

Constituency Service in Ghana

Joseph Luna*

August 20, 2015

Abstract

Constituency service is an important duty for politicians. Numerous scholars argue that this duty is critical for reelection (Fiorina 1977, Fenno 1978). In the African context, constituency service is also important for both electoral and social reasons, but research on this topic primarily focuses on *national* legislators. Based on my fieldwork observations, I argue that citizens in sub-Saharan Africa often turn to *local* politicians for a variety of reasons. Drawing from a survey administered to 2809 Ghanaian cocoa farmers, I employ a non-parametric matching design to determine which factors drive these farmers to seek help from various local leaders. I find nuanced results across treatments spanning economic, political and demographic dimensions. The results of this research hold numerous implications for scholars and practitioners.

I. Introduction

Addressing constituent requests is an important task for politicians all over the world. For politicians, meeting these requests can translate into votes and ultimate reelection. Fenno (1978) examines the “home styles” of United States congressmen, detailing the various ways in which they interact with constituents and satisfy their requests. Fiorina (1977) also emphasizes the role congressmen play in “unsticking” the bureaucracy for constituents with

*joseph.luna@post.harvard.edu. Michael Hiscox and Jens Hainmueller courteously permitted my use of data gathered by the Harvard-Ghana Cocoa Team, on which I am a member. Special thanks to the seventy Ghanaians who administered the survey and the 2809 farmers who patiently donated their time. Further special thanks to Abednego Majisi for assistance at the Parliament of Ghana and to the Department of Cooperatives for facilitating focus groups. Please do not circulate.

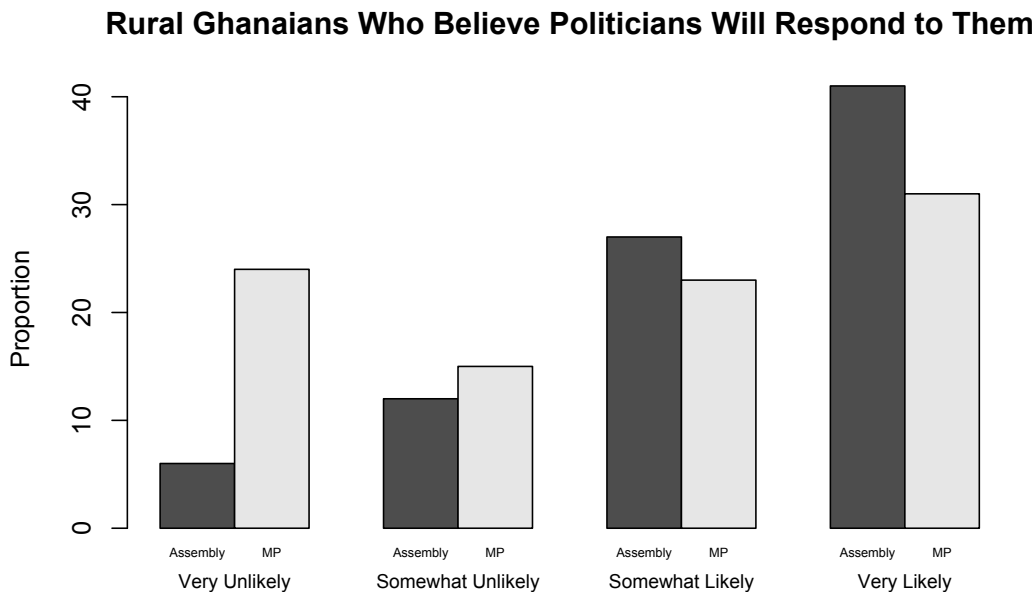


Figure 1: *Rural result of Ghana Afrobarometer Round IV question on the likelihood of local assembly members and MPs listening to a matter of great concern to the community.*

needs. Constituency service has a long history in the comparative context, as well. Hodgkin (1961) discusses the kinship-based role that political parties play in providing services to rural areas in Africa. Several contemporary authors describe how African legislators are compelled to meet constituent requests, though this reduces their ability to attend to legislative tasks in the capital (Lindberg 2010; Barkan et al 2010).

Studies of constituency service in Africa typically assume that national legislators are the most important resource for constituency service. As Figure 1 shows, a larger proportion of Ghanaians reports that their local legislators—not their Members of Parliament—will respond to their requests. This result illustrates the central puzzle. I argue that, in many cases, constituents are more likely to turn to their local politicians for assistance, and scholarly research must distinguish between types of politicians when examining constituency service.

I test this notion with an original survey data gathered from Ghanaian cocoa farmers.

Using non-parametric matching, I investigate how different background characteristics influence whether these farmers bring requests to local politicians, traditional chiefs or national legislators. Section II outlines the relevant literature on political participation. Section III describes the data and survey methodology. Section IV presents testable propositions. Section V explains the multiple-imputation and non-parametric matching methods utilized to draw causal inferences. Section VI analyzes the data. Section VII concludes.

II. Constituency Service

Lindberg (2010) investigates the accountability pressures that Ghanaian MPs face.¹ In Ghana, MPs are responsible for providing personal benefits to constituents in the form of clientelistic goods (Lindberg 2010). Such goods include electricity and formal permits, both of which I test as treatments below. Lindberg (2010) also emphasizes the jobs and benefits that arise during an MP’s electoral campaign, but to whom do constituents turn when it is not an election year? An MP’s portion of the District Assembly Common Fund is a small percentage of the total district budget—as a result, there must exist other methods by which citizens are able to secure desired goods.²

In their African Legislatures Project, Barkan et al (2010) affirm Lindberg’s (2010) finding that constituents prefer representation and constituency service from their legislators over actual legislation and oversight.³ Barkan et al (2010) advance a variety of factors that explain the weakness of African legislatures: limited constitutional powers; poor resources, such as low staff salary; and limited ability for parliamentary committees to oversee ministries.⁴ Additionally, Ghana’s legislators are weakened by a constitutional provision where the President appoints at least half of her Cabinet ministers from Parliament; such a provision discourages

¹Lindberg, Staffan. 2010. “What Accountability Pressures Do MPs in Africa Face and How Do They Respond? Evidence from Ghana.” *Journal of Modern African Studies*. 48(1).

