under female

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leadership (Beaman *et al.* , 2010; Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2003; Deininger *et al.* , 2011); that female candidates are more likely to run and win in reserved districts after quotas have been removed (Bhavnani, 2009); that citizens in reserved districts have less bias against female leaders (Beaman *et al.* , 2009); and that female leaders may act as role models for young girls in their communities (Beaman *et al.* , 2012). The female leadership effect on traditional influence in reserved districts, however, has yet to be systematically addressed in the Indian case, although some anecdotal evidence suggests that informal governance structures have a great deal of influence in selecting which women run (often uncontested) in reserved districts (Pur, 2002: 4285).

A second relevant literature relates to how decentralization has affected the influence of traditional elites as a source of local public authority. Theory building work on the role of the chieftaincy in newly emerging African democracies notes the challenges faced when new political actors are introduced onto existing political, economic, and social systems (Williams (2004); Murray (2004) on South Africa, Englebert (2002) on Uganda, de Sousa Santos (2006) on Mozambique, and Muriaas (2011) on Uganda, Malawi, and South Africa). The results here are mixed and demonstrate that these new power-sharing dynamics are not always deleterious for democratic outcomes. For instance, using Afro-barometer data from 15 countries on the continent, Logan (2009) notes that respondents' evaluations of newly decentralized local authorities and hereditary chiefs are positively linked, indicating that rather than being a zero-sum game over control of local power and resources, "local traditional leaders appear to draw their sustenance and legitimacy from the same well as elected officials (Logan, 2008: iii)."

A related literature examines whether the type of relationship that exists between local politicians and traditional leaders affects the local provision of public goods. Documenting these empirical effects, however, proves difficult in large part because of the difficulties associated with measuring the influence of traditional leaders or other types of unelected patrons in local politics. In theory, closer relationships between local councilors and chiefs may indicate that councilors are benefitting from chiefs' clientelistic networks to buy votes and ensure future electoral support. In such instances, patronage-based redistribution may come at the expense of public goods provision (Wantchekon, 2003; Keefer, 2005; Bratton, 2008; Collier & Vicente, 2012; Van de Walle, 2003, 2012). Baldwin (2013), however, finds that closer ties between chiefs and local MPs in single-member constituencies in Zambia are beneficial to the public provision of education because chiefs "serve as a technology by which resources are delivered to communities" and further that citizens vote for MPs backed by local chiefs because they recognize

these welfare benefits.

Whereas fiscal responsibilities have not been devolved to community councils in Lesotho to the same extent as in other recently decentralized countries, there is anecdotal evidence that relationships between chiefs and councilors that are defined by conflict may be detrimental to local service delivery - and further that the propensity for these types of conflicts may be gendered: Morna & Tolmay (2007: 118), who provide the only interview and focus-group based account of local government in Lesotho during the time to the quota, relate the experience of one female councilor at the time:

> She [a female councilor] alleges that she faces resistance from some of the men who work closely with the chiefs. The biggest problem she has faced as a councilor is the poor turn out at pitsos (public gatherings), that she has organized through the chief whom she relies on to send out invitations. She is convinced that the chief is no sending the invitations out in time. It is at these meeting that people are given information. Poor participation hinders her ability to perform optimally.

Finally, to date, neither the gender quota literature nor the decentralization literature has directly empirically addressed the relationship between gender quotas at the sub-national level and the influence of traditional leaders. To my knowledge, this study is the first to do so.

3 Interactions Between Local Councilors and Traditional Authorities: Why Should Quotas Matter?

How might a quota policy requiring only female candidates in local electoral divisions affect the public authority of the chieftaincy? The literatures outlined above suggest several possibilities:[4]

A first explanation relates to the nature of the quota law itself. A quota policy that constrains local elections to only female candidates makes the state's presence in local politics much more visible than in the absence of such a policy. A constrained subset of potential candidates not only limits chiefs' ability to mobilize support around

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[4]It is important to note that chiefs are not barred from running in local elections, but in practice this does not happen. There has been no recorded instance of this occurrence by Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission and these two domains of public authority (chiefs versus councilors) are largely considered separate by Basotho citizens. As one citizen told me: "Chiefs are chiefs and councilors are councilors - why should a chief try to be a councilor?"

a particular desired (male) candidate before the election, but the quota may also reveal to citizens the general inability of chiefs to control local elections. Thus the state's role in visibly and dramatically shaping local elections may decrease the perceived influence of traditional leaders in reserved EDs.

