Variation in performance among members of parliament: evidence from Ghana

Staffan I. Lindberg

Working Paper

No. 7 Feb, 2010

Copyright: The author.

Published on behalf of the Africa Power and Politics Programme (APPP) by the Overseas Development Institute, 111 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JD, UK (www.odi.org.uk).

The APPP Working Paper series is edited by Richard Crook, Professorial Fellow, Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE, UK (r.crook@ids.ac.uk).

The Africa Power and Politics Programme is a consortium research programme funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), with additional support from Irish Aid, for the benefit of developing countries. The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and not necessarily those of DFID, Irish Aid or the Programme as a whole.

Variation in performance among members of parliament: evidence from Ghana

Staffan I. Lindberg*

This paper suggests a new method for measuring political survival strategies employed by members of legislatures. The method builds on survey data that in principle could be collected in any new democracy. The data is used to evaluate established theories of clientelistic politics and incentives created by differing levels of competition in poor, new democracies. The analysis shows significant variation in the use of clientelism and the provision of collective goods as a main reelection strategy. This variation, within one and the same country, is a finding that runs contrary to much of the established literature on African politics. Almost half of the incumbent MPs in this study prioritize collective and club goods. The analysis also identifies a few puzzling outcomes – provision of collective goods in a highly clientelistic environment – that should preferably be analyzed in a more in-depth study.

1 Introduction

In their day-to-day roles, MPs face a variety of formal and informal institutional pressures to supply public, collective, and private goods. The conventional wisdom is that in most African countries, informal pressures to provide private goods take precedence over public and collective goods provision. The role of the African politician, as depicted in much of the literature on African politics, is about providing small 'club' goods to communities and private rewards to supporters, the former by means of formal or informal relations with government ministries and external donors, the latter by means of informal, sometimes illicit, sometimes ethnic, personalized and clientelistic networks.

For many observers, the experiments with multiparty elections since the early 1990s have not changed the fundamental nuts and bolts of African politics. Bratton (1998) argued that Africa quickly returned to neopatrimonial politics while others saw no change at all (Akinrinade 1998), political closure (Joseph 1998), semi-authoritarianism (Carothers 1997), elections without democracy (van de Walle 2002), 'virtual democracies' rather than true democratization (Joseph 1997, 1998), or just a return to the usual 'big man', neopatrimonial, clientelist, informalized and disordered politics that had always characterized African politics (e.g. Ake 1993, 1996, 2000; Chabal and Daloz 1999; Chege 1996; Mbembe 1995). Africa was returning to 'an institutional legacy of 'big man' rule, and the electoral alternation of leaders was again becoming abnormal' by all indications (Bratton 1998, 64-5). Bratton's argument

* Department of Political Science and Center for African Studies, University of Florida. The author wishes to acknowledge insightful comments on an earlier version from Victor Brobbey and Winifred Pankani. The survey was carried out in collaboration with research officers at Center for Democratic Development-Ghana and we also wish to recognize the excellent work by the 49 assistants we trained for the field work during summer 2008. The research project was sponsored by the Africa Power and Politics Programme within its research stream on parliamentarians, with funding provided by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). As always, the content, errors, omissions, and flaws in the text are the responsibility of the author.

was based on the available data at the time and echoed by scholars like Diamond and Plattner (1999, 19, 32, 169) arguing that second elections were merely 'transitions without change' and Cowen and Laakso (2002, 14-5, 23) arguing that the 'massive voter apathy' spreading across the continent is undermining the meaningfulness and legitimacy of elections in Africa.

These analyses, however, have little to say about the role of the legislator in Africa. In fact, while there is just emerging a small literature on legislatures (Barkan 2009), studies of legislators and their role in government, in development, as representatives of the citizens and possibly brokers in clientelistic networks, are in an abysmal state. The role of legislators in a *de jure* democratic system is supplying more genuinely collective and public goods, such as executive oversight, or the scrutiny of legislation, or the making of public policy, or constituency representation and service – in short, the kind of roles with which legislators are most closely associated in the established democracies. Indeed, in the eyes of most Western observers, including donors, part of the problem of African politics is that legislators spend too much time grabbing private rewards, in the form of jobs, contracts, and kick-backs to sustain clientelistic networks, and too little time supplying public goods, or even club goods (e.g. constituency service) to their constituents.

However, the present author's recent explorative research (Lindberg 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Weghorst & Lindberg 2009), demonstrates that MPs are subject to very strong contradictory pressures to supply both collective and private goods. These pressures take the form, among other things, of powerful informal institutional expectations about the role of the MP, expectations which we do not expect to change drastically overnight. Not enough is known about how effectively MPs manage the different demands of formal and informal institutions, or about the circumstances in which hybrid institutional pressures lead to better development outcomes. Yet, before a cause and effect analysis is possible, one must effectively map out the 'lie of the land' with regards to how MPs actually behave in terms of resource allocation. In this regard, we know very little. This purpose of this paper is to advance our knowledge regarding how much of private, collective and public goods MPs actually provide – in the eyes of their constituents.