²See also Banful 2010.

³Barkan, Joel; Robert Mattes; Shaheen Mozaffar; and Kimberly Smiddy. 2010. “The African Legislatures Project: First Findings.” *CSSR Working Paper No. 277*.

⁴This final point is confirmed by the author’s interviews with parliamentary clerks in Accra.

parliamentarians from criticizing the executive (Lindberg 2010).

In the African context, ethnicity is a central component in political life. Posner (2005) analyzes the formation and political salience of ethnic cleavages—particularly the linkages between urban and rural co-ethnics—in Zambia.⁵ Bratton et al (2011) underline the intersection of ethnic and economic voting.⁶ Analyzing presidential regime changes in Kenya, Burgess et al (2011) find evidence that road investment is targeted to presidential co-ethnics under autocracy.⁷ On the other hand, Ichino & Nathan (2013) argue that ethnic voting does not operate when voters of a particular ethnicity are in the minority in their immediate geographical area. I test ethnic salience in constituency service below.

The comparative studies above focus primarily on the importance of constituency service to national legislators. Numerous scholars of American politics, however, assert the role of other political actors. Dahl (1961) emphasizes the “spheres of influence” controlled by a municipality’s political elites. In Dahl’s (1961) New Haven, power was decentralized, which gave citizens multiple channels for meeting requests. Verba et al (1995) and Putnam (1993), who focuses on Italy, highlight the role of civic voluntarism in achieving political ends. In other words, power is not solely concentrated in national legislators, and citizens often turn to other political actors to address their needs.

III. Data

This paper is drawn from a 2009 Harvard study on Ghana’s cocoa farmers (Hiscox et al 2009). This study conducted survey experiments on 2809 cocoa farmers to determine the efficacy of a fair-trade cocoa program. Villages in the study with a fair-trade program in place were included in the treatment groups, and were then matched with similar villages

⁵Posner, Daniel. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. (New York: Cambridge University Press.)

⁶Bratton, Michael; Ravi Bhavnani; and Tse-Hsin Chen. 2011. “Voting Intentions in Africa: Ethnic, Economic or Partisan?” *Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 127*.

⁷Burgess, Robin; Remi Jedwab; Edward Miguel; Ameet Morjaria; and Gerard Padro i Miquel. 2011. “Ethnic Favoritism”.

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics*

Region	Districts	Age	% Female	Years of Education	Farms	National Grid
Ashanti	15	52.34	22.49	9.99	2.41	68.35
Brong Ahafo	5	51.76	25.24	8.90	2.08	49.79
Central	14	52.96	15.38	9.47	2.70	33.80
Eastern	18	52.04	16.97	9.08	2.73	59.27
Western	12	46.58	17.06	8.91	2.35	45.86

in the control group. At the individual level, surveyors measured various socioeconomic indicators as well as community-level indicators pertaining to education, water and health outcomes.

Table 1 provides region-level descriptive statistics. The average age of farmers for four of the five regions in the study is just over 50; the age is younger for Western Region. One possible explanation is that the Western Region represents the newest cocoa frontier in Ghana, and new types of trees—which do not require “shade trees” to protect them from the sun—are being planted there. Younger farmers would be more likely to work in this new, less hospitable environment. Ashanti and Brong Ahafo host a higher proportion of female cocoa farmers, possibly owing to the strong matrilineal inheritance culture prevalent amongst the Ashanti people inhabiting those regions. The remaining columns delineate the farmer average years of education, farms cultivated and proportion of households connected to the national electrical grid.

My dependent variable is operationalized in the following multi-part question:

In the last 12 months, how many times have you contacted [LEADER] about an important problem?

Respondents are asked this question several times, substituting a different leader for each question:

- An assemblyman or assemblywoman
- A paramount chief or traditional leader
- A member of parliament

From the survey data, I test the following covariates that could determine to which political leader citizens turn to for assistance:

Background Covariates

- Sex
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Religion

Economic Covariates

- Education
- Property Ownership
- Access to Electricity
- Access to Banking

Social Covariates

- Participation in Social Events
- Association Membership
- Political Interest
- Political Beliefs