A second set of explanations considers that the power-sharing dynamics between chiefs and councilors may be gendered. This is possible in both directions. Given that the chieftaincy is predominately male, male councilors and traditional leaders may be more likely to work together to uphold the patriarchal power structures of local governance. This is likely not an overt decision, but chiefs may be more comfortable working with male councilors than what they consider the more unseemly act of working with a female leader. In this scenario, chiefs are more likely to work with newly elected male councilors, and they may also decide to support particular male candidates prior to the election.

The preference of chiefs to work with male councilors rather than female councilors is made more likley by the fact that one of the central duties traditionally assigned to chiefs and recently devolved to councilors is the allocation of livestock grazing rights, particularly of cattle. Because herding is a duty undertaken by men in Basotho society, chiefs may be more willing to work with other men in this realm of rural life rather than what they perceive as the more unnatural alliance of working with women on issues of cattle grazing. Morna & Tolmay (2007: 117) report the following observations from their focus groups:

> One of the most contentious issues is that chiefs no longer have jurisdiction over the distribution of land. Because the transfer of powers from chiefs to local government is so recent, the impact of a traditional system that theoretically has little power, but in practice exercises tremendous sway, is a contentious issue, especially from women councilors... A male councilor explained that for a long time the grazing lands have been controlled by the chiefs and the men. In the women-only constituencies, when women try to control these lands, the men challenge them.

When Basotho citizens see a female councilor involved in the allocation of grazing land, it may undermine the traditional notion that this is a male domain, which may indirectly call into question the patriarchal power structures on which chiefs base their authority. On the other hand, seeing a male community leader make these decisions does not upend the traditional patrilineal authority of chiefs in the same way. These observations suggest that the influence of traditional authorities (both real and perceived)

will remain high when chiefs have the same constituencies as male councilors, but may weaken in electoral divisions reserved for women.

A countering argument, however, is also plausible. Given women's historically weak position in Basotho society, female councilors might be more likely (or perceived to be more likely) to hand governing authority over to traditional leaders. In this instance, chiefs might back female leaders prior to the elections, as they know women will be less of a threat to their monopoly on public authority. Although there have been no recorded instances of women handing over their positions to men in reserved districts wholesale (Morna & Tolmay, 2007: 80), after elections chiefs may have an easier time assuming some of the responsibilities of female councilors and maintaining governing influence in their communities. Anecdotal evidence from Morna & Tolmay (2007: 115) also suggests that this might be occurring in some districts:

> A participant in the Lesotho civil society focus group added: 'Women are trapped in a cultural boundary. They are not supported by the chiefs or the community who believe that they are not good decision-makers; that they can't drive development. They accept whatever the elders say.'

Under this scenario, chiefs are more likely to maintain *de facto* authority under female leadership, as women become relegated to the status of tokens.

If the last explanation is at play, the presence of the quota should not affect the perceived local authority of traditional leaders (or might even increase it), however, in the presence of the first two explanations, I expect to find decreased levels of perceived traditional influence in reserved electoral divisions. In Section 5, I attempt to adjudicate between the explanatory power of these two explanations. I offer a way to measure levels of preexisting governing influence of local traditional leaders prior to the adoption of the quota. I expect that in areas where chiefs previously had high levels of public authority, citizens will be more likely to perceive chiefs as loosing influence when they see a woman stepping into the chief's policymaking domain. However, in areas where chiefs were less active in the informal governance structures of their communities prior to the quota, this explanation is less plausible. Further, the mediator the considers the state's presence as the delegitimizing factor in the way citizens perceive the influence of chiefs seems most plausible in areas with an inactive or moribund chieftaincy and less likely in areas where the chiefs' authority is deeply embedded in local governance structures.

4 Measures and Methods

4.1 Random Assignment Checks

The experimental nature of the quota design depends on the random assignment of the reserved electoral divisions. First, it is important to note that Lesotho is a small landlocked mountainous country that is ethno-linguistically, culturally and religiously homogenous. 99.7% of the population self-identifies as belonging to the Basotho ethnic group and speaks Sesotho as a first language, and 96.7% of the population claims to be Christian (Afro-barometer, 2008). The clustering of religious and ethnic groups are not plausible confounders of the quota's random assignment, but other potential ED-level characteristics are. To gain leverage of the validity of random assignment, I test for observable differences across future reserved and unreserved EDs before the quota's implementation.