2 Purpose and scope of the paper

Facing the issue of provision of goods, whether in a principal-agent or a collective action situation, the MPs are exposed to pressures from both informal and formal institutions to which they respond within the constraints of a current institutional (informal and formal) configuration. While opening the possibility of endogeneity, one would thus expect the character of the hybrid institutions at t as well as independent action taken by the MPs at t_{+1} to influence the pressures they face at t_{+2}. MPs can act in good or bad ways so as to create reactions from groups, change expectations among them, and thus shape the pressures to which they are subject. While idiosyncratic actions by individual MPs can to some extent be just that, it is also reasonable to expect that such actions are at least in part responses to a set of incentives, disincentives and morale that can be systematically assessed. A first step in this process is to measure how MPs actually behave.

Based on explorative fieldwork Lindberg (2009b, 2010) found examples of how the office of the MP in Ghana had developed a distinct hybrid character consisting of a combination of the

fairly standard formal expectations, and the informal norms of being a 'father/mother' of the constituency who provides private goods and some amount of small 'club' goods for communities (e.g. roofing sheets for the school, a public toilet, and so on). The hybrid configuration of the MP's office puts enormous pressures on office holders to be responsive to constituents' needs and priorities and has also brought into play traditional tools of shame, collective punishment of the family, and loss of prestige and status as methods of sanction. In this sense, the accountability relationship between MP (agent) and citizens (principal) is in many ways even stronger than standard democratic theory would have us to believe. The informal side of the institution of MP in Ghana provides examples of innovative solutions to the moral hazard problem in principal-agent relationships but also demonstrates the key role of information deficit in making such solutions work.

The informal side of the MP-citizens relationship in Ghana also has a significant potential for making the agent act in accordance with the interests of the principal. For example, office holders feel pressured to speak on the floor of the House as much as they can and bring knowledge of their constituency and the people's needs to bear on issues under debate. With increased information and civic education, this could potentially be a tool of effectuating democratic responsiveness, furthering programmatic platforms that lead to a greater provision of collective and public goods, and making policy better adapted to the needs of constituents. Similarly, that office holders are also held to task for community development efforts and the informal institution of being a 'father/mother' of the constituency, could come to play an enhancing role in making it a primary concern of MPs to bring local development projects to their communities.

3 Measuring MPs' performance

The position taken in this paper is that the preferred situation is one in which MPs focus their time, energy and resource on the provision of public, and to some extent club goods rather than on distribution of private goods in clientelistic networks. The question is the extent to which there is meaningful variation between MPs in this respect and, if so, whether this can be measured systematically and in a reliable fashion. Unless this is the case, the next step of assessing which factors promote the preferred situation is effectively impossible. Hence, the limited goal of this paper is to present a suggested method and then the results of a first strategy relying on survey responses from a random selection of citizens in ten strategically selected constituencies in Ghana. How much of various types of goods do MPs in fact supply? Is there substantial variation among MPs' performance?

I suggest that gauging MPs' behavior can be based on evaluations made by ordinary citizens in their constituencies as reported in survey responses. This method is far from perfect but nonetheless has some advantages over alternatives. Indicators of actual behavior would in all respects be the most preferred measure but for practical purposes it is not feasible to use other than public perceptions if one wishes to get at the behavior of more than a very few legislators. Activities of executive oversight, for example, are mostly not recorded in any formal sense in African countries like Ghana. Questions on the floor of the house are, but that is usually the end of the story. Certain committees (including the public accounts committee) have begun to play an important role in oversight in Ghana and systematic measurement of individual MPs' contributions to those could potentially be conducted, although it was not

within the means of the present project. Visits to ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) are not documented in any fashion; neither are constituency-level inspections of ongoing projects and activities that the executive is responsible for.

Legislative activities are equally shrouded in, if not secrecy, obscurity. Beyond the attendance register and statements or amendments made on the floor during debates, the activities (or lack thereof) of individual MPs in the legislative process are not registered. When it comes to constituency service, as well as taking care of constituents in their role as 'father/mother of the constituency', there are virtually no indicators that could even function as proxies. In conclusion, in all areas of the MPs' varying responsibilities a behavioral approach would necessitate recording of primary data by way of effectively shadowing individual legislators from morning to night over a given period. Even if this is doable in principle, it would be prohibitively expensive and hence not feasible in more than a very limited number of cases. Those few (two or three) would have to be carefully selected in a strategic sense to ensure that the variation among MPs on theoretically interesting variables is included in the very small sample.

As a first step towards such selection, and in order to create a dataset for further analysis of MPs-citizens accountability relationships, ten out of Ghana's 230 constituencies were selected for intensive surveying of citizens' perceptions and attitudes.[1] Ghana is a presidential democracy with single-member constituencies and single plurality rules for elections to legislative office, and as predicted by theory, has a stable two-party system. There are a few smaller parties that usually win two to four seats. The ten constituencies were selected based on a number of variables that we expect to be important in terms of representativeness as well as for variation on the dependent variable. First, the ten constituencies are divided approximately equally between incumbents from each of the two main parties. For each of the main parties, we also selected one safe haven constituency, defined as one in which the party has consistently won 70 percent of the votes or more in the elections since 1996:[2] Ho West in the Volta region and Kwabre East in Ashanti region. Beyond that, we strategically selected constituencies that are competitive to varying degrees, all the way to those which have become swing constituencies: Ablekumah South in the capital Accra and Cape Coast constituency in the Central region. In making these selections we made a conscious effort also to get as much geographical variation as possible, as well as rural-urban spread and ethno-linguistic representation. We also wanted to sample the behavior of the largest minor party, also representing a long-standing northern tradition in Ghanaian politics: Bolgatanga constituency. We can in no way claim that the selected constituencies are representative of the total sample of 230 constituencies, but at the same time, they should capture much, if not all, of the variation in terms of citizens- representative accountability relationships.

For example, we expect accountability relationships to be influenced in important ways by the level of competition. In safe havens, candidates of the incumbent party face no real threat of being 'thrown out' by the electorate in the national polls. Rather, the pivotal events are the primary elections in which, to date, only party constituency executives and party polling

---

[1] For further discussion of the methodology used for the selection of the constituencies, including considerations of Ghana's political history, see Lindberg and Morrison (2005, 2008).

[2] The first legislative election in November 1992 was boycotted by the opposition after disagreements over the fairness of the presidential elections held earlier the same year.

station executives are allowed to take part. This group has over the past electoral cycles been around one hundred individuals per constituency. Hence, we would expect candidates to be held accountable much more closely by the local party executives than by ordinary people in these areas. Election campaigns for incumbent MPs in safe havens are more or less only about mobilization; that is, bringing out the vote for the party's presidential candidate.[3] In this type of strategic configuration, candidates (and his/her party) can be relatively sure (with a probability equal to the percentage of votes the party normally receives in that area) that an individual voter is going to vote for them and their presidential candidate if the voter just makes the effort to go to the polls. Hence, there is less need for either individualized, that is highly targeted and thus private goods through clientelistic networks, or for monitoring and other enforcement activities. Club goods for the communities and/or collective goods for the constituency should be a preferred strategy.

The situation is different in a highly contested constituency under conditions of general relative poverty as is the case in much of Africa. Particular local communities that are strongholds for a specific candidate may be treated in much the same way as safe havens, but most areas are not. In a contested constituency the pivotal voter is the swing voter and candidates ultimately would prefer to be able to identify potential swing voters, find out their preferences and target clientelistic, private goods to them in ways that make monitoring and enforcement possible. This of course creates enormous costs for candidates in terms of organization but they have little choice unless they have been able to source comparatively large funds for their election campaign activities. Everything being equal, thus, we would expect a higher incidence of clientelistic practices in contested constituencies where the outcome of the election is unknown.

Once the ten constituencies were selected based on the criteria discussed above, a random sample of potential voters (everyone above the age of 18) was drawn using a two-stage procedure. First, a random selection of 16 electoral areas was drawn from the polling station register (with distance rule applied to ensure geographical spread within each constituency). In each electoral area, a random selection of ten potential voters was identified using standard household survey methodology (essentially using the same protocol as the Afrobarometer survey). This generated a sample of 160 respondents in each constituency and a total sample of 1,600 potential voters.

Performance of the MPs in these ten constituencies was measured using a battery of questions where citizens were asked to evaluate the incumbent. The performance in terms of public goods was measured with two questions: one asking how well, or how badly the incumbent had been doing in terms of executive oversight ('monitoring the president and his government'); and the other question asking about the incumbent's legislative performance ('making laws for the country'). Club goods performance was measured by a question asking how well or how badly the respondents thought the incumbent had done over the past years in

[3] The extent to which safe havens exist in African countries varies widely both between countries and between different regions in the same country, as do turnout rates in general. In some countries mobilization is a major issue in virtually all constituencies (e.g. Mali with an average turnout in national elections typically hovering around 30 %), but on average turnout has been relatively high (67% in elections judged to be credible by international and local elections observers) in Africa's national elections since 1989 (Lindberg 2009c, 30).

terms of constituency service ('delivering community and constituency development'), while private goods performance was measure by a question asking how well or badly the incumbent had done in terms of 'providing personal assistance'. In all cases the respondents were given the options: 'very badly, badly, neither bad nor well, well, and very well'. The calculation of constituency means as well as percentages, rating the incumbent in terms of the bad/very bad, or well/very well ratings and producing rankings out of these measures (as displayed in Table 1), is relatively straightforward.

Measuring and producing the equivalent measure of clientelism is a little more tricky. Clientelism is potentially a socially less acceptable practice and there is a risk of underreporting. It is also uncertain which indicators more truthfully measure the combination of extensiveness – meaning how many are involved in patron-client relations. Rather than arguing for one particular indicator as better than others, it seems more reasonable to accept that political clientelism can take different forms for different individuals. The objective here is to find a reasonable way of comparing the pervasiveness of clientelism in different parts of Ghana, and in constituencies with different levels of competition. The strategy chosen has two elements.