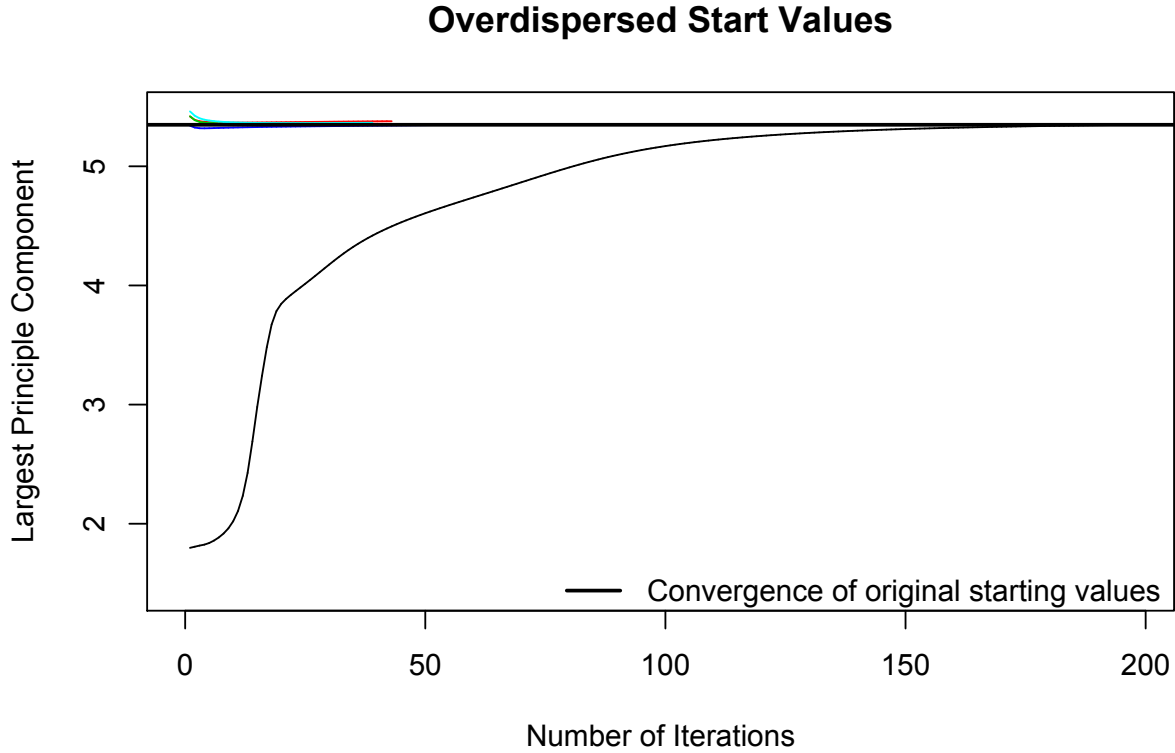


Figure 2: *In this dispersion graph, an imputation procedure is forcibly started at various points to ensure that imputations are not dependent on start values. The colored lines clustered at the top left converge to the same value as the black line, indicating that the multivariate normal has been properly estimated.*

IV. Methodology

To address missingness in the survey data, I apply multiple imputation to generate complete data sets.⁸ As explained by Honaker, King & Blackwell [2012], multiple-imputation procedures assume that data belong to a multivariate normal distribution, and replaces missing data points with points estimated by the distribution.⁹ Figure 2 presents the convergence of my multiply imputed data sets along the first principal component. Proper convergence is achieved.¹⁰ Figure 3 presents distributions for observed and imputed values of two key

⁸Subsequent matching also requires complete data sets.

⁹Honaker, James; Gary King; and Matthew Blackwell. 2012. “Amelia II: A Program for Missing Data.”

¹⁰To achieve such convergence, one must strike the balance between removing enough unnecessary variables to speed up computing time and leaving enough in to properly estimate the multivariate normal. My final pre-matching data sets contained 2809 observations across 153 variables.

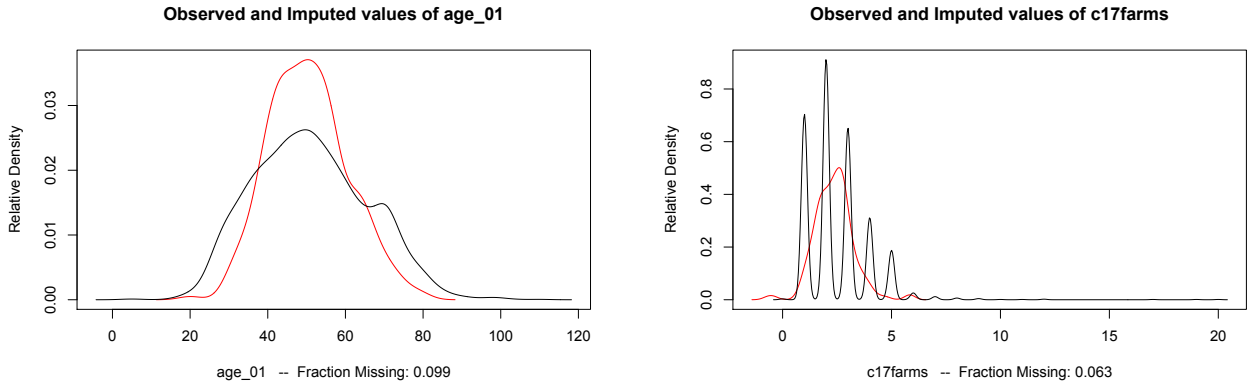


Figure 3: *Comparing imputed and observed distributions for farmer ages and farms cultivated.*

variables of interest, farmer ages and the number of farms they cultivate. The imputed distributions well approximate the observed distributions, and this is true for most other variables in the imputed data sets.

Following multiple imputation, I implement a non-parametric matching framework for each of the treatment conditions to isolate the causal effect of each treatment. As detailed in Ho, Imai, King & Stuart [2011], pre-processing observational data via non-parametric matching reduces model dependence by approximating a randomized experiment, thereby allowing stronger causal inference. Matching procedures create subsets of data that are distributed *as if random*, where a portion of that data is subject to a *treatment*, while the remaining portion of the data subset serves as the *control*.¹¹ Matching procedures also allow one to account for important background covariates, and ensure that treatment and control subsets are balanced on those covariates. In terms of a matching procedure, I select the “genetic” matching procedure. Diamond & Sekhon [2012] explain genetic matching as an iterative, evolutionary algorithm that utilizes weighted Mahalanobis distances to achieve the best levels of balance across pre-treatment control variables.¹²

Table 2 presents balance indicators for my sixteen treatments. I ensure matching balance

¹¹Ho, Daniel; Kosuke Imai; Gary King; and Elizabeth Stuart. 2011. “MatchIt: Nonparametric Preprocessing for Parametric Causal Inference.”

¹²Diamond, Alexis and Jasjeet Sekhon. 2012. “Genetic Matching for Estimating Causal Effects: A General Multivariate Matching Method for Achieving Balance in Observational Studies.”

Table 2: *Matching Balance*

Treatment	Covariates	Treated Means	Control Means	Treated Set	Control Set	Unmatched
Religion	Age	50.90	50.88	1538	994	277
	Sex	1.19	1.20			
	Ethnicity	-24.83	-24.83			
Age	Sex	1.26	1.26	1466	814	529
	Ethnicity	-46.90	-46.92			
Ethnicity	Age	51.25	51.26	1301	1361	147
	Sex	1.21	1.21			
Sex	Age	57.29	57.28	534	1144	1131
	Ethnicity	-32.44	-32.48			
Legal Title	Age	52.09	52.09	1058	1249	502
	Sex	1.19	1.19			
	Ethnicity	-50.96	-50.96			
Farms	Age	51.02	51.00	1231	1133	445
	Sex	1.14	1.14			
	Ethnicity	-35.64	-35.62			
Education	Age	50.58	50.59	1389	983	437
	Sex	1.11	1.11			
	Ethnicity	-36.04	-36.04			
National Grid	Age	53.21	53.22	1158	1119	532
	Sex	1.20	1.20			
	Ethnicity	-31.16	-31.20			
House Size	Age	53.63	53.58	1229	1172	408
	Sex	1.19	1.19			
	Ethnicity	-39.78	-39.74			
Funeral Spending	Age	52.53	52.54	1099	1173	537
	Sex	1.17	1.17			
	Ethnicity	-43.15	-43.12			
Bank Account	Age	51.32	51.32	882	1175	752
	Sex	1.10	1.10			
	Ethnicity	-43.86	-43.84			
Susu Account	Age	48.29	48.21	303	851	1655
	Sex	1.21	1.20			
	Ethnicity	-56.16	-53.11			
Group Member	Age	51.03	51.03	1089	1230	490
	Sex	1.19	1.19			
	Ethnicity	-31.98	-31.98			
Political Interest	Age	48.59	48.60	1014	1189	606
	Sex	1.17	1.17			
	Ethnicity	-39.39	-38.74			
NDC Support	Age	48.84	48.84	1105	1332	372
	Sex	1.14	1.14			
	Ethnicity	-44.32	-40.91			
Individual Fate	Age	52.84	52.85	244	811	1754
	Sex	1.22	1.22			
	Ethnicity	-33.45	-33.65			

Variable	I	II	III	IV
Religion	-0.88 0.37	-0.88 0.37	-0.87 0.37	-0.84 0.37
Age		0.0050 0.013	0.0087 0.013	0.0088 0.013
Sex			-0.64 0.47	-0.63 0.47
Ethnicity				-0.0010 0.00092

Figure 4: *Treatment: Protestant/Pentecostal membership on visits to assembly member. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 1538. Control: 994.*

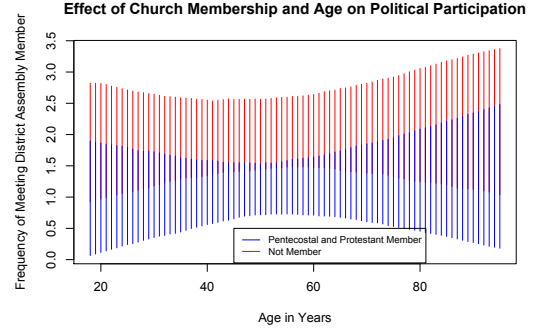


Figure 5: *Simulated results of effect of church membership and age on frequency of visiting local assembly member.*

on the three pre-treatment variables of farmer age, sex and ethnicity. Plausibly none of these can be affected by a given treatment.¹³

V. Analysis

I focus primarily on the treatment effect of the above variables on frequency of visits to the local assembly member, Member of Parliament and the chief. Of the sixteen testable questions listed above, the treatments of ethnicity, number of farms, size of house, governing-party (NDC) support and beliefs about individual fate provided little conclusive evidence concerning to whom Ghanaian farmers turn to for political help. In my post-matching analysis, I employ ordinary least squares (OLS) regression.¹⁴

¹³For the treatments of age, sex and ethnicity, I only match over the remaining two pre-treatment variables

¹⁴Imai, Kosuke; Gary King; and Olivia Lau. 2007. “ls: Least Squares Regression for Continuous Dependent Variables” in Kosuke Imai, Gary King, and Olivia Lau, “Zelig: Everyone’s Statistical Software,” <http://gking.harvard.edu/zelig>. Normally, these dependent variables would qualify as Poisson event-count variables; however, with multiple imputation, non-integer and negative values are imputed on the underlying distribution, which would not allow the use of a Poisson framework. However, matching reduces model dependence, so I am able to apply an OLS framework and achieve the same results.

Table 3: *Effect of Age on Frequency of Visiting Local Assembly Member*

Variable	I	II	III
Age	0.78	0.86	0.85
	0.39	0.37	0.38
Sex		-0.77	-0.73
		0.44	0.44
Ethnicity			-0.0025
			0.00085

A. Background Treatments

A.1 Religion

Figures 4 and 5 present the treatment results of membership in Protestant or pentecostal churches on how often one approaches a political leader. A negative treatment effect was found for visiting one’s local assembly member. It is possible that membership in these churches allows one to receive benefits that non-members would typically seek from political leaders. Figure 4 details the statistical results with the appropriate controls and Figure 5 presents simulated results of the effect of church membership and age on the number of times one approaches a local assembly member in a year. The vertical bars indicate 95% confidence intervals, and the likelihood of visits increases with age and non-membership.

A.2 Age

Table 3 presents results for the treatment effect of age on the frequency with which one approaches local assembly members for political assistance. The age variable is operationalized in a binary fashion, with respondents aged 50 and over considered to receive the “treatment”. This result resembles Campbell [2005] in that older members of the rural population have more influence over district assembly members. This finding corresponds to the notion that elders are respected in rural African society. The main treatment finding remains robust to the addition of pre-treatment controls, gender and ethnicity.