Table 1 shows data from the 2003 Lesotho Afro-barometer survey, two years before the realization of the quota policy. It lists potential confounding variables, their mean values in the future reserved and unreserved electoral divisions, the difference between the groups, and the standard error associated with this estimate. Column 5 shows the p-values associated with difference of means t-tests and column 6 reports the coefficients of future-reserved-ED residence with each cofounder as a separate dependent variable. The models are hierarchical with random intercepts allowed at the community council level. Variables that achieve traditional statistical significance ($p \leq 0.05$) are indicated in bold.

Table 1 here

The only observable potential confounder with a statistically significant difference between the future reserved and unreserved EDs is the respondents' mean age. Respondents in future reserved EDs are on average 4.6 years older than respondents in future unreserved EDs. Given that there is balance between reserved and unreserved EDs across the other eight indicators, it is likely that this small difference in means is due to sampling variability. For increased transparency and ease of interpretation in the tests that follow, I calculate average treatment effects (ATEs) on the unmatched sample, however, the results hold when running these tests on a sub-sample that matches control and treatment groups on respondents' age.

4.2 Data and Dependent Variable Specification

In the population of community councilor positions in Lesotho, 29.1% are quota-mandated women, 26.3% are non-quota-mandated women, and 44.6% are men. The Afro-barometer sample of respondents living in these districts closely mirrors the population of leadership groups: 31.7% of respondents in the sample live in a reserved ED, 23.3% lived in an unreserved ED that elected a female councilor, and 44.9% live in an unreserved ED that elected a male councilor. The distribution of the population of councilor characteristics across electoral divisions and the corresponding respondent sample within those divisions are statistically indistinguishable.[5]

To measure the impact of living in a reserved ED, I rely on Afro-barometer survey data, which includes a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of approximately 1200 Basotho. The 2008 Afro-barometer survey measures the impact of living in a reserved ED for three years. This research specifically employs the local-level Afro-barometer data, which identifies the village of each respondent. Respondents are located in 577 villages as identified by Afro-barometer survey administers. I constructed an original dataset by merging the Afro-barometer results with data from the Independent Electoral Commission I collected in Lesotho's capital, Maseru, to identify the gender of each village's community councilor and whether the village was in a formerly reserved ED. I list-wise delete observations for which I cannot definitively identify the councilor's gender and ED reservation status.[6] In Appendix B, I present diagnostics that indicate that the remaining observations are not systematically different than those from the complete data set, indicating that this loss of sample size (17.5%) will not introduce bias into the analyses that follow. Further, Section 5 demonstrates that the average treatment effect of the quota is robust to a series of regression specifications, which control for pre-treatment covariates that might also affect citizens' perceptions of local traditional influence. The rate of missingness across other relevant variables is relatively minimal (between 0 - 7%), but I choose to use Amelia II for R to impute missing values rather than list-wise delete remaining observations.[7]

The dependent variable in this study takes a question from the 2008 Afro-barometer

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[5]Pearsons Chi-squared test p-vale = 0.997.

[6]This happens, for instance, when there are two villages with the same name in the census list, and I cannot identify which one corresponds with the respondent's residence as identified from the Afro-barometer data. It also occurs when the village identified by Afro-barometer researchers is not included or is spelled a different way than on the official census list. This narrows my total observations from 1200 to 990.

[7]Honaker *et al.* (2012)

survey, which reads: "How much influence do traditional leaders currently have in governing your local community." The response categories on a Likert-type scale are "none," "a small amount," "some," or "a great deal." Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses to this question by response category and respondents' ED type.