Table 1: MPs' performance in selected constituencies

Constituency	Type	Personal Assistance "Very/Bad"	Private Goods Perf* (0=Low)	Private Goods Rank (1=High)	Private Goods Category	Consti-tuency Service "Very/Bad"	Club Goods Perf.** (0=Low)	Club Goods Rank (1=High)	Club Goods Category	Law-Making "Very/Bad"	Executive Oversight "Very/Bad"	Public Goods Perf.*** (0=Low)	Public Goods Rank (1=High)	Public Goods Category
Tamale C	Intermed.	37.1%	2.15	2	High	26.5%	2.48	1	High	12.8%	11.0%	2.81	1	High
	N	*52 (140)*	(.119)			*41 (155)*	(.110)			*181 (141)*	*14 (127)*	(.082)		
Ho West	Safe	38.7%	2.08	3	Medium	30.8%	2.36	3	High	7.0%	15.3%	2.67	2	High
	N	*41 (106)*	(.114)			*45 (146)*	(.095)			*8 (115)*	*11 (72)*	(.061)		
Kwabre East	Safe	45.9%	1.88	6	Medium	47.7%	1.86	5	Medium	14.2%	14.8%	2.41	3	High
	N	*50 (109)*	(.113)			*74 (155)*	(.110)			*19 (134)*	*16 (108)*	(.071)		
Bolgatanga	Contested	18.8%	2.59	1	High	24.8%	2.43	2	High	19.2%	17.4%	2.52	4	High
	N	*25 (133)*	(.092)			*36 (145)*	(.094)			*24 (125)*	*16 (92)*	(.084)		
Jaman S	Intermed.	29.4%	1.93	4	Medium	28.5%	2.04	4	Medium	11.4%	15.7%	2.32	5	High
	N	*40 (136)*	(.079)			*45 (158)*	(.074)			*16 (140)*	*19 (121)*	(.056)		
Akim Swedru	Safe	63.8%	1.14	10	Low	47.7%	1.60	8	Low	23.4%	26.9%	2.04	6	Medium
	N	*83 (130)*	(.105)			*73 (153)*	(.104)			*32 (137)*	*36 (134)*	(.086)		
Evalue-G.	Intermed.	64.6%	1.21	9	Low	65.6%	1.29	9	Low	34.4%	36.1%	1.78	8	Low
	N	*95 (147)*	(.104)			*101 (154)*	(.107)			*45 (131)*	*43 (119)*	(.085)		
Ablekumah S	Contested	52.0%	1.61	7	Low	46.4%	1.83	6	Medium	37.5%	32.0%	1.97	8	Low
		51 (98)	(.129)			*65 (140)*	(.108)			*45 (120)*	*31 (97)*	(.096)		
Kpone/Kat	Intermed.	44.9%	1.91	5	Medium	50.3%	1.62	7	Low	39.1%	32.1%	1.88	9	Low
	N	*53 (118)*	(.122)			*72 (143)*	(.116)			*34 (87)*	*26 (81)*	(.106)		
Cape Coast	Contested	67.1%	1.22	8	Low	63.4%	1.20	10	Low	44.5%	48.8%	1.57	10	Low
	N	*96 (143)*	(.117)			*97 (153)*	(.111)			*65 (146)*	*60 (123)*	(.092)		
	Total	46.5%	1.76			43.2%	1.87			24.0%	25.3%	2.20		
	N	*586 (1260)*	*1,260*			*649 (1502)*	*1,502*			*306 (1276)*	*272 (1074)*	*1343*		
	Chi2/Anova-F	210.745	19.99			208.487	19.83			171.748	173.225	25.15		
	p	*.000*	*.000*			*.000*	*.000*			*.000*	*.000*	*.000*		

* Calculated as means of performance along the 2 public goods dimensions if missing values are 1 or 0; analyzed using Anova; values in brackets are standard errors; significance is F-value.

Source: Lindberg's own survey data

The first is to first use a battery of questions in the survey using a ‘normalization’ protocol derived from criminology in order to counteract tendencies of underreporting socially less acceptable practices.[4] Selecting the five most direct of these questions, and calculating the average response rate indicating clientelism then lays the foundation for an index. This first component consists of answers to five questions indicating to what extent clientelism is present and whether the respondent perceives that it has increased over the past eight years. The first question asks if the respondent perceives that more people ‘got small chops’ during the elections campaign in 2004, compared to the 2000 campaign. ‘Chops’, and ‘to chop’, are local and universally understood expressions denoting clientelistic exchanges. The second question asks if the respondent personally knows more people who got something in clientelistic exchange in 2004, compared to 2000, and the third question is the answer to whether the respondent was engaged in a clientelistic exchange.[5] The final two questions, asked in August 2008, pertain to expectations about the prevalence of clientelism in the 2008 election campaign.

Table 2 reports on the means and significant differences of means for each of these five measures across the ten constituencies. The figures reported are the percentages of respondents giving the answer indicating the highest level of clientelism. These comparisons also testify that the ‘profile’ differences between constituencies tend to be relatively small, since a constituency that scores higher than another on one of the five measures also tends to score higher on the other four. The composite index is therefore constructed as the average across the five measures using the numerical value of each response code (values on each measure ranging from 0 to 4). A higher value indicates more political clientelism. It seems reasonable that respondents from constituencies where political clientelism is more common and widespread than in others, will score higher on a composite measure like this without systematic bias due to possible varying profiles of clientelism.

[4] First, the questions purposely treat clientelism as something that would be normal, showing that the interviewer speaks about it openly. The initial questions ask what the respondent thinks about clientelism in general – in this context Ghana – with subsequent questions moving down to the constituency, the local area, people the respondent knows, family and friends, then the respondent.

[5] To be precise, these questions indicate whether the respondent witnesses and is subject to attempts to establish clientelistic exchanges. We cannot tell whether each such attempt of a politician or his/her party worker to create political loyalty by distribution of personalized goods is successful or not. But assuming that some portion of attempts are successful and that this rate of success is relatively constant across these constituencies, measuring attempts to establish clientelistic relations should be a useful proxy for actual clientelism. Even so, we must be aware that the data are likely to overestimate the prevalence of *successful* clientelism.

Table 2: Clientelism in selected constituencies

		Compared to 2000, Did More People Get 'Small Chops' in 2004?	Do You Personally Know More People Who Got Something in 2004, than in 2000?	Did You Receive 'Small Chops' in the 2004 Campaign?	Do You Expect People to Get 'Small Chops' 2008?	Expect 2008 To Involve More 'Small Chops' Than 2004?	Composite Measure of Clientism*	Did You Personally Know Anyone Who Got 'Small Chops' in 2004?	How Many Did You Know That Got 'Small Chops' in 2004? (>100 set at 100)	Clientism Index**	Clientism Rank
Constituency	Type	*"Much more"*	*"Yes, many more"*	*"Yes"*	*"Yes, many"*	*"Much more"*	*(Higher =More)*	"Yes"	*(harmonic mean)*	*(O=Nove, 10=Max)*	*(1 = least)*
Jaman S	Intermediate	26.3%	36.2%	5.1%	35.9%	46.9%	1.66	38%	4.44	3.33	1
N		*26 (99)*	*34 (94)*	*8 (156)*	*47 (131)*	*53 (113)*	*(.089)*		*(28.6)*		
Kwabre East	Safe	20.0%	34.1%	5.2%	42.6%	61.8%	1.78	33%	6.37	3.88	2
N		*17 (85)*	*29 (85)*	*8 (155)*	*52 (122)*	*63 (102)*	*(.083)*		*(31.1)*		
Ho West	Safe	29.6%	33.9%	5.8%	33.3%	54.7%	1.99	62%	3.50	4.14	3
N		*16 (54)*	*20 (59)*	*9 (155)*	*23 (69)*	*29 (53)*	*(.086)*		*(28.2)*		
Evalue-Gwira	Intermediate	31.6%	31.2%	6.7%	49.5%	54.1%	1.84	33%	7.01	4.15	4
N		*24 (76)*	*24 (77)*	*10 (149)*	*45 (91)*	*40 (74)*	*(.087)*		*(33.3)*		
Kpone/Kat	Intermediate	49.5%	55.6%	5.7%	41.4%	67.7%	2.05	53%	4.90	4.65	5
N		*46 (93)*	*45 (81)*	*9 (158)*	*46 (111)*	*65 (96)*	*(.082)*		*(31.4)*		
Akim Swedru	Safe	37.0%	39.8%	8.6%	40.4%	47.1%	1.88	51%	5.87	4.89	6
N		*34 (92)*	*33 (83)*	*13 (151)*	*40 (99)*	*41 (87)*	*(.091)*		*(31.6)*		
Bolgatanga	Contested	42.1%	46.2%	13.3%	59.0%	61.8%	2.10	50%	6.96	5.55	7
N		*(40 (95)*	*43 (93)*	*20 (150)*	*72 (122)*	*63 (102)*	*(.077)*		*(17.8)*		
Tamale C	Intermediate	60.3%	60.2%	7.6%	67.4%	72.8%	2.26	55%	8.58	6.96	8
N		*73 (121)*	*74 (123)*	*12 (157)*	*87 (129)*	*91 (125)*	*(.072)*		*(38.7)*		
Ablekumah S	Contested	50.6%	67.1%	8.8%	70.2%	65.7%	2.23	50%	11.10	7.78	9
N		*43 (85)*	*55 (82)*	*13 (148)*	*46 (111)*	*69 (105)*	*(.073)*		*(39.1)*		
Cape Coast	Contested	45.3%	51.8%	15.3%	70.1%	82.2%	2.41	69%	8.60	8.30	10
N		*53 (117)*	*59 (114)*	*24 (157)*	*96 (137)*	*106 (129)*	*(.066)*		*(44.1)*		
	Total	40.6%	46.7%	8.2%	52.4%	62.9%	2.03	49%	6.4	5.36	
N		*372 (917)*	*416 (891)*	*126 (1,536)*	*593 (1,132)*	*620 (986)*	*1,158*	*1.147*	*414*	*1,158*	
Chi2		65.265	92.538	22.673	110.318	73.362	F=9.53	58.308	F=5.33		
p		*.000*	*.000*	*.007*	*.000*	*.000*	*.000*	*.000*	*.000*		

*Composite of the 5 indicators, value for each of them ranging from 0 to 4. The composite calculates the mean value for each individual if non-missing values are 3 or fewer out of the 5, then aggregates to constituency level; Anova F and significance; figures in brackets are standard errors; the expected mean is 2.0.

** Index = clientelism composite measure + (mean of how many known to have gotten 'small chops' x share of sample who knew at least one person)

Source: Lindberg's own survey data

This resulting composite measure says little about its extension in society, however. The extension of networks has a different conceptual logic and we therefore combine the composite measure with a separate measure of extension. This is the second element in our strategy. The extension measure uses the response rate of yes-answers to the question of whether the respondent knows anyone who was involved in political clientelism (i.e. measuring the extension of individuals indirectly observing clientelism) and multiplies it by the average number of individuals that respondents said they knew who had de facto 'got something' in the clientelistic exchange involving the incumbent MP as patron. The resulting measure should be a relatively effective proxy for actual extension of clientelism in a particular constituency. There are many possible ways of aggregating the two resulting composite components of the final clientelism index but as a conservative approach it was decided to give them equal conceptual weight and therefore simply add them together.

The result can be seen in the last two columns of Table 2. The first of these two columns provides the index score, and the second shows the rank order of the constituencies. The rationale for using the rank order is that no matter how well justified these index scores may be, there is a substantial amount of uncertainty in the measures and the interval measures probably give an undue impression of precision. It would be intellectually dishonest to treat them as known entities that can be analyzed using methods designed for precise measures such as regression analysis. But we can be much more certain about the position of the constituencies relative to each other (even if we know little about the distances between them), and therefore the relative ranking position is used as the main measure for the analysis.

4 Performance: expected variation and puzzles

In Table 3 the relative rankings of the ten constituencies have been used to present the results. The responses on provision of public goods are found in the first column, and the following column gives the relative rankings used to sort the constituencies from 'High' to 'Low', which in this case represents best to worst. In the second column, the index figures have been transformed into cross-hatched (green), light dotted (yellow), and dark grey cells. Cross-hatching indicates that the average respondent over the two composite measures lies above the theoretical median (2.0 in numerical terms, which substantially indicates a neutral response; i.e. that the MP has done neither badly, nor well in the provision of these public goods). Light dotted cells indicate that the average response is statistically indistinguishable from the median response, and dark grey indicates that it is significantly lower. The same form of presentation is then used for the rest of the measures with rank order first and shaded cells second.

Table 3: Categorical comparison

Constituency	Type	Public Goods Rank (1=Highest)	Public Goods Category	Club Goods Rank (1=Highest)	Club Goods Category	Private Goods Rank (1=Lowest)	Private Goods Category	Clientelism Rank (1 =Lowest)	Clientelism Category	Outcome vs Expectations
Tamale C	Intermediate	1	High	1	High	2	Neutral	8	High	Puzzle 1
Ho West	Safe	2	High	3	High	3	Neutral	3	Low	Positive (Expected)
Kwabre East	Safe	3	High	5	Neutral	6	Neutral	2	Low	Positive (Expected)
Bolgatanga	Contested	4	High	2	High	1	Low	7	Medium	Positive (Expected)
Jaman S	Intermediate	5	High	4	Neutral	4	Neutral	1	Low	Positive (Expected)
Akim Swedru	Safe	6	Neutral	8	Low	10	High	6	Medium	Mixed (Unexpected)
Evalue-Gwira	Intermediate	8	Low	9	Low	9	High	4	Low	Puzzle 2
Ablekumah S	Contested	8	Low	6	Neutral	7	High	9	High	Negative (Expected)
Kpone/Kat	Intermediate	9	Low	7	Low	5	Neutral	5	Medium	Negative (Expected)
Cape Coast	Contested	10	Low	10	Low	8	High	10	High	Negative (Expected)

In interpreting the resulting picture, the fast track is to just look at the columns with the cell shading. The theoretical expectation is that cross-hatched (green) cells (i.e. relatively good performance) in the first two columns (public and club goods) would be associated with light dotted (yellow) or dark grey colors in the second two columns. The logic is based on the assumption that MPs have constraints on time and resources and need to prioritize. A strategy based on provision of collective and club goods would then necessitate less emphasis on provision of private goods and clientelistic relationships. Public goods take time for the legislator which detracts from the capacity to engage too much in direct private goods provision. Club goods, however, are not only costly in terms of time but also consume potentially large resources. In Ghana, the MPs not only lobby MDAs for development projects for their communities but also pay directly for bore holes, school buildings materials, construction of markets, scholarship schemes for gifted students to go on to secondary school, sanitation projects and so on. Some of the funds come from what is known as the MPs' share of the Common Fund, the Ghana Education Trust fund, and in recent years debt relief from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries agreement. But MPs routinely use large sums of their personal funds as well in order to meet demands for club goods of this nature. Hence, the more a legislator spends on public and club goods, the less time and resources will be left over to invest in private goods and clientelistic relationships. That is not to say that one should expect legislators to spend their time and money exclusively on collective and club goods. Most, if not all, of them can be expected to pursue mixed strategies and that is also

what the data indicates. In all the ten constituencies analyzed here, incumbent MPs do just that and the differences reflect relative emphasis.

In seven out the ten constituencies, we find the expected pattern, where incumbents who pursue a strategy more oriented towards provision of collective and club goods give much less emphasis to giving personal assistance and gifts and engaging in political clientelism, and the reverse. Indicating that we did a good job in the strategic selection of the constituencies, we find four among these seven constituencies that follow the first pattern and have a relatively fair provision of public and club goods while emphasizing clientelism less; and three cases (Ablekumah South, Kpone/Katamanso, and Cape Coast) displaying the expected negative relationship (low levels of collective and club goods but high levels of private goods and clientelism). Akim Swedru is a safe haven constituency displaying a mixed picture that is difficult to interpret beyond the lack of a clear pattern.

The four constituencies with a positive but expected relationship (Ho West, Kwabre East, Bolgatanga, and Jaman South) show an interesting pattern. First, two out of the three selected safe havens are found in this group suggesting that very low levels of competition tend to relieve MPs, if not necessarily from the pressures to provide clientelistic goods, at least from the absolute need to engage in private goods provision on a larger scale to get reelected. It may also be that these MPs are forced to spend so much on their primaries where it is *de facto* decided who will become MP, that they are simply forced to focus on the less expensive strategy of collective goods provision during the official election campaign. This may be exaggerated by the pressure on them to mobilize (rather than persuade) party supporters to turn out in larger numbers on election day in order to strengthen the support for the party's presidential candidate in the simultaneous executive poll. From a candidate's rational perspective, this makes sense. In a safe haven, the candidate is guaranteed to win, so using limited resources on expensive clientelistic strategies in order to improve the vote return from say 76 to 82 percent should be considered waste. These resources will have much higher marginal utility if saved until the election season is over and can be invested in either small scale club goods for communities or private goods for individuals – in both cases delivering on election promises and signaling in symbolic terms that he/she is 'taking care' of the constituents. So according to this reasoning, the candidate should spend as close as possible to zero on the official campaign.

However, if the party's presidential candidate does not win, this implies a huge loss of resources available for constituency service and also patronage, especially in poor African countries such as Ghana where state resources are decisive. This makes it rational for the candidate to use some personal funds in order to enhance the chances of the party retaining executive power. Yet, the stakes will not be as high for a candidate in a safe haven as in a competitive constituency. Safe haven voters tend to be less elastic in their vote choice and more forgiving of the fact that their representative cannot bring home 'pork' and provide clientelistic goods when out of power, compared to voters in swing constituencies. In the end, candidates in safe havens are unlikely to face serious challenges to their reelection in the next election even if their party's presidential candidate is defeated. It is different for candidates in contested constituencies, whose reelection is much more likely to be dependent on having the access to pork, patronage and resources for clientelistic networks that is provided by being the party in power. In the end, the outcomes, in terms of balancing and prioritizing between provision of collective and private goods and the level of clientelism in these constituencies,

are consistent with the expectations from the theory discussed above. Yet, correlation is not causation, as we know. In order to validate these claims about the causal mechanisms involved, we need to investigate at least one of these cases more closely by means of political ethnography.

One constituency in the group of 'good cases' – Bolgatanga, held by one of the small parties (PNC) – is interesting. It is a contested area where PNC's hold on the seat is very tenuous. We would thus have predicted a higher level of spending on clientelism than we see. A likely explanation for the relatively lower levels of private goods provision and clientelism in this case is that small parties simply tend to be very poor. While it is possible for an MP from a small party to get some development projects approved by MDAs in exchange for loyalty when it comes to voting in the legislature, they do not have access to big party coffers, kick-backs from contracts, and other sources of income that can be used to sustain clientelistic networks.

The four mixed or negative cases more or less mirror the positive cases. There is an unexpected instance with one safe haven constituency (Akim Swedru) where the incumbent has engaged in more private goods provision and clientelism (although less pronounced in the latter case) than seems necessary given the safe haven nature. It is less strongly a safe haven than the other two, however, and that may explain the somewhat mixed picture in this case. Two others are hotly contested constituencies which is exactly where we would expect a more pervasive clientelism. The last is a semi-contested constituency that has been targeted by the other party as one constituency they would try to take, hence a need for the incumbent to respond by increasing the amount of private goods and clientelism in order to make swing voters change their vote. The outcome once again tallies with our theoretical expectations but the actual causal mechanisms may or may not be consistent with the explanation. Hence, there is a need to scrutinize further the political linkages between representative and citizens in one of these highly contested constituencies.

We end with two real puzzles. For one constituency (Tamale Central), the results indicate that the MP is providing relatively high levels of everything across the board, and in the other (Ewalu-Gwira), it is the opposite – the incumbent is apparently doing very little of anything. There may be purely idiosyncratic reasons for these two puzzles and, once again, there may be as yet uncovered but theoretically relevant reasons. We would expect, however, that the incumbent in the second case (Ewalue-Gwira) would lose his seat in the 2008 elections which is also what happened. Hence, whatever the reasons for the peculiarity of the case, it seems that the ultimate outcome was predictable and hence the case is less interesting in terms of theory building. The Tamale case is interesting from this point of view, however. The incumbent got reelected in the last elections and this raises several interesting issues. Why did the incumbent feel the need to pursue an across-the-board strategy? How was it possible to pursue the provision of collective and club goods in a highly clientelistic environment? Why did the provision of private and clientelistic goods not crowd out other strategies? Has the incumbent found innovative ways of combining these strategies or even allowing for private goods provision to somehow assist in the provision of club and collective goods in the eyes of the citizens? These are questions that necessitate a closer investigation into the dynamics of politics in this particular constituency.

5 Conclusion

This paper has outlined the contours of a new empirical method of measuring political strategies employed by legislators in single-member district systems using survey data that could be collected on a cross-national basis. Building on established theories of clientelistic politics and incentives created by differing level of competition in poor, new democracies, the analysis also shows significant variation in levels of clientelism and in the focus on provision of private goods as the main reelection strategy. This variation, within one and the same country, is a finding that runs contrary to much of the established literature on African politics, especially the finding that four out of ten (almost half) of the incumbent MPs prioritize collective and club goods, associated with more programmatic strategies, in their activities as MPs seeking reelection. Even this relatively close inspection of a few constituencies in one country (Ghana) cannot validate the theoretical claims about causal mechanisms. Nevertheless, the groundwork done with this analysis will permit an informed selection of a few of the typical positive and negative cases for the purposes of a political ethnographic study. Finally, the analysis also identifies a few puzzling outcomes and suggests that not only two typical cases but also one of the puzzling outcomes – provision of collective goods in a highly clientelistic environment – should be included in an in-depth study.

References

Ake, Claude (1993) 'The Unique Case of African Democracy,' *International Affairs* 69: 239-244.

Ake, Claude (1996) *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Ake, Claude (2000) *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa.* Dakar: CODESRIA.

Akinrinade, Sola (1998) 'The Re-Democratization Process in Africa: plus ca change, plus c'est la même' in S. Akinrinade and A. Sesay (eds.) *Africa in the Post-Cold War International System.* London: Pinter.

Barkan, Joel D. (ed.) (2009) *Legislative Power in Emerging African Democracies*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Bratton, Michael (1998) 'Second Elections in Africa', *Journal of Democracy* 9(3): 51-66.

Carothers, Thomas (1997) 'Democracy without Illusions', *Foreign Affairs* 76: 85-99.

Chabal, Patrick, and Jean-Paul Daloz (1999) *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Chege, Michael (1996) 'Between Africa's Extremes' in Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner (eds.) *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*. 2nd edn. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press: 350-7.

Cowen, Michael, and Liisa Laakso (eds.) (2002) *Multiparty Elections in Africa.* Oxford: James Currey.

Diamond, Larry, and Marc Plattner (eds.) (1999) *Democratization in Africa*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Joseph, Richard (1997) 'Democratization in Africa after 1989: Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives', *Comparative Politics* 29(3): 363-382.

Joseph, Richard (1998) 'Africa, 1990-1997: From Abertura to Closure', *Journal of Democracy* 9(2): 3-17.

Lindberg, Staffan I. (2009a) ‘Parliament in Ghana: Cooptation Despite Democratization’, Chapter 5 in Barkan (2009).

Lindberg, Staffan I. (2009b) *Member of the Parliament of Ghana: A Hybrid Institution with Mixed Effects*. Working Paper 2. London: Africa Power and Politics Programme.

Lindberg, Staffan I. (2009c) ‘The Power of Elections Revisited’, Chapter 1 in Staffan I. Lindberg (ed.) *Democratization by Elections: A New Mode of Transition?* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 25-46.

Lindberg, Staffan I. (2010) ‘What accountability pressures do MPs in Africa face and how do they respond? Evidence from Ghana’, *Journal of Modern African Studies* 48(1): 117-142.

Lindberg, Staffan I. and Minion K. C. Morrison (2005) ‘Exploring Voter Alignments in Africa: Core and Swing Voters in Ghana’, *Journal of Modern African Studies* 43(4): 1-22.

Lindberg, Staffan I. and Minion K.C. Morrison (2008) ‘Are African Voters Really Ethnic or Clientelistic?: Survey Evidence from Ghana’, *Political Science Quarterly* 123(1): 95-122.

Mbembe, A. (1995) ‘Complex Transformations in the Late Twentieth Century’, *Africa Demos* 3: 28-30.

van de Walle, Nicolas (2002) ‘Elections Without Democracy: Africa’s Range of Regimes’, *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 66-80.

Weghorst, Keith and Staffan I. Lindberg (2009) ‘The African Swing Voter: Evidence from Ghana’. Paper presented at African Studies Association’s Annual Meeting, November 19-22, New Orleans.