The legislators' dilemma:
(IN)FORMAL INSTITUTIONS, EXTERNAL PATRONAGE AND THE LOCAL-ELITE-CENTEREDNESS OF PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION IN AFRICA'S EMERGING DEMOCRACIES

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Dissertation

The Legislators' Dilemma: (In)Formal Institutions, External Patronage and the Local-Elite-Centeredness of Parliamentary Representation in Africa's Emerging Democracies

zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades doctor rerum politicarum (Dr. rer. pol.)

eingereicht an der Fakultät Sozial- und Wirtschaftswissenschaften

der Universität Bamberg

vorgelegt von

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Datum der mündlichen Prüfung:

12.01.2023

To my beloved late wife

REJOICE GBEWORZA-DOGBE

23.09.1989 – 11.02.2021

RIP

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Unless the LORD builds the house, they labour in vain who build it" (Psalm 127:1a). This research, as well as the many seminars, conferences, winter schools and field trips, could only have been possible with the mercies and grace of the Lord. For this, I am thankful.

I want to say a special 'thank you' to my Supervisor, Professor Dr. Thomas Saalfeld, for his intense reading, insightful comments and valuable inputs. In the past years, I found not only a supervisor in him but also a close friend and a great mentor. I could never ask for a more supportive Supervisor! Thank you, Thomas! This study has also benefited greatly from the insights of Professor Dr. Ulrich Sieberer. I appreciate the useful feedback during our BAGSS Pillar Four Colloquium and Comparative Politics Research Seminars. I am particularly grateful for pointing me to informal institutions! And to my long time Professor, boss and supervisor, Dr. Julia Leininger, I am extremely thankful for your timely and useful comments. Thank you, Julia, for believing in me every step of the way.

To the MPs and staff of the Parliament of Ghana and the National Assembly of South Africa, I am very thankful for your insights and valuable contribution to this study. Without your inputs, this study would not have been possible. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Nelson Owusu Ansah (Deputy CEO of the National Youth Authority) and Lawyer Nana Boakye (National Youth Organiser of the NPP, Ghana) for connecting me with many of the MPs I interviewed for this dissertation. Also, to the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) in Cape Town, I am grateful for providing the much-needed institutional affiliation while on fieldwork in South Africa. Special thanks go to Mr. Rashaad Ali (The Executive Director, PMG), Ms. Monique Doyle (Parliamentary Monitor) and Sabelo (I didn't nickname you -*The big boy*- for nothing). Thanks buddy! To the staff of the Research Department of the Parliament of Ghana also, I say a big thank you!

I must single out the Bamberg Graduate School of Social Sciences (BAGSS) for special mention for the immense institutional support provided me during this study. I appreciate every minute I spent in the BAGSS community. I will miss the warmth the Graduate School provided to aid my research work. Thank you, Olga, Melissa and Nasia.

Now to my dear late wife, Rejoice Gbeworza-Dogbe, you worked hard with me, meticulously edited several portions of the manuscript and transcribed some of my interviews. You accompanied me to interview for this PhD position and always looked forward to my completion. It is heartbreaking that today you are not here with me, but I know you are smiling down and feeling proud. Thank you very much, my dear. I owe you a debt of gratitude. This PhD is for you, Joiz!

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die repräsentative Demokratie beruht auf einem klaren Prinzip: Wählerinnen und Wähler wählen in regelmäßigen Abständen Vertreter*innen, die in der gesetzgebenden Versammlung ihre Interessen vertreten. Repräsentation gestaltet sich in der Praxis allerdings sehr viel komplexer. Abgeordnete vertreten nicht ausschließlich die Interessen der Wählerschaft im Wahlkreis. Von Abgeordneten wird erwartet, sowohl landesweite als auch parteipolitische Interessen zu berücksichtigen. Infolgedessen konkurrieren lokale, nationale und parteipolitische Akteure um die Zeit der Abgeordneten. Dadurch geraten die Gesetzgeber*innen in einen Zwiespalt: Einerseits kommt die Konzentration auf die Belange der Wählerschaft im Wahlkreis direkt den Wähler*innen zugute und stärkt die vertikale Rechenschaftspflicht der Abgeordneten. Andererseits werden dadurch die Ressourcen für die interne parlamentarische Politikgestaltung und Kontrolle beansprucht und somit die Fähigkeit des Parlaments zur horizontalen Rechenschaftspflicht geschwächt. Eine Konzentration auf die Parlamentsarbeit kann dazu führen, dass die Wählerschaft im Wahlkreis nicht genügend Aufmerksamkeit des Abgeordneten erhält. Die Parteivertretung kann wiederum zu einer Diskrepanz zwischen Abgeordneten und der Wählerschaft im Wahlkreis führen, insbesondere, wenn sich die Parteiinteressen und die Interessen der Wählerschaft unterscheiden. Wie reagieren die Abgeordneten auf diesen Zwiespalt, wenn man bedenkt, dass die Betonung einer Repräsentationsform mit demokratischen Konsequenzen verbunden ist? Ich argumentiere, dass, obwohl ein Gleichgewicht zwischen inner- und außerparlamentarischen Aktivitäten das Kernstück der legislativen Repräsentation in modernen Demokratien darstellt, Gesetzgeber*innen oft Kompromisse zwischen diesen beiden Formen eingehen. Ich untersuche, in welchem Bereich afrikanische Abgeordnete den Schwerpunkt setzen, wie diese variieren und welche institutionellen und kontextuellen Faktoren der Prioritätensetzung zugrunde liegen. Theoretisch weise ich die konventionellen Hypothesen über das Repräsentationsverhalten zurück, die sich ausschließlich auf formale Wahlinstitutionen, das koloniale Erbe und den elektoralen Klientelismus stützen. Stattdessen schlage ich einen theoretischen Rahmen vor, der auf der modernen politischen Rolle vorkolonialer traditioneller Autoritätsstrukturen, der Religion und dem relationalem Klientelismus beruht. Dieses Modell legt nahe, dass der Anreiz für eine stärkere oder schwächere Betonung der lokalen, nationalen oder parteipolitischen Vertretung von der relativen Stärke der informellen politischen Institutionen im elektoralen Kontext des Abgeordneten abhängt. Meine empirische Analyse von Gesetzgeber*innen in Ghana und Südafrika verwendet eine einzigartige Kombination aus quantitativen und qualitativen Daten, die semistrukturierte Interviews, Parlamentsakten, Meinungsumfragen und Pressedaten umfasst. Die Analyse zeigt die Popularität der elitezentrierten Vertretung der Wählerschaft im Wahlkreis in Ghana und Südafrika. Allerdings unterscheidet sich die Repräsentationsform aufgrund der Stadt-Land Konfliktlinie und dem Wahlkontext. Die Bedeutung informeller Institutionen in ländlichen Wahlbezirken sowie die elektorale Unsicherheit führen zu einer Orientierung an der Wählerschaft im Wahlkreis. Umgekehrt werden landesweite und parteipolitische Schwerpunkte durch die Struktur der Wählerschaft im Wahlkreise und die Sicherheit der Wiederwahl beeinflusst.

Schlagworte: Repräsentation, Informelle Institutionen, Klientelismus, Lokale Eliten, Wählerschaft im Wahlkreis

ABSTRACT

Representative democracy is founded on a straightforward principle: voters periodically elect representatives to the Legislative Assembly to represent their interests. However, in practice, representation is much more complex. Members of Parliament (MPs) do not exclusively represent parochial constituency interests. They also face expectations to represent state-wide as well as partisan interests. As a result, local, national and party forces concurrently compete for the MPs' time. This is the legislators' dilemma: while focusing primarily on constituency issues benefits voters directly and hones the MP's vertical accountability, it depletes the resources needed for internal parliamentary policymaking and oversight, and thus weakens parliament's abilities for horizontal accountability. Conversely, a disproportionate focus on parliament may adversely deprive constituents of the MPs' attention. Party representation, on the other hand, may create MP-constituency gaps, especially if partisan interests and constituents' preferences diverge. How do MPs respond to this dilemma, given that an emphasis on either of the representational foci has unique democratic consequences? I argue that, although a healthy balance between intra and extra-parliamentary activities is at the heart of legislative representation in modern democracies, legislators often make trade-offs between them. I investigate where African MPs place their representational emphasis, how they vary and the institutional as well as contextual forces that systematically underlie their priorities. Theoretically, I push back against conventional hypotheses on representational behaviour based solely on formal electoral institutions, colonial legacies and electoral clientelism. Instead, I propose a framework based on the modern political roles of precolonial traditional structures of authority, religion and relational clientelism. This model suggests that the incentive for placing greater or lesser emphasis on local, national or party representation is a function of the relative strength of informal political institutions present in the MPs' electoral context. I empirically analyse this by observing legislators in Ghana and South Africa using a unique combination of quantitative and qualitative data comprising semi-structured interviews, parliamentary records, public opinion surveys and press data. The analysis demonstrates the popularity of 'elite-centric' constituency representation in Ghana and South Africa. There are, however, within case representational variations manifesting along rural-urban and electoral contextual dimensions. The salience of informal institutions in rural electoral districts, as well as electoral vulnerability, induce constituency-oriented behaviour. Conversely, state-wide and party emphasis are influenced jointly by constituency complexity and electoral security.

Keywords: Representation, Informal Institutions, Clientelism, Local Elites, Constituency

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

"Every Member of Parliament swore an oath to uphold the constitution. The mandate of every MP is above the interest of the party" – Hon. Muntaka Mubarak, MP, National Democratic Congress (NDC).

"I have spoken more times in parliament than some people have spoken in their three terms" – Hon. Sam Nartey George, MP, National Democratic Congress (NDC).

"Three days ago, I took a Chinese company to Ghana Water to sign MoU for Assin Fosu… while I am doing this, my colleagues were in parliament talking… so which one do you prefer?... The parliamentary work is not only going to parliament and raise your hands: Mr. Speaker I have a contribution" - Hon. Kennedy Agyapong, MP, New Patriotic Party (NPP)

1.1 The puzzle

It is around midday, Wednesday, the 2nd of October 2019, in Accra, Ghana's capital. The Minister for Parliamentary Affairs is set to address the press. Among other topics, legislator absenteeism from parliament is to feature prominently. The Minister is displeased with the alarming rate of absenteeism amongst the country's legislators. He indicates that "oftentimes when it comes to making laws, you don't see more than 50 people in the House, and of the 50 (…), the business of crafting legislation rests on not more than 20" (Gyesi and Kissiedu, 2019). He compliments the punctual legislators while strongly impressing upon the chronic absentee members to prioritise the business of the House.

The Minister's outburst is not the first of its kind. If anything, he only echoed already existing sentiments. The media and parliamentary monitoring organisations have consistently reported that the average Member of Parliament (MP) in Ghana misses 1 in every 4 four sittings (Odekro, 2014). As a result, postponements of parliamentary debates for lack of quorums are not unfamiliar. For instance, between October and December 2017, the Speaker of Parliament suspended two sittings over poor attendance. In one of these, only 7 out of the 275 MPs were present at the commencement of proceedings (Joy News, 2017). Similarly, debates on the 2016 and 2020 budget statements were postponed for lack of quorums (see Modern Ghana News, 2015; Ghanaweb, 2019).

To be sure, absenteeism in Ghana's Parliament is not an outlier situation in Sub Saharan Africa. Speakers of the Kenyan Parliament (Standard Media, 2014), the Namibia National Assembly (Namibian Sun, 2013) and the Sierra Leonean Parliament (Mohamed, 2004; Sierra Leone Press, 2013), among a host of others, have also frequently bemoaned the high rates of legislator absenteeism from parliament. In Uganda, for example, the lack of quorums to commence parliamentary sittings have virtually been routinised (Ssekika, 2014; Shikhongola, n.d.). For a whole week, in some cases, the parliament of 386 members would fail to raise the statutory 125-member quorum to commence parliamentary business (Monitor, 2015). In one such case, the Deputy Speaker, Jacob Oulanyah suspended the House for 15 minutes only to return to a further reduced number (Parliament of Uganda, 2019). Aside from the plenary, other important parliamentary businesses such as committee meetings have also not been spared by absenteeism. Monitors from the Cape Town-based Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) – an organisation that reports on the day-to-day workings of the South African National Assembly – have on several occasions reported postponements of portfolio committee meetings over poor attendance[1].

While achieving a healthy balance between activities 'inside parliament' and those at the 'local constituency' is at the heart of legislative representation in modern democracies, the extant literature typically portrays African MPs as paying disproportionate attention to constituency service (Lindberg, 2003; Barkan, 2009b; Barkan et al., 2010). Consequently, activities like sponsoring community development projects and holding constituency meetings have instead come to define their primary role. This is not to suggest that MPs in other jurisdictions invest comparatively fewer resources in constituency service. Many studies have also documented the popularity of constituency service in advanced democracies (Fenno, 1978; Jewell, 1982; Loewenberg, 2011; André et al., 2014). What is, however, at stake here is the seeming lopsided indulgence of African MPs in constituency-related activities to the disadvantage of their parliamentary or party work.

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[1]Poor attendance of Members; Umsobomvu Youth Fund (POSTPONED) Link here; Poor attendance: MEETING POSTPONED Link here; POSTPONEMENT of meeting due to lack of quorum Link here; POSTPONED: Internal Committee capacity Development Programme focusing on Trade and Industrial Policy Link here; CANCELLATION of meeting due to lack of quorum Link here etc.

But to be fair, despite the popularity of constituency representation, not every African MP is disproportionately constituency-centric. A generalisation to that effect will be too sweeping and uncritical. In fact, in discussing the popularity of constituency representation among parliamentarians in Africa, observers could fall for the temptation of inadvertently under-accounting for the teaming cohort of MPs who, on their part, spend more time attending to internal parliamentary or party business to the detriment of their constituencies – however few they may be, in comparative terms. Parliamentary monitoring groups in Ghana have equally observed the admirable rigour some MPs attach to their work in parliament, as well as their profound punctuality amid the widespread absenteeism mentioned earlier (Gyesi and Kissiedu, 2019; Odekro, 2014). As the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs in Ghana stated in his press conference, at least, some 50 or 20 MPs demonstrate high parliamentary productivity and shoulder the business of crafting legislation in the House. What could explain the heavy indulgence of these MPs in parliamentary work while their counterparts focus primarily on constituency representation? And for the constituency-centric MPs, why is parliamentary representation a subsidiary preoccupation? Are there other entities on which legislators in Africa focus? If yes, how can we specify and analyse them? And what systematically explains variations in these diverse foci of representation?

Although elected representatives in Africa, as elsewhere, have an enormous influence on democratic outcomes, theory-based empirical analysis of the representational options they face and the factors that drive the trade-offs they make regarding their representational focus [i.e., whom or what they primarily choose to represent] is still rare in the study of African politics. With this void in mind, I contribute to advancing the frontiers of research on parliamentary representation in Africa by answering the following questions. First, what trade-offs do African legislators face and make in the performance of their representational functions? Additionally, which institutional and contextual forces systematically explain their representational choices? And lastly, what mechanisms underlie variations in their foci of representation?

Unlike African politics, the discourse on representational focus has received ample attention from legislative researchers in advanced democracies. In most cases, analysts in these contexts draw primarily on rational neo-institutionalism to understand the

representational behaviour of parliamentarians. The focus has usually been on using the structure of incentives and constraints to which the MP is subject – such as electoral system variables – as a critical explanatory framework. It has been argued, for instance, that due to the direct electoral interface between legislators and their constituents, MPs elected under majoritarian systems tend to pay more attention to territorial or constituency representation. On the contrary, under proportional representation (PR) – especially closed-list systems – legislators are theorised to be more attentive to the party or national representation since ballots are cast for the party, not the individual candidate (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Shugart et al., 2005; André and Depauw, 2013).

But if these conclusions were anything to go by across space, then we should expect Ghanaian, Kenyan and Ugandan MPs, for instance, to display uniform constituency mindedness given their election under majoritarian systems. However, as indicated earlier, there are marked disparities in their foci of representation. While constituency service obviously remains popular, some MPs primarily focus on internal parliamentary work. In much the same vein, there must be extra–electoral–institutional explanations for the constituency popularity of South African and Namibian MPs given their election under closed-list PR systems. Again, Sierra Leonean MPs' chronic absenteeism under a closed-list PR system should equally question the universal appeal of electoral institutional theories. Therefore, there may be good reasons to conclude on a certain degree of disconnect between observed representational behaviour in Africa's emerging democracies, on the one hand, and scholars long-held expectations on the effects of formal electoral institutions[2], on the other.

As a result, in this study, rather than treating electoral system explanations as having universal effects, I argue that informal institutions and contextual givens could utterly compromise the expected outcomes of electoral institutions and condition legislators'

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[2] Institutions are construed as "humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction" (North, 1990). In this dissertation, a distinction is made between formal and informal institutions based on Helmke and Levitsky (2004). Informal institutions are "socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels". Formal institutions on the other hand are "rules and procedures that are created, communicated, and enforced through channels widely accepted as official" (p.727).

behaviour in ways that diverge from conventional expectations. So that, even under the same electoral institution, the representational foci of MPs may differ sharply when subject to different informal political institutions. The study, therefore, pushes back against approaches focusing primarily on formal institutions to explain representational outcomes. Instead, I propose a framework for legislative representation based on the modern political roles of informal institutions of chieftaincy, religion and relational-clientelism. I draw empirically on Ghana and South Africa to demonstrate that the high relevance of these local informal institutions in an MP's electoral context induces constituency-oriented behaviour. At the same time, its relative weakness provokes intra-parliamentary or partisan focus. As such, while extolling the relevance of formal institutions in the study of parliamentary representation in Africa, neo-institutional theories ought to place equal premium on the enabling and constraining effects of informal institutions on political behaviour. The rest of this introductory chapter proceeds as follows: first, I summarise my arguments and follow it with an overview of the data and methods on which the argument rests. The chapter concludes with an outline of the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

1.2 The argument

The job description of MPs is as broad as it is unspecific. They face several mutually conflicting sets of representational expectations. While they are expected to serve the whole state (i.e., commit to national policy making in parliament), they are at the same time expected to represent just a part of the state (i.e., champion the particularistic interest of their local constituencies). What if parliament and the constituency simultaneously require the MP's presence or attention? Should she trade off the parliamentary work for the constituency or vice versa? For parliament to possess the ability to influence policy outcomes and assert its horizontal accountability role, MPs' presence and commitment to plenary and committee meetings are necessary. Conversely, a disproportionate focus on parliament may adversely deprive constituents of the MPs' attention and consequently affect their vertical accountability to voter.

Alongside the parliament-constituency dilemma, MPs are again beholden to their parties and are accordingly expected to represent partisan interests. What if this interest and the constituents' preferences diverge on a policy issue? Should the MP emphasise on the party

against the constituents? What implication will such a representational decision have on vertical accountability? In many cases also, African legislators additionally represent outside entities, what Jane Mansbridge (2003) calls surrogates. What informs the MPs' priorities in the face of these conflicting expectations? Since each of the activities associated with the parliamentarians' office has unique democratic consequences, where should legislators place their emphasis? And if they must make trade-offs, which forces systematically drive them and what mechanisms underlie variations, if any, amongst them?

Figure 1. 1: Legislators' role matrix
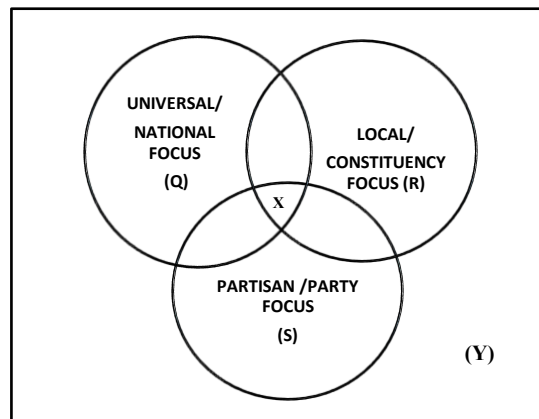
Source: Author's illustration

As illustrated in Figure 1.1, honouring constituency-national-party representational expectations proportionately may put a mutually incompatible set of pressure on the MP's finite resources. Again, paying more attention to activities in the parliamentary arena (Q) may adversely affect the MP's effectiveness in the local constituency (R) and the party (S) and vice versa. The complication heightens when MPs simultaneously take on responsibilities as legislators of regional parliaments (Y)[3]. Therefore, we can expect legislators to not attend to the competing activities associated with their office in equal measure (x). It is practically impossible to perfectly divide time and effort to equally satisfy intra-parliamentary duties, extra-parliamentary assignments and party work simultaneously. Therefore, legislators repeatedly make trade-offs in selecting which

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[3] ECOWAS, PAN African parliament for instance.

activity areas to concentrate on predominantly. In doing this, they may significantly differ on the resources and commitments put on the different shades of representational activities associated with their office.

If the representational responsibilities of MPs require them to constantly make trade-offs, then we may have to wonder which cohort of forces or factors influence their eventual selection of representational foci, and what explains any variations. This dissertation investigates the exact focus of representation of African parliamentarians and systematically isolate the factors that explain how they set their priorities among the conflicting set of representational expectations they face. I explain why some MPs emphasise universal/national policymaking in parliament while others focus on the local constituency or political party work. In other words, I investigate the representational foci of legislators in Africa.

Theoretical explanations for the behaviour of parliamentarians are not in short supply in the literature of legislative studies. As I mentioned in the introduction, one widely cited explanation focuses on electoral institutions. This has mainly emerged from studies on legislative representation in advanced democracies in Western Europe and North America. Additional explanations that I appraise in this study draw on theories of historical institutionalism on the one hand and behavioural economics and patron-clientelism on the other. Although these theories may have some merit, I push back against them for their superficial explanatory appeal for legislative representation in emerging democracies in Africa. I instead propose an alternative framework based on the modern political roles of local informal institutions and elites on the one hand and local party relational clientelism on the other. The model suggests that the incentive for emphasising 'more' or 'less' on either local, national or partisan representation is a function of the relative strength of the informal political institutions present at the parliamentarians' electoral and geographical context.

Given legislators' central role in democracies, one would assume that scholarship on African politics would have some established explanations for legislative behaviour. But as I show in-depth in the following two chapters, this is not entirely the case. Explanations for why legislators in Africa set specific representational priorities and what informs the

trade-offs they make are still in their embryonic stages. Many existing explanations are rather derived from industrial democracies where formal institutions provide a near definitive behavioural course for political actors. For instance, it has been argued that legislators strategically adopt and switch roles owing to the institutional frameworks within which they operate. These frameworks include mechanisms on intra-party candidate nominations and national electoral laws. My argument is that, while the rational neo-institutionalist underpinning of such theories may be appropriate also for the African context, not accounting for the role of informal relationships provide an uncomfortable misfit for contexts with weak states, dominated by strong informal institutions and actors. Thus, while pushing back against such explanations in the next chapter, I argue that theories based solely on formal institutions may only explain a minute fraction of representational behaviour in Africa.

I again diverge from extant theories on representational behaviour premised on historical legacies of colonial rule on the one hand and Africa's socioeconomic misfortunes on the other. While I agree that resource constraints and poverty have a lot to explain on the behaviour of political actors in Africa, I refrain from treating representational behaviour in the region as a function of incessant poverty-induced clientelistic demands from voters. Behavioural economists tend to argue that voters in the developing world largely condition their voting choices on clientelistic provisions (see Blaydes, 2011; Jensen and Justesen, 2014). And this behaviour is said to elicit the deployment of patronage strategies by parliamentarians, thereby making them constituency centric. I make appeals to recent literature on voting behaviour in Sub-Saharan Africa to push back against this blanket treatment of voters in developing countries as clientelistic. I instead argue that they repel clientelistic handouts and consequently tend to punish political actors who deploy such strategies (Kao et al., 2017).

Resource constraints in African countries rather do empower informal community actors and networks to amass local political clout to shape the course of legislative representation in ways that may be impossible in 'strong' and 'firm' state contexts (Hydén, 2013). The alternative theory suggests that in contexts where states lack the capacity for welfare provisions and where formal rules of the game are weak, community institutions and actors tend to step in to accommodate and address the state's functional gaps. In other words, the

weakness of the state strengthens community institutions and actors with state-substitution powers. With this, informal institutions and the actors that operate in these non-state-sanctioned environments gain functional legitimacy and garner political bargaining power to influence local voting decisions. This local clout, I argue, is subsequently used to shape the representation priorities of re(s)election seeking MPs whose electoral prospects may be structurally dependent on the goodwill of local informal community networks. In the next chapter, I extensively review the existing hypothesis on the drivers of representational behaviour mentioned earlier, lay out their shortcomings and create space for the alternative explanation I propose in the third chapter.

1.3 Approach

Methodologically, I use individual-level data to explain standardised, collective representational behaviour of MPs in South Africa and Ghana. This design has come to be known in legislative research as the micropolitical approach to the study of parliamentary representation (Loewenberg, 2011). The strategy is to conceive the daily representational decisions and behaviour of selected representatives as having inferential relevance for collective parliamentary representation. The approach is informed by the assumption that a systematic and in-depth study of the attitudes, behaviour, and roles of a group of carefully selected legislators has the potential to provide rich information on the legislators under study, and more importantly, improve our understanding of collective legislative behaviour. In this study, therefore, the strategy is straightforward; (1) I analyse the representational behaviour of selected individual legislators in Ghana and South Africa and (2) also rely on the observed individual-level behaviour to understand the collective representational behaviour of the MPs in both countries.

This approach is currently enjoying a tremendous revival in legislative research after almost falling out of favour with legislative scholars several decades ago. The era of behaviourism in the 1960s and 1970s saw some rich works on legislators based on micro-level data. However, the approach got somehow impeached in the 1980s by newer approaches based especially on "new institutionalism". Today, a new wave of studies is re-focusing attention on individual-level analysis, following in the footsteps of such pioneering works as John C. Wahlke and his colleagues' (1962) "The legislative system" and Richard Fenno's (1978)

"Home style". Adding to these burgeoning studies, I collected and analysed systematic data on legislators in Africa. My approach, therefore, recognises the utility and strength in understanding collective parliamentary behaviour by directly observing the individual MPs' activities and not just by reading the 'rule book'. Such approaches are especially relevant in the Sub-Saharan African context, where formal institutions and internal political party cohesion and discipline are weak.

It will be recalled that a key argument for ditching the micro-political approach among [especially Western European] scholars was the presence of strong political parties. Strong party discipline means at least two things for the methodological appeal of micro-political approaches. First, it means that the individual legislators' agency, activities and representational behaviour are strongly controlled. It also means that individual-level variation in representational activities may not be strongly anticipated (Converse and Pierce, 2014). Consequently, in such contexts, dropping the micro-political approach may be methodologically justifiable. However, in the Sub-Saharan African context, a direct opposite of the parliamentary party discipline and cohesion in Western Europe prevails. As Nicholas van de Walle and Kimberly Smiddy put it, African political parties are plagued by weak organisations and low levels of institutionalisation (van de Walle and Smiddy, 1999). Similar observations are common in the literature (see for instance, Basedau and Stroh, 2008; Riedl, 2014). Given the weak cohesive powers of political parties in Africa, we have good reasons to expect individual-level variations in the representational activities of the region's legislators even within the same parties – hence the micro-political approach.