Variable	I	II	III
Gender	-0.93 0.55	-0.91 0.56	-0.92 0.56
Age		-0.0044 0.020	-0.0084 0.020
Ethnicity			-0.0041 0.0015

Figure 6: *Effect of being female on visits to assembly member. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 534. Control: 1144.*

Variable	I	II	III	IV
Title	1.89 0.67	1.88 0.67	1.89 0.67	1.85 0.67
Age		0.0058 0.024	0.012 0.024	0.011 0.024
Sex			-1.07 0.89	-1.04 0.89
Ethnicity				-0.0041 0.0016

Figure 8: *Effect of holding formal title on visits to chief. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 534. Control: 1144.*

A.3 Sex

Figures 6 and 7 present results for the treatment effect of being female on approaching a district assembly member. Treatment effects for women approaching other political leaders were neither strong nor robust. In my field observations, women often report that district–assembly members are not responsive to their concerns. As the figure above demonstrates, women, represented by the blue bars, approach their local assembly member less often than men. Combined with the finding on the age treatment variable, this result suggests that village politics is still controlled by male elders.

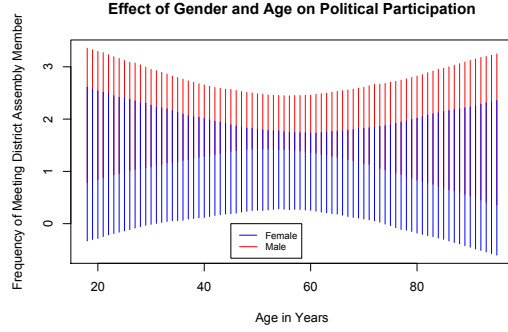


Figure 7: *Simulated results of effect of gender and age on frequency of visiting local assembly member.*

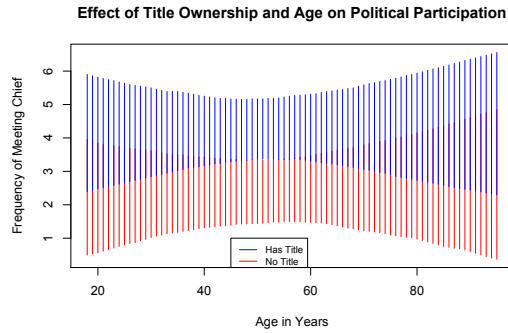


Figure 9: *Simulated results of effect of owning land title and age on frequency of visiting chief.*

Variable	I	II	III	IV
Title	0.18 0.038	0.17 0.038	0.17 0.038	0.17 0.0038
Age		0.0033 0.0013	0.0029 0.0014	0.0029 0.0014
Sex			0.068 0.051	0.068 0.051
Ethnicity				6.7e-5 8.8e-5

Figure 10: *Effect of holding formal title on visits to MP. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 1058. Control: 1249.*

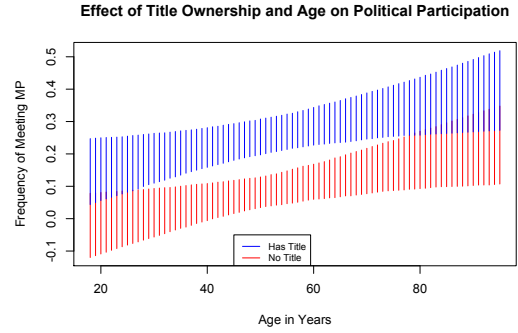


Figure 11: *Simulated results of effect of owning land title and age on frequency of visiting local assembly member.*

B. Economic Treatments

B.1 Possessing a Formal Land Title

Figures 8 through 11 present treatment results for possessing a formal title to one's land on approaching political figures for assistance. Unlike the previous treatments considered, owning a formal land title has no effect on approaching a local assembly member; however, respondents holding these titles approached their chiefs and MPs more frequently than respondents who did not hold these titles.

Regarding visits to chiefs, one explanation corresponds to Ghana's traditional land laws. Under these laws, chiefs possess the land and control land transactions. In Ashanti Region, for instance, the predominant ethnic group practices matrilineal succession, and chiefs settle disputes in cases where there are no daughters or sisters to inherit the land. Having a formal, government-issued land title reduces the power of the chief relative to an individual, thereby allowing that individual to make demands of a chief as a chief has less ability to rule against that person.

On MPs, holding a formal land title might signal wealth and prestige. As a result, those with a formal title would be more inclined to approach an MP with a political request as she could use her economic influence to sway that MP.

Variable	I	II	III	IV
Education	1.06	1.05	1.04	1.09
	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41
Age		0.016	0.016	0.015
		0.015	0.015	0.015
Sex			-0.21	-0.17
			0.59	0.59
Ethnicity				-0.0026
				0.00095

Figure 12: *Effect of years of education on visits to assembly member. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 1389. Control: 983.*

Variable	I	II	III	IV
Education	0.11	0.11	0.12	0.12
	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.0040
Age		0.0021	0.0019	0.0019
		0.0014	0.0015	0.0015
Sex			0.077	0.076
			0.057	0.057
Ethnicity				4.2e-5
				9.1e-5

Figure 14: *Effect of years of education on visits to MP. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 1389. Control: 983.*

B.2 Years of Education

Figures 12 through 15 present the treatment effect of a farmer's educational attainment on approaching political figures for assistance. These figures confirm findings from Verba, Schlozman & Brady [1995] with respect to resources: individuals who have completed more years of schooling are more likely to be active in approaching political figures. It is possible that these individuals are more aware of problems in the community or can better articulate their community's needs, with co-villagers asking these more educated members to bring concerns to the political authorities.

The figures to the right represent simulated values of the effect of years of education and age on meeting one's assembly member and MP. In both cases, those with more education,

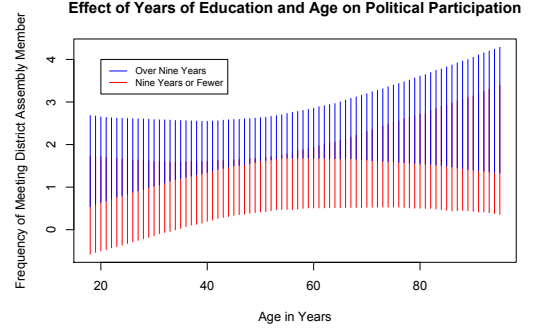


Figure 13: *Simulated results of effect of education and age on frequency of visiting assembly member.*

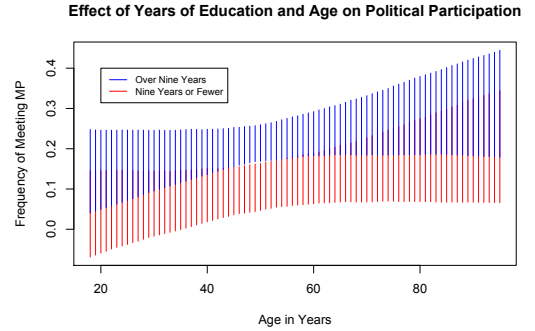


Figure 15: *Simulated results of effect of education and age on frequency of visiting MP.*

Variable	I	II	III	IV
Grid	0.97	0.96	0.98	1.01
	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41
Age		0.0013	0.0049	0.0049
		0.015	0.015	0.015
Sex			-0.66	-0.63
			0.54	0.54
Ethnicity				-0.0019
				0.0010

Figure 16: *Effect of grid connection on visits to assembly member. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 1158. Control: 1119.*

Variable	I	II	III	IV
Grid	0.10	0.096	0.094	0.093
	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.0040
Age		0.0025	0.0021	0.0021
		0.0014	0.0015	0.0015
Sex			0.073	0.072
			0.053	0.053
Ethnicity				5.5e-5
				9.8e-5

Figure 18: *Effect of grid connection on visits to MP. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 1158. Control: 1119.*

represented by the blue 95% confidence interval bars, approach their political figures more often than those with less education. This is especially true for the critical group of farmers between the ages of 40 and 60. In absolute terms, the simulations imply that more educated farmers visit their district assembly members between one and three times a year.

B.3 National Grid Connection

Figures 16 through 19 display the treatment effect of being connected to the national electricity grid on approaching political figures. Having a connection to the national grid increases the frequency with which respondents contact their district assembly member and MP with a problem requiring their assistance. There are several possible explanations for this ef-

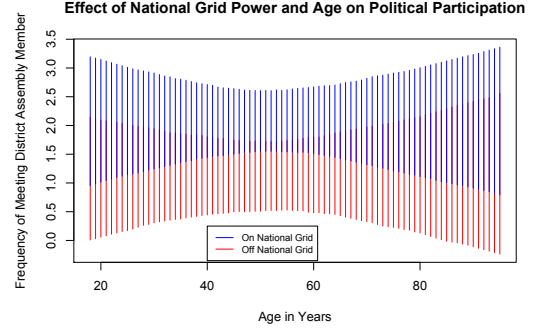


Figure 17: *Simulated results of effect of grid connection and age on frequency of visiting assembly member.*

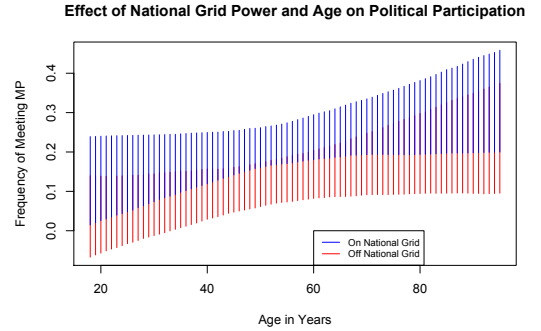


Figure 19: *Simulated results of effect of grid connection and age on frequency of visiting MP.*

Variable	I	II	III	IV
Funeral	-0.74 0.39	-0.75 0.39	-0.75 0.39	-0.75 0.39
Age		0.0019 0.014	0.0053 0.015	0.0051 0.015
Sex			-0.55 0.53	-0.54 0.53
Ethnicity				-0.00091 0.00093

Figure 20: *Effect of funeral spending on visits to assembly member. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 1099. Control: 1173.*

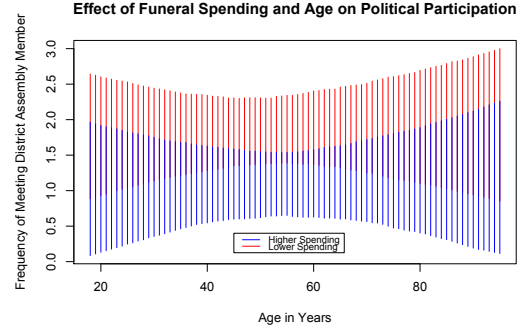


Figure 21: *Simulated results of effect of funeral spending and age on frequency of visiting assembly member.*

fect. Having an electrical connection increases one’s standards for acceptable public-good provision, thus, encouraging these respondents to seek out further public goods from their political figures. It is also plausible that politicians allocate these connections to key constituents; this could be a reward or incentive. In exchange for their electoral support, these constituents contact their representatives more often.

C. Social Treatments

C.1 Funeral Spending

Funerals are major social events in Ghanaian culture, with each funeral potentially drawing hundreds of relatives and friends from around the world. Family spending on funerals is often an indicator of social status.¹⁵ Figures 20 and 21 present treatment results of funeral spending on respondents approaching their district assembly members. There are no strong and robust results with respect to approaching other political figures.

My matched results indicate that households spending more money on funerals approach their local district assembly members *less often* than those that spend less. This contrasts with Verba, Schlozman & Brady’s [1995] finding that more resources are associated with

¹⁵Western banks in Ghana such as Barclays and Standard Chartered even offer special funeral financing plans.

Variable	I	II	III	IV
Account	1.20	1.20	1.16	1.16
	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45
Age		0.0094	0.015	0.014
		0.016	0.016	0.016
Sex			-1.08	-1.06
			0.70	0.70
Ethnicity				-0.0011
				0.0011

Figure 22: *Effect of bank account on visits to assembly member. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 882. Control: 1175.*

Variable	I	II	III	IV
Account	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12
	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.0040
Age		0.0026	0.0025	0.0025
		0.0014	0.0015	0.0015
Sex			0.029	0.027
			0.063	0.063
Ethnicity				8.6e-5
				9.8e-5

Figure 24: *Effect of bank account on visits to MP. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 882. Control: 1175.*

more political activity. One explanation is that these households are simply wealthy enough to not require the assistance of the assembly member or can ignore community concerns. Another explanation is more social: families that spend more on funerals build stronger social networks, and thus turn to others, not politicians, for assistance when necessary.

C.2 Bank Account

Figures 22 through 25 present treatment results for holding a formal banking account on the frequency of contacting district assembly members and MPs. Holding a formal bank

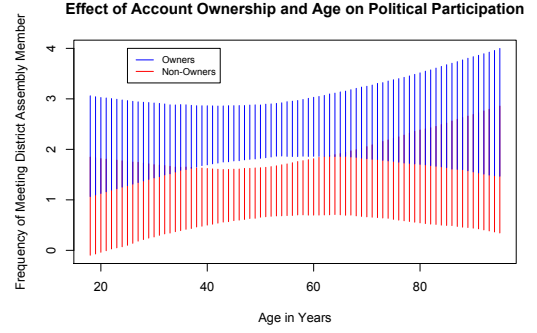


Figure 23: *Simulated results of effect of bank account and age on frequency of visiting assembly member.*

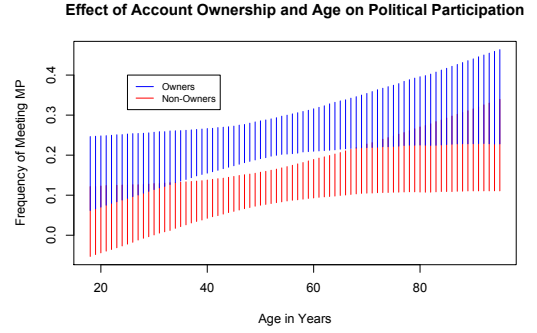


Figure 25: *Simulated results of effect of bank account and age on frequency of visiting MP.*

Variable	I	II	III	IV
Susu	1.42	1.44	1.60	1.46
	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81
Age		0.041	0.054	0.062
		0.029	0.030	0.030
Sex			-2.00	-2.06
			1.02	1.01
Ethnicity				-0.0052
				0.0019

Figure 26: *Effect of susu account on visits to assembly member. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 303. Control: 851.*

Variable	I	II	III	IV
Susu	0.20	0.21	0.21	0.21
	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060
Age		0.0028	0.0026	0.0023
		0.0028	0.0022	0.0022
Sex			0.036	0.038
			0.075	0.075
Ethnicity				1.7e-4
				1.4e-4

Figure 28: *Effect of susu account on visits to MP. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 303. Control: 851.*

account is relatively rare in rural settings, but it proxies for a family’s economic capacity.¹⁶ Confirming a resources finding of Verba, Schlozman & Brady [1995], holding a bank account corresponds with higher rates of approaching political figures for assistance. As the confidence-interval plots to the right signify, this is especially true for farmers between the ages of 40 and 60. In terms of absolute magnitude, farmers with bank accounts tend to visit their district assembly member between one and four times a year, but figures are lower for MPs.

¹⁶There was a question in the survey about household savings, but that question was viewed by respondents as quite sensitive and thus contained a high level of missingness.

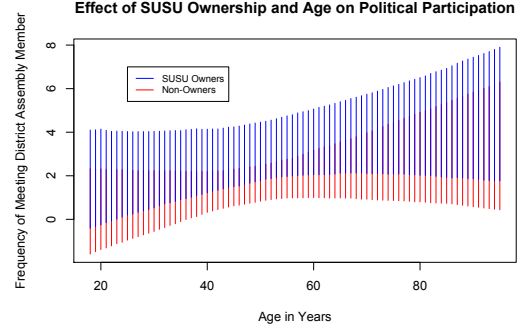


Figure 27: *Simulated results of effect of susu account and age on frequency of visiting assembly member.*

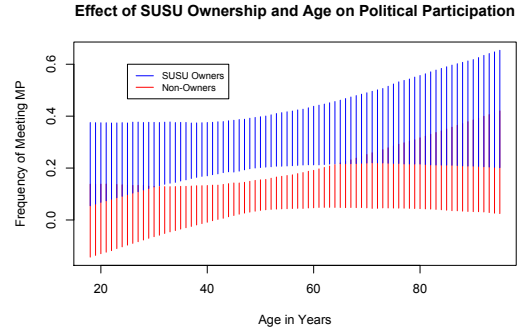


Figure 29: *Simulated results of effect of susu account and age on frequency of visiting MP.*

Variable	I	II	III	IV
Group	0.09 0.039	0.093 0.039	0.091 0.039	0.091 0.039
Age		0.0029 0.0014	0.0026 0.0014	0.0026 0.014
Sex			0.053 0.052	0.52 0.052
Ethnicity				3.9e-5 1.0e-4

Figure 30: *Effect of group membership on visits to MP. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 1089. Control: 1230.*

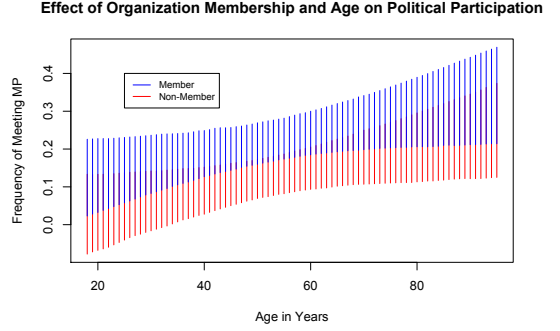


Figure 31: *Simulated results of effect of group membership and age on frequency of visiting MP.*

C.3 Susu Account

Figures 26 through 29 present results for the treatment effects of holding susu accounts and approaching district assembly members and MPs with political concerns. Susu accounts are group-lending facilities: a lender loans a substantial sum to a group of farmers who then spend it on either a collective project or allocate it to a subset of members (sometimes a single member) to devote to a particular purpose. Each member of the group is responsible for repaying funds on time, and the group may punish those who shirk. The social element is critical: lenders view these groups as lower risk relative to individuals, and thus are more willing to lend funds.

My results indicate that susu-account ownership is associated with greater political activity—that is, approaching district assembly members and MPs with political concerns. The treatment result is especially strong with respect to MPs: this may be a function of the group nature of susu accounts, and that groups are more likely to approach an MP with a community problem. This parallels my field-based observations of farmer cooperatives approaching political leaders with its concerns.

Variable	I	II	III	IV
Interest	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.17
	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041
Age		0.0026	0.0023	0.0023
		0.0014	0.0015	0.015
Sex			0.049	0.046
			0.056	0.056
Ethnicity				8.6e-5
				9.7e-5

Figure 32: *Effect of political interest on visits to MP. OLS model. Bold: effects with less than a 10% chance of nullity. Standard errors: gray. Treated: 1014. Control: 1189.*

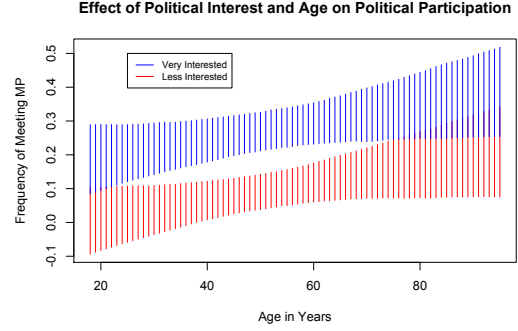


Figure 33: *Simulated results of effect of political interest and age on frequency of visiting MP.*

C.4 Organization Membership

Figures 30 and 31 show treatment effects of being an organization member on contacting your MP with a political concern. There was also slight positive effects of organization membership on visiting the chief. Similar to the result concerning susu accounts and my observation of farmer cooperatives, it is likely that group membership encourages citizens to approach politicians—especially higher-level politicians such as MPs—with political concerns. As Figure 31 indicates, this effect is especially strong amongst farmers between the ages of 40 and 60.

C.5 Political Interest

Figures 32 and 33 depict results for political interest on contacting MPs with a political concern. Treatment effects were neither strong nor robust when considered across other types of politicians. My results suggest that higher political interest is associated with more frequent contact of MPs; this result, as indicated by Figure 33, is especially robust for farmers between the ages of 25 and 70. Such a result on political interest confirms a result of Verba, Schlozman & Brady [1995], which found that more politically interested citizens engaged in political activity.

VI. Conclusion

Turning to political leaders for assistance is a complex decision. For rural Ghanaians, Members of Parliament are not the only avenues through which political needs are fulfilled. These members can be difficult to contact, and they must allocate their time across competing demands. More importantly, their incentives may not align with the requests that typically arise from constituents. An MP might excel at building a road, but a local assembly member is more likely to fix that road.

Drawing from an original survey dataset of Ghanaian cocoa farmers, I uncover a nuanced portrait of political choice in rural Ghana. As expected, income and education generally lead to more political activism, more visits to the district assembly member and MP. On the other hand, women and younger farmers tend not to approach their district assembly member. Political interest and membership in civic organizations, on the other hand, correspond with more frequent visits to the MP.

From a practical standpoint, democratization assistance must account for these nuances. Concentrating resources solely on parliamentary institutions might leave out critical functions that are typically solved by local government, or might exacerbate inequalities in the local government system. Furthermore, not properly focusing assistance to legislative institutions could continue a bias towards group participation in soliciting political assistance at the expense of individual initiative.

VII. References

- Arriola, Leonardo. 2009. "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa." *Comparative Political Studies*. 42(10).
- Barkan, Joel; Robert Mattes; Shaheen Mozaffar; and Kimberly Smiddy. 2010. "The African Legislatures Project: First Findings." *CSSR Working Paper No. 277*.
- Bratton, Michael; Ravi Bhavnani; and Tse-Hsin Chen. 2011. "Voting Intentions in Africa: Ethnic, Economic or Partisan?" *Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 127*.
- Burgess, Robin; Remi Jedwab; Edward Miguel; Ameet Morjaria; and Gerard Padro i Miquel. 2011. "Ethnic Favoritism".
- Campbell, Andrea Louise. 2005. *How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Political Activism and the American Welfare State*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
- Dahl, Robert. 2005 [1961]. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press).
- Diamond, Alexis and Jasjeet Sekhon. 2012. "Genetic Matching for Estimating Causal Effects: A General Multivariate Matching Method for Achieving Balance in Observational Studies."
- Ho, Daniel; Kosuke Imai; Gary King; and Elizabeth Stuart. 2011. "MatchIt: Nonparametric Preprocessing for Parametric Causal Inference."
- Honaker, James; Gary King; and Matthew Blackwell. 2012. "Amelia II: A Program for Missing Data."
- Imai, Kosuke; Gary King; and Olivia Lau. 2007. "Is: Least Squares Regression for Continuous Dependent Variables" in Kosuke Imai, Gary King, and Olivia Lau, "Zelig: Everyone's Statistical Software," <http://gking.harvard.edu/zelig>
- Lindberg, Staffan. 2010. "What Accountability Pressures Do MPs in Africa Face and How Do They Respond? Evidence from Ghana." *Journal of Modern African Studies*. 48(1).
- McCubbins, Mathew & Thomas Schwartz. 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols Versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science*. 2(1).
- McCubbins, Mathew & Terry Sullivan, ed. 1987. *Congress: Structure and Policy*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).
- Posner, Daniel. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. (New York: Cambridge

University Press).

Prempeh, H. Kwasi. 1997. *Toward Judicial Independence and Accountability in an Emerging Democracy: The Courts and Consolidation of Democracy in Ghana*. (Accra, Ghana: Institute of Economic Affairs).

Putnam, Robert. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

Verba, Sidney; Kay Lehman Schlozman; Henry Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).