Figure 1 here

The distribution of responses here is revealing. Respondents in EDs reserved for women are 18% less likely (moving from 51% to 42%) than those in unreserved EDs to report that traditional leaders have a great deal of influence in their local communities. Conversely, respondents in reserved EDs are 33% more likely (moving from 18% to 24%) to report that traditional leaders have a small amount of influence in their communities. The difference between the "great deal" response category by ED reservation status is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, and the "small amount" response category at the 0.04 level.[8]

5 Results

5.1 The Reservation Effect

Table 2 shows the mean perceived traditional influence on the four-point scale for the reserved and unreserved groups (with higher values associated with greater levels of perceived traditional influence). The difference between these groups can be interpreted as the average treatment effect - in this case 0.2 on the four-point scale. I simulate and calculate and the associated 95% confidence intervals around this estimate based on the principles of cluster random assignment (Gerber & Green, 2012: 80) with respondents clustered within EDs. Using this method, I find that the ATE is bracketed by a confidence interval of a true effect size ranging from -0.37 to -0.03. To measure the standardized effect size, I divide the ATE by the standard deviation of the control (unreserved) group to reveal that the quota caused a decrease of 0.2 standard deviations on the scale of perceived traditional influence.[9]

Table 2 here

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[8] Calculated through Welch Two Sample t-tests.

[9] Researchers typically characterize standardized effects of less than 0.3 standard deviations as small, between 0.3 and 0.8 as moderate, and above 0.8 as large (Gerber & Green, 2012: 70).

5.2 Heterogenous Treatment Effects

The analysis above does not reveal whether the reservation effect is due to the restrictive selection mechanisms mandated by the quota policy, or whether it is a result of chiefs having to work with a female councilor when they would have preferred a male councilor. Whereas the cumulative reservation effect allows for causal inference because of the random nature of the quota assignment, comparisons between residents in reserved EDs and the two respective control subgroups (male-led unreserved and female-led unreserved EDs) are problematic because these groups are neither randomly assigned nor observationally identical.

However, I expect that in reserved EDs where chiefs had high levels of public authority prior to the quota, they lost their ability to mobilize votes around a preferred (male) candidate to a greater degree than in areas where they had low levels of pre-existing authority. Further areas with oft-contacted chiefs are more likely to house citizens with heightened beliefs about the importance of patriarchal power structures. In these areas, the experience of having a quota-mandated female community leader (especially dealing in the domain of grazing rights) may be seen as more shocking, causing citizens to reevaluate the chiefs' role in local governance to a greater degree than an areas where the local chief had less of a presence in the community prior to the quota.

One question from the 2003 Afro-barometer survey round, two years prior to the quota's adoption, asks respondents how often they have contacted a traditional ruler during the previous year "for help to solve a problem or to give them your views." Respondents could indicate on a four point Likert-type scale that they had never contacted a traditional ruler, done so only once, done so a few times, or had done so often during the previous year. This observed variation in traditional leaders' presence in their communities prior to quota adoption, as measured by contact with their subjects, provides a useful way to test for reservation effects in communities with high and low preexisting levels of traditional influence. Importantly, responses to this 2003 survey question are not correlated with the assignment of the quota policy (see Table 1), and the measure therefore allows for the separation of subgroups within both the future reserved and unreserved EDs with arguably high or low levels of preexisting traditional influence.

To create a subset of EDs (both reserved and unreserved) with high preexisting levels of traditional influence, I select only council areas from the 2003 survey with a modal response indicating residents had contacted a traditional leader often during the

previous year.[10] I then select residents in these same council areas from the 2008 data to create a group of respondents who lived in an area with a oft-contacted chief prior to the instigation of the quota policy. Conversely, to create a subset of observations with low levels of preexisting traditional influence, I select a subset of EDs (again both reserved and unreserved) from the 2003 data with the modal response of never having contacted a traditional leader in the previous year. I include respondents with residence in these council areas from the 2008 data to create a subset of respondents living in areas with seldom-contacted chiefs prior to the quota.

I use a series of regressions with treatment by covariate interactions to model potential treatment effect heterogeniety within subgroups with respectively high and low levels of pre-existing traditional contact. To accounted for the nested structure of individuals within EDs, I use an OLS specification of hierarchical linear modeling with random intercepts at the ED level. Model 1 of Table 3 first shows the calculation of the quota's ATE under this specification, which is identical to the estimate calculated through randomization inference presented above. Model 2 and Model 3 show the conditional average treatment effects (CATEs) within the subgroups for areas with respectively high and low levels of reported citizen contact with chiefs prior to the quota policy. It should be emphasized that, whereas measuring difference between the reserved and unreserved groups in the entire sample reveals the quota's average treatment effect, analyzing CATEs within subsets of observations based on pre-treatment covariates that are not randomly assigned leaves the realm of experimental analysis, and rather shows observational differences between groups.

Table 3 here

There does not appear to be heterogenous treatment effects in areas with either high or low pre-existing levels of chiefly contact, as neither interaction term is statistically significant. Further the p-values associated with the corresponding F-tests comparing Model 1 to Model 2 and Model 3 are respectively 0.64 and 0.96, indicating the presence of an interaction term does not identify significant CATEs for these particular subgroups. The lack of heterogeneous treatment effects within these respective subgroups suggests

[10]Unfortunately, specifying to the level of electoral division is not possible from the 2003 to the 2008 data, as Afro-barometer staff did not sample enough of the same villages to disaggregate at this level. I therefore select respondents who are in the same council area. However, given that chiefs wards do not directly correspond with electoral divisions it is likely that chiefs influence is spatially clustered to include surrounding villages.

that, as is often the case in social science research, more than one mediator is causing the quota policy to change the way citizens view the influence of their local traditional leaders. I discuss the implication of this further in Section 6.

5.3 Robustness Considerations

Although the quota was randomly assigned, as a robustness consideration I also use a series of regression models to test whether the average treatment effect holds when controlling for additional pre-treatment covariates that might also affect the way citizens perceive the influence of their local traditional leader. I control for respondents' age, sex, education, poverty level, religiosity, and urban/rural residence. The results from Model 2 indicate that, unsurprisingly, chiefs are perceived to have more influence (and by all accounts indeed have more influence) in rural communities compared to urban communities. Including this variable as a covariate somewhat attenuates the quota's average treatment effect, but the ATE maintains its statistical significance at the 0.08 level. Further, the results of Model 3 show that including other demographic covariates does not significantly reduce the the quota's effect or improve model fit - and the quota's ATE again maintains its significance at the 0.08 level.

Table 4 here

Finally, a series of regression models (not presented) with covariate by treatment interactions reveal that there are no statistically significant heterogenous treatment effects among the various demographic subgroups I control for in Table 4.

6 Discussion

6.1 Evaluating Mediators

In sum, I find that the influence of traditional authorities is significantly diminished in electoral divisions reserved for only female candidates, and that this effect is equally pronounced in EDs in which the chieftaincy had both a strong and weak presence prior to the quota's adoption. Although a complete testing of mechanisms is beyond the scope of this study, a review of the mediators outlined in Section 3 is useful.

I have not found evidence that chiefs benefit from quota-mandated female leadership because women present less of a threat to their monopoly on local authority. To the country, citizens perceive chiefs as loosing authority under this scenario.

The first explanation presented in Section 3 related to the quota's possible delegit-imizing effect on chiefs' authority, as the strict stipulations of the quota policy may have revealed to citizens the ability of the state to control local elections in a way that superseded the chiefs' prerogative. Under this account, I expected that citizens in areas with an inactive or moribund chieftaincy would be more likely to accept the new role of the state and, hence, the governing influence of female councilors. A second explanation posited that chiefs prefer to share governing responsibilities (when they must) with other men and that chiefs' relationships with female councilors are more likely to be defined by conflict. Under this scenario, I expected the reservation effect would be the most pronounced in areas with an influential chief prior to the quota because it is in these areas in which chiefs should have gotten their preferred candidates in unreserved EDs and felt the limitations of the quota most severely in reserved EDs.

I find no statistically significant heterogeneous treatment effects among citizens in areas with respectively oft or seldom-contacted chiefs prior to the quota. This suggests, although certainly far from proves, that both of these mediators are likely at play. Future studies might use experimental approaches to test the implications of these mediators more fully.

6.2 Public Sentiment toward Traditional Leaders

As a final observation, one additional question from the 2008 Afro-barometer asks respondents their opinions on the influence of tradition leaders in their communities. The question reads: "Do you think that the amount of influence traditional leaders have in governing your local community should increase, stay the same, or decrease?" Respondents should indicate on a five-point scale that they believe the influence of tradi-tional leaders should "decrease a lot," "decrease somewhat,", "stay the same," "increase somewhat," or "increase a lot." Table 5 reveals that there is not a statistically signifi-cant difference between citizens' responses in reserved and unreserved electoral divisions, despite the perceptions that traditional leaders have lost influence in the former. This seems to indicate that even though citizens believe that chiefs are loosing influence in electoral divisions reserved for female leaders, they accept the changing nature of local governance.

Table 5 here

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6.3 Perceived versus Real Influence

Ideally this study would examine whether the quota has affected the real influence of traditional leaders in governing their local communities. The ability to empirically measure and collect reliable data on the ways in which traditional patrons "influence" local governance in new democracies, however, proves difficult, and recently has led researchers to develop clever identification strategies, including experimental approaches, to empirically document this phenomenon (see, for example: Wantchekon, 2003; Baldwin, 2013).

This study, in contrast, examines the way citizens perceive the influence of local chiefs, which is an important contribution to our understanding of the changing roles of traditional leaders in decentralized contexts for at least two reasons. First, it is quite possible that Basotho citizens are apt perceivers of the actual influence of chiefs in their communities. As noted, over 99% of Basotho report having a local traditional leader. This means that when respondents were asked "how much influence do traditional leaders have in governing your local community" - they are were asked a factual, rather than a theoretical, question.

Second, even if perceived influence is not a proxy for real influence, perceptions of the public authority of traditional leaders in new democracies have important implications for local perceptions of the democratic legitimacy of recently decentralized institutions. If, as some scholars have argued, the chieftaincy constitutes an inherently non-democratic or anti-democratic form of governance (Mamdani, 1996) that consistently excludes the voices of youth and women (Beall, 2005; Molutsi, 2004), than we might imagine that decreased *perceptions* of the chiefs' authority may increase the democratic legitimacy of recently decentralized governance structures. However, if the popular perceptions of the chieftaincy and new local authorities are positively linked (Logan, 2009), than a decrease of the former has less obvious implications on public commitment to local democracy. It is beyond the scope of this paper to adjudicate between these competing expectations regarding how the loss of perceived traditional influence translates into support for local democratic institutions, however, it adds to this literature by examining the antecedents of changes in popular perceptions of traditional authority.

Conclusion

The popularity of electoral gender quotas as a way of integrating more women into formal political power structures has increased dramatically in the last several decades, at both the national and subnational levels, in every region of the world. For instance, countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Albania, Mexico and South Sudan have all adopted subnational electoral gender quotas in the last ten years. Scholarly work aimed at understanding the varied potential impacts of an increase in women's descriptive representation has also expanded rapidly. One growing dimension of this research agenda examines the extent to which quota policies have allowed women to turn their new *de jure* political positions into *de facto* decision-making authority.

Here I have examined how quota-mandated female leadership affects the way citizens perceive the influence of local traditional elites. The case of Lesotho, by many accounts, is similar to most rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa, in which hereditary chiefs selected along patrilineal lines continue to be the main source of local authority. My findings suggest that quota-mandated female leaders are able to effectively challenge chief's monopoly on traditional authority, in both active and inactive chiefdoms, to a great extent than their male colleagues. Further, citizens in these districts do not appear to lament this loss of traditional authority, indicating a certain level of acceptance of women assuming political authority via quotas. Whereas a great deal of work remains to be done on this question, Lesotho's policy experiment provides distinctly causal evidence that, rather than being relegated to the status of tokens, citizens see quota-mandated female leaders as filling governing spaces that was traditionally assumed by predominately male traditional leaders.

Figure and Tables

Figure

**How much influence do traditional leaders
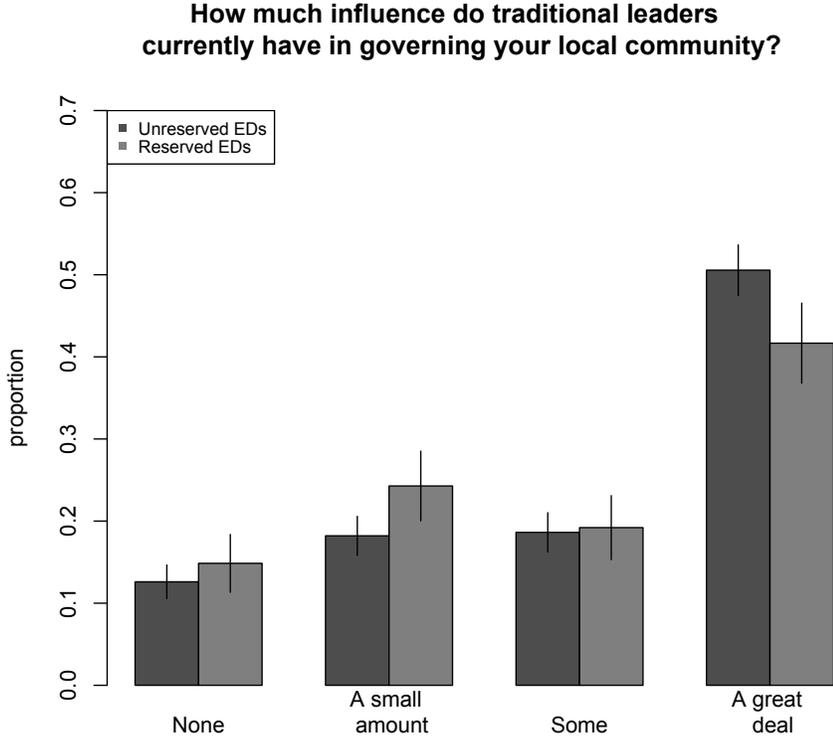currently have in governing your local community?**

Figure 1: Dependent variable: distribution of response categories by in reserved versus unreserved electoral divisions. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals around estimates

Tables

	Mean Future Unreserved	Mean Future Reserved	Difference (SE)	t-test p-value	Reservation Effect with Council Random Effects (SE)
% rural	0.815	0.809	0.007 (0.030)	0.828	-1.987 (1.166)
Discuss politics	1.861	1.947	-0.086 (0.061)	0.164	0.041 (0.101)
Poverty level	2.928	2.870	0.058 (0.094)	0.536	0.006 (0.107)
Education level	2.210	2.171	0.040 (0.054)	0.461	-0.080 (0.116)
Interest in politics	2.640	2.715	-0.075 (0.044)	0.091	0.045 (0.131)
Age	41.101	45.691	**-4.590** **(1.351)**	**0.001**	**3.434** **(1.682)**
Belief in women's equal rights	2.396	2.467	-0.069 (0.094)	0.465	1.093 (1.427)
Trust in traditional leaders	2.650	2.581	0.069 (0.081)	0.396	-0.018 (0.095)
Contact with traditional leaders	2.445	2.401	0.044 (0.094)	0.666	0.063 (0.115)

Table 1: Checks for random assignment from 2003 Lesotho Afro-barometer data. $n = 243$ for the future reserved electoral divisions and $n = 542$ for the future unreserved electoral divisions. Values that achieve statistical significance of $p \leq 0.05$ are indicated in bold. See Appendix A for variable coding.

	Mean Reserved	Mean Unreserved	Difference [95% CI]	p-values: 2-tailed (1-tailed)	n
Perceived traditional influence	2.88	3.07	**-0.20** **[-0.37, -0.03]**	**0.03** **(0.02)**	990

Differences with significance of $p < 0.05$ indicated in **bold**.

Table 2: Reservation average treatment effect. Higher values equate to higher levels of perceived traditional influence.

	Model 1: Coef [95 % CI]	Model 2: Coef [95 % CI]	Model 3: Coef [95 % CI]
(Intercept)	**3.07**	**3.08**	**3.10**
	[2.98; 3.16]	**[2.99; 3.18]**	**[2.99; 3.21]**
Quota	**-0.20**	**-0.20**	−0.20
	[-0.37; -0.03]	**[-0.38; -0.02]**	$[-0.41;\ 0.01]$
High 2003 contact		−0.09	
		$[-0.36;\ 0.19]$	
High contact * Quota		0.07	
		$[-0.41;\ 0.54]$	
Low 2003 contact			−0.08
			$[-0.26;\ 0.11]$
Low contact * Quota			0.02
			$[-0.32;\ 0.36]$
AIC	3003.11	3010.23	3011.19
BIC	3022.70	3039.61	3040.58
Log Likelihood	-1497.55	-1499.11	-1499.60
Deviance	2995.11	2998.23	2999.19
Num. obs.	990	990	990
Num. groups: ED	155	155	155
Variance: ED (Intercept)	0.04	0.05	0.04
Variance: Residual	1.16	1.16	1.16

Differences with significance of $p < 0.05$ indicated in **bold**

Table 3: Model-based estimates of conditional average treatment effects.

	Model 1: Coef [95 % CI]	Model 2: Coef [95 % CI]	Model 3: Coef [95 % CI]
(Intercept)	**3.07** **[2.98; 3.16]**	**2.76** **[2.60; 2.92]**	**3.33** **[2.54; 4.14]**
Quota	**-0.20** **[-0.37; -0.03]**	−0.14 [−0.30; 0.02]	−0.13 [−0.29; 0.02]
Rural		**0.38** **[0.21; 0.55]**	**0.40** **[0.23; 0.58]**
Age			0.00 [−0.01; 0.00]
Female			−0.05 [−0.18; 0.09]
Education			−0.04 [−0.15; 0.06]
Poverty			**-0.09** **[-0.15; -0.04]**
Religiosity			−0.03 [−0.21; 0.14]
AIC	3003.11	2990.46	3013.42
BIC	3022.70	3014.95	3062.40
Log Likelihood	-1497.55	-1490.23	-1496.71
Deviance	2995.11	2980.46	2993.42
Num. obs.	990	990	990
Num. groups: ED	155	155	155
Variance: ED (Intercept)	0.04	0.02	0.01
Variance: Residual	1.16	1.16	1.16

Table 4: Model-based robustness considerations. Values that achieve statistical significance of p ≤ 0.05 are indicated in bold. See Appendix A for variable coding

	Mean Reserved	Mean Unreserved	Difference [95% CI]	p-values: 2-tailed (1-tailed)	n
Should traditional influence increase?	4.37	4.34	0.03 [-0.12, 0.18]	0.69 (0.34)	990

Differences with significance of $p < 0.05$ indicated in **bold**.

Table 5: Reservation average treatment effect on whether local traditional influence should increase. Higher values equate to stronger levels of agreement that traditional influence should increase.

Appendix

A   Variable Coding

Dependent variable	
How much influence do traditional leaders currently have in governing your local community?	1 = None 2 = A small amount 3 = Some 4 = A great deal

Treatment	
Quota-mandated female leadership	Respondent lives in an electoral division (ED) that was reserved for only female candidates in the 2005 election (0/1)

Additional variables used in assessing random assignment and conditional average treatment effects	
How interested would you say you are in public affairs? You know, in politics and government.	1 = Not at all interested 2 = Not very interested 3 = Somewhat interested 4 = Very interested
When you get together with your friends or family, would you say you discuss political matters?	1 = Never 2 = Occasionally 3 = Frequently
Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without enough food to eat? (Poverty)	1 = Never 2 = Just once or twice 3 = Several times 4 = Many times 5 = Always
What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Education Level)	1 = No schooling 2 = Primary 3 = Secondary 4 = Post Secondary

Table 6: Variable coding

Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement A or Statement B. A: Women have always been subject to traditional laws and customs, and should remain so. B: In our country, women should have equal rights and receive the same treatment as men do. (Belief in Women's Equal Rights)	1 = Agree Very Strongly with B 2 = Agree with B 3 = Agree with A 4 = Agree Very Strongly with A
Age	Respondent's age in years
How important is religion in your life? (Religiosity)	1 = Not at all important 2 = Not very important 3 = Somewhat important 4 = Very important
How much do you trust each of the following, or havent you heard enough about them to say: Traditional Leaders/Chiefs/Elders?	1 = Not at all 2 = A little bit 3 = A lot 4 = A very great deal
During the past year, how often have you contacted any of the following persons for help to solve a problem or to give them your views: A traditional ruler?	1 = Never 2 = Only oncet 3 = A few times 4 = Often

B Missingness Diagnostics

	Mean Complete Data	Mean Sample Data	Difference (SE)	T-test p-value
% rural	0.740	0.772	0.032 (0.018)	0.09
Discuss politics	1.920	1.907	0.013 (0.035)	0.709
Poverty level	2.593	2.593	0.000 (0.054)	0.994
Education level	2.235	2.230	0.005 (0.031)	0.881
Interest in politics	3.034	3.048	-0.014 (0.052)	0.785
Age	41.508	41.363	0.144 (0.787)	0.855
Perceived traditional influence	3.023	3.017	0.006 (0.047)	0.897
Religiosity	3.913	3.914	-0.001 (0.016)	0.961

Table 7: Checks for random assignment from 2003 Lesotho Afro-barometer data. $n = 1200$ for complete data set and $n = 990$ for data used in the included analysis. Values that achieve statistical significance of $p \leq 0.05$ are indicated in bold. See Appendix A for variable coding.

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