In observing the representational behaviour of the MPs in my sample, I used a multi-data approach (MDA). This implies the integration of multiple data sources in the study of a political phenomenon. First, I conducted in-depth interviews with legislators in South Africa and Ghana to appreciate, among others, whom or what they primarily represent and why. I combined the interviews with behavioural data on the MPs' activities in their portfolio committees and outside parliament gathered from official parliamentary sources and press reports. Additionally, to appreciate the pressure the MPs face as well as the perception of the public on their work and how these perceptions shape their

representational foci, I included public opinion surveys by the Afrobarometer in the analysis.

The multi-data approach provides a broad systematic description of the parliamentarians' representational activities and aids in appreciating what the MPs do in the real sense, what they claim to do and what the media report them to have done – a point I shall be returning to in some detail in the next section on 'data'. The combination of these varied data in one study allows for a "more contextual account of the complexities, strategies and processes of reasoning involved in the representative task, which may otherwise be obscured by relatively static quantitative evidence alone" (Gauja, 2012:121). I must add that the strategy is particularly suitable for studies that investigate complex phenomena like legislative representation, especially in less institutionalised contexts.

While multi-data studies could be mounted entirely on qualitative or quantitative design, a mixture of both paradigms can also suffice. As mentioned already, in this research, multiple qualitative data are utilised. Additionally, quantitative data derived from Afrobarometer surveys was concurrently embedded in the qualitative design (see Aultman, 2020). The rationale for this is multiple folds. First, embedding different datasets in one study enables us to clearly differentiate the representational activity levels and foci of the different legislators under study. Secondly, concurrently embedding quantitative data in a multi-data qualitative design helps to respond to validity and reliability concerns. Nested approaches enable the possibility for triangulation with the different data sources (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Additionally, as I discuss in the following sections, the combination of various data sources and methods also hone the robustness of the results and add to the study's overall rigour. This advantage may be absent in single data or single method studies.

1.4 Data

From the foregone, it is apparent that the results of this study rest on the hybridisation of at least four datasets. This is as shown in Table 1.1 below. The first covers "what the legislators themselves claim to do" in the act of representation. This is gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted on Members of Parliament in Ghana and South Africa. This source is vital for at least two main reasons. First, it provides detailed information on how the legislators perceive their representational roles, how they carry out

this role and most importantly, why. Second, interviewing the legislators enabled probing, follow-ups and clarification of concepts or perceptions that otherwise would have been difficult to obtain with other data gathering tools.

I must, however, mention that a growing cynicism among scholars of legislative studies points to a possible disconnect between legislators perceptions usually gleaned from interviews and their actual behaviour. Magnus Blomgren and Olivier Rozenberg's (2012) edited volume makes this point quite forcefully. While important, this critique may only apply to designs that restrict the interview guide or interview conversation to 'role perceptions' while neglecting actual behaviour and itineraries. My design particularly emphasised the self-reported representational *activities* of the MPs and not only their *role* perception. Additionally, the inclusion of several other data sources responds to critiques that always accompany the use of [single data] interviews in representation research.

Table 1. 1: Description of main sources of data

Focus	Specific information	Data source
MPs' self-claims	What the legislators themselves claim to do	Obtained from conducting semi-structured interviews with the legislators
Objective records	What legislators actually do	Obtained from the records of legislators' committee membership
Public perception	What the public perceives about legislators	Obtained from public opinion surveys by Afrobarometer over time
Media reports	What the legislators are reported to have done	Obtained from press coverage of the activities of legislators over time

In addition to the interviews, parliamentary records on the MPs' committee membership and activities were also sourced and analysed. This is behavioural and covers "what the legislators actually do" in the parliamentary arena. Parliamentary committee membership tells us a lot about the MPs goals and focus of representation. While committees may be assigned to MPs by the parliamentary party based on expertise or as a reward, some MPs also 'self-select' into specific committees (Fernandes et al., 2021). Self-selection into committees tells us a lot about an MP's motivations and representational focus. I categorise

portfolio committees in the National Assembly of South Africa and the Parliament of Ghana into those with National and Local focus or relevance. Selecting into either of these categories is treated as a proxy for the national or local focus of the MP in question. This strategy complements the self-described activities of the legislators in the interviews. It plays a fact-checking and triangulation role on the rest of the data used in this study. At the same time, it provides additional information stock to glean the representational behaviour of the legislators.

To date, the most comprehensive public opinion data covering the perceptions of Africans on political actors and institutions and how they influence political processes and outcomes is the Afrobarometer survey. I rely on it in this study to appreciate the political role of (in)formal institutions and actors like chiefs, religious leaders, local party officials and parliamentarians. I also use the data to examine the leverage and influence of informal actors on voters. The survey is conducted almost across the continent and covers 37 African countries as of Round 7 (2016/2018). With its nationally representative random sample of 2400 respondents spanning all the 9 provinces and 16 regions of South Africa and Ghana respectively and a margin of error of +/- 2 percent at a 95 percent confidence level, the dataset helped to gauge public opinions on the relationship between elected representatives and voters in both countries.

The next set of data covers "what the legislators are reported to have done" in the act of representation. This is sourced from a systematic analysis of media reports on the activities of the legislators over time. The press in Africa has evolved into an active medium for political communication (Omotoso, 2018), especially since the transition of many states to democracy in the early 1990s. The media has become a popular means of information on political actors and their activities for the public. Aside from the increasing dependence of individual political actors on the media to propagate their activities, the popularity of organised broadcasts of parliamentary activities has soared tremendously over the years.

In many African parliaments, television cameras and radio broadcasters are allowed to transmit live feeds on parliamentary proceedings. The spotlight is thus always thrown on active and articulate Members of Parliament who display productivity in the parliamentary arena. In many cases also, journalists give live reports on the happenings in the House,

including post-plenary interviews and discussions. Beyond broadcasting proceedings from parliament, the press also widely covers the individual representational activities of the legislators. Media reports tend to cover the constituency activities of legislators across parties. Reports on MPs' visits to the constituency, the events they organise, the social functions they attend and so on are common in the media. This demonstrates the extent of the media's interest in parliamentarians and their representational activities. This study taps into the wealth of information.

Press sources are, unfortunately, not without reliability and validity challenges. Since determining what is "newsworthy" is the prerogative of news editors and journalists, there is the likelihood of under-coverage or otherwise over-coverage geographically and thematically. It is very likely that MPs of particularly favoured parties may be more covered than others. It is also likely that incumbent and senior MPs may make the news more than their unknown newcomer counterparts. So that, whether an activity by a parliamentarian will receive reportage or not is subject to the broadcaster's independent editorial control and decision. This means that the newsworthiness of a legislator's activity is determined subjectively. After all, the media sieves outs and selects stories that may be appealing to their audience (Wolfsfeld, 2011). This scenario rakes in the question of selection bias.

Closely related to the above is that press data itself is not originally meant for scientific research (Ortiz et al., 2005). As such, if its collection and usage are not done systematically, we may run into at least two interrelated types of risks. On the one hand, we may end up excluding a good chunk of information that first and foremost eluded journalistic coverage and, by consequence, research knowledge. On the other hand, we could also end up including a good quantity of data that is highly biased towards the fulfilment of specific research-unworthy aims. Bearing in mind that media organisations may not have the "carrying capacity" or the interest to cover and report on every activity undertaken by politicians (Hilgartner and Bosk, 1988:59) and may also be selective on what appeals to their audience (Wolfsfeld, 2011), the possibility of gaps in the representational activities they report on can certainly not be ruled out.

Given the foregone, therefore, one may be tempted to treat press data on parliamentary representation just as any random sample of events that is incapable of passing even the

simplest form of "systematic" tests to warrant its usage for scientific research[4]. This is, however, not the position I take in this research. I recognise that the above shortcomings notwithstanding, alternative sources of data such as interviews and surveys may not also on their own be entirely sufficient in covering the multifaceted nature of parliamentary representation. Again, the problem of journalistic selection bias and validity is not completely insurmountable. Many studies have dealt with them by simply multiplying the sources of the press data sampled for analysis (Rucht and Neidhardt, 1998; Olzak and Oliver, 1999). Relying on just one newspaper source or online portal, for instance, could typically lead to validity problems. But multiplying the sources to include both national and local, print and online, and so on (Barranco and Wisler, 1999) could respond to the methodological problems associated with sole-sourced media analysis. I surmise that, when carefully collected and systematically analysed, press data could enrich scientific research on legislative representation quite substantially[5] (Earl, et al., 2004).

1.5 Cases

To demonstrate how different patterns of representational behaviour in Africa are explained by the presence and institutional strength of local informal elites at the legislators' electoral context, and not the existing hypotheses, four important benchmarks for case selection were outlined. I looked for comparative cases with attributes that:

1. Differ on the conventional independent variables that are said to explain legislative representational choices outlined in section 1.2 of this chapter. For instance, countries with different electoral systems, different candidate selection mechanisms, different electoral clientelism profiles etc.

2. Show similarity on the independent variables of interest. That is the presence and influence of informal institutions and actors in the MPs' electoral context.

3. Demonstrate similarities in the dependent variable, that is, legislative representational foci, despite the differences in the independent variable. That is, countries with legislators that show a demonstrable inclination towards either national, constituency or party representation.

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[4] For more on where we stand on the use of press data for scientific research, see Ortiz et al (2005)
[5] See Appendix 8 for notes on the data collection and analysis.

4. Count for a stable democracy with an appreciable level of electoral integrity (Cheeseman, 2015; Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). Studying the representational relationship between MPs and voters require the selection of cases where clear chances of electoral defeat exist for the MP[6].

These criteria should enable us to clearly associate the dependent variable with the independent variable that is similar in both cases (Seawright and Gerring, 2008). As summarised in Table 1.2, the existing literature treats representational behaviour as a product of; (1) the electoral institutions within which the parliamentarian is embedded (2) party-specific candidate selection mechanism which presides over the MP's re-selection (3) the type of colonial programme that existed in a particular country and (4) electoral clientelism. These factors are assumed to affect the inclination of parliamentarians to emphasise either national, local or party representation (i.e., their representational focus). These conventional theories, I argue, have appeal deficits. I rather propose a new approach based on the presence and influence of informal local political elites in the MPs' electoral context. Pushing back against the established theories and introducing a new way of thinking about legislative representation in less institutionalised contexts require a careful selection of cases that meet the four criteria above. The criteria eliminate completely the possibility of those independent variables different in both cases (i.e., the conventional theories) from explaining the outcome (i.e., their representational focus).

In the worst-case scenario, the set criteria should weaken evidence of the relationship between the conventional theories and the outcome. On the contrary, the criteria should rather establish evidence of a causal relationship between the variable of interest and the outcome. Given their theoretical variation, empirical relevance, and overall fitting into the set criteria, legislators in the National Assembly of South Africa and the Parliament of Ghana were selected to examine the arguments raised in this study.

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[6]See the discussion of Jane Mansbridge (2003) and Andeweg and Thomassen's (2005) political representation in Chapter Two.

Table 1. 2: Case selection criteria/ differences and similarities between South Africa and Ghana

Case	Independent variables					Dependent variable
	Institutional Design		Colonial programme	Electoral clientelism	Local elites	Focus of representation
	Electoral System	Candidate Selection				
South Africa	Closed-list proportional representation	Hybrid selection	Settler	Non-clientelistic	Present and influential	Constituency
Ghana	Majoritarian (First-Past-The-Post)	Exclusive selection	Non-settler	Clientelistic	Present and influential	Constituency

Source: Author's compilation based on Ferree (2018); Afrobarometer; Barkan (2009b); Alabi (2009); Logan and Katenda (2021); Lindberg (2005)

Not only is there is a good presence of informal elites such as traditional chiefs and religious leaders in both countries, but they are also very influential in affecting political outcomes. This is a point I shall return to with a lot of details in the subsequent empirical chapters. Additionally, the popularity of constituency service among MPs in both countries despite the disparities in their electoral institutional makeup, colonial history and clientelistic profiles cannot be overemphasised. This makes the selection of South Africa and Ghana the most fitting cases for this study.

As shown in Table 1.2, while South African MPs are elected via a closed party-list proportional representation system, their colleagues in Ghana are voted into office directly by their geographical constituents via a majoritarian FPTP system. Given these differences, legislators in both countries should have different strategic interests and unique representational foci. Again, the two countries also represent two ends of the colonial legacy continuum. South Africa was one of the last Sub Saharan African countries to gain independence from foreign minority rule in 1994, and Ghana was the first in the region in 1957. There are also marked disparities in the colonial programmes rolled out in both countries along settler-non-settler lines. Moreover, unlike the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, the politics of South Africa is said to be devoid of electoral clientelism. As Joel Barkan (2005) argues, the structural context and the clientelistic outlook of South Africa differs markedly from the rest of the continent. While issuing clientelistic handouts is not the dominant mode of political mobilisation in South Africa (Barkan, 2005), it is in Ghana (Ibn Zackaria and Appiah-Marfo, 2020; Odijie and Imoro, 2021). Also, in a region "where competitive elections are often unfamiliar and imperfect" (Moehler, 2005:1), South Africa and Ghana have a distinguished reputation for holding credible elections – thus meeting the fourth case selection criteria. In effect, the chosen pair of cases place the study in an excellent position to empirically examine African MPs' representational choices.

1.6 Outline

This dissertation is organised into seven chapters. In this first chapter, I introduced the puzzle of legislative representation in emerging democracies. I also provided an outline of the main arguments in this study. The chapter also gave an overview of the alternative theory I develop in detail in subsequent chapters of the dissertation. A micro-political

approach to understanding collective legislative representation was also introduced in this chapter. In Chapter Two, I dig deeper into the subject of legislative representation dilemma introduced in the first chapter. I also expand on the arguments against the universal appeal of existing models, such as the arguments on electoral institutions, candidate selection as well as colonial legacy and electoral clientelism. This creates space for the introduction of an alternative theory in Chapter Three. In Chapter Three, I argue that local informal institutions and actors external to parliament constrain the choices of parliamentarians in Africa in a more convincing manner. Representational choices are therefore argued to be a function of the relative strength of the informal political institutions and actors present at the parliamentarians' electoral context.

The fourth and fifth chapters present an empirical overview of the representational behaviour of Ghanaian and South African legislators. The chapters show the popularity of constituency service among the MPs in both countries. In Chapter Four which focuses specifically on Ghana, I show (1) the nature of parliamentary representation and analyse why Ghanaian MPs primarily focus on delivering constituency objectives (2) the sources of variations among the MPs and (3) what account for the variations. On South Africa, Chapter Five presents empirical findings on (1) why the focus on 'constituency' is more popular among the varied representational functions of South African MPs [when local representation is expected to produce minimal electoral payoffs], (2) The nature of constituency service in South Africa and (3) How South African MPs vary regarding their representational behaviour and the explanations that underlie the different patterns of representation they roll out. In both chapters however, I show that constituency work is highly elite-centred and strictly mediated by local actors. In Chapter Six, I compare the institutional and contextual factors that influence the focus on constituency representation in Ghana and South Africa. The chapter focused on (1) the role of local political actors in the election of legislators in Africa (2) how institutional and contextual factors interact to explain the influence of local elites over electoral decisions of voters and (3) explanations for the extent to which local actors influence the representational choices of legislators. Chapter Seven summarises the study's key findings and points out some implications for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DILEMMA OF LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATION: A THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

Students of legislative representation are very familiar with the oft-cited assumption that parliamentarians operate on ill-defined lines of responsibility. The individual parliamentarian's office is without specific assignments to precise duties. While the collective functions of parliaments are usually specified and regulated, state constitutions tend to place minimal constraints on 'individual' legislators in the performance of their 'collective' parliamentary functions (Cain et al., 1987; Wawro, 2000). As a result, *whom* or *what* they represent and how they build reputation is mainly within their individual determination. MPs essentially decide for themselves whether to emphasise constituency service, party work or plenary activities, among others. This is also true for what exactly they *do* in the act of representation and *why*. Because parliamentarians have minimal restrictions on how they perform their individual representational roles, they make trade-offs among the mutually conflicting set of representational expectations they face.

As I mentioned in Chapter One, these assumptions are rooted mainly in research on legislators in advanced democracies in Western Europe and North America, where formal institutions ordinarily should provide a measure of definite behavioural pattern for political actors. So that, if representational behaviour is not uniform even in these institutionalised contexts, then it should be far more complex and uncertain in Africa's emerging democracies. This is because informal norms of political behaviour in Africa tend to compete with formally established institutions to explain political outcomes (see Jackson and Rosberg, 1982a; Dia, 1996; Chabal and Daloz 1999; Sandbrook et al., 1999; van de Walle 2003; Lindberg, 2003; Hydén, 2013). How then should we make sense of legislative representational behaviour in Africa? Knowing that formal rules of the game are of questionable explanatory capacity, just like informal rules – standing on their own – how should the explanatory framework for parliamentary representational behaviour in Africa look like? Who or what do legislators in Africa represent, how and why? And in explaining

legislative representation, where should we place the analytical emphasis? Formal or informal institutional approaches? And if there are existing analytical tools in other contexts, what are their strengths, weaknesses and potentials for generalisation to the African context? These are some of the theoretical questions this chapter seeks to answer.

Fortunately, a rich body of research exists on representational behaviour in advanced democracies. These studies point to the dilemma that legislators face in selecting their representational foci and the factors that drive their eventual choices. Most importantly, it has been observed that the daily operationalisation of representational duties is problematic for legislators. But that is not all. The conceptualisation of 'representation' is equally controversial for scholars. Thus, beyond the confusion that characterises the actual practice of representation by political actors, there is also consensus on the extremely paradoxical nature of the concept [of representation] itself. Although, at first glance, representation may appear very straightforward, it is actually as elusive as it is complex – for both parliamentarians and parliamentary researchers.

The literature of legislative representation is consequently overstocked with multiples of conceptions and dimensions of the concept. In this chapter, I discuss sixteen - still inexhaustive - normative dimensions of the concept of representation to demonstrate its unspecific and multifaceted nature. I reckon that placing the analysis of parliamentary representation in the context of emerging democracies would greatly aid our understanding of the concept and its spatial operationalisation. More importantly, the analysis would expand the contextual scope of the study of parliamentary representation beyond its current geographical concentration on Western industrial democracies.

In doing this, the study investigates the trade-offs faced by legislators in two new democracies in Africa when performing their representational functions. It also explores how their representational foci vary and what explains these variations. Legislative representation is, in this case, construed as a differentiated and overlapping set of activities that legislators undertake in response to a conjunction of incentives and constraints emanating from diverse sources. As such, rather than simply perceiving representation as a homogenous act of advocating for a group in the policymaking process, we ought to fully decompose the concept into its manifolds of dimensions. To do this, the question of which

network of pressures and demands elected legislators face in their representational functions becomes eminent. This question is necessary for our understanding of legislative representation and for appreciating the circumstances under which individual legislators vary in their representational behaviour.

This chapter proceeds as follows: first, I commit some time to disaggregate the concept of representation. I specify numerous variants and conclude by drawing a congruence among the various dimensions. The aim is to make a case for the multifaceted character of the concept. I mainly argue that representation is not only confusing for parliamentarians but also for researchers. For instance, the multiple dimensions of representation leave MPs with comprehensive behavioural options when operationalising their representational roles. Consequently, they often face conflicting standards of assessment from the people they represent due to the lack of consensus on what legislators' 'representation' functions entail specifically.

The section on the concept of representation is followed by a discussion of the two most important questions dominating representational theory; (1) whom or what legislators represent in their policymaking functions (focus of representation) and (2) how they represent the represented (style of representation). I then proceed by paying attention to three core representational foci of legislators: (1) the focus on universal or national policy in the parliamentary arena, (2) the focus on local or constituency service, and (3) the focus on political parties. This will form the basis for the puzzle this dissertation purposes to solve. A discussion will then follow on some existing explanations for representational behaviour. In this discussion, I will spell out the superficial appeal of three conventional theories of representational behaviour. As hinted earlier, the first hypothesis focuses mainly on the role of electoral systems and party-specific variables in explaining representational outcomes. I also question the explanatory appeal of models premised on colonial legacies on the one hand and Africa's socioeconomic constraints and electoral clientelism on the other. I instead propose an alternative theoretical framework that argues that Africa's informal political and economic context creates a humongous space for informal community-level actors and institutions to foster social and power relations that ultimately

compromise the explanatory power of the above highlighted institutional, structural and historical factors.

2.2 Normative models of representation

Representation ensues when one is authorised to act or speak on behalf of another. Straightforward as this may be, the concept is more complex and keeps evolving. Since 1967, a radical shift in the theoretical development of the concept has been seen. Particularly, Pitkin's (1967) "Concept of representation" occasioned a major facelift in representation research. Several conceptual developments and differing discussions have followed Pitkin's work. Under this section, four of the most comprehensive discussions of the concept are reviewed. I begin with Hanna Pitkin's (1967) concept of representation and then proceed to Eulau and Karp's (1977) puzzle of representation. The last two sub-sections discuss the works of Jane Mansbridge (2003) and Andeweg and Thomassen (2005). The section that follows aims to unite these four bodies of literature and spell out common themes to aid our understanding of representation.

2.2.1 Pitkin (1967): Representation as making present again

Hanna Pitkin's concept of representation remains the fulcrum around which several discussions on representation revolve. Using the method of linguistics or "ordinary language philosophy" (p.6), which distils the meanings of concepts from the ordinary use of words, she conceives representation as making present again. Representation serves aggregation and advocacy purposes, given the impossibility of every opinion to be heard in the policymaking process. However, the concept of representation is not this uncomplicated, and Pitkin recognises this in unequivocal terms. She identifies four sub-types: formalistic, descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation. Even though it is not difficult to spot important variations in the four dimensions, Pitkin maintains the need to view them as integral parts of a coherent whole.

First, the formalistic view is grounded in the concepts of authority and accountability. Representation starts from the conferment on elected representatives, a formal authority to act on behalf of the represented. This means that the first point of representation is granting

formal authority to the representative to act on behalf of the people. The second is accountability which has to do with the sanctioning mechanisms available to voters to evaluate and punish or reward their representatives. The institutional arrangement of authorisation and accountability is what constructs the dyadic link between representatives and their constituents. The second view of representation, descriptive, considers the composition of the legislative body itself and the extent to which it resembles or reflects the represented in demographic terms. Thus, the construction of descriptive representation is based on the accuracy of the resemblance between the composition of the legislature itself and the represented.

The third and final views are symbolic and substantive representation respectively. Symbolic representation means "standing for" the represented. Although descriptive representation can equally be construed as standing for the represented, the analytical distinction dwells in the symbolising element in symbolic representation. Here, representatives are "understood on the model of a flag representing the nation or an emblem representing a cult" (Pitkin, 1967:92). It operates on the assumption that the making of an underrepresented group present in legislative bodies can strongly impact public perceptions and attitudes towards that group's role in the political space. Substantive representation refers to "acting in the interests of the represented in a manner responsive to them" (Pitkin, 1967: 209). This has to do with championing a group's interest in the policy decision-making process. This view considers the extent to which the representative's policy positions and actions reflect the interest of her constituents. Pitkin calls this acting in the interest of the represented.

2.2.2 Eulau and Karps (1977): Representation as responsiveness

Eulau and Karps (1977), on their part, view representation as "responsiveness". Responsiveness, however, is not to be merely misconstrued as voter-representative policy congruence. They argue that even in situations where representatives' actions are in direct accord with the issue preferences of their constituents, such mere policy alignment cannot be said to be a sufficient basis for representation. Their definition of representation as responsiveness, therefore, could be said to have arisen from the critique of the policy congruence conceptualisation of representation.

Policy responsiveness refers to the extent to which the expressed policy interests and preferences of constituents affect their representative's policy position. As a central premise, "if the representative and his constituency agree on a particular policy, no matter how the agreement has come about, then the representative is responsive" (Eulau and Karps, 1977:242). Although a representative's articulation of the policy preferences of her constituents may imply that she considers them a competent source of policy demand, that may not always be the case. In fact, Eulau and Karps caution that "the representative may react to constituency opinion, and hence evince congruent attitudes or behaviour, yet not act in what is in the best interest of the constituency as he might wish to define that interest, thereby being, in fact, unresponsive" (Eulau and Karps, 1977:242).

Acknowledging the above weakness, the second composition of responsiveness, service responsiveness is proposed. This refers to using the representative's influence to procure particularistic services for their constituents. Petersen asserts that "when constituents or local firms or organisations need assistance from the (…) government, they contact their representative" (Petersen, 2012:7), and in supplying such assistance, representatives offer service responsiveness (Eulau and Karps, 1977). This may be done in at least five dimensions; casework, outreach, providing nominations, gathering information and visits (Petersen, 2012). The main idea behind service responsiveness is to engage with constituents to appreciate their concerns and solve their particularistic problems.

The third component of Eulau and Karps' (1977) responsiveness is allocation responsiveness. Allocation has to do with the extension of benefits to constituents. Supplying "pork" to voters has come to represent one of the primary characteristics of representation (Loewenberg, 2011). According to Eulau and Karps, representatives demonstrate allocation responsiveness when they respond to the material needs of their constituents by supplying them with public goods. The last component of representation is symbolic responsiveness. This refers to the extent to which representatives make symbolic gestures to their constituents in their representational activities. Symbolic representation also speaks to Hanna Pitkin's popular distinction between conceiving representation as "standing for" others and "acting for" others. Symbolic representation can thus be construed in line with the "standing for" dichotomy. Eulau and Karps argue that under

symbolic responsiveness, the representational relationship between legislators and their constituents is one "that is built on trust and confidence expressed in the support that the represented give to the representative and to which he responds by symbolic, significant gestures, in order to, in turn, generate and maintain continuing support" (Eulau and Karps 1977:246).

2.2.3 Mansbridge (2003): Representation as a complex relational phenomenon

Jane Mansbridge's concept of representation arises from the need to steer the conceptualisation of representation away from the predominant practice-oriented or empirical discussions and instead adopt more normative approaches that could sufficiently guide empirical analysis. She, therefore, proposes a systemic and plural theory of representation based on four types. She sees representation as a complex relational phenomenon that entails one entity that represents and another being represented. Her relational structure of representation is embedded in four different forms: promissory, anticipatory, gyroscopic and surrogate.

Not sharply departing from the earlier discussed models, Mansbridge's first variant of promissory representation lends itself directly to the principal-agent logic. Promises by elected representatives are what define promissory representation. Representatives and voters enter into a dyadic and accountability relationship where the former gets sanctioned either positively or negatively depending on the extent to which they keep or desert from their pre-election promises. The second type of representation is 'anticipatory representation' which operates on voters' evaluation of the past goodness of their representatives for either retention or disengagement. Anticipatory representation thus highlights the relevance of retrospective voting as a critical criterion for representation. Therefore, one crucial normative role retrospective voting plays is to provide an incentive for the representative to "please future voters" (Mansbridge, 2003:517) in order to be returned and also maintain constant communication relations with them to advertise their goodness for retention.

Mansbridge's third form of representation is gyroscopic. The central premise of gyroscopic representation is that voters select representatives whose actions are thought to inure to the

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benefit of the entire district while the representative also tries to act according to her conscience and judgement on the expectations of the voters. This raises concerns about the exact nature of the accountability relationship between representatives and voters. Mansbridge argues that the nature of the accountability relations in gyroscopic representation is a unique one and differs from that which exists ordinarily in promissory representation. Under gyroscopic representation, representatives possess a normative accountability responsibility not to lie about the issues based on which they secured their mandate. This type of representation thus expects representatives to be accountable to themselves on the one hand or be made to be accountable by their political parties. The fourth and last type of representation is surrogate representation. This refers to the representation of the interest of someone, a group or an entity outside the representative's constituency. Although attaining a perfect match or congruence between voters and their representatives is very difficult, surrogate representation has no basis for ditching the preferences and wishes of district voters. There is, however, no legal accountability relation between Mansbridge's surrogates and their constituents.

2.2.4 Andeweg and Thomassen (2005): Representation as delegation and control

The final discussion of representation is based on Andeweg and Thomassen's (2005) four modes of political representation. This conceptualisation arises in response to the never-ending mandate-independence controversy in political representation theorising. The authors combine different mechanisms through which voters can sanction their representatives with varying modes of interaction between the two parties to arrive at their conceptualisation of representation. They move beyond the principal-agent models of representation[7] to instead interrogate the mechanisms at the disposal of voters to control and ensure that their representatives act in their interest. Such control mechanisms could be ex-ante or ex-post.

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[7] Andeweg and Thomassen define the principal-agent model as the "delegation of power from a constituency or group of voters (the principal) to a party or MP (the agent)" (p.510).

Ex-ante mechanism connotes such controls as screening prospective representatives before formally voting for them. Thus, ex-ante representational relationship precedes the actual process of representation where voters pre-judge the goodness of potential representatives. Ex-post is the exact opposite. Here, the representative rather than the represented voter assumes a more active role in initiating policies. Potential representatives make policy proposals for the evaluation of the voter. If they get voted, they are expected to honour their proposed policies, which then invites sanctions. It has to do with making representatives accountable after their election. This includes the constant monitoring or institutional checks to which elected representatives are subject. Andeweg and Thomassen (2005) argue that representation can both be driven from below and above in four modes. This is depicted in Table 2.1 below.

From Table 2.1, political representation is bi-directional – it can emanate both 'from below' and 'from above'. 'From below', that is bottom-up driven representation, voters have specific views and issue preferences. The representative's duty is to channel this through 'as best as possible' into government policy. This is what they call, ex-ante delegation. It follows the principal-agent logic and assumes that the represented possess sufficient policy proficiency to make concrete policy demand on their representatives. Again, it resonates with the mandate and delegate models of representation. The ex-ante delegation model also follows Mansbridge's (2003) logic of promissory representation and its principal-agent underpinning.

The second form of representation is ex-post 'responsiveness'. Like 'delegation', this is a form of representation 'from below'. However, with responsiveness, the relationship between representatives and the people is borne out of the need to satisfy the policy expectations of the people after being elected in order to get returned in future elections. The threat of removal from office, therefore, becomes the source of the representative's responsiveness to her constituents. It must be emphasised, however that, this form of representation is only feasible in contexts with a certain degree of electoral integrity and party representation (Andeweg and Thomassen, 2005).

Table 2. 1: Modes of Political Representation

		Control Mechanism	
		Ex-Ante	**Ex-Post**
Direction	From above	*Authorisation*	*Accountability*
	From below	*Delegation*	*Responsiveness*

Source: Andeweg and Thomassen (2005)

The third form of representation, ex-ante 'authorisation' takes the top-down direction. This functions on the assumption that it is prospective representatives who present their future programmes to voters. The representation relationship is thus stimulated by the representatives who outline their policies for approval by the voter. The voters then weigh the different policy options and settle on the one that matches their expectations. The last mode of representation, 'accountability' also follows the ex-post logic. This means holding representatives to account for their stewardship. It has to do with the voter evaluating the extent to which the proposed programmes of their representative were implemented in the previous electoral period. Diligent representatives who honoured their promises get returned to office. The novelty in Andeweg and Thomassen's (2005) analysis is that it provides a new framework for representation theorising beyond the ever-dominating delegate-trustee divide.

2.3 Bringing together the four conceptualisations: Implication for this study

The discussion above brings at least two observations to the fore. First, each of the authors provides different dimensions or approaches to conceptualising political representation. Although some of the views converge on concepts like authorisation, accountability and policy responsiveness, others like Mansbridge's surrogate representation diametrically diverges and rakes in a relationship with entities with no electoral and sanctioning powers over their representative. These overlaps, as well as divergence, feed into my second observation. This is the fact that the different views provide varying benchmarks and standards for scholarly evaluation of political representation. The four authors have

altogether proposed sixteen views on the concept of representation. This provides evidence to the complex and multi-dimensional nature of the concept.

Viewed together, however, one gets the impression that the single most influential theory indispensable to representation theorising is agency theory. As we have seen, all four authors create the impression that representation occurs between two parties; the representative and the voter, where the former is tasked, evaluated and punished or rewarded for her stewardship to the latter after a specified period. Although this is perhaps more highlighted in Mansbridge (2003) and Andeweg and Thomassen (2005), Pitkin's formalistic and substantive views as well as Eulau and Karp's policy, allocation and service responsiveness speak to the same issue. Thus, representation is a relationship between two parties in which one is representing while the other is being represented. The represented reserves the power to disengage the representative in such circumstances as non-performance or deviation from the tasked interests or preferences. We can, therefore, conceive of legislative representation as a differentiated and overlapping set of activities that legislators undertake in response to a conjunction of incentives and constraints emanating from diverse sources.

But most importantly, it must be noted that the foregone discussion on the confusing nature of the concept of representation does not only manifest at the conceptual level. Political actors equally face confusing and multiple options when defining and operationalising their daily representational responsibilities. It remains contentious whether the process of representation should begin with the representatives entering the political space with their programmes to which voters align or the process should rather begin with the voter having crystalised policy views that ought to be championed by the representative. Closely related to this is the style of representation legislators should adopt; whether they are required to follow their constituents' instructions religiously or follow their independent perception of constituency preferences and make judgements about the proper course of action. These concerns occupy a central place in the study of legislative representation. Legislative role theory has, therefore, emerged as one of the most influential frameworks for understanding the relationship between citizens and their representatives in systematic ways. The following section delves into it.

2.4 Theory of representation roles

Roles are routines or regular patterns of interrelated goals, attitudes or behaviour that people in particular positions engage with (Searing, 1994; Strøm, 2012). The study of representation roles has revolved around two core questions. The first discusses "whom" or "what" legislators represent in the policymaking process and, secondly, "how" they represent their constituents. Legislators are thought to perform their representational responsibilities in multiple ways. Early role theorists have distinguished between two ideal-typical representational "roles": district "delegates" and "trustees". There is a third role of "politicos" that function as an intermediate category (Wahlke et al., 1962). While delegates primarily deem themselves a mouthpiece of their constituents' demands, trustees present themselves as national advocates and focus on delivering long-term benefits. Recent evidence on European democracies (see Thomassen, 1994, for example) suggests that legislators may also perceive themselves as party agents instead. These classifications follow Edmund Burke's famous pronouncements to the electors in Bristol in 1774. He argued that elected representatives do not owe constituents a responsibility to ditch their conscience to follow the constituents' instructions. He conceives of parliament as a deliberative assembly that ought to pursue nationwide goals and not particularistic ones. Therefore, representatives serve their constituents best when they follow their own judgements and conscience and not that of their constituents.

Wahlke and his colleagues in 1962 revisited the conversation on legislators' role conception and proposed a typology of representational roles following the footsteps of Burke. A representative who acts as a delegate is basically a vessel for conveying constituency demands. The implication of the delegate model of representation is that the legislator lacks any autonomy to assert herself independent of her constituents' instructions. The trustee, on the other hand, does not only rely on her own judgement and act as she sees fit; she can also take positions that conflict with the short-term interest of her constituents. As indicated above, legislators may also perceive themselves as party delegates instead. This third variant could be said to have evolved from the contextual differences between the American democracy and that of Western Europe. Several empirical studies from European parliamentary democracies rather show that legislators tend to be more inclined to their

parties and thus serve more as "party delegates" than constituency delegates (see Blomgren and Rozenberg, 2012; Müller and Saalfeld, 1997; Vonno, 2012). In a similar vein, Blomgren and Rozenberg's edited volume in 2012 brought to the fore two concepts relating to representation roles. The first, areal role is a context-specific role set where legislators focus primarily on the welfare of either the whole state or a particular geographical constituency. The second, party role concerns the type of legislative representation which is particularly focused on advancing the interest of specific parties.

Decomposing legislative roles into styles and foci has significantly shaped contemporary research on representation to unearth several types of positions that legislators adopt. One of such renowned works is Searing's (1994). He argues that legislators play two types of roles, namely position and preference roles. This is what he calls the motivational approach to the study of legislative roles. While position role results from given institutional constraints, preference roles are influenced by an individual's personal preferences. Rules and personal reasons, therefore, become the central determinants of position and preference roles, respectively. This leads him, focusing on preference roles, to the identification of four types of legislators: policy advocates, ministerial aspirants, constituency members and parliament men.

Searing argues that large proportions of legislators take the role of policy advocates and primarily aim at influencing the policy process of government. These parliamentarians usually spend the lion's share of their time working on legislations and shaping public policy. Among this group is a sub-group of specialists and generalists. While the former prefers to focus on specific policy sectors, the latter does more general policy advocacy. A third category of ideologues also functions as policy advocates who basically pursue policy analysis and propaganda. The second role set comprises what Searing calls Ministerial Aspirants. These parliamentarians mainly get involved in activities that serve to catapult them into government positions in the future. They thus see parliament as a steppingstone to higher ministerial portfolios.

On the other hand, constituency members, who constitute the third role, concentrate on delivering particularistic goods to their constituents. Such legislators prioritise what Eulau and Karps (1977) call service responsiveness and allocation, including running

ombudsman-like services and doing case works for constituents. The last role legislators could adopt is to remain in parliament and get involved in parliamentary activities without advocating for any particularistic interests. This is what Searing calls Parliament Men. Their main aim is not to enhance their chances of either getting into the executive or being popular with district voters but to conduct the business of parliament. Within this group, Searing distinguishes such subgroups as Status Seekers, Spectator and Club Men.

2.5 Three core activity areas in legislative representation

As we have seen, legislators significantly differ regarding the amount of commitment they put on the different expectations associated with their office. It has been demonstrated that the legislative arena is a broad field with unspecific job descriptions. Essentially, legislators select from a broad menu of 'styles' and 'foci. The above has shown that legislators could summarily emerge as advocates of universal/national policy, servants of local constituencies or act primarily as representatives of their political parties, among others (Blomgren and Rozenberg, 2012; Gauja, 2012; Saalfeld and Müller, 1997; Searing, 1994; Vonno, 2012). Below, I expand the various activities entailed in taking the roles of universal/national policy advocate, local/constituency servant and party loyalist.

2.5.1 Universal or national focus

Legislators who champion universal or national policies primarily aim to contribute to public policymaking. They mainly strive to have an influence on the processes that result in the formulation of policies. Policy advocates primarily spend the bulk of their time in parliament, attending committee meetings, sponsoring and amending bills, asking questions and participating in legislative investigations and audits (Strøm, 2012). While their counterparts may prefer to be in their constituencies attending to local problems, they would rather want to contribute to constituency issues through their activities in parliament, say through questions or voting. Donald Searing (1994) calls this category of legislators, *Policy Advocates.* They commit to introducing bills, giving speeches on pressing issues and filing parliamentary questions. Some are ideologues who seek to promote and sponsor abstract ideas whilst others are either generalists or specialists who rather take an interest in very particular policy areas or sponsor bills where they have expertise.

Searing again puts 'policy advocates' and 'parliament men' in different categories with respect to their focus of representation. However, for the purposes of this work, the two would not be distinguished for two basic reasons. First, since much of the policy advocacies that parliamentarians do happen in parliament or in committees within parliament, 'parliament men' who primarily focus on conducting these businesses of parliament invariably end up being involved in such policy advocacy works as asking questions, sponsoring bills, among others than their counterparts who concentrate primarily on constituency or party work outside parliament. Second, the mere presence in parliament of parliament men [even if they are "spectators"] contributes invaluably to policymaking.

Searing argues that some parliament men only enjoy the parliamentary space or just enjoy watching the political drama in the chamber unfold (Searing, 1994). But their presence in parliament alone is necessary to avoid quorum constraints and, by extension, essential for policy advocacy. Since "most parliaments use 50% majorities to pass bills" (Laruelle and Valenciano, 2011:241) or require some majorities of a sort to conduct its business, the reliable presence of parliament men contributes significantly to policymaking. Regular attendance to parliamentary meetings or committee sittings can thus be construed as being policy inclined, as policy advocacy requires the 'presence in parliament' to ask questions, initiate bills, partake in debates, scrutinise executive policies, and participate in legislative audits and investigations.

2.5.2 Local or constituency focus

Distinct from parliamentarians who prioritise national policy advocacy are those who principally consider constituency service as their primary calling. Such parliamentarians aim to offer particularistic benefits to only a section of the population. This is what Eulau and Karps call service responsiveness. Such legislators employ "non-legislative services" (Eulau and Karps, 1977:243) to solve the problems of their constituents. Constituency service has become the most widespread activity legislators in most modern democracies engage in (Loewenberg, 2011). To proceed, two questions beckon our attention. The first is what a constituency itself means, and the second is what or which activities constitute constituency service?

Starting with the former, the word "constituency" immediately paints a picture of a geographical location that is represented by a legislator. However, not only geographical entities can be represented but also ideals, groups, interests, among others. This means that a constituency can also be construed demographically to mean functional groups like ethnic, religious, and economic groupings (Eulau and Karps, 1977). A constituency, therefore, connotes first, a geographical entity and second, the people within it. In Richard Fenno's (1978) *Home style,* a constituency is defined from the perception of legislators who represent it. Through interviews with members of the US Congress, Fenno derives a conception of constituency based on the individual perceptions of legislators themselves. His arrival on this conceptualisation of constituency stems from the question; what do elected representatives see when they see a constituency? According to Fenno, four types of constituencies are seen when elected representatives construe their constituency, and he portrays these concentric circles. These are geographic, re-election, primary, and personal constituencies.

Circle A - Geographic constituency: This represents the broadest and largest part of the concentric circles displayed in Figure 2.1. It also represents the entire geographic territory which a legislator is legally mandated to cater to. The geographic constituency thus includes the whole population within a defined region which the legislator represents. Fenno also calls this the *legal constituency* as it is the district, entity or location demarcated by law to be represented by a representative.

Circle B - Re-election constituency: Within the geographic constituency is the support base of the legislator. This is what Fenno calls the re-election constituency. This means that legislators in construing their constituency disaggregate and make distinctions between those he thinks voted for him and those who he thinks did not. This partitions the constituency explicitly into political components. Thus, the legislator creates within the geographic constituency, further constituencies comprising of his supporters and non-supporters.

Circle C - Primary constituency: Within the re-election constituency is still a third concentric circle of core supporters. This constituency is referred to as the primary constituency. Fenno indicates that this constituency consists of the legislator's key loyalists, true believers or political base. As a distinction from the re-election constituency, this

constituency does not only support the legislator but regards itself as hardcore or strongest supporters.

Circle D - Personal constituency: The fourth and last constituency legislators perceive is the innermost of the concentric circles. This constitutes the most intimate circles of individuals who surround the legislator. Fenno calls them the very strongest supporters. This constituency usually comprises the bosom political advisers and confidants of the legislator.

Figure 2. 1: Different types of constituencies
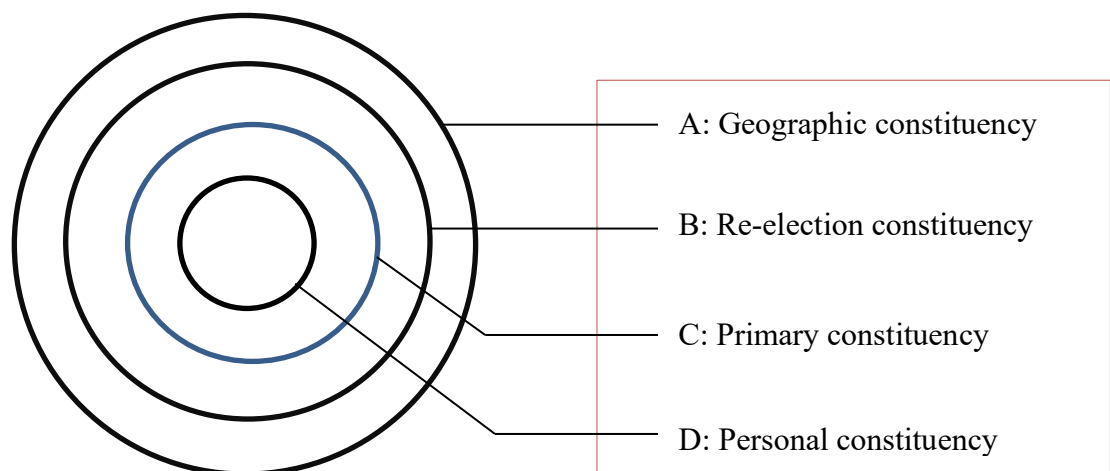
Source: Author's illustration based on Fenno (1978)

Fenno's conceptualisation of constituency, even though highly political, brings to the fore one important observation. This is the fact that constituency is more than a defined geographical entity. This distinction is perhaps better articulated by Eulau and Karps (1977), who argue that different functional groups in a country can equally constitute constituencies. In this scenario, religious groupings, ethnic groupings, civil society groupings and even the entire nation can constitute a constituency. This is also not to add to the conceptual confusion already surrounding the concept but to argue that any grouping or entity can form a kind of constituency whose concerns and interests could be represented by a legislator.

Having said this, I turn to the main question of what exactly parliamentarians do when they do constituency service. There is no straightforward answer to this question as constituency service is diverse, highly varied and involves a series of activities. Petersen (2012) holds that legislators who do constituency service get involved in at least five activities; outreach, casework, gathering of information, providing nominations and visits. First, embarking on outreaches, legislators introduce themselves to their constituents, inform them of their activities in the capital and finally gather information on what to convey to the National Assembly. Constituency service also involves casework in which the MPs or their staff help obtain benefits from state agencies to targeted constituents. In many instances, legislators hold "office hours" in their constituencies, communicate by telephone and get to know specific individual problems and offer solutions.

Constituency service could also take the form of doing errands for the constituents, giving advice, obtaining information, sponsoring community development projects and explaining activities in the capital. Eulau and Karps (1977) argue that in supplying such assistance, representatives offer service responsiveness (Eulau and Karps, 1977). Additionally, constituency work could take the form of allocation. Allocation has to do with the extension of benefits to constituents. Supplying "pork" to voters has come to represent one of the primary characteristics of representation (Loewenberg, 2011).

In the African context, Lindberg (2003) shows that constituency service sometimes takes the form of showing off in public gatherings and functions. Legislators usually attend funerals, weddings, church services, mosques, and public ceremonies whenever they are in the constituency. Additionally, constituency-active MPs are typically known for the award of individual favours like the payment of school fees, electricity bills, water bills, distribution of tools for agriculture and giving cash handouts, among others. After interviewing Members of the US Congress, Fenno concludes that the home style of Members manifests in three ways. First is the presentation of self, explanation of activities in the capital and lastly, allocation of resources. Although the activities underpinning constituency service may be diverse and varied, the discussions above point to similar fundamentals. Legislators who commit to constituency service tend to allot a lot of time to

maintain their presence in their constituencies. They also prioritise listening to their constituents and explaining their activities in the capital.

2.5.3 Partisan focus

Legislators could also commit their time and resources to party work. Unlike those who prioritise constituency service or national policy advocacy, party loyalists consider the representation of their party's interests as the dominant part of their work. The party loyalist role has generated a bit of controversy. In Searing's influential work, party loyalists are not mentioned, and this has led to the argument that partisanship among legislators is more a disposition than a role (Andeweg, 2014). This of course, should also lead to questions on the analytical distinction between roles and disposition. While this may be blurred, at least, we can posit that perhaps, different legislators in different contexts exhibit distinct role sets, which may explain why party loyalists are not mentioned in Searing's study of British Members of Parliament. Andeweg (1997), for instance, found in contrast to Searing, that in the Dutch Parliament party loyalists dominate.

The contradictions in parliamentarians' priorities lead to at least one key understanding. This is the fact that there may not be fixed roles for legislators in different parliaments. In other words, parliaments in different contexts may feature different legislators with dissimilar role sets. In fact, Searing makes this admission when he posits that his "four legislative roles are not mutually exclusive" (Searing, 1994:416). Recent evidence on European democracies (Thomassen, 1994 for example) has suggested that legislators may predominantly perceive themselves as party agents. The debate as to why [Dutch] MPs differ in their role sets from their [British] counterparts and, by extension, why legislators in similar and different contexts differ is the point of interest in this thesis.

The point is to investigate and explain the different role sets in parliaments in Africa. The central point is that legislators could, in addition to being policy advocates or constituency servants, also function as party loyalists or workers. Cynthia van Vonno (2012) validates the party loyalist role orientation by observing that scholars risk oversimplifying the roles legislators could adopt if we approached role studies by classifying legislators according to one orientation. To this end, the question that should attract our attention is what legislators

do to get the label of party loyalists or party politicians. Legislators who commit to party work subscribe to serving and being diligent to the parliamentary party. They also engage in extra-parliamentary party activities that inure to their party's benefit. Parliamentary party loyalists make sure they fall in line with the party whip system in parliament, join committees that bring strategic benefits to the party and debate and vote in line with the party. For extra-parliamentary duties, this may include campaigning for other candidates on the party ticket (Strøm, 2012), supporting the party periodically with financial contributions and defending the party's interests in the media.

2.6 Switchability or specialisation of representational roles

The final theoretical contention I would like to address in this section is whether the roles discussed above [that is, national policy advocates, constituency servants and party loyalists] are fixed, stable roles or otherwise changeable. In other words, are legislators' representational priorities a fixed attitudinal characteristic of each MP or role switching is possible. First, in his discussion of legislative roles, Searing makes the attribution that MPs specialise in particular roles. Specialisation therefore creates the impression that roles and priorities are fixed and, therefore, not switchable. What this means is that legislators who commit to national policy advocacy or constituency service stick to these roles irrespective of the context, time, or circumstance. This position is reiterated by Blomgren and Rozenberg (2012), who equate roles to personal need. The implication is, therefore, that if roles emerge out of personal needs, then it follows that role choices are stable and hence not switchable.

However, it is contentious to assume that political actors do not change and remain stable even under different exposures and conditions. Wahlke realised the possibility of role switching when he advised scholars not to take "any given role orientation as a fixed attitudinal attribute of each person, which invariably leads him to act and react the same way in every situation" (Wahlke, 1962:17). The patterns of behaviour legislators adopt, and their priorities are shaped by their daily circumstances and situations. The implication is that whether a legislator acts as a national policy advocate or constituency servant, or a party loyalist cannot be fixed but dependent on situational givens, contextual circumstances, or institutional environment. Therefore, representational roles and their

consequent behaviours may be viewed as a product of contextual and institutional givens. The question of how legislators come to adopt one representational focus over another will be the focus of the subsequent section.

To place this in context, the core aim of this dissertation is to explain how African parliamentarians set their priorities as representatives dealing with the dilemma of overlapping representational expectations[8]. I also explore the factors that explain why some MPs emphasise universalistic/national policymaking while others focus on the local constituency or party work. In other words, what exactly explains the representational foci legislators adopt? As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, one widely cited explanation focuses on electoral institutional contexts. It has mainly emerged from studies on representational behaviour in advanced democracies in Europe and North America. The second hypothesis to be considered draws on theories of historical institutionalism and argues that historical legacies and path dependencies condition legislators' representational behaviour. The third explanation is based on behavioural economics on the one hand and patron-clientelism on the other.

Even though these theories may have some merit, I push back against them in this chapter for having a superficial explanatory appeal for legislative representation in emerging democracies in Africa. While I argue against their appeal in this chapter, I prepare the grounds to introduce an alternative explanatory framework for representational behaviour in Africa based on the modern political roles of informal institutions and local political actors and relational clientelism. The model suggests that the incentive for emphasising on either local, national or partisan representation is a function of the relative strength of the informal political institutions present in the parliamentarians' electoral context.

2.7 The institutional context theory

As highlighted above, one of the most widely accepted theories of representational behaviour is the institutional context hypothesis, which conceives legislators' representational choices as resulting from strategic calculations within the context of the

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[8] See the puzzle in Chapter One

incentives and constraints to which they are subject. It derives inspiration from the rational choice framework and has been very influential in legislative studies in Western democracies. This theory has produced consistent findings in these contexts across time and space (see Carey and Shugart 1995; Müller and Saalfeld, 1997; Tsebelis and Money, 1997; Strøm, 2012; Blomgren and Rozenberg, 2012). As a central argument, the representational focus and style legislators adopt is considered a function of the institutions that preside over their activities. These institutional rules may include those regulating the legislature itself or exogenous ones like party regulations or electoral laws.

Proponents of this theory assume that legislators are usually driven by re-election interests (Mayhew, 1974). Therefore, they tailor the various activities associated with their office to precisely achieve this goal. The type of constituents that legislators would respond to (their representation focus) and how they do it (representation style) are strategically shaped by the institutional framework that defines the electoral connection. Strøm (2012) develops this a bit further by arguing that legislators may not only be purposeful re-election seekers but rather face hierarchically ordered layers of goals. The quest to attain these goals is, in turn, consequential for the role conception and overt behaviours they adopt. These goals are re-selection, re-election, party office and legislative office. To gain access to parliamentary office, aspirants go through internal party candidate selection procedures to secure their parties' nominations before competing in general elections. This hurdle within-party is, according to Strøm (1997; 2012), the most fundamental of all the goals parliamentarians pursue. Having secured re-selection, parliamentarians [can then] move to the attainment of the next higher goal of re-election. This is followed by party office goals and legislative office goals.

Candidate selection, therefore, remains one of the key duties of political parties prior to general elections. It encompasses various mechanisms by which a political party decides on a list of candidates to sponsor on its ticket for general elections. While candidate selection takes place in almost every political party, the mechanism of the selection is hardly regulated by national laws. In a vast majority of democracies therefore, candidate selection remains an uncharted territory for national regulations. Parties are consequently left on their own to decide their mode of selection. Hazan and Rahat (2010) classified the

mode of candidate selection into four categories considering the size of the selectorate, qualification for candidacy, centralised or decentralised nature of the selection and lastly, the procedure for the selection.

While each of the four methods may have specific behavioural consequences on legislators, the size of the selectorate, by far comes on top of the hierarchy relative to its effect on legislators' behaviour (Hazan, 2014). Selectorates are a body of people responsible for the selection of parliamentary candidates in intra-party competitions for onward presentation to the entire electorate for voting. Parties may differ regarding the size of their selectorates. While in some cases, it could be just one person – usually a powerful party leader – it could also comprise the entire electorates in a constituency (Hazan, 2014; Hazan and Rahat, 2010). Thus, candidate selection mechanisms could feature either an inclusive or exclusive selectorate. As shown in Figure 2.2 below, an inclusive selectorate could mean the entire voters in a constituency, and an exclusive selectorate could imply just a single leader. In a very inclusive candidate selection mechanism, it is expected that parliamentarians would be inclined to the median voter due to the direct accountability relationship between the entire voters and the legislator. Parliamentarians who intend to seek re-selection, therefore, are expected to have strategic incentives to build a closer, deeper relationship with the voters.

If we move a step back the arrow, the size of the selectorate reduces from the entire "voters" to "Party members". Even though this may still be quite a number and also highly inclusive, the reduction of the size to only party members is expected to also reduce the constituency-centeredness of the legislator. The same logic plays out in situations where "party delegates" constitute the selectorate. The decision of re-selection-minded MPs to cater to one group or the other therefore largely depends on who constitute the re-selection group. When the candidate selection mechanism is highly exclusive and limited to only the party leader or a few influential party figures, legislators are expected to display high levels of party consciousness (Hazan, 2014).

When the goal of re-selection is met, the next step towards the attainment of a parliamentary office is the goal of re-election. General elections, as with candidate selection are also guided by different institutions which provide different incentives to candidates. Under

institutions where votes are cast for individual candidates, such as the majoritarian system (either simple plurality or second-round elections), re-election seeking parliamentarians are expected to strategically cultivate closer relationships with the electorates for the purposes of getting returned. Parliamentarians, therefore, become constituency-centric or voter-centric because the direct electoral interface with voters makes direct sanctioning easier in case of unresponsiveness. Conversely, representatives elected under proportional systems are expected to be inclined to the party since electorates vote for their preferred parties rather than individual candidates. For instance, in closed list systems, voters cast their ballots for the party without any opportunities to alter the priorities presented on the party list. Even under the open list system or Single Transferrable Vote (STV), where voters can re-order the arrangements on the party list, re-election seeking parliamentarians may still display higher levels of party-centeredness in order to get access to the list, in the first place.

Figure 2. 2: Party selectorate and legislative behaviour
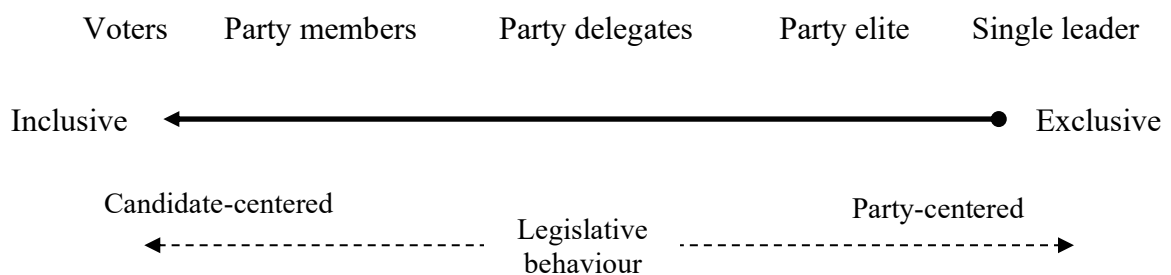
Source: Hazan (2014)

Although this theory is very influential in legislative studies, it may not have a good appeal in contexts where weak states, fragile formal institutions and strong community influence abound. While this is not to belittle the effects of formal electoral institutions and candidate selection mechanisms in their entirety, it will be highly problematic attempting to explain political outcomes in Africa solely with formal institutions without accounting for the role of informal institutions and actors. Students of African politics have often treated formal institutions as having questionable explanatory capacity. It has been argued that formal institutions [such as electoral systems and candidate selection procedures] exist only on

paper in Africa and are generally symbolic and weak to have any meaningful effect on political behaviour (see Jackson and Rosberg, 1984; Chabal and Daloz 1999; van de Walle 2003; Hydén, 2013). Jackson and Rosberg particularly observed that in Africa's weakly institutionalised context, "rulers and other leaders take precedence over the formal rules of the political game… the rules do not effectively regulate political behaviour" (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982a:10).

While this obviously casts the explanatory capacities of formal institutions in a very incompetent light, one may argue that formal political rules of the game may have been necessarily weak in the pre-third wave democratisation period when Jackson and Rosberg wrote. But even that, it appears that the democratisation of the region has not occasioned much transformation in the strength of formal political institutions either. Quite recently, several other scholars such as Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999), Nicholas Van de Walle (2003) and Goran Hydén (2006) have reiterated Jackson and Rosberg's (1984) fears on the competence of formal institutional explanatory frameworks in the study of African politics. Among Africanists, one thing is clear; "abstract constitutions and formal institutions exist on paper, but they do not shape the conduct of individual actors, especially those in power" (Hydén, 2006:98). Therefore, despite the considerable acceptability of the explanatory potential of electoral systems and candidate selection mechanisms elsewhere, contextual realities can make a huge difference in its universal application.

This notwithstanding, I do not intend to gloss over the fact that there are a couple of authors belonging to the "formal school" who are rather cautious in completely dismissing the constraining effect of formal institutions. These 'optimists' see formal institutions as gradually having a bite as much as informal institutions in explaining political outcomes in the region (Posner and Young, 2007; Cheeseman, 2015). Perhaps the strongest and most convincing of these arguments was the one offered by Daniel Posner and Daniel Young. In their article entitled "Institutionalization of political power in Africa", they point out that formal rules are beginning to constrain political actors in Africa "in ways that they previously have not" (Posner and Young, 2007:126). Additionally, they indicate that formal institutionalisation trends in Africa are unlikely to reverse. However, Prempeh (2008) argues that political power in Africa is largely untamed by the very institutions that are

supposed to regulate political conduct. Prempeh's arguments sharply contradict that of Posner and Young.

It must be emphasised that the formalists' arguments are gaining a lot of traction among recent scholars – however erratic it has been in the many times it has been subjected to empirical testing. In an attempt to find out whether the effects of electoral systems in Africa resemble that of advanced democracies, Lindberg (2005) ended up with mixed results. While there were some effects on the effective number of parties and party systems, for instance, there was none on the logic of political accountability. Even on the effects of electoral systems on political parties, a study by Riedl (2014) paints a contrary picture. Her study found no effect of electoral systems on political party institutionalisation in Africa as may have been hypothesised in advanced democratic contexts. The question is, if formal institutions have little explanatory appeal for politics in Africa, then what should the alternative framework for the study of parliamentary representation in the region be? Could informal institutions provide the much-needed explanatory remedy?

In the next chapter, I argue that it will largely be untenable to completely dismiss the relevance of formal institutions in the study of legislative representation in Africa, however weak they may be. But this notwithstanding, the region's largely informal context creates a humongous amount of space for informal community-level actors and institutions to foster social and power relations that ultimately compromise the effects of formal electoral institutions. But again, the extent of this compromise, I shall argue, is a function of the relative strength of informal local political players at the legislators' electoral context, and therefore highly differentiated along geographical lines.

2.8 The salience of colonial and other historical legacies

Other scholars consider historical contingencies and resilient legacies of the past as the most appropriate framework within which to understand representational behaviour in Africa. According to this approach, institutions or rules of behaviour adopted at historical points in time in Africa have tended to affect present and future political behaviours. Therefore, contemporary representational behaviour of parliamentarians in Africa cannot be fully understood without immersing same in the region's history. Proponents argue that

history matters in at least two main ways. First, since political events happen within historical contexts, they may either constrain or enable future political decisions. Secondly, history matters because of the opportunity it gives political actors to refer to and learn from the past. Historical intuitionalists believe that past decisions and choices serve as points of reference and critical junctures to shape present and future political behaviour.

But historical institutionalism has for decades not been a preferred approach for the study of African politics for obvious epistemological reasons. On the one hand, its normative focus on formal political institutions made it less appealing as formal institutions themselves have been dismissed for having very little relevance for African politics. However, recent scholarship on legislative politics in the region is replete with historical institutionalist approaches, especially on the long-term impact of colonial legacies on recent parliamentary behaviour (Cooper, 2002; Sissokho, 2005; Alabi, 2009; Barkan, 2009a; Opalo, 2019). The argument has been made, for instance, that the representational focus of African legislators is more towards extra-parliamentary activities in constituencies than intra-parliamentary activities because of two main historical junctures; colonial rule and post-colonial neo-patrimonial politics.

It would be recalled that by the early 20th Century, only about two countries[9] in Africa had not succumbed to the European imperial and diplomatic aggression that began in the late 1800s. Seven European powers – Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium, and Portugal – partitioned and established a colonial presence across the continent and ruled it for a little over a century[10]. The twin colonial goals of subjugation and exploitation (Nganje, 2015) as well as the strategies employed by the colonial powers is argued to have had a lasting impact on the governance structure, attitudes and political behaviour in the [former] colonies. Although one could argue of striking variations in the nature of the colonial programmes of the different powers in different colonies, there are, at the same time, generalisable similarities and legacies that run through the different colonial projects.

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[9] Ethiopia and Liberia

[10] There are of course variations in the duration of colonial rule across African countries

A typical example is the nature, powers and composition of the legislatures established under the British and French rules. While a prominent feature and legacy of the British administration was the establishment of quasi-legislative Councils (LegCos) across its colonies, the French preferred centralised Assemblies based in Paris or a subunit based in the centralised colonial headquarters of Dakar and Brazzaville. These two different legislative policies, however, contributed to the creation of similar patterns of not only weak legislative institutions birthed after independence (Barkan 2009a) but, more importantly, created a cohort of legislators who operated mainly at the fringes of mainstream legislative and policy discourses and processes (Alabi, 2009; Thomas and Sissokho, 2005).

Table 2. 2: Summary of existing explanations for legislative representation in Africa

Approach	Institution	Type/form	Main feature	Consequent MP behaviour	Critique
Formal Institutional context	Candidate selection mechanism	Inclusive selection	Open selection. It could be open to the entire constituency voters or a large number of selectorates.	Local constituency orientation	Formal institutions exist only on paper and are incompetent in regulating political processes or explaining political outcome. They are generally symbolic and weak to have any meaningful effect on political behaviour. Extant empirical analysis on the effect of electoral systems is either mixed or shows no effect
		Exclusive selection	Selection is closed and done by party oligarchy or leader.	Partisan orientation	
	Electoral system	Majoritarian system	Votes are cast for individual candidates; the candidate with the most/majority votes wins	Local orientation	
		Proportional system	Voters cast their ballots for the party	Partisan orientation	
Colonial and other historical legacies	Colonial legacy	Indirect rule/policy of assimilation	Established LegCos were advisory in nature, lacked legislative power/ The legislative arm was centralised in the colonial headquarters	Weak legislative culture, Local orientation	Empirical evidence suggests that the role orientation and actual behaviour of legislators in Africa are not differentiated along clear-cut patterns representing colonial legacies
		LegCos in Settler colony	European settlers stayed after independence to continue with legislative culture, well-structured committees and legislative infrastructure existed	Parliamentary orientation	
		LegCos in Non-settler colony	Legislative culture was terminated after the demise of colonial rule	Local orientation	
Resource constraint	Clientelism	Electoral clientelism	Voters in resource-deficient contexts demand private, clientelistic handouts, poor voters are ready to sell their votes to the highest bidder	Local orientation	Handouts are seasonal and cannot shape legislative representation in between elections. No constant patterns of interaction with the clients after elections

First, on the part of the British, a policy of "Indirect Rule" was adopted with a top-down structure within which African traditional rulers and warrant chiefs were incorporated into the local administrative setup in a decentralised fashion. They again created a system for the collection of the local's reactions and opinions on the colonial policies in the pre-World War I era which became known as the Legislative Councils (LegCos). The first LegCo was established in 1850 in Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) and later in 1863 in Sierra Leone (Alabi, 2009). The composition of the early LegCos was limited to prominent British civil servants, the clergy and educators in the colonies appointed by the British governor (Alabi, 2009; Barkan 2009a). Without any powers over legislation, oversight, or representation, these LegCos were established to perform at least two main functions. First, they were to serve as a mechanism for the gathering of feedback from the local elites and the rest of the indigenous population on their perception or acceptance of the policies of the colonial administration (Barkan, 2009a). The LegCos and their members thus only remained and functioned as conduits for conveying the satisfaction or otherwise of the policies of the colonial governors from the periphery to the centre.

The LegCos were secondly to serve as advisory bodies to the colonial governors who rather wielded actual legislative and executive powers (Alabi, 2009; Thomas and Sissokho, 2005). Before anything else, the primary function of the early legislators was to interface with the local people and evaluate the effects of the colonial programmes and advise the governors based on the information they gathered. Thus, their roles were defined more vertically between the colonial administration and the indigenous African population (i.e., the constituents) than horizontally between the LegCos and other state institutions, and this was later to be the defining orientation of the African legislators who took over following the World War II.

The wave of anti-colonial campaigns that swept through Africa in the aftermath of the Second World War gradually led to the inclusion of a few Africans into the Legislative Councils, creating some voice for Pan-Africanist views. Yet, the colonial governor still possessed enormous powers to overrule and veto policy alternatives emanating from the African legislators (Alabi, 2009). Given their limited influence and power over legislation and policy, the African legislators had to define their priorities and concentrate on what they could reasonably accomplish within the minimised space they operated. This

effectively restricted the members of the Legislative Councils to functioning as mere mechanisms of conveying the indigenous people's aspiration for self-government to the colonial administration (Barkan, 2009a). Since the parliamentary chambers became a mere, powerless talk shop for the articulation of anti-colonial sentiments, grassroots mobilisation of the local people for decolonisation became the main role of the early African members of the LegCos.

The "local orientation" of legislators under the British indirect rule system became symptomatic of the early post-independence legislators in Anglophone Africa and continues to remain so. Upon the transition to independence, the new parliaments lacked well-structured institutional resources in the form of portfolio committees, basic infrastructure (Barkan, 2009a), and the requisite power to remain relevant to the policy and legislative discourses of the new countries (Alabi, 2009). Thus, from the very inception of the legislative institution in Anglophone Africa, parliamentarians defined the scope of their relevance and conceived of their primary role as being rather limited to extra-parliamentary activities in the constituencies.

The arguments mounted for the British indirect rule and its legacies do not diverge any sharply from those for the French and the other colonial powers. As briefly mentioned previously, in the case of the French, legislative institutions were not even established in the colonies until after the Second World War. The few African elites who had successfully become French nationals by going through the French policy of "Assimilation" through education and acculturation were rather made to be members of the French National Assembly in Paris. They particularly played the role of representatives championing and bringing the attention of the French colonial administration to the concerns of the colonies. Thus, unlike their British counterparts whose colonial policy had a place for indigenous Legislative Councils, the French had no such institution. Their legislative organ was centralized, while the African legislators were made to be localised.

The French, in response to popular agitations for self-rule in 1946, increased the membership of the African representatives to the French National Assembly in Paris and established local assemblies. Unlike the National Assembly in Paris, however, power over such important parliamentary discourses as budgeting and oversight was terribly limited

(Barkan, 2009a). Like the British arrangement, the members of these legislative bodies played much more roles as representatives of their constituents than equal partners in the policymaking process. Their relationship with the colonial administration was only advisory (Le Vine, 1979). Their ultimate attention had to be shifted to constituency service as a result. This constituency orientation is thought to have continued to define legislators in Francophone to date.

In former Portuguese and Belgian colonies, legislative bodies were as irrelevant to the colonial administration as they were absent. The governance system functioned without any legislative establishment to either checkmate the executive or be player in the policymaking process. Governance in these colonies thus evolved and developed without any legislative culture. Mainstream legislative and policy duties became the preserve of the executive branch. The belated legislative institutions that were established after independence became junior partners in the already established and powerful executive-dominated arrangement of government. As a result of the very few opportunities at their disposal to contribute to intra-parliamentary work, many African legislators came to embrace constituency service as a buffer for their lack of space in internal parliamentary work.

Barkan (2009a) argues that the legacies of colonial rule on African legislatures are threefold. On the one hand, the constitutional powers of the legislatures were terribly limited to make their existence less relevant to the functioning of the government machinery. On the other hand, the legislatures and their members were poorly resourced and understaffed causing a disincentive for intra-parliamentary work and thirdly, important parliamentary structures like portfolio committees were woefully underdeveloped. For these reasons, the only meaningful opportunities to contribute as parliamentarians remained in the emphasis on extra-parliamentary duties in the constituencies. Thus, these circumstances surrounding the establishment of African legislatures by the colonial authorities created an enduring structure of incentive for the emphasis of the continent's legislators on constituency service instead of parliamentary work.

Notwithstanding the incentive for constituency focus arguably embedded in the colonial programmes, an exception is often made for the legislative councils established in settler colonies in southern and parts of eastern Africa. It is argued that unlike those in the non-settler colonies in western and parts of central Africa, members of the LegCos in the settler colonies possessed some powers of a sort, albeit minimal, to shape policies that bothered on their living conditions. This means that the colonial arrangements in the settler colonies, to some extent, incorporated the legislative councils into the governance framework and entrusted them with a modicum of policymaking powers – an opportunity non-existent in the non-settler LegCos (Alabi, 2009; Opalo, 2019).

This incorporation enhanced the policymaking relevance of the legislative councils in the settler colonies. Since the European settlers and for that matter the members of the LegCos did not essentially depart after decolonisation – like their non-settler counterparts – the new legislatures in the former settler colonies are expected to have emerged with some stronger institutional powers. They are also expected to possess some relevance to the functioning of the governing machinery and not as limited to the peripheries as the non-settler legislatures. The point is that, if the differentiated colonial programmes are consequential for the character of post-colonial institutions and actors, then we should expect legislators in these former settler colonies to be comparatively more universalistic and policy-oriented than their counterparts in the former non-settler colonies.

I argue, however, that, the present orientation of legislators in Africa cannot be explained by the character of the colonial programmes or legislatures that preceded them. In fact, there is humongous cross-national evidence suggesting that the role orientation and actual behaviour of legislators in Africa are not differentiated along any clear-cut patterns representing colonial legacies. In other words, the MPs of the former settler colonies of South Africa, South-West Africa (Namibia), Southern and Northern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe and Zambia) are not more national policy-oriented as argued than their counterparts in such former non-settler colonies as Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Gold Coast (Ghana) (see Barkan et al., 2010).

In the same way, even though there were large remnants of European settlers from Holland, Britain, Germany, Portugal, among other colonial powers in the former settler

colonies after independence, legislative behaviour in these countries has not prominently focused on universalistic policies over constituency service as the literature on colonial legacies predicts. Evidence from the Africa Legislatures Project for instance, suggests that legislators in such former settler colonies as South Africa, Zambia, Namibia, and Mozambique define themselves primarily as constituency servants against committee work, party work and plenary work (Barkan et al, 2010). A distinction is therefore difficult to be drawn among the foci of African legislators based on colonial legacies.

While there may certainly be some merit in the argument that many present institutions of governance in Africa are of colonial inheritance, the prime determinant of the constituency foci of the region's legislators has very little to do with colonial legacies. If legislators in former settler colonies in southern Africa indulge predominantly in constituency service as their counterparts in former non-settler colonies in West Africa do, then colonial or historical legacies cannot be a useful framework for studying the representational behaviour in the region.

2.9 Resource constraints and patron-clientelism

Another widely acclaimed theory of representational behaviour is the resource constraint and patron-clientelism hypothesis, which assumes that Africa's economic and developmental challenges invariably shape the behaviour of the region's parliamentarians towards constituency service. Adherents to this theory argue that politicians from resource-deficient contexts [or contexts where the state has budgetary constraints to meet competing demands on its resources] tend to face incessant demands for the provision of "present" goods (see for instance Tanaka et al., 2016; Carvalho et al., 2016). This demand-side pressure, in turn, elicits supply-side responses from the political elites in the form of short-term clientelistic provisions against collective, futuristic goods (Kitschelt, 2000). In other words, the representational style and focus of parliamentarians in emerging economies and weak democracies where poverty is rife are thought to be particularly shaped towards local or constituency representation than party or nationwide representation due to the demand and supply of short-term, individualistic material benefits.

To be sure, the question of whether voters in emerging economies [especially in the Sub-Saharan African context] and their preferences differ from those in advanced, industrial economies is not new to comparative political scientists on the one hand and behavioural economists, on the other. A common assumption points to how politics in much of the developing world is dominated and shaped by the handing out of usually private and club goods to a poverty-stricken voting population whose votes are conditioned on material benefits or are ready to be sold to the highest political bidder (Kitschelt, 2000; Blaydes, 2011; Jensen and Justesen 2014). Voters in the developing world are, therefore, treated as largely conditioning their voting choices to the provision of material benefits and thus, clientelistic (Kitschelt, 2000). Consequently, political actors in these contexts also deploy patronage strategies for the mobilisation of votes. Political competition in these contexts is said to be limited to a transaction between political actors and voters in which the former offers cash handouts or tangible benefits to the latter in return for votes and support. This is because, in such contexts, an otherwise insignificant material exchange such as money, sugar, roofing sheets, employment, and the like are considered significant enough to sway votes in favour of the patron.

For these important reasons, voters in the developing world are largely considered as being clientelistic in their relationship with political actors. But the question is: what will the implication of the clientelistic and present-seeking behaviour of poor voters in Africa's developing economies be for the representational focus and style of parliamentarians in these contexts? First, many have argued that parliamentarians only achieve congruence with their constituents when they represent the latter's preferences and interests (Carey and Hix, 2013) and align their behaviour with those preferences (Gerber and Lewis 2004). Proceeding from this rational choice logic, parliamentarians from Africa's emerging economies may strive for congruence with their voters' preferences by delivering clientelistic and present goods. And this may explain why African parliamentarians are more constituency-centric and cater to individual interests over collective parliamentary or party representation.

While these conclusions may be plausible to some extent, utmost caution ought to be taken not to exaggerate the effects of patron-clientelism on parliamentary representation in the African context. In fact, recognition must be made of the wide variations in the prevalence

of patron-clientelistic politics across and within states in the region. For this reason, the assumption that voting in developing regions is characterised by patron-client exchanges will be treated as a simplistic generalisation of how politics actually works. There may, for instance, be wide variations between the preferences of rural and poor constituencies on the one hand and urban and wealthy constituencies on the other. So that the structural properties of electoral constituencies may impact the behaviour and representational style and focus of legislators differently even within the same country. Rural districts, for instance, which are usually in need of direct services, are more likely to demand constituency service from their MPs than universalistic national policies or party representation.

In Barkan's (2009b) influential volume on African legislators, the argument is made to the effect that the agrarian nature of many African constituencies may explain the constituency-centric behaviour of many African MPs. The same can be assumed for legislators representing complex districts or industrial constituencies, by contrast, who are more likely to adopt a universalistic partisan political orientation. What this means is that any attempt at theorising legislative representation ought to meticulously account for within-state variations. A wholesale characterisation of voters from resource-deficient contexts as clientelistic and private goods seekers is highly problematic. Additionally, characterising political representatives in these contexts as suppliers of present and personalistic goods is equally uncritical.

Even though, I shall argue that district structure presents differentiated representational foci and style to parliamentarians, my argument is far from a blanket labelling of voters in poor and rural constituencies as seekers of present, clientelistic goods – a situation which elicits vote-buying and constituency focus by parliamentarians. Neither is the argument about treating wealthy and urbanised constituencies as favouring universalistic and programmatic strategies. I, therefore, reject the position that poor constituencies attract more clientelistic exchanges due to their being considered cheap voting banks by their political patrons.

In fact, recent evidence suggests that the poor actually dislike vote buying (see Kao et al., 2017), and for that reason, parliamentarians may incur electoral costs when such strategies

are deployed. Poor voters [more than their wealthy counterparts] tend to display altruistic characteristics (Piff et al., 2010) and therefore may demand more universalistic and programmatic policies due to the personal, societal disadvantages they face and their constant need for assistance. While money may be issued out during election campaigns, its effect on poor voters' choices may be negligible. In fact, voters in poverty-stricken contexts become suspicious of the motives underlying the distribution of targeted benefits and consequently rather reward political actors who promise and deliver community goods (Kao et al., 2017). This is empirically shown in Malawi, where poverty is rife, yet voters detest personalistic handouts by political actors in preference for collective community goods (Kao et al, 2017). We can say that poor voters respond more positively to the promise of community goods than private, personalistic handouts as established widely in the literature. Patronage transactions in developing economies may therefore not necessarily create legislators who are district-centric and clientelistic. This is so because voters in these contexts are repelled by parliamentarians who present selective offers.

If the "economic constraint and clientelism hypothesis" also presents grave weaknesses in explaining representational behaviour in Africa, how should we go about making sense of the representational choices legislators in Africa make? I argue that Africa's weak economic footing certainly has a more robust story to tell about legislative representation beyond what has just been discussed. States with budgetary constraints, I argue in the next chapter, are more likely to be incapable of being responsive without community support. Performing state substitution roles in the context of poor state presence elevates and emboldens informal community actors and institutions to shape the course of formal legislative representation. The argument is not that economic constraints produce clientelistic and present-seeking voters and constituency-focused parliamentarians but that economic challenges create space for the empowerment of informal community actors who bring pressure to bear on parliamentarians to act in ways that align with their preferences.

2.10 Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that the concept of legislative representation is complex and multifaceted for scholars. Even more so is its operationalisation by parliamentarians. They face mutually conflicting sets of representational options and expectations which require constant trade-offs. The trade-off is due to the limited resources at their disposal and the practical impossibility to attend to state-wide, local and party representation proportionately and simultaneously. Although the final selection of representational focus has enormous relevance for democratic development, research on African democracy has paid very little attention to the dilemma of legislative representation. This is not the case with advanced Western democracies, however. Research in those contexts has over the years concentrated on the factors that drive the selection of representation focus, with many studies pointing to formal institutional determinants. I have argued that, while these formal institutional explanations are convincing, they may not be very appealing in contexts like Africa where informal norms of political behaviour usually compete with formal institutions in determining political outcomes. In effect, formal rules of the game may not effectively and universally explain representational outcome in Africa as it does in advanced democracies.

I have equally questioned explanations based on colonial legacies and argued that if such models were anything to go by, then parliamentarians in former settler colonies in Africa should be differentiated from their non-settler counterparts with more internal parliamentary or policy attentiveness. Again, while it is true that Africa's economic challenges may have a lot to explain in terms of political behaviour, I have refrained from endorsing arguments that cast voters in poor countries as present-bias and as cheap vote banks for parliamentarians. Proponents of this position argue that MPs who deploy clientelistic strategies for vote mobilisation end up being constituency-centric. This chapter also rejected this position.

Due to (1) the complexity of the act of representation, (2) the multifaceted representational expectations legislators face and (3) the limited resources at their disposal to uniformly represent these expectations, I expect African MPs to place varying degrees of emphasis on their representational activities. Whereas focusing on parliament, the constituency or

party are equally crucial, I expect the MPs to pay disproportionate attention to each of them. In other words, I expect legislators to display different representational focus. However, in determining which activity to primarily focus on, I do not expect their choices to be exclusively influenced by formal electoral institutions, colonial legacies or electoral clientelism. My claim is that:

1. The emphasis of African MPs on either state-wide, constituency or party representation may not be solely conditioned by the electoral institutions that preside over their (re)election.
2. While party-specific mechanisms on candidate selection matter, they do not independently affect African MPs' representational focus.
3. Legacies of "settler or non-settler" colonial rule or policy cannot explain the inclination of African MPs to emphasise on either internal parliamentary work, local constituency service or party work.
4. Periodic material exchange relations between parliamentarians and voters in Africa do not provide a compelling framework for understanding representational behaviour.

Pushing back against these established theories for their lack of appeal brings several outstanding questions to the fore. First, how should we then explain legislative representation in contexts with weak institutions such as Africa, if the above explanations have a superficial appeal? How do African parliamentarians set their priorities as representatives dealing with the dilemma of overlapping representational responsibilities? Which factors explain why some MPs set their priorities on universalistic/national policymaking while others focus on the local constituency or party work? In the next chapter, I propose an explanatory framework based on the strength or otherwise of enduring informal political institutions and actors present in the MP's electoral context to respond to these questions.

CHAPTER THREE

WEAK STATE, STRONG LOCAL ELITES AND LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATION

3.1 Introduction

Writing in 2013 to synthesize over fifty years of scholarship on African politics, Goran Hydén highlights an important consensus that has emerged among Africanists. This is the consensus on the *weakness* and *softness* of the African state. In comparison with states elsewhere in the world, he characterises the Western European state as both strong and firm, the American state as firm but weak and the Latin American and Asian states as strong but soft. Drawing heavily on this characterisation, I will be emphasising in this chapter that the concepts of state weakness and softness in Africa have a lot to explain on political processes and outcomes in the region. Most importantly, I shall argue that these concepts remain a fundamentally useful analytical lens for understanding legislative representation and parliamentary behaviour in the region.

In the previous chapter, I laid bare the shortcomings of some existing explanatory models on legislative representation in the African context. I have argued that while legislators across different contexts may face similar overlapping representational options, the factors that may influence their prioritisation of one or more representational styles or foci over others may differ across space. So that, in our quest to always standardise, compare and generalise, we ought to be mindful of how structural characteristics, institutions and contextual givens shape legislative behavioural course in ways that may defy conventional wisdom.

Flowing from the above, in this chapter, I borrow insights from the literature on state weakness and softness, rational neo-institutionalism and (in)formal institutions to develop a framework that explains legislative representational choices in emerging democracies in Africa, where weak and soft state structures abound. The model explains why some legislators commit to constituency service while others prioritise partisan representation or universalistic nationwide policymaking. I draw heavily on Chabal and Daloz (1999), Rice and Patrick (2008), Lindberg (2003), Paller (2014) and Hydén (2013) to postulate

that, despite the democratisation of many countries in Africa since the 1990s, the state in Africa still remains weak, soft and dominated by strong informal institutions which have so intricately fused with its formal counterparts. These informal institutions have consistently evolved and been shaped in so as not to overtly – at least – conflict with modern democratic practices.   Their merger with formal democratic institutions notwithstanding, they possess enormous influence over political processes and outcomes in the region.

The weakness of the African state, as well as the fragility of its formal institutions, I argue, creates a platform for local informal elites and institutions to accommodate and address the state's functional gaps and lapses. This informal role, in effect, enables the local elites to accumulate resources and followers to hone their political/electoral bargaining power. The consolidation of this power over time is consequently used to mount pressure on legislators – whose electoral fortunes may depend, to a large extent, on the mobilisation and endorsements of these local elites – to display unmitigated constituency focus. This alternative framework thus prioritises the presence and relative strength of informal local political institutions and elites as explanatory variables for the representational foci legislators in Africa adopt. As a starting point, I trawl through the literature on state weakness and softness, emphasising what they imply conceptually and what consequences they have on how we understand legislative representation in Africa.

3.2 The concept of weak and soft state

The concept of weak state is broad, not very specific and multifaceted. In Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg's (1982b) seminal article *Why Africa's weak states persist*; a state is conceptualised as weak when its institutional structures are underdeveloped and is presided over by frail governments with hegemonic and legitimacy challenges. It may also imply the prevalence of political instability and other forms of violence. Weak state entities additionally may lack control over activities within their jurisdiction as well as over their population who may be divided along ethnic lines. The concept of state weakness usually comes with connotations like illegitimacy, the lack of transparency, unaccountable political institutions, the rule of man instead of law, insecurity and so on. Additionally, a state is considered weak when it is unwilling or lacks the capacity to supply

such basic collective goods as the maintenance of order, law enforcement and the eradication of corruption. These could mainly suffice as the political understanding of the concept.

But as expected, scholars have not only conceived of state weakness in political terms. There are also economic, security and social welfare dimensions. Economically, the concept encompasses the inability of states to deliver sustainable economic growth, redistribute income equitably and enact binding policies that engineer private sector development (Rice and Patrick, 2008). Again, in the security sense, a state is conceptualised as weak if it lacks the ability to protect its citizens against violent conflicts, illegal seizure of political power and gross human rights abuses. A state is again weak if it is either unwilling or incapable of serving the social welfare needs of its citizens in the form of nutrition, access to quality and affordable healthcare, education, clean water, among several others (Rice and Patrick, 2008).

Situating the discussion of state weakness within the African context, Hydén (2013) posits that the state in Africa is both weak and soft for three main reasons. First, the state tends to succumb to community pressures and gets shaped by it instead of the other way around. The authority of the state in Africa therefore gets compromised by community entities and sentiments that ordinarily ought to be subordinated to the state. This is what Joel Migdal (1988) famously captured as "strong societies and weak states". A weak state supervises over societies that are stronger, making the state rather subservient in exercising controls over it. As I show later in this chapter, in many parts of the continent, the reach of the state appears too weak generally and especially so in the peripheral parts within its own borders. This is to the extent that the state is forced, in some instances, to rely on informal networks and non-state forms of authority for access to many rural parts (Lawson, 2002).

Secondly, the state in Africa is considered weak because of the fragile posture of its formal institutions in determining political outcomes. It has been argued that formal rules do very little to shape political life in Africa. Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999) were some of the first to refer to the continent as *institutionless* due to the ineffectiveness of the formal rules of the political game to bite political actors who appear largely "*untamed*" (Prempeh, 2008). Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz argue that state officials could

circumvent formal rules and suffer very little to nothing for it. This means that the presence of formal rules does essentially little to demonstrate rule-bound behaviour. As Hydén (2013) observes, while African states may have very elaborate legal frameworks, constitutions and clearly laid out rules of the game, their application to political life has been weak, at best. There is wide admission among several Africanists that these formal rules largely exist on paper and have only symbolic value (Chabal and Daloz 1999; van de Walle 2003; Hydén 2006; Prempeh, 2008; Hydén 2013).

Figure 3. 1: A typology of states by world region
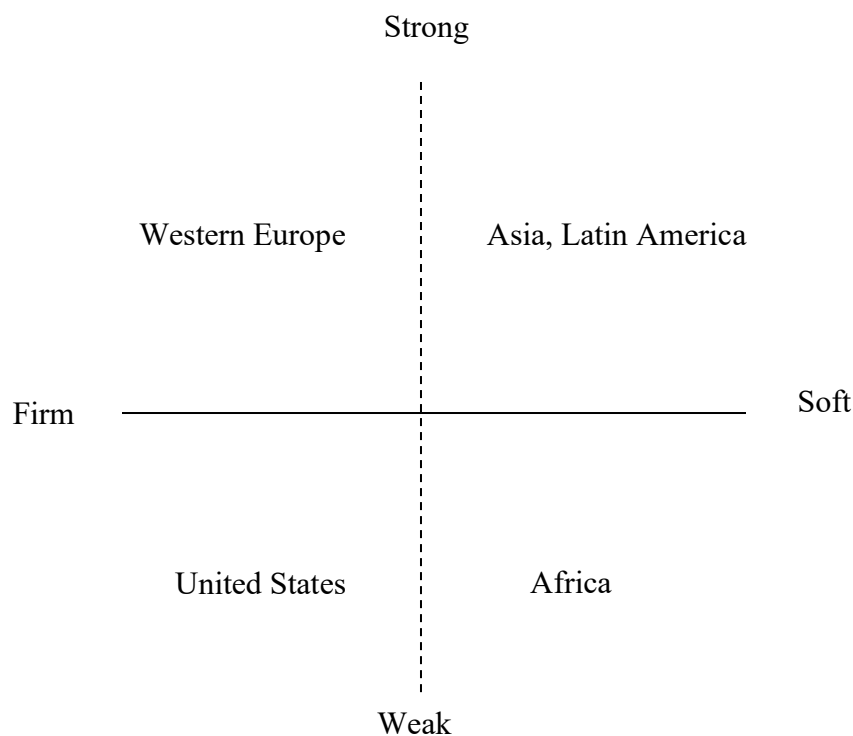
Source: Hydén (2013)

Hydén finally argues that the state in Africa is weak because state officials continue to blend private and public spheres in a manner that undermines their public offices. Individual actors rather tend to accumulate too much power in contrast to what ought to be the case in a rational-legal context. Goran Hydén concludes that "the state in Africa is not an independent system of power that operates predictably and provides guidance to society" (Hydén, 2013:68). While this is certainly not to be misconstrued as an endorsement of African *exceptionalism* as is mostly the case with many comparative

Africanists, it is important to point out, however, that Africa in many ways works in its own way (Chabal and Daloz 1999; Hydén, 2013). And I shall argue that political processes on the continent, including legislative representation, cannot be adequately understood without reference to the continent's unique and most fundamental characteristics and structures – the fact that the African state is weak and soft.

As mentioned earlier, in Hydén's typology of states by world regions depicted in Figure 3.1, the African state is portrayed to be comparatively both weaker and softer than states in the rest of the world. Weak because it lacks the capacity to control society. In other words, it lacks the autonomy to shape and exercise control over internal competing claims of legitimacy, and for that reason, conversely gets shaped by societal forces. Strong states, on the other hand, possess robust executive capacity and strong legal infrastructure to control and shape society. Beyond its weakness, the state in Africa is again considered soft in the sense that its officials could operate outside the remits of the law with little or no consequences at all – a point Chabal and Daloz (1999), van de Walle (2003) and especially Prempeh (2008) make quite forcefully. In firm states, on the contrary, officials are bound by the formal rules of the game.

If formal rules have little constraining effect in Africa's weak institutional contexts, then formal institutional explanations for political behaviour may not be entirely a good fit for the study of African politics, as well. Informal institutions like patronage and personal networks, religion and traditional forms of authority, instead may have a more profound explanatory capacity in the African contexts. The reason is straightforward. The unwillingness of the African state or its lack of capacity to supply such basic collective goods as the maintenance of law and order, basic infrastructure and social welfare provisions rakes in community institutions and actors as relevant substitutes. Even where state-funded programmes are rolled out, in the many fiscally fragile states in Africa, community contribution may be required before it can see the light of day (Baldwin, 2015). The weakness of the state, on one hand, and the resourcefulness of community institutions and elites, on the other hand, in implementing programmes is what raises the legitimacy and popularity of informal institutions and actors in Africa.

These actors, in turn, influence legislative representation in, at least, two main ways. First, since constituency service remains the most widespread activity of legislators in most modern democracies (Loewenberg, 2011; Lindberg, 2003; André et al., 2014) and a good proxy for congruence (André et al., 2014; Barkan, 2009b; Fenno, 1978; Jewell, 1982), the local popularity of parliamentarians may be directly dependent on their constituency effort. But in the context of weak and sometimes non-existent structures, especially at the local government level (Ribot, 2003; Bratton, 2010), parliamentarians and the state itself may lack the capacity to organise response to community problems without local community contribution (Baldwin, 2015). If the electoral success of parliamentarians has everything to do with their ability to resolve social dilemma issues in the constituency, then the support and contribution of these established informal local actors are key to the MP's career. They are thus able to use this local political clout to convince parliamentarians to roll out styles of representation that are in sync with their interest. Their indispensability to the career of parliamentarians thus arms them with the requisite levers to induce compliance to their bargains with promises of future electoral rewards or punishments.

Second, the embeddedness of the informal local actors in their communities as well as their functional effectiveness usually cloth them with an electorally significant fund of followers who may consider their opinions before voting (see Baldwin, 2015). These local elites, consequently, become very important vote brokers in their communities, whose support and endorsement re-election seeking parliamentarians must always court. MPs, therefore, have the incentive to closely align with them and present themselves as their endorsed candidates for future elections. Again, parliamentarians may be beholden to local elites who usually exercise subtle controls over their career by either convincing, discouraging or coercing rival candidates from contesting their preferred candidate. They can also push loyal parliamentarians through by making sure that voters in their communities either register to vote or abstain from voting – a point I shall return to in due course.

Important here, however, is that the accumulated following and resources of these local elites do not only enable them to grow their personal authority and affect parliamentary election outcomes, it also arms them with profound bargaining powers to structure the

behaviour of re-election seeking parliamentarians to suit their purpose – which as I shall show, bothers invariably on local constituency service. I will again argue that the relevance of informal political institutions and actors is more towering in rural electoral districts and this usually induces local constituency-oriented behaviour. On the contrary, its relative weakness in urban constituencies predicts intra-parliament or party focus. Thus, while snippets of rule-bound behaviour definitely exist in the African context, I argue that they are normally concentrated in urban areas where the influence of local informal institutions and elites is weak or absent.

3.3 Electoral incentive

The literature on legislative representation largely views the representational behaviour of legislators as a strategic response to the incentives as well as constraints in the structural context within which they operate as representatives. Thus, to better appreciate the representational behaviours put forward by different parliamentarians, we ought to begin by first understanding the overarching structural framework within which such behavioural choices are made. This is because legislative representational priorities are strictly constrained, shaped and determined by structural and institutional forces. But I have already highlighted the limited reach of formal institutional incentives in explaining every facet of political behaviour in weak institutional contexts. For this reason, I refer here to the role of informal incentives and constraints in shaping the behaviour of parliamentarians in Africa.

For many legislative scholars, David Mayhew's (1974) electoral connection postulation seems a major starting point in the analysis of legislators' incentives, constraints and consequent behaviour. Mayhew argues that Members of Parliament are seekers of re-election, and as a result, their careers are dependent on their ability to stay electorally appealing. Thus, the type and volume of the activities they pursue will be geared towards the attainment of this [electoral] goal. To reach the goal of re(s)election, MPs pay close attention to the demands and preferences of specifically relevant gatekeepers in their electoral context on whom their electoral success may depend. My argument is that in contexts where formal rules are weak, personal networks and other non-state forms of authority emerge with more elaborate weight on the re(s)election chances of

parliamentarians. The electoral context may thus be dominated by relations of informal institutions and actors who possess enormous followership and resources to affect parliamentary electoral outcomes. Members of Parliament, therefore, have the incentive of aligning with these local informal actors for re(s)election purposes.

Figure 3. 2: A model of parliamentary behaviour in weak state contexts
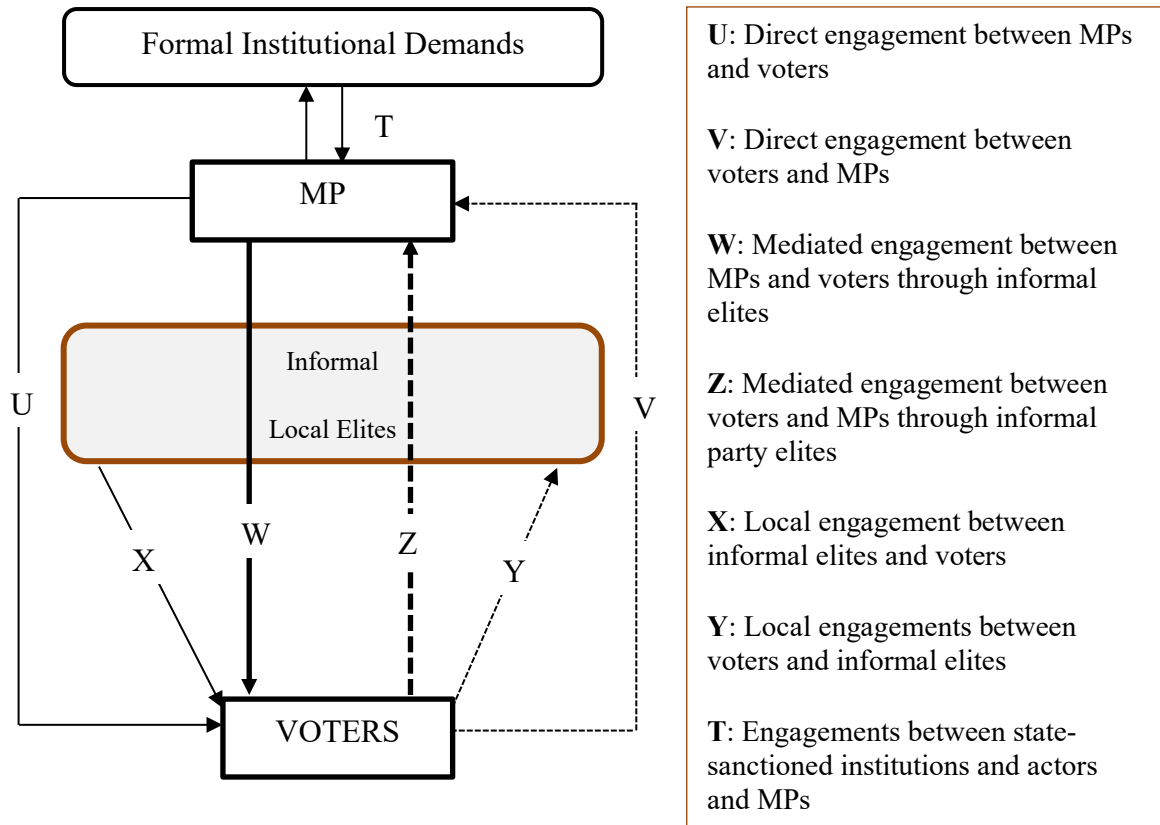
Source: Author's illustration

As shown in Figure 3.2, although parliamentarians may directly engage voters (Arrow U), they may consider it more electorally prudent to work through local elites (Arrow W) who have much more leverage over local votes. This is by virtue of their accumulation of personal power built with their large following and strong resource base – a point I return to in detail under section 3.5. Due to the embeddedness of the local elites in the local community and their constant mutual interaction with the voter (Arrow X), as well as the crucial role they play in the face of the state's poor provision of public goods and services, voters may become structurally dependent on them in order to get by. This leverage enables them to build political power at two levels. First, they are able to shape the electoral decisions of their communities either openly or usually, covertly. Thus, voters

consider their opinions (Arrow Y) in their electoral decisions. This leverage secondly hones their political bargaining powers and enables them to act as informal representatives of the community (Arrow Z) and, on that basis, could bring pressure to bear on parliamentarians to deliver constituency related goods.

Although voters may also directly place demands on their parliamentarians (Arrow V), they may be reluctant to do so and may rather utilise 'the established' and more effective route, i.e., through the informal local elite (Arrow Z) (see Lindberg, 2010; Logan, 2011). Again, parliamentarians may face both bottom-up pressure from informal local elites and top-down pressure from formal state-level institutions simultaneously (Arrows T). But they are more likely to strategically respond to the incentive or pressure that has a more determinative effect on their re-(s)election prospects – pressure emanating from local informal elites. Thus, in determining representational outcomes in contexts with strong community forces and weak state structures, informal networks are key even though they may operate side by side formal institutions. But it must be pointed out preliminarily that the relevance of both types of institutions may vary along electoral contextual, and geographical lines – a point I develop in some depth under section 3.7 of this chapter.

3.4 Informal institutions and elites: Towards an alternative theory

To begin with, the weakness and fragility of formal institutions in the African context do not necessarily imply the lack of robust institutions per se. In this section, I alternatively discuss the presence of elaborate systems of informal constraints on representational behaviour that manifest in the form of shared norms, customs and pervasive power relations. These informal institutions, I shall argue, explain legislative representational behaviour in Africa in very vigorous and predictable ways. Although usually not codified and normally enforced through unofficially sanctioned channels (Helmke and Levitsky, 2004), such informal institutions possess enormous constraining potential on legislators' choices as representatives.

The same can be said of the local elites and their networks that operate within these informal contexts. Local elites are here defined as "groups of individuals that, due to their control over natural, economic, political, social, organisational, symbolic (expertise/knowledge) or coercive resources, stand in a privileged position to formally or

informally influence decisions and practices that have a broad societal impact" (Bull, 2014:120). But if informal institutions and elites are this powerful in weak state contexts, why do they remain at the fringes of comparative legislative studies in the region? This dissertation brings them in. Three of these institutions and the constraining power of local elites on representational behaviour are discussed below.

3.4.1 Traditional chieftaincy institution

For many years, many scholars and political actors alike in Sub-Saharan Africa dismissed the relevance of traditional chieftaincy institutions. On the part of the scholars who are critical of the institution (hereinafter referred to as modernists), the institution of chieftaincy is not only anachronistic and gerontocratic; it is also seen to be chauvinistic. Additionally, the institution is viewed as despotic and should not have any space in contemporary democratic governance. One of the oft-cited champions of this position is Mahmood Mamdani (2018), who argue that the institution of chieftaincy is bereft of accountability to the very people it claims to represent. He argues that the colonial administration created a chieftaincy institution that was only accountable to an upwards colonial authority – making its contemporary offshoot incompatible with democracy and development.

Other authors corroborate Mamdani's position by arguing that both the colonial and post-colonial states have consistently corrupted the institution of chieftaincy, making it less relevant to modern democratic states. Ntsebeza (2005) for instance contends that since the people living under traditional authorities are essentially subjects and not citizens, the relevance of the institution ought to be dismissed. Again, the incompatibility of the chieftaincy with modern democracy, according to Ntsebeza (2005) comes to the fore when one considers the hereditary source of the chiefly authority. He argues that anything short of elections is at variance with competitive democracy.

These anti-chieftaincy sentiments were even stronger among the first-generation African leaders in the early 1960s. Across the continent, the language in unison – soon after independence – was the need for the abolition of the institution of chieftaincy for basically two reasons. First, aside from touting its undemocratic trappings, many early post-independent African leaders secondly wanted to immediately eradicate every competing

claim to political authority in the new states. Thus, in many countries, the state launched several attempts at stripping the chiefs of their authority. In Ghana, for instance, many important chiefs were dethroned, while in Mozambique, chiefs were especially targeted for assassination (Baldwin, 2015). The South Africa state, on its part legislated against the existence of the authority of the chiefs. Reports are also rife that in Uganda, Zambia, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, among several others, numerous efforts were made to either abolish the institution of chieftaincy entirely or strip traditional chiefs of their authority (Mengisteab, 2017)[11].

But, despite all the opposition, the institution has consistently shown no sign of withering. If anything, countries – hitherto unreceptive of the authority of chiefs – have recently even moved from the mere recognition of the institution to fully institutionalising chiefly authority. Many of the powers they used to exercise have equally been restored and enhanced in many cases (Kleist, 2011; Różalska, 2016). As Baldwin observes, the transition to democracy during the third wave has rather led to the revival in the authority and influence of the traditional chiefs on the continent. Instead of curtailing the power and influence of traditional chiefs, democratic processes like periodic elections have rather increased their coercive powers as dominant political figures.

The reason for this is not difficult to discern. On the one hand, chiefs' enormous following and legitimacy make them very crucial political actors in determining electoral outcomes (Haag, 2017). In fact, the formal recognition and empowerment of chiefs in Africa are largely as a result of politicians trying to capture the support of the chiefs as well the votes of their communities (Logan, 2011). In some cases – especially in rural areas – chieftaincy institutions have evolved into very important political institutions controlling large chunks of the population. For instance, it is estimated that some 14 million South Africans come directly under the rulership of the over 2400 chiefs in the country (Williams, 2009).

Due to the hefty electoral influence traditional chiefs wield, parliamentarians have the incentive of closely aligning with them. Although in most cases, traditional chiefs are

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[11] For a complete discussion on the early post-independence hostility towards chiefs in Africa, see Baldwin (2015) and Mengisteab (2017)

barred from active partisan politics, they have found several ways of not abstaining from politics and have, therefore, been involved deeply, usually behind the scenes (Ansa-Koi, 1998). Re-election seeking parliamentarians have good reasons, therefore, to want the chiefs in their constituencies throw their electoral weight behind them. Traditional chiefs, on the other hand, equally have the incentive of seeing to the electoral success of parliamentarians with whom they think they can work (Baldwin, 2015). Because of their lifetime embeddedness in the communities they rule, traditional chiefs have the incentive of championing the political cause of parliamentarians who promise territorial development and deliver constituency-related goods. As Baldwin rightly observed, because the very wellbeing of the traditional chiefs is "closely linked to the socioeconomic development of the communities, where they live and make their livings" (Baldwin, 2015:10), they are more likely to champion the election of parliamentarians who promise and actually show constituency attentiveness.

Beyond their vote brokerage roles, traditional chiefs also usually take on important lobbying functions. They tend to bring pressure to bear on parliamentarians in their areas to attend to issues, especially of, constituency development. The aggregate of these constituency pressures invariably succeeds in turning the attention of parliamentarians in such areas disproportionately to constituency activities. Chiefs, in rural areas especially, act as channels for pressures for constituency development that voters mount on their MPs (Lindberg, 2010). The evidence shows how traditional chiefs rather than civil institutions are more trusted to represent community interests (see Logan, 2011). It is not uncommon for traditional chiefs to lead delegations to the capital to bring pressure to bear on their MPs to deliver promised constituency development (Lindberg, 2010). As indicated previously, the leverage that chiefs possess over the voting choices of the electorates in their jurisdictions enables them to exert considerable influence over the MP. Parliamentarians from areas where strong chieftaincy institutions exist are therefore more likely to succumb to these bottom-up pressures and attend more to local constituency service than the other duties associated with their office.

As a cautionary note, we must be careful, however, not to exaggerate the influence chiefs have over the voting behaviour of their communities. To be clear, my argument is not that chiefs can directly instruct voters on which candidate to vote for and expect compliance.

In any case, usually, due to the huge moral reputation at their disposal, they try to overtly act above partisanship, notwithstanding their subtle involvements (Ansa-Koi, 1998). It is rather their embeddedness in local social networks, their functional efficiency and the great respect they command that usually accord them with strong behind-the-scenes vote brokerage capabilities. The modus operandi of chiefs who engage in political campaigns is, therefore, usually not very overt.

Additionally, due to the weak economic bases of most African societies, local development projects initiated by the state, in many cases, requires community mobilisation of labour and other contributions at the behest of the chief (Baldwin, 2015). Voters in these areas therefore, as Baldwin puts it, take the opinions of their chiefs into consideration before casting their ballots. The reason is not farfetched. Voters most likely would select parliamentarians who can best collaborate with their chiefs to bring about constituency development. This clothes the chief with significant leverage to influence the representational choices of parliamentarians. This leverage may however vary along electoral vulnerability and geographical lines, and this is an argument I develop later in section 3.7.

3.4.2 The religious institution

Religion plays a crucial role in all facets of life in Africa – from family to education, health and politics. Like the institution of chieftaincy, the religious institution also long predates Africa's contemporary democratic adventure yet possesses a very profound influence over it. A large majority of Africans today either belong to the Islamic or Christian sects. This used to be different a century ago when indigenous traditional religious persuasions held sway over people in the region. Today, however, the spread and influence of Islam and Christianity have been phenomenal. Africa is now the global centre of Christianity with more than 599 million believers; overtaking Latin American and most importantly, Europe which had been the global leader since the past one thousand years (Johnson et al., 2018). The PEW Research Center estimates that Africa's share of the population of Christians worldwide will explode to 42 percent by 2060 up from 26 percent in 2015 (McClendon, 2017). The situation with the Muslim population in the region will not be any different. It

is projected that within the same timeframe, it will increase to 27 percent from 16 percent (McClendon, 2017).

Religion remains one of the most important yet frequently overlooked informal institutions that frame legislative representational choices in Sub-Saharan Africa. Its influence over political processes and outcomes can best be appreciated within the context of the region's low-level economic development and weak and soft state structures. In weak state contexts, religious bodies become instrumental in the provision of social welfare and infrastructural buffers that the state is incapable of delivering.

Religious bodies in Africa are, for instance, credited for many of the health and educational infrastructural interventions on the continent. The churches and mosques, through these interventions, have been able to permeate and extend their networks and influence into even the remotest corners of the continent – areas usually beyond the reach of the state (Lawson, 2002). Religious institutions have therefore won the hearts and minds of many Africans by their timely responses to such common societal problems as food insecurity, inadequate health and educational infrastructure, peace negotiations, flood disasters, among several others. The Kale Heywet Church, a large Evangelical charismatic denomination in Ethiopia which that more than 6.7 million members and over 7,774 branches scattered across the country has, for instance, been at the forefront of the fight against mother to child transmission of HIV in the country. The church has the reputation of being the largest distributor of Antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) across Ethiopia (The Guardian, 2008; see also Krakauer and Newbery, 2007). Similar examples abound across the continent. Local churches in Rwanda for instance, built a network of 1000 churches to deliver training to some 2.5 million Rwandans towards the fight against malaria and also to accelerate efforts aimed at peacebuilding and reconciliation in the country (The Guardian, 2008). Several other faith-based organisations have been extremely instrumental in the provision of water and sanitation to remotely sited households, among several other interventions.

The point in all of this is that the massive presence of religious bodies across the continent and their landmark infrastructural and social welfare programmes project them as a viable alternative to state power (Paller, 2014). With huge financial resources and following,

religious bodies have emerged as very important political players in Africa. Churches and Mosques have become not only places of worship and adoration of God but also serve as serious political platforms for the mobilisation of votes (Meyer, 2004). To be successful electorally, therefore, and within the political space generally, parliamentarians have the incentive of presenting themselves as either preachers or maintain close association with the church and its leadership (Paller, 2014). The clergy and imams of the churches and mosques, respectively thus wield enormous political bargaining power to influence the choices parliamentarians make as representatives.

The reason for this influence is not at all difficult to discern. On the one hand, the capital projects and welfare programmes run by religious bodies cloth local religious leaders with some aura of credibility, integrity, and reliability. On the other hand, their daily hope-filled interactions, sermons, and support-based interfaces with masses of followers and church members – many of whom may live under conditions of deprivation – create a fund of trust, dependency, followership and for that matter personal prestige and power. Additionally, the soul winning campaigns and the messages of optimism and eternal bliss they preach enliven hitherto impoverished congregants who may end up committing to them for both economic and spiritual security, that is, protection against hostile forces. These arenas of personal power construction enhance the likelihood of local religious elites accumulating personal reputation and power. The more resources, prestige and followers a religious leader has, the stronger their political influence.

This influence makes them very crucial to local level politics. They become indispensable in the political calculations of parliamentarians. Since religious elites can advise members of their churches or mosques on which voting choices are right (Paller, 2014), parliamentarians have the incentive of being endorsed by them. Their influence over parliamentary elections equally makes them influential in bringing pressure to bear on parliamentarians to deliver goods that are in sync with their interest. Parliamentarians may have difficulties escaping the expectation and pressures for local constituency attentiveness without suffering a decline in votes or losing their seat. Since local churches are deeply embedded in the local communities, we expect them to influence the foci of parliamentarians towards constituency representation. Politicians do not only rely on religious elites for votes and political campaign platforms; they also align with them for

spiritual support against inimical spirits and difficult opposition. To continue enjoying this support, re-election seeking parliamentarians become reliant on the directions, lobby and pressure emanating from local religious figures. They, therefore, have the incentive of being pliant to local pressures arising from the religious bodies and leaders in their constituency.

3.4.3 The institution of relational clientelism of local party elites

Arguably one of the most discussed informal institutions by scholars focusing on politics in the developing world is clientelism. But this institution is not only a developing world phenomenon but rather omnipresent in all political contexts (van de Walle, 1997). Although extant in all polities, the structural characteristics of Sub-Saharan Africa make clientelism not only pervasive but also much more impactful on political processes and outcomes. The concept of clientelism, in straightforward terms, refers to a mutually beneficial exchange relationship between a patron – in this thesis, say Members of Parliament – and clients, say electorates or political party selectorates in which the former dispense private or club benefits to the latter for electoral support.

A distinction is often made between electoral and relational clientelism as two basic variants of the concept (Nichter, 2010). Electoral clientelism involves dispensing benefits to clients at specific times, especially during political campaigns. This makes this form of clientelism seasonal and ad hoc since the patron establishes no constant patterns of interaction with the clients after elections. With relational clientelism, on the other hand, there is the establishment of long-lasting, constant exchange relations between the patron and the client. Relational clientelism thus transcends political campaign seasons, as is the case with electoral clientelism. Parliamentarians who employ relational clientelism as a basis for vote mobilisation strategically build personal networks at the grassroots through whom they reach out to the rest of the population.

To understand parliamentary representation in weak state contexts such as Africa, electoral clientelism may not help much for at least three reasons. First and most fundamentally, the exchange relations between the parliamentarian and voters in the logic of electoral clientelism are only momentary and seasonal. The absence of a sustained relationship beyond elections thwarts or limits the opportunity for the clients to influence

the post-election representational behaviour of the patron in a continuous and unrelenting way. Secondly and closely related to the foregone, electoral clientelism is straightforward and purpose-specific. How the parliamentarian carries out the act of representation is usually outside the scope of the transaction, which is rather, as mentioned earlier, primarily set on the exchange of material rewards for votes. Conversely, relational clientelism is hinged on continuous patterns of relationship. Lastly, the exchange relations embedded in electoral clientelism are facilitated by brokers who form the fulcrum of relational clientelism (Frye et al., 2019). This effectively subordinates and embed the logic of electoral clientelism in relational clientelism. For these reasons, relational more than electoral clientelism is better positioned to aid in explaining the post-election representational behaviour Members of Parliament roll out.

Relational clientelism brings into focus the salience of local party elites and their networks. Clientelism in contemporary democracies typically involves lower-level mediators or brokers (Frye et al., 2019) such as grassroots party figures, local strongmen, chiefs, religious leaders, employers etc. Under this section, I concentrate on local party elites in my discussion of relational clientelism. These elites typically mediate between the parliamentarian and voters. They construct long-lasting patterns of relations with the parliamentarian for this purpose. These deeply rooted clientelistic networks spread across all corners in the MPs' electoral constituency. Usually, the networks are among the first points of call by the parliamentarian on local constituency issues. As a strategy for getting feedback on their programmes in the local constituency as well as for vote mobilisation, parliamentarians rely on these networks and dispense resources also through them.

With considerable influence over local voters and their closeness with parliamentarians, local party elites tend to wield enormous power. This is even more pronounced in contexts with lower levels of socioeconomic development and weak state structures in Africa, where many poor voters tend to depend on petty handouts dispensed by the patron through local party elites. Also, because local party elites – usually branch or constituency executives – tend to be a key source of information to voters, especially in the absence or incapacity of alternative state structures at the peripheries, they possess significant leverage over the voting choices of the locals. Again, being used as conduits by politicians for the distribution of selective benefits to voters enables local party elites to build their

own political power base. This is because constant interface with the voters enables the local party elite to wield significant levers of influence over the voting behaviour of the electorates. This patronage role makes them an important link between the MP and the voter and a key source of pressure on the decisions of the parliamentarians. Since local party elites may serve as the eye of the parliamentarian and as a source of information on the happenings in the localities, they possess profound influence over the legislator's decisions. Re-(s)election seeking MPs thus have the incentive of maintaining and expanding these networks.

Additionally, beyond their embeddedness in the local party establishment and their influence over voters, local party elites equally tend to wield immense power over the parliamentarian's re-nomination. Since these local networks usually are party executives at the grassroots with responsibility for the selection of parliamentary candidates, the career of the MP tends to rely essentially on them. This is especially so in majoritarian electoral systems where safe seats abound (Hazan, 2014). Even in proportional representation systems, access to the party list may be a function of the MPs relationship with the local party. As a result of the fact that in "many democracies, in a majority of elections and in a majority of parties, selection is equal to election" (Hazan, 2014:214), local party elite become very key in the parliamentarian's pathway to office. The resources in terms of time, energy and money the parliamentarian spends in maintaining this relationship with local party elites and responding to their pressures from the constituency typically distracts them from focusing on parliamentary work in the capital. The pressure in sustaining these relationships with intermediaries across branches and wards in the constituency makes representatives more attentive to the local constituency than the party or state-wide policymaking.

3.5 Leverage over voters: A performance-based approach

If the state in Africa is weak and has consequently amplified the salience of informal institutions and actors in the provision of public goods and services, then we have to ponder over the degree of indispensability of informal actors in the electoral calculations of voters. This is important to decipher the extent to which the opinions of traditional chiefs, local religious leaders and grassroot party elites weigh on the electoral decisions

of the average voter. It is also important to explain what may account for variations, if any, in the relative influence informal actors wield over voting decisions. It is equally worthy to discuss how local elites' influence over voters translates into personal power over legislators' representational decisions – a discussion I return to in the next section. We know that the more leverage local elites have over voters, the more assertive they become in influencing legislative representation. Thus, to be able to influence legislative representation, local elites amass and consolidate power by building a pool of followership. When this position is firmly established in the community, they become politically powerful, persevering and can make binding demands of re-election seeking parliamentarians.

But local elites may differ regarding their ability to sway voters in line with their interests. There is the likelihood that some may be more effective in inducing voter compliance than others. To begin with, leverage over voters is a function of the ability of an elite to make proposals or demands from voters and threaten compliance (Frye et al., 2019). So that leverage suffices when local elites make the practice of defecting from a bargain a risky exercise for voters. This is to intimate that the fear of future rewards or punishment to voters is what defines the extent of the leverage local elites have over them. Thus, whether voters will submit to the influence of local elites or not depends on the extent to which the former is dependent on the latter to get by in their daily lives. As Frye et al. (2019) argue, structural dependence by clients on the local elite for economic, social, and political benefits is what increases the risks of defection from the bargain.

The adverse impact – or the fear thereof – of the absence of the benefits provided by the elites is what nurtures the dependency relationship between informal local elites and voters. My argument is that the weakness of the state in Africa and the poor performance of governments at both national and especially sub-national levels in delivering socioeconomic outcomes invariably creates a system of dependence of voters on informal local elites at the grassroots. On the other hand, the demonstration of overtime venerable performance by informal institutions and elites, and their functional relevance is what makes them influential over voting choices.

From my previous arguments, we would expect informal local elites in Africa to be able to sway voters, build their power base from the bottom up and influence parliamentary representation because of the centrality of the services they render to the community and their enormous leverage. The weakness and softness of the African state to provide welfare services utilising both local and central state structures have cast informal providers of similar services in a legitimate light (LiPuma and Koelble 2009; Williams 2010). I have intimated in section 3.2 of this chapter that in many places across the continent, the state is essentially helpless when it comes to the provision of public goods and services. This is especially so in rural areas where local government structures are either absent or ineffective. Local government structures in Africa have been particularly ineffective in responding to local community issues and have, therefore, over the years received very poor ratings by Africans (Bratton, 2010). Countries like Namibia and Malawi provide a befitting example for this. Because elaborate structures of decentralisation in these countries are absent, traditional authorities are naturally drawn in to perform the functions which otherwise would have been performed by the state (Logan, 2011).

Across Sub-Saharan Africa, chiefs, religious leaders and local party elites have been integral in the performance of otherwise central or local government functions in the areas of healthcare provision, safety and security, welfare, registration of birth, death, customary marriages, arts and culture, land administration, justice delivery, among a host of others (Crook, 2005; Haag, 2017; Shale, 2017). Many of the services provided by informal local elites – are usually delivered in such a way that they are more in tune with the socio-cultural realities of the communities than those provided by formal state structures (Mengisteab, 2017). The reason for this is quite straightforward; state-sanctioned programmes do not usually encourage community participation and may therefore not be compatible with community expectations (Baldwin, 2015).

Local elites more importantly render such crucial services as adjudication of dispute and administration of justice at a much lower cost than the state. In Botswana, for instance, about 80 percent of all criminal cases are tried by the traditional court system (Crook, 2005). Similarly, in countries such as Lesotho, Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Kenya and Zimbabwe, traditional leaders are more dominant in the adjudication of local disputes than

formal local and central government structures, and this is obviously at a lower transaction cost than similar services rendered by the state (Mengisteab, 2017). In a similar way, in many countries across the region such as Senegal, Uganda, Ghana, Liberia, Kenya, Nigeria among others, local residents usually resort to voluntary policing known as "community watchdogs" at the behest of traditional authorities to address their own security needs in the absence of state-sanctioned security services (Anderson, 2002; Baker 2002; Adu-Mireku 2002; Aning 2006; Baker 2009).

Beyond the traditional chieftaincy institution, mention has already been made of how faith-based organisations across the continent have been integral in the provision of potable water, school infrastructure, health facilities, among several other welfare programmes. In the same way, distribution of patronage and selective benefits to economically impoverished local folks by local party officials also goes to cement their foothold over community choices. Local elites are able to identify properly with community sentiments and coupled with their accessibility to the ordinary people; they are able to influence their political choices.

Local elites come across as informal representatives and advocates for the people's interests (Sithole and Mbele, 2008; Lindberg, 2010; Logan, 2011). They live with the people in the same community, maintain close social proximity with them and also ensure constant interaction patterns with them. This status makes the local community willing followers of the political directions of the local elites, however overt or covert they may be issued. Electorates may thus consider the opinion of these elites such as the chiefs when casting their ballots (Baldwin, 2015) in situations where overt electoral instructions are not forthcoming. Yet, in some instances, powerful local elites will make direct pointers but usually do so behind the scenes (Ansa-Koi, 1998).

To put this argument in perspective, we have to briefly account for the powers and functional effectiveness of locally based institutions and actors that derive their authority from the state viz-a-viz the local informal institutions and actors discussed above. The literature on local government and decentralisation in Africa is replete with concerns about how central governments have been reluctant in devolving real powers to sub-national bodies. Formal local government institutions are rather often hindered from effectively

exercising administrative controls over their jurisdictions and are considerably dependent on central governments. Local governments in many African countries thus turn to community actors for support in the provision of goods and services (Baldwin, 2015) that ordinarily are supposed to be provided by the state. It is not surprising, therefore, that many Africans would like the influence of traditional leaders to increase (Logan, 2011).

Leverage over voters is therefore simply a function of the important functions local elites play in the community. In the absence of an effective state, local communities become structurally dependent on alternative institutions like chieftaincy, religion and intra-party patronage structures to access essential services. It is noteworthy that such functions may be deemed very important in contexts of dire poverty where such petty handouts and services could be used to induce compliance to clientelistic bargains. The continuous supply of public goods and services by community actors make residents turn to them in order to get things done. The consequential leverage they garner over their followers (voters) are then used to influence legislative representation towards local constituency service – a point I turn to in the following section.

3.6 Leverage over MPs: The quest for re(s)election

Local elites may influence legislative representation by exploiting the legislators' own self-interest. I have argued previously that the quest for re(s)election remains fundamental amongst the goals pursued by parliamentarians (Strøm, 2012). In view of this, they expectedly pay particular attention not only to influential gatekeepers in their electoral context but also engage in activities with overall positive electoral consequences. Since local elites build personal power at the grassroots with followers and resources, parliamentarians are better off electorally when aligned with them. These elites then use their local political influence to encourage parliamentarians to roll out styles and foci of representation that are in sync with local interest. Due to their prominence to the career of Members of Parliament, local elites are able to induce parliamentarians to prioritise constituency service disproportionately over other aspects of the MPs' job. Their success in this bargain may reside strongly in their ability to utilize promises of future electoral rewards or punishments to shape MPs' behavioural choices.

Aside from the fact that voters may consider the opinion of these informal local elites before casting their ballot (Baldwin, 2015), some chiefs could, on their own, launch voter mobilisation drives to canvass for votes for their preferred candidates (Ansa-Koi, 1998). Beyond inter-party general elections, chiefs, religious leaders and leading local party actors may also be influential in candidate selection processes within parties. Jonah (2003) calls this Patronage by Restriction of Competitors (PRC). This is where a chief either convinces, discourages or coerces rival candidates out from contesting his preferred candidate. Chiefs in particular can also push loyal parliamentarians through by making sure that voters in their communities either register to vote or abstain from voting, as the case may be. This is patronage by mobilisation of the electorates (see Gyampo, 2011). So that just like the welfare of voters, the career of parliamentarians in these areas also become structurally dependent on the local elites. This dependence arms them with enormous power over the representational choices of parliamentarians. And as Baldwin (2015) observed, since their very wellbeing and the development of the local communities in which they live are inseparably interconnected, we would expect the local elites to disproportionately demand more constituency development and the delivery of constituency-related services from the MPs.

Additionally, parliamentarians may depend on informal religious leaders for access to their congregants, for prayers and spiritual support. This dependency relation creates a personal power base that enables local preachers and Islamic leaders to make consequential demands on parliamentarians and expect compliance. Parliamentarians must necessarily be friends with important religious figures to be able to canvass for the support of their followers. Therefore, the more followers a preacher has, the more power he/she possesses to shape legislative representation. As Paller aptly puts it with reference to Ghana, "preachers are more than simply religious figures; they are important political actors as well. Establishing churches provides them with the opportunity to accumulate a fund of followers that directly translates into political power" (Paller, 2014:128).

Churches have become important platforms for the mobilisation of political constituencies. The clergy plays a crucial role in advising the congregation on the "right choices" (Paller, 2014:128) to make during elections. Parliamentarians therefore have the incentive to evoke religious languages, use religious centres as campaign grounds and

court the blessings and endorsements of religious leaders. Local preachers therefore have an enormous basis to exert influence on parliamentarians to respond to local demands. Because of their heavy dependence on local religious leaders for re-election purposes, parliamentarians have very little incentive to defect from their bargains and pressures. Local religious leaders can therefore induce constituency service as a result of their own interest in territorial development and expect compliance from re-election seeking MPs.

Local party officials, on their part, may also amass enormous personal power at the grassroots. It has been emphasized that, they don't only mobilise votes for parliamentarians but also double as the channel through which the parliamentarian's patronage handouts are dispensed. They also are responsible for the selection of parliamentary candidates and other officials of the party. These linkage and candidate selection roles place in them significant levers of influence not only over voting behaviour in the locality but also over parliamentarians' representational choices. Again, since local party elites serve as the eye of the parliamentarian and as a source of information on the happenings in the localities, they possess profound influence over the legislator in terms of the kind of reports they pass on to them.

Thus, parliamentarians become dependent on them, first and foremost for re-selection and re-election and subsequently for local information gathering and also as channels to distribute patronage to the voters in the constituency. Local party officials are, therefore, well placed to utilise threats and rewards to ensure the compliance of parliamentarians to their interests. They possess the requisite levers to convince parliamentarians to engage in representational styles that they may otherwise not prioritise. As with traditional chiefs and local religious leaders, since party officials are equally deeply embedded in their local communities and therefore have their economic wellbeing inseparably tied to constituency development, they are likely to influence parliamentarians to focus more on local community development than other aspects of their responsibilities.

3.7 Geographical context and electoral vulnerability

Within this broader story of informal local elites shaping legislators' representation in contexts with weak and soft state structures, there are smaller ones; for instance, of how geographical context, that is, representing either a rural or urban constituency and electoral

context i.e., representing either an electorally safe or swing constituency may lead to different outcomes in legislators' representational choices. In other words, there are some conditions under which we are likely to see the effect of informal institutions and actors not manifesting as theorised, and therefore there is the need to explain what could account for the effectiveness of formal institutional explanations rather in the context of weak states.

First, the relevance of traditional chiefs, religious leaders as well as local party officials on parliamentary representation may vary across geographical contexts. I have argued that the bargaining power of these local elites takes its source from their relevance in the community. So that the political power they are able to accumulate in order to exert influence on legislators may equally differ along the lines of their societal relevance. I have also already indicated above that, state institutions may be more ineffective or absent in rural than in urban areas (see Logan, 2011; Mengisteab, 2017). We can therefore expect local informal elites to play a substitution role, build a strong power base and influence parliamentary representation more in rural than in urban areas. Ceteris paribus, legislators who represent rural constituencies are more likely to display higher constituency focus (Arrow A) in Figure 3.3 than universal/national or partisan/party focus.

In urban areas, on the other hand, the state shows much more presence and formally established institutional structures are more robust than in rural areas. We can consequently expect informal institutions and actors to only play marginal roles in the political lives of urban voters. The weakness of informal sources of pressure in contexts with advanced state structures should result in urban-based Members of Parliament having more universal/national or partisan/party focus (Arrow E) than constituency attentiveness.

The argument is not that informal institutions are absent in urban areas, neither is it that formal institutions are not present in rural areas. Rather, both informal and formal institutions intricately co-exist in both urban and rural areas, but their relevance and constraining power may differ in these contexts. While in rural areas, informal local elites play very crucial roles in land administration, management of mineral and other natural resources, administration of justice, community development, among several others; in urban areas, informal institutional actors like chiefs and religious leaders mainly play only

marginal roles relating to cultural, spiritual, ceremonial or advisory roles (Różalska, 2016). The consequential relevance and powers informal institutional actors wield therefore differ geographically.

Parliamentarians also vary regarding their electoral context. While some may represent very safe electoral constituencies or may find themselves occupying comfortable places on the party lists, others may be electorally vulnerable by representing competitive constituencies. In safe electoral constituencies, individual legislator's representational behaviour is expected to have little effect on electoral outcomes. Parliamentarians in such contexts may be less motivated to develop a reputation within the constituency and may thus be expected to focus more on either universal/national or partisan/party (Arrow E). On the other hand, MPs representing marginal electoral districts are expected to respond to their electoral vulnerability by showing strong constituency focus (Arrow A).

Figure 3. 3: Geography and electoral vulnerability in representation theorising

Swing — Local/Constituency focus — A — MP — E — Universal/National focus — Partisan/Party focus — Safe

Rural — Urban
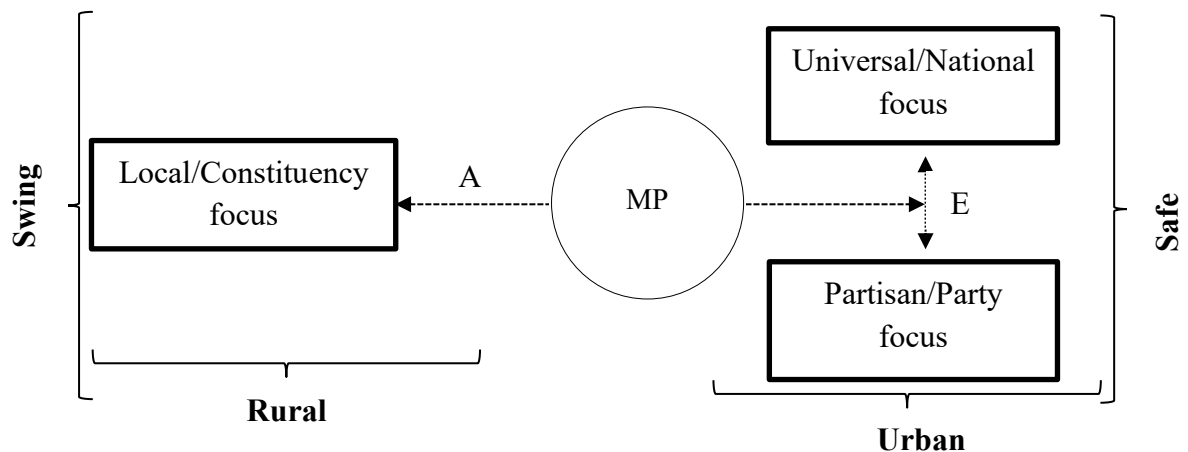
Source: Author's illustration

There is also the possibility for parliamentarians to be electorally safe and at the same time represent a rural constituency. In such a scenario, they are expected to demonstrate more constituency focus than partisan or universalistic effort for two reasons. First, they are still likely to face incessant pressure for constituency work by informal local elites, whose displeasure not even the most electorally safe parliamentarian may be prepared to incur. Aside from general elections, informal local elites have enormous leverage over the MP's re-selection chances through Patronage by Restriction of Competitors (Jonah, 2003) and by actually taking part in the selection process in internal party competitions. Second, safe

and rural MPs may show disproportionate constituency focus to build personal reputation for career enhancement. On the other hand, since MPs representing urban and safe constituencies may have little pressure from local informal elites, they are expected to be universal/national, or partisan/party-minded. In much the same way, those representing rural and swing electoral districts have more incentive focusing more on the constituency. Urban and swing constituencies will equally display constituency focus as a result of the marginal nature of their electoral chances as well as the softness of the formal institutions that ordinarily ought to provide the incentive for universal representation.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined an alternative framework for understanding legislative representation in contexts with weak and soft formal state structures and strong informal institutions and actors. I have argued that the weakness and softness of the state – both at the local government and central government levels – in Africa, especially in the rural areas create a platform for informal institutions and actors to render services that otherwise should have been provided by formal state institutions. I have also intimated that, even in cases where the state attempts to roll out programmes in territories outside of the centre, it may require community contribution for effective execution.

Informal institutions and actors thus become indispensable in the political lives of Africans, a majority of whom reside in rural areas. Local communities thus become structurally dependent on local elites for socio-economic benefits. I have argued that the more leverage local elites have over voters, the more assertive they become in influencing legislative representation by amassing and consolidating power, building a pool of followership and financial base. When their position is firmly established in the community, they become politically powerful, persevering and can make binding demands on re-(s)election seeking parliamentarians. Since local elites build personal power at the grassroots with followers and resources, parliamentarians are better off electorally when aligned with them. Local elites are able to use their local political clout to induce parliamentarians to display disproportionate constituency focus.

This alternative theoretical framework thus outlines at least five systematic arguments that show how different patterns of representational behaviour are explained by the presence

and institutional strength of local informal elites at the legislators' electoral context. It is argued that:

1. Where the state is weak and soft, and consequently incapable or unwilling to meet the socio-economic needs of its population, the relevance of informal elites who provide those services heightens.
2. The more the relevance of informal elites increases as a result of their provision of state-substitution socio-economic benefits, the higher the structural dependence of voters on them.
3. Where the dependence of voters on informal local elites for socio-economic benefits surge, the leverage of the elites in influencing voting decisions equally increases.
4. The more the leverage local elites possess over voting decisions increases, the higher the dependence of the career of re(s)election seeking MPs on them.
5. When the prominence of informal elites to the career of MPs increases, their assertiveness in utilising promises of future electoral rewards or punishments to induce parliamentarians to disproportionately focus on local constituency service equally increases.

At the same time, where the state is strong and firm, and consequently capable of meeting the socio-economic needs of its population, the relevance of informal elites wanes and the incentive to represent constituency interests accordingly diminishes, giving way for more state-wide or party representation. In the following chapters (4, 5 and 6) I analyse these theoretical assumptions empirically with a focus on Ghana and South Africa. I discuss what the primary focus of MPs in both country is, the role of local informal actors in the election of the MPs, the institutional and contextual factors that interact to explain the influence of local elites over voting decisions and the extent of influence local actors have over the representational choices of the MPs. As I have argued in this chapter, representational variations are expected to manifest along rural-urban and electoral contextual dimensions in both countries. The salience of informal elites in rural electoral districts on the one hand, and electoral vulnerability on the other, are expected to induce constituency-oriented behaviour. On the contrary, parliamentary and party emphasis are expected to be influenced jointly by constituency complexity and electoral security.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ELITE-CENTREDNESS OF LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATION IN GHANA

> **MPG 1**: "…I am in parliament because my constituents think I can better convey their problems and needs and procure solutions for them. So, it is their voice I echo… and represent" (GH_14: Interview, 28.09.2018)
>
> **MPG 2**: "If each and every one of us decides to advocate individually for his constituency, as it should appear, will we have a national parliament passing legislations and scrutinising the executive in the interest of the country?" (GH_7: Interview, 21.08.2018)
>
> **MPG 3**: "… [I] by and large represent [my] constituents because that is where [we] derive our mandate from. And by representing our constituents, we also find space within our party's policies and programmes to situate it. So that as much as possible, you are representing your constituents alright, but it must fall in line with what your party is also seeking to do" (GH_3: Interview, 18.08.2018)
>
> **MPG 4**: "…I don't really feel like I represent my party that strongly. Even though you do a lot of things to support the party but in terms of representation, it's more of your constituents. Yea basically your constituency" (GH_12: Interview, 20.08.2018)
>
> **MPG 5** "…My principle is that I represent my God and country… and this is as simple as that" (GH_11: Interview, 28.08.2018)

4.1 Introduction

The quotes above are from field interviews conducted with Members of Parliament in Ghana (MPGs) on (1) who or what exactly they represent as parliamentarians and (2) what their representational duties entail, specifically. From the extracts, it is pretty obvious that the five parliamentarians (MPG 1 to 5) differ – in some cases, sharply – regarding how they individually conceive and perform their representational duties as parliamentarians. These variations, however, fly in the face of the several similarities the MPGs collectively share. First, they are all popularly elected to hold the same portfolio as legislators in the [same] parliament of the same country – Ghana. By virtue of these similarities, [especially the fact they are popularly elected], we have good theoretical reasons to expect them to display a modicum of uniformity in their representational behaviour. As discussed in Chapter Two, electoral arrangements that require MPs to directly interface with voters are

theorised, for instance, to elicit representational behaviours that are voter-centric. What we see from the quotes above are, however, a bevy of diversity. We shall return to this shortly.

The MPGs additionally represent Single-Member Constituencies (SMCs). District magnitude has also been theorised consistently to shape the incentives and consequent behaviour of legislators (André and Depauw, 2013: Carey and Shugart, 1995; Richardson et al., 2004). The kind of relationship or reputation legislators build with either their constituents or the party is said to be contingent on the type of constituencies they represent. In low magnitude constituencies, for instance, individual MPs have more incentive to cultivate personal votes and consequently end up engaging in more constituency work. In Multi-Member Districts (MMDs), on the other hand, free-riding is eminent, and constituency orientation consequently diminishes. This is because voters may find it exhausting to closely track the activities of the [many] parliamentarians representing the constituency for either electoral rewards or punishment. Ghana's SMCs should consequently not produce MPs with this mixed representational focus, *ceteris paribus*.

 Another key point that cannot skip attentions is the fact that the MPGs are all elected under the same Majoritarian (First-Past-The-Post) electoral system to serve the same term of office. They, as a result, face the same structure of electoral institutional (dis-)incentives. The expected effects of electoral systems on the representational behaviour of legislators have been sufficiently discussed in the literature (see for instance, André & Depauw, 2013; Carey & Shugart, 1995; Shugart et al., 2005; Sieberer, 2006) and in Chapter Two of this dissertation. The electoral system also ought to elicit uniform representational patterns from the MPGs.

Given the above similarities and cognisant of the theoretical assumptions outlined, we have good reasons to expect that the MPGs would conduct their representational activities, at least in similar ways. But the message in the quotes is quite patent; there are striking disparities among Ghanaian legislators on "whom" or "what" they represent as parliamentarians. The excerpts particularly give indications of the divergent emphasis the MPGs place on the universe of actors whose interests they principally champion in the

parliamentary arena. At the same time, as would be shown later in this chapter, "*how*" the MPGs carry out their representational function is equally less straightforward. While it is true that parliamentarians [could] represent multifaceted interests and groups such as their political parties, ideologies, unions, states, constituency, voters, all the people in a country, among several others, it is also true that since these foci of representation could be very broad and mostly overlapping, they repeatedly make trade-offs in selecting which one(s) to predominantly concentrate on.

In this chapter, I discuss *whom or what* Ghanaian legislators primarily represent in their day-to-day activities and *why* and *how* they vary. I am interested in the dominant focus of representation that elected representatives in Ghana display. In doing this, I pay attention to the MPs' work in their constituencies, the parliamentary arena, and finally, their work in their political parties. The argument is cast within a broader framework; I discuss legislative representation in Ghana within the context of the 'legislative role theories' discussed in Chapter Two using empirical evidence. I am also concerned with how the MPs carry out their representational activities and the factors that explain variations in the various activities associated with the parliamentary office in Ghana. To structure the argument and guide the discussions, I disaggregate the aim of the chapter into three questions:

1. What is the primary focus of representation for legislators in Ghana?
2. What is the nature of parliamentary representation in Ghana?
3. How do Ghanaian MPs vary regarding their representational behaviour, and what explanations systematically underlie the patterns of representation they roll out?

By answering these questions, I demonstrate on the one hand that indeed, in agreement with theoretical expectations, Ghanaian MPs are more constituency-minded despite the diversity of representational foci present in the Parliament of Ghana. That is to say that legislators in Ghana pay more attention to issues in their constituencies than their duties in parliament or their political parties. Yet, in contrast to theoretical expectations, despite this constituency effort, the median constituency voter in Ghana plays only a marginal role in the MPs' representational activities. I demonstrate empirically that constituency service in Ghana takes place in a clientelistic setting that effectively succeeds in cutting

the ordinary voter from the thick layers of local networks and their associated bargains. The analysis points to how legislator-voter relations are mediated by local elites who rather are directly at the receiving end of the MPs' representational attention in the constituency. Local reputation, electoral vulnerability as well as local contextual factors are outlined to explain the centrality of the role of local actors in the representational activities of MPs in Ghana. But again, the MPs vary regarding the extent of their electoral vulnerability. I demonstrate these variations and provide explanations for them.

The rest of the chapter proceeds as follows: I first outline the central arguments in the section that follows. I also introduce the methods and data on which the arguments rest. This is followed by a discussion of the primary focus of representation Ghanaian MPs display. While showing that constituency representation dominates, I also point out how diverse and multifaceted individual Ghanaian MPs operationalise their representational roles. I will then show the nature of representation in Ghana and what it entails, as well as what accounts for the choice of those representational activities. I show later in the chapter that the type of activities Ghanaian MPs pursue and who they choose to represent are contingent on the quest for reputation building among specifically influential local figures in their electoral context. Thus, different MPs face different incentives relative to their local conditions. The concluding sections of the chapter will focus on MP-voter relations in Ghana.

4.2 Argument and methods

The argument presented in this chapter is that legislators in Ghana display plural representational foci but with more constituency effort. This possesses both confirmatory and confounding implications for legislative representation theorising. First, while the empirical evidence that MPs show comparatively more constituency effort in Ghana confirms theoretical expectations on the country's electoral institutions; the focus on other representational entities outside the geographical constituency such as the party or the state also defies electoral institutional theories. Furthermore, even for the theoretically expected constituency servants, I show that the very nature of their constituency activities and engagements confound theoretical expectations. Electoral institutions, therefore, do

little to condition the representational behaviour of Ghanaian parliamentarians in a uniform manner.

Indeed, in the performance of their representational functions, MPs in Ghana devote much more time and attention to handling local constituency concerns than attending to parliamentary or party issues. This representational disposition should ordinarily not be surprising given the behavioural incentives embedded in Ghana's simple majoritarian electoral system, the country's colonial history and its clientelistic profile. However, beyond this casual observation, the very nature of constituency service in Ghana is far from being straightforward. As I have noted in the previous chapters, it has widely been argued in the literature that electoral institutions matter. They matter because they provide parliamentarians with incentives to either focus on the party or the median voter. Where legislators compete under party-centred systems, their inclination tends to be towards party representation. This is because voters cast their ballots for the party and not the individual candidate – making the pursuit of personal reputation a near-worthless investment. In candidate-based electoral systems like Ghana's simple majoritarian or open-list Proportional Representation (PR) and Single Transferable-Vote (STV) systems, on the other hand, parliamentarians tend to strategically cater more to the constituency electorates for the purposes of re-election.

I argue that, in contrast to the widely held theoretical expectation on majoritarian systems, colonial policy and the prevalence of clientelistic exchanges[12], there is weak MP-voter linkage in Ghana. This is notwithstanding the predominant focus of the country's parliamentarians on constituency representation. The structural context in which legislative representation happens in Ghana evince representational behaviours that concentrate constituency service rather around powerfully placed local elites and networks within the geographical constituency instead of the median Ghanaian voter. The relationship between constituency voters and their elected representatives is mediated by internal party clientelistic networks and informal local strongmen. Even though upon casual observation, one would assume, as the existing literature posits, that Ghanaian

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[12] See Chapter Two for the details on these arguments and representational behaviour

legislators are predominantly constituency-centric in line with expectations associated with the country's electoral institutions, structural make-up and history, I argue that this is not the case. While it is true that Ghanaian MPs spend incredible resources on constituency service, it is also true that they typically conduct their constituency activities through layers of local actors who rather interface with the constituents. The focus of constituency work on local elites instead of the voter in Ghana, I argue, is influenced by both re(s)election and reputational ambitions.

First, I assume that Ghanaian MPs – like their counterparts ubiquitously – seek re-election as a primary goal (Mayhew, 1974). I also assume that the desire for re-election may not be the exclusive goal they pursue (Strøm, 2012). However, electoral ambitions are central and fundamental to the attainment of further goals. Therefore, the type of actors the MP interacts with and the intensity of the activities they devout their time to are influenced by their electoral goals. Due to the hefty electoral influence of clientelistic networks in the local constituency, MPs in Ghana conduct their representational activities through these networks and local actors. As a result, legislative representation in Ghana is highly elite-centred.

While avenues for direct legislator-voter engagements exist, using local intermediaries like local religious leaders, traditional chiefs, and local party elites tend to be more mutually preferred by both the voter and the parliamentarian – an argument I have copiously advanced in Chapter Six. This empirical reality renders existing generalisations and conventional wisdom on representational behaviour far too insufficient in new democracies similarly circumstanced – however theoretically appealing they may be in other contexts. As such, MPs could operate under the same electoral institution, and same historical context yet exhibit divergent representational foci when subject to different local realities. For Ghanaian MPs, I argue that the presence of influential local elites and clientelistic networks in their constituencies turn them not only to focus on local representation but also widen legislator-voter gaps. However, for those who represent electorally safe and urban constituencies where local clientelistic networks tend to be either weaker or absent, parliamentary or partisan focus is expected.

The arguments above are based on multiple qualitative and quantitative data. Over the years, many scholars have relied on the simple question of 'whom or what legislators think they primarily represent and how' to come to an understanding of their representational foci and styles, respectively (Blomgren and Rozenberg, 2012; Müller and Saalfeld, 1997). There is, however, a few methodological disparities in the literature on how different authors have approached the subject and how each approach is consequential for the responses generated. In many instances, survey designs have been employed. This strategy typically requests respondents to select from a pool of options made up of groups, interests, or ideologies that individual MPs focus on in their representational activities.

Some surveys (see for instance, Zittel, 2012) ask MPs to indicate how important it is for them to represent the voters of their own party, on the one hand, and voters in their district on the other within a range of 1 representing least important to 5 representing most important. This approach restricts respondents between the continuum of representing party interests on one stretch and district voters on the other, thus ignoring many other possible representational foci[13]. The approach may thus be seen not be sufficiently exhaustive. Other designs go explicit by outlining several such options of representational foci as town, region, constituency, party, social group, interest group and all citizens of the country and ask respondents to select from amongst them (e.g., Ilonszki, 2012). While such strategies allow for straightforward categorisation, they equally limit respondents to predetermined choices and/or drive the responses towards a certain expectation.

The use of interviews has equally garnered some traction in recent studies, with many simply using closed questions to reach an understanding of their respondents' foci of parliamentary representation (e.g., Best and Vogel, 2012)[14]. The present study rather took inspiration from Searing (1994) and employed an open approach to understanding the representational focus of Ghanaian legislators. For this reason, the question "who or what do you primarily consider yourself a representative of" was asked without supplying any menu of options from which the MPGs could select. This allows for the respondents to

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[13] Such as businesses, ideologies, unions, states, outside entities, all the people in a country, among others
[14] Do you consider yourself primarily as a representative of your party, of the people who voted for you, of your electoral district or as a representative of the whole country?

answer freely and offer much more details on their representational activities and engagements reflective of their actual day-to-day duties. The strategy also carefully restrains the interviewer from foisting on the interviewees pre-coded options of representational foci, which may only theoretically exist in the thinking of scholars (see Searing, 1994 for more on this).

For this chapter, twenty-six (26) non-randomly selected interviews were conducted during two separate field works in the period between August and October 2018 and between March and October 2020 in Ghana. In order to take account of the differences in MPs background characteristics, four clusters were developed into which every MPG belonged. Table 4.1 provides details on these clusters, the various sub-categories and the number of interviews conducted under each. The interviews were conducted at various locations, including the offices of some MPGs in the capital, Accra, constituency offices, the parliament's cafeteria, some MPGs' residences and one in a Deputy Minister's office. Absolute anonymity of the interviewees in publications was discussed and guaranteed[15]. So that in order not to compromise the confidentiality of the interviewees when making direct citations or quotations; only Ghana's abbreviation (GH), the assigned number of the interview, and the date and place of the interviews are indicated.

Table 4. 1: Respondents and cluster distribution

Background feature	Cluster 1	N	Cluster 2	N
Geographical property	Rural	16	Urban	10
Electoral Vulnerability	Safe	18	Swing	8

Source: Field interviews 2018-2020

Three umbrella topics were covered in each interview, namely the MPGs' work in parliament in the capital, which is inclusive of their plenary and committee activities, their home style or work in the constituency and their work within their various political parties. Where appropriate, follow up questions were asked to either *mine* additional content or widen already given responses. For the purpose of this chapter, only the contents of the interviews that touched on the 'focus of representation' of the MPGs and its ancillary

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[15] Absolute anonymity in the sense that the identity of the participants of the interviews is strictly concealed

topics were included and analysed. The interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and coded using a mixed approach which applies both theory-derived and open codes generated in the process of analysis (Campbell et al., 2013). In some cases, copious notes were taken during the interviews and were immediately transcribed so that close to verbatim accounts could be guaranteed.

The textual analysis adopted was interpretive in nature which implies that premium was placed on the meanings and content of the given text rather than the quantitative generation of frequencies for specific keywords. The coding for the focus of representation concentrated on whom each MPG favours in her representational activities and who they specifically are. What this means for the analysis is that, even in cases where a respondent explicitly does not mention a specific focus of representation, a code is regardless generated on the basis of the typical activities or people the said MPG engages with in line with his/her representational duties. This is important as it brings out the hidden or inexplicit aspects of legislators' representational activities. As mentioned in Chapter One, the study was designed as multi-data research and therefore, uniquely combined different sets of data to study parliamentary representation in Ghana and South Africa. Two of these important data utilised in this chapter, in addition to the interview data, were press data and Afrobarometer. While I relied on the press data to understand the 'reported' activities of the MPGs, the data from Afrobarometer gauged public opinion on the (1) time the MPGs spend in their local constituencies and (2) frequency of contacts between Ghanaian legislators and their constituents.

4.3 Constituency representation: The dominant focus of MPs in Ghana

I find that Ghanaian parliamentarians significantly differ relative to their representational foci. Parliamentarians generally tend not to have a singular representational focus. They are representatives of varying entities. On the question of whom MPs in Ghana primarily represent, a diverse spectrum of representational foci was expectedly mentioned. These, for instance, included 'the people', 'my constituents', 'the NDC', 'my party', 'women and children', 'the voiceless' 'God and country' amongst several others. These foci of representation generated 11 codes in the MAXQDA analysis, as presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4. 2: Main categories, focus and representational activities of Ghanaian MPs

Focus	Constituency representation	Party representation	Universal representation
Main response categories	-The people -My constituents -The poor -Women and children in my constituency -Chiefs and people	-My party -The NDC	-God and country -State -Ghanaians -The plight of the voiceless in the country
Main activities from responses	-Community development -Attending constituency functions e.g., durbars, weddings, funerals etc. -Constituency visits and tours -Meeting with local traditional rulers and opinion leaders -Inspection of ongoing projects -Dispensing of favours, e.g., looking for job opportunities for party foot soldiers -Caring for local party executives e.g., payment of utility bills, school fees etc. -Meetings with local party executives – -Individualised cash donations at funerals, weddings etc	-Media engagements e.g., Serving as panellists for TV and radio talk shows -Being a party communicator -Financial contribution to the party -Co-partisan campaigns -Assistance in election campaigns e.g., monetary assistance	-Advocacy -Writing letters to ministries and specific agencies -Protection and advancement of interests of the voiceless -Lobbying -Working on bills -Working in standing and select committees -Asking questions -Collaborating with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Source: Field interviews in Ghana, 2018-2020

For the purposes of standardisation and analysis, the codes were categorised under three broad conceptual umbrellas; (1) Constituency representation, (2) Party representation and (3) Universal representation. This means that all the articulated foci of representation found expression under one of the three coding categories. But the research design is such that the mere (1) self-confession of a focus of representation by the MPs is considered insufficient to conclude on their focus of representation without also accounting for (2) the content of their activities reported in the media and (3) their committee membership. For this reason, media reports and the intra-parliamentary activities of each of the MPs in the sample were tracked and included in the analysis. This also generated a total of 17 codes pointing to the MPs' focus of representation.

Again, for the same purposes of standardisation and analysis used for the interview analysis, the 17 codes were categorised under the umbrellas of constituency representation, party representation and universal representation (see Table 4.3 and appendix 1). Amongst the three main categories (foci) of parliamentary representation, each MP was assigned one 'main' focus of representation. 'Main' focus of representation implies that all the MPs represent plural entities. An analysis of their reported activities in the media, their constituency engagements, and their committee work lends itself to the diverse representational focus of the MPs. Notwithstanding this diversity, each MP's 'main' focus of representation demonstrates the attention and time he or she tends to devote to that particular activity. For instance, assigning an MP to the category 'party representation' does not mean that the MP exclusively serves his/her party to the total neglect of every other parliamentary or constituency activity. What it, however, means is that, among all the engagements of the said MP, activities that promote the party's interest dominate.

I find that many of the MPs consider the time they spend in their constituencies and the interventions they make on behalf of their constituencies their most primary function. All the MPs I interviewed try to spend their weekend home to cater to local constituency issues. When they 'have to' spend the weekends in Accra, many do so for two primary reasons. First is when they are on equally important or more pressing assignments that require their absence from the constituency.

Table 4. 3: Frame for representational focus from media reports and MPs' parliamentary activities

Category	Constituency reference	Party reference	Universal reference
Main codes	- Community development financing - Public functions/ events - Outreach, meetings and events - Constituency tours - Provision of basic services - Constituency effort in parliament - Constituency advocacy and appeals - Cautioning constituents	- Media engagement - Party loyalty - Partisan campaign - Party donations	- Parliamentary questions - Committees - Speeches and debates - Extra-parliamentary advocacy - Regular attendance
Content and description	-Donations -Development projects -Sod cutting for projects -Sponsorships -Attendance to constituency functions -Holding of meetings -Organisation of events -Constituency visits -Inspection of constituency projects - Helping with access to state-issued documents	-Television appearance -Radio show participation -Phoning into radio or TV programmes -Falling in line with the party's whip system in parliament -Debating and voting the party -Campaigning for candidates on the party ticket -Financial allocations to the party -Defending the interest of the party in the media	-Asking Questions to sector ministers or heads of departments and agencies on issues of national concern -Committee assignment or placement on non-constituency-specific committees - Debating and making speeches in parliament as a priority - Extra-parliamentary lawsuits that have national importance and character - Punctuality to parliament

The second is when they have made sufficient arrangements for someone to represent them at functions or events in the constituency. Such typical weekend events usually include funerals, weddings, church programmes, amongst others. This demonstrates the importance they attach to constituency representation. So that, even when they are in the capital or outside the constituencies, the MPs find a way of being "in touch with the constituency to know what is always happening there"[16].

> For the past five years, it's difficult to remember when I spent my weekend outside (*name of constituency withheld*)[17].

> Most of us visit the constituency regularly… especially on Saturdays, and return to parliament on Tuesday… When I am on equally important assignments, I delegate...[18]

While the promotion of constituency interests is the most popular focus of Ghanaian legislators, there is also a handful who take a more universalistic, nationalistic, or parliamentary[19] posture by presenting themselves as representatives of "all Ghanaians". As shown in Table 4.2, some of these MPs claim to primarily represent the plight of the "voiceless" in the country while others claim to represent the "state" as a whole – a point I shall return to shortly. The core activities of these MPs with universal or national focus gleaned from the media analysis mainly include debating and giving speeches on the floor, asking questions and working in committees with 'national' rather than 'local' focus. Such committees include the committees on 'Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs', 'Defence and Interior', 'Foreign Affairs', 'Communication', Youth, Sports and Culture, among others[20].

I have mentioned in Chapter One that parliamentary committees tell us a lot about the goals MPs pursue as well as their focus of representation. The type and number of committees MPs join, as well as the positions they occupy on the committee(s) give a clue on their representational focus. While I acknowledge that parliamentary committees may be assigned to MPs by the leadership of the parliamentary party based on expertise or as a reward, some

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[16] GH_15: interview, 23.09.2018, Accra
[17] GH_19: Interview, 12.07.2020, Accra
[18] GH_18: interview, 07.06.2020, Accra
[19] Nationalistic representation, Universal representation and parliamentary representation refer to the same focus of representation and thus used interchangeably.
[20] See Appendix 3 and 4 for details on committee membership and assigned national or local focus

MPs do also 'self-select' into specific committees of their choice (Fernandes et al., 2021). Self-selection into committees tells us a lot about the motivations and representational focus of MPs. It tells us whether an MP in question has 'national' or 'local' ambitions. Self-selecting into committees like the 'Food, Agriculture and cocoa Affairs' or 'Lands and Forestry' committees, for instance, gives an indication of the local constituency orientation of the MP. Such committees provide a platform for the actualisation of local ambitions. I, therefore, categorised Select committees in the Parliament of Ghana into those with 'National' or 'Local' focus or relevance. Selecting into either of these categories is treated as a proxy for the national or local focus of the MP in question.

I find that MPs with universalistic or national focus tend to simultaneously join more committees than those with local constituency focus. Joining many committees at a time requires the MP to spend more time in the parliamentary arena attending to the committees' issues. On the contrary, MPs who are members of only two committees may have more time on average for their extra-parliamentary engagements. Of course, to be definite, we must be able to account for the workload of individual committees and match it with the number of committees in total. But this is beyond the scope of this analysis. What I find rather is that MPs in Ghana who have state-wide focus tend to exhibit unique committee characteristics presented in Table 4.4. First, they tend to join more committees than those with local constituency focus. Per the Standing Orders of Ghana's Parliament, each MP is required to be a member of at least one Standing committee[21]. Yet MPs with national focus tend to take on more than two committees concurrently and consequently devout more time to their work in parliament.

Secondly, they also tend to occupy leadership positions on the committees such as chairpersons, Vice chairpersons, Ranking Members or Deputy Ranking members. Among the MPs who display universal/national/parliamentary focus, only one holds no position of responsibility on his committees. Even with that, as Table 4.4 shows, that MP is a member of five different committees. The many committees he joins alone demonstrate his intra-parliamentary focus, notwithstanding the fact that he occupies no leadership position on the committees. The rest of the MPs perform what Searing (1994) calls positional roles in the

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[21] Order 154(1) states that "every Member shall be appointed to at least one of the Select-Committees described as Standing Committees established under Order 152(2).

Parliament of Ghana – on their committees. One of them is a chairperson of a committee (GH_11)[22], three are vice chairpersons of their committees (GH_1, GH_7 and GH_24) and two are Deputy Ranking Members (GH_8 and GH_22). Joining more committees and taking on leadership roles in those committees may likely leave little space for MPs to focus on extra-parliamentary representation. The interviews confirmed that MPs with leadership positions in parliament, such as committee chairpersons, tend to focus less on the constituency and more on parliament.

Table 4. 4: Parliamentary committees of MPs with national focus in Ghana

MP	# of Committees	Local focus	National focus	Position on committee*
GH_1	3	1	2	2.5.5
GH_7	3	1	2	2.5.5
GH_8	2	1	1	4.5
GH_9	5	2	3	5.5.5.5.5
GH_11	2	0	2	1.2
GH_22	3	1	2	4.5.5
GH_24	3	0	3	2.5.5

*Chairperson=1. Vice chair=2. Ranking=3. Deputy Ranking=4. Member=5
Source: Parliament of Ghana

Again, from the interviews, MPs with universalistic or national representational focus can be distinguished into two. The first are those who claim to represent the entire citizens of Ghana (God and country, the state, Ghanaians) and those who represent only a disadvantaged fraction of the population (the plight of the voiceless in the country) as shown in Table 4.2. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that representing the voiceless places no geographic restrictions on the MPGs. Those who represent this group conceive of their core mandate as catering to the downtrodden and those who would otherwise not be able to bring their needs to the attention of policymakers. Even though each MP is elected to represent a geographically defined district, the very category of MPGs who claim to represent the voiceless in the country look

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[22] And additionally doubles as a Vice Chair of another committee

beyond their immediate milieu to advocate for the "less privileged, unemployed, the poor, the disabled, homeless, sick" (GH_7: Interview, 21.2018) and people in similar situations.

Members of Parliament with universal focus define their role nationally to cater for every citizen who finds him/herself in need of some form of assistance from the state yet in such a disadvantaged position as to prevent them from making those demands on the state. Their main preoccupation is to seek redress for the grievances this category of citizens may have and serve as agents to advance and protect these interests. They see their core parliamentary role as advocacy in nature and strive to focus on helping the 'abandoned' in their activities. Table 4.2 shows the main activities of the MPGs who represent national interests. They include frequently speaking about the ills of the country, writing letters to the ministries to advance the cause of one group or the other and usually demonstrating their zeal to make sure that policymakers take into consideration the needs of the forgotten and less privileged. This advocacy is without respect to the constituencies which the "voiceless" come from:

> "Our work is purely to advocate… what sense does it make to represent those who can represent themselves anyway… those who are already loud and can handle their lives? (…) Democracy is not meant to function like that"[23]

The second variant of universal representation comprises those MPGs who represent the entire population. This particular focus is interesting for two reasons. Unlike the focus on local or party representation – which are all sectional in focus – the representatives in this category engage in activities with state-wide effect. This focus is at the same time interesting because of its concentration on or representation of an abstract concept, God. One MP mentioned that his representational focus is 'God and country'[24]. While this may be a common expression, it took a lot of effort to clarify how "God" can be represented. One gets the indication that serving every citizen equally or paying attention not only to one's geographical constituents but everyone in the country, implies doing the will of 'God and country'. The driving motive of the MPGs who represent God and all Ghanaians is to make sure that "the will of God that no man or woman is left out" (GH_11: Interview, 28.08.2018) in the policy process comes into fruition. It is also explicitly pointed out that "serving the will of God … ensures a fair attention to all interests and voices in the country" (GH_11: Interview, 28.08.2018). In all, the MPGs with

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[23] GH_7: Interview, 21.08.2018, Accra
[24] GH_11: Interview, 28.08.2018, Accra

national focus are associated with phrases like "my responsibility goes beyond my constituents"[25], "it doesn't matter where one is from"[26], "we are all Ghanaians and I have in lot of instances had to sacrifice time and resources for (if you like) outsiders… non-constituents at the expense of my own constituency"[27], "we must realise that MPs are not only properties of their constituencies"[28] and so on. This is demonstrated by their willingness to sacrifice for a national cause even at the expense of their constituency[29].

The third variant of MPs I found in the Parliament of Ghana, albeit small, are those who primarily focus on promoting partisan interests. These MPs define themselves primarily by the services they render to their political parties, especially outside parliament. Engaging in activities in the media space, empanelling for their parties on political talk shows in the media and campaigning for co-partisans in elections are some of their most popular engagements. But party representation in Ghana is empirically more complex: I find that the MPs distinguish party work from constituency service only at the national level. In other words, focusing on the party as a priority of representation at the local level, on the one hand, and providing services to constituents, on the other hand, constitute practically the same set of activities.

> "Sometimes the party work and the constituency work are interlinked … So, you are serving a dual purpose, serving the constituents, and also serving the party. So sometimes it is difficult to practically disentangle the two"[30]

Although the above-quoted MP makes a valid point, the difficulty in separating party and constituency work for the purposes of analysis may not be entirely insurmountable, as suggested. I find that the MPs employ a 'local-national' dichotomy in their work to distinguish between the focus on the constituency, on the one hand, and the party, on the other. Those who consider themselves as primarily representing their political parties are those who get involved in national-level partisan politics. As such, any service to the party at the grassroots is not classified or considered in this analysis as party representation but rather as constituency

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[25] GH_22: Interview, 28.08.2020, Accra
[26] GH_7: Interview, 21.08.2018, Accra
[27] GH_9: Interview, 10.09.2018, Accra
[28] GH_11: Interview, 28.08.2018, Accra
[29] GH_24: Interview, 03.09.2020, Accra
[30] GH_12: Interview, 20.08.2018, Accra

work. Party representation thus has a "national party" connotation. One MP who claims to represent his party, for instance, indicated:

> "…Before Parliament commences each forenoon, I would be on a few radio and TV stations to sell the party and the programmes and activities of the government. In fact, this is so crucial… a very important component of my weekly routines"[31].

The point worthy of establishment here is that the MPGs involved in activities like the above-quoted consider themselves as "working for the party" while their counterparts who contribute to the party at the grassroots consider themselves as constituency servants. Party representation was not found to be very typical among MPs in Ghana. Since party work among MPs in Ghana also manifests in the making of "monthly financial contributions for the running of the national party"[32], many MPGs refrained from owing up as party delegates since all of them are required to undertake this activity. The low focus on the party could thus be attributed to the "national" and "allocational" definitions attached to it. As a result, parliamentarians who are not party communicators or campaigners or strategists for co-partisans primarily considered themselves as not representing the party as their primary role.

Overall, these findings are consistent with earlier studies in other parts of the continent, which have underscored the huge popularity of constituency service in Africa. In 2010, Joel Barkan and his team found that legislators in Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zambia define their constituency responsibility as not only the most important part of their job but also the most satisfying. Likewise, in the case of Ghana, more than half of the interviewees consider the task of representing their constituents and "taking care of them" their topmost priority and utmost focus. However, constituency work in Ghana is not as voter-centred as we would expect of First-Past-The-Post electoral institutions – This is a point I expand in the next section.

4.4 The concentration of constituency service in Ghana on elites

Members of Parliament in Ghana are predominantly constituency servants. We have seen from the foregone that some of them also consider services rendered to their parties and "all Ghanaians" as their primary focus. However, those who prioritise their "constituencies" as

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[31] GH_25: Interview, 12.09.2020, Accra
[32] GH_20: Interview, 21.08.2018, Kumasi

their primary focus dominate. This should ordinarily not be surprising given Ghana's institutional, structural and historical background[33]. What is rather surprising is the constituency style of MPs in Ghana and how it confounds theoretical explanations. Many studies have documented the popularity of constituency representation in Africa (Barkan, 2009; Barkan et al., 2010; Lindberg, 2010). But as far as I know, knowledge on the exact activities the MPs engage in when serving their constituents, and what drives them are limited. I show in this section that constituency representation in Ghana is a highly mediated activity that only focuses on a few local elites instead of the median voter in the constituency.

Table 4. 5: Openness or restrictiveness of the constituency activities of MPs in Ghana

Constituency Activities	Open	Partially restricted	Fully restricted
Community development	X	✓	X
Public functions/ events	X	X	✓
Meetings	X	X	✓
Constituency Tours	X	✓	X
Provision of basic services	X	✓	X
Group visits e.g., churches	X	✓	X
Advocacy	X	X	✓
Cautioning constituents	X	X	✓
Office Hours	✓	X	X

Source: Field interviews and press reports

A typical constituency engagement of Ghanaian MPs concentrates lesser on the constituents than it does on polling station executives, chiefs in the communities and influential religious leaders, for instance. I coded for the activities of the MPs in their constituencies based on media reports and my field interviews. I find that in the constituency, the MPs typically engage in at least 9 key activities. These include the financing of community development projects, attendance to public events and functions, meetings and outreaches, visits, or tours, among others presented in Table 4.5.

Apart from 'office hours', which avail the MP directly to the constituents, the rest of the activities of the MPs in the constituency are either partially restricted or totally exclusive. For

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[33] See Chapter Two for the institutional and historical factors that drive constituency orientation

instance, when the MP embarks on community development projects, they usually leave the monitoring of the project in the hands of local party officers[34]. They, therefore, make frequent contacts with these actors instead of the people who are the eventual beneficiaries of the project. As I was told by one MP, if the said project is for a specific functional group, then that group become active participants in the execution of the project[35]. The MPs' community development projects are therefore partially restricted. The same applies to 'constituency tours', 'Group visits' and the 'provision of basic services'. The rest of the activities of the MPs are highly targeted and restricted to specific individuals and groups in the constituency.

In the interviews, I find that groups like "party voters", "foot soldiers", "cadres", "grassroots supporters", "loyal members" etc were at the centre of the constituency activities of the MPs. Aside from monitoring the MPs' constituency development projects, local party officials tend to be the ones to get the MP to visit the constituency for funerals, weddings and other social activities. They also tend to have the utmost attention of the MP regarding clientelistic provisions. When I asked about the most prominent people or groups they engage with when they visit the constituency, one MP mentioned that:

> …they are delegates, you also feel obliged to them. Because of election and more or less they decide your future in the office; you have a certain feeling of responsibility towards them[36]

> …but if a party member or executive requires support, you cannot turn him away because that is not how politics work (…) if you will go to these same people every four years to ask for their mandate, why would you turn them down if they come to you today? They will also reject you tomorrow. Yes. This is politics…It is a reciprocal game[37]

The quotes highlight the relevance of local party elites in the constituency activities of the MP. Not only that, it also, more importantly, points out the fact that the MPs concentrate on these local party officials for electoral reasons. As the quotes suggest, because it is the party delegates that decide their 'future in office', the MPs are under obligation to cater to their

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[34] GH_12: Interview, 20.08.2018, Accra
[35] GH_16: Interview, 27.09.2018, Accra
[36] GH_12: Interview, 20.08.2018, Accra
[37] GH_11: Interview, 28.08.2018, Accra

interests. But this calls for some questions. First, if the local party official is this electorally powerful, then where do we place voters on the scale of electoral relevance regarding the election of MPs in Ghana? What exact role do voters' reward or punishment play in the electoral calculations and consequent post-election behaviour of the MPs? And to what extent are the voters involved in the constituency work of their MPs? Public opinion survey suggests a huge disconnect between MPs in Ghana and their constituents.

Between 2002 and 2018, for instance, less than 3 percent of Ghanaians had contacts with their MPs "often". This means that as the Afrobarometer frames it, only this small fraction of Ghanaians reached out to their MPs about something important or to offer their opinions, as shown in Table 4.6. This is against a large majority of more than 85 percent who "never" had any contacts with their MPs within the same period. This finding goes to confirm the disconnect between MPs and their constituents on the one hand and the close ties between MPs and local party elites on the other, as evident in the interview quotes above.

Table 4. 6: Frequency of MPG – Constituent contact (%)

Category	Total	2002/3	2005/6	2008/9	2011/2	2014/15	2017/18
Never	85.4	86.8	82.9	84.6	86.0	87.1	84.1
Only once	5.0	5.4	4.0	4.2	5.2	4.2	6.1
A few times	6.2	4.8	8.3	6.1	5.7	5.9	6.7
Often	2.7	2.0	3.8	4.0	2.2	2.4	2.8
Don't know	0.7	1.0	0.9	1.2	0.9	0.3	0.3
(N)	10,794	1,200	1,196	1,200	2,400	2,399	2,399
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100)	(100%)	(100)

Source: Ghana Afrobarometer round 2-7

Weak MP-voter linkage in Ghana also manifests in the amount of time MPs spend in their constituencies with their voters. Here again, public opinion data from Afrobarometer indicates that only a handful of legislators in Ghana spend "almost all their time" in their constituencies. This constitutes less than 3 percent of the respondents. Another set of respondents representing more than 30 percent think that their MPs "never" spend time home, as displayed in Figure 4.1. But this finding raises eyebrows. The MPs I interviewed claim to represent their constituents predominantly. If that is anything to go by, then this constituency effort should,

at least, reflect in public perceptions and constituency visibility. But as the public opinion data indicates, the MPs are perceived to spend very little time in their constituencies.

This seeming disconnect supplies more evidence to the mediated character of legislative representation in Ghana. As I have displayed in Table 4.5 above, many of the MPs represent their constituents and engage in constituency activities on the blind side of their constituents. They rather, as indicated above, engage local party officials, polling station executives and loyal party members. But the list is not exhaustive yet.

Figure 4. 1: Time MPGs spend in constituencies (%)
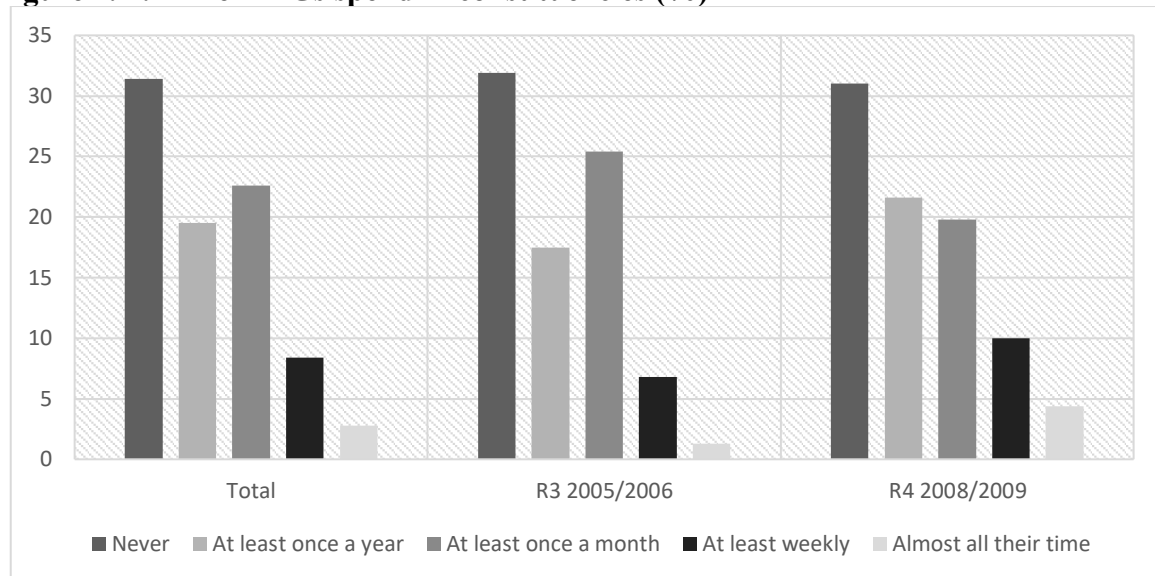
Source: Ghana Afrobarometer round 3-4

Many of the MPs I interviewed also identified themselves as representing the "chiefs and people" in their constituencies. They outline the difficulty in aggregating the "people's" preferences and thus alternatively rely on already established informal institutions such as local chiefs and religious leaders[38]. The prominence of the traditional institution of chieftaincy as one of the most revered mechanisms of modern representation is thus brought to the fore by these MPGs. MPs in Ghana deem the informal role of traditional chiefs as a crucial link to the people in the constituency. Since the traditional chiefs live with the "people", it is easier for the MPs to get an aggregated view of their needs and preferences to inform decisions making. The chiefs, therefore, become the easy focus of the MPGs as they more competently

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[38] GH_3: Interview, 18.08.2018, Accra

bridge the MP-constituency gap. Stressing on the relevance of traditional chiefs to constituency representation in Ghana, one MPG indicated that;

> "…They [*i.e., the chiefs*] represent the people in various ways and are in touch with their plights and needs. They usually try not to impose their thoughts on you but when they make any suggestion, you really have to consider it for your own good as well as for the good of the constituency"[39].

By this, focusing on the chiefs in one's representation activities invariably implies focusing on all the "people" in the constituency. Again, from the quote, the reliance on traditional chiefs is seen to be also 'good' for the MP. How? Why does constituency representation in Ghana heavily rely on the information, advice, goodwill, and directives from informal local actors like the traditional chiefs, religious elites, and local party officials? One MPG was quite forceful in stressing that "whatever the chiefs ask me to do, I will do… I will take their wise counsel anytime, any day"[40]. But why? Why should the advice and direction of the chief hold sway over the MP? I argue below that the reason is electoral as it is reputational.

4.4.1 Electoral incentive

The question of why parliamentarians in Ghana prioritise local elites in their constituency activities at the expense of the voter is an 'electoral' question. MPs in Ghana consider their political future as being largely in the hands of local political figures like party delegates and chiefs and not necessarily the ordinary constituency voter[41]. To keep their parliamentary offices, therefore, they require the continuous support of their polling station and constituency executives as well as prominent local elites such as chiefs and religious leaders. This is understandable given the wide influence of these local actors over voting decisions[42] as well as the large number of 'safe constituencies' in the country (Ichino and Nathan, 2012).

Local party elites (delegates) are directly in charge of selecting candidates both in the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in Ghana. Traditional chiefs

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[39] GH_15: Interview, 23.09.2018, Accra
[40] GH_23: Interview, 28.08.2020, Accra
[41] GH_11: Interview, 28.08.2018, Accra; GH_12: Interview, 20.08.2018; GH_23, Accra: Interview, 28.08.2020, Accra
[42] See Chapter Six for the influence of local elites over both intra and inter-party elections and how this clothes them with the leverage to affect legislative representational outcomes

as well local influential religious elites in the constituency equally have some leverage over candidate selection through what Jonah (2003) calls 'Patronage by Restriction of Competitors' (PRC). This is where chiefs or the clergy influence local elections by convincing, discouraging or coercing rival candidates out from contesting their preferred candidate. Because many safe seats abound, paving the way for one candidate over the other or selecting a candidate in internal party candidate selection is akin to securing a parliamentary office. When one wins the contest to be presented the ticket of a party in its stronghold, that candidate is sure of winning the general elections. In majoritarian electoral contexts like Ghana's, with many safe seats, it is intra-party rather than inter-party competition that determines who the next MP will be.

If the existence of safe seats can absolve MPs of direct accountability to the voter in Ghana, then it is intuitive to expect them to concentrate their constituency activities disproportionately on the small oligarchy of grassroot party officials, chiefs and influential clergy in the local communities in the constituency. The lack of incentive to build stronger linkages with voters result from the electoral relevance of the local elite to the MPs' access to the parliamentary office.

4.4.2 Reputational motivation

Kaare Strøm (2012) argues that Members of Parliament do not pursue only re(s)election goals but rather face hierarchically ordered layers of goals. The quest to attain these goals is, in turn, consequential for the role conception and overt behaviours they adopt. These goals are re-selection, re-election, party office and legislative office. I found this to be true among parliamentarians in Ghana. Their concentration on local actors is also influenced by the quest to build local level reputation among influential local political figures. Being popular among local elites in the constituency is not only good for electoral purposes, it also affects the career chances of the MP positively. For those MPs with ministerial ambitions, chiefs and influential religious leaders in the constituency can lobby the appointing authority for a ministerial portfolio for being able to represent their interests well. The elite concentration of constituency service is, therefore, a way of getting influential local actors to put in a word for aspiring ministers. As one MP mentioned in the interview, there are many instances where local elites make interventions for MPs who have built a reputation amongst them.

"…not me personally, but I have a colleague from the other side whose paramount chief and pastors brought a delegation to lobby for a deputy ministerial position for him. They do that a lot"[43]

Delegations from the constituency to lobby for MPs who have built local popularity is a common phenomenon. Thus, concentrating constituency activities around influential elites in the constituency does not only yield electoral rewards but also affect career advancement. MPs, therefore, have more incentive to construct closer ties with the local elites than the constituency voter. In Chapter Six, I explore this subject in depth.

4.5 Who represents what? The agency of geographical and electoral context

The foregone shows the complexities in the representational behaviour of Ghanaian legislators. There are observable variations in how the MPGs individually perceive their roles and, most importantly, how they operationalise their representational functions. While a majority of them principally concentrate on representing elite-centric local constituency interests, others prefer to function primarily as promoters of universal or partisan political interests. What exactly explains variations in the commitment of Ghanaian MPs to these different representational foci? Also, which of the legislators primarily focus on constituency representation and which of them show preferences for party or universal representation?

To answer the above questions, I disaggregate the responses on the MPs' representational focus and match them with their background characteristics[44]. This is to appreciate whether such specific variables as (1) the structural properties of the MPs' geographic constituencies and (2) the extent of their electoral vulnerability influence their representational focus, i.e., their constituency effort, partisan inclination and universal representation. Theoretically, I assume that the disposition of legislators to focus on one entity, group or interest over the other may be influenced by previous experiences or background characteristics (see Best, 2007; Edinger and Searing, 1967; Bourdieu, 1990). Below, I show four key background variables of the MPGs in my sample and demonstrate how they associate with their representational focus. In doing this, I focus on district complexity and electoral vulnerability.

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[43] GH_15: Interview, 28.08.2020, Accra
[44] See the background clusters in Table 4.1

First, the degree of complexity or urbanisation of the legislators' geographic constituency was found to affect their representational strategy. I first divided the MPs into two categories by distinguishing between those who represent rural constituencies and those whose constituencies are urban. While I could have relied on existing rural-urban data such as the World Bank's data[45] or national statistics from the Ghana Statistical Service, I wanted more nuanced and disaggregated data that clearly partitioned different constituencies along the rural-urban categories. While the World Bank's data considers aggregate rural areas as a percentage of national populations, the Ghana Statistical Service's partitioning is done on district basis. This does not accurately correspond with electoral districts (constituencies). As a matter of fact, two or more electoral districts could fall within one administrative district. Again, a constituency may be located in an area that is administratively deemed 'urban' but shares every characteristic of a typical rural constituency[46]. An example may comprise of slums and informal settlements in urban areas. There is the need, therefore, to have a typology that clearly considers the typical make-up of each constituency than rely on aggregate categorisations that risk overlooking salient local-level properties.

I therefore, arrived at a classification of the constituencies in my sample by 'seeing' them through the eyes of the MPs who represent them. As part of the interviews, I asked the MPs themselves to describe how they 'see' their constituencies. I asked them (1) to describe the key characteristics of their constituencies and (2) to state whether they themselves conceive of the constituency as rural or urban. For legislative representational scholars, this strategy may not be new. It was employed by Richard Fenno (1978) in his seminal contribution on US House members in their constituencies. He set out to understand the activities of the Congressmen by finding out what they themselves 'see' when they see their constituencies. The question of "what kind of district do you have?", led Fenno to a typology of 'constituency' based on what the MPs' have in mind when they perceive of their constituencies. Employing the same strategy, I find that the rural-urban perception of MPs in Ghana is consequential for the kind of representational focus they adopt.

Second, representational behaviour is not only construed as a function of the MPs' rural-urban context but also the degree of their electoral vulnerability. In the sample, some MPs represent

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[45] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?locations=ZG
[46] See the characteristics of rural and urban constituencies described by MPs in Ghana in Table 4.7

safe electoral constituencies while others represent marginal ones. Where a parliamentary seat has been won by one political party consecutively in the last four elections – counting from 2008 to 2020, that seat is coded 'safe' for that political party. Conversely, where a seat has alternated between political parties within the same period, that seat is coded as 'swing'. A parliamentary seat is therefore safe when the incumbent party has secured sufficient electoral victories in the past and is sufficiently guaranteed of further wins in future elections. With parliamentary election data from 2008 to 2020, I partitioned the MPs in my sample into two: those representing safe constituencies and those representing swing constituencies. Again, I find an association between the different patterns of representational focus displayed by the MPs and their electoral contexts.

As a cautionary note, however, I must stress that the representational activities undertaken by parliamentarians in Ghana are difficult to clearly distinguish. Aside from their 'self-confessed' representational focus, a clear-cut priority on one entity or group is rare when their activities in the media are systematically analysed. However, for analytical purposes, some distinctions can be spotted between the MPs who represent urban and rural constituencies, on the one hand, and those who represent safe and swing constituencies on the other. As displayed in Table 4.7 and also in Figure 4.2, the MPGs who represent urban constituencies usually take on more universalistic representational posture than their rural counterparts at 23 and 3.8 percent, respectively. The core attention of urban-based MPs is usually on intra-parliamentary work. They are also biased towards policy advocacy and checkmating the executive.

While urban MPs additionally get somewhat involved in party and constituency work, they tend to do so with a comparatively lower intensity at 3.8 and 11.6 percent, respectively. MPGs who represent rural constituencies on the other hand are less inclined towards universalistic representation as they are for constituency representation. As displayed in Figure 4.2, less than 4 percent of them show a preference for state-wide activities [such as those in the parliamentary chamber]. Rather, rural MPs prefer to frequent their constituencies for meetings, to inspect ongoing projects, donate to especially individuals, schools and hospitals and undertake community development projects. They tend to commit disproportionately to local activities (50 percent) while also representing their party's interests at the fringes (7.8 percent) and taking part in national representation (3.8 percent).

Table 4. 7: Rural-Urban distinction of the representational activities of Ghanaian MPs

Constituency type	MPs' Self-description of constituency	Examples of main areas of focus of representatives
Rural	Low population density Small townships Agricultural and horticultural communities Pastoral community Detachment from big cities Slums and informal settlements within cities Youth unemployment and poverty Small to medium scale businesses and enterprises Bad infrastructure, especially road network Low human development (illiteracy)	Frequent constituency visits, tour, inspection of ongoing projects Unemployment Social exclusion Rural electrification Football pitches (Astroturf) Donations to especially individuals, schools, and hospitals Road infrastructure Construction works - housing, school, public toilets, water Attendance to public functions and events, allocation
Urban	Students' enclave or university location Central Business areas Youthful population Dense population Affluence Immigration Commercial enclave Good infrastructural development	Advocacy, appeals, public requests, engagement with authorities Performance monitoring of government and party structures portfolio committee work Party caucus assignments Assistance with civil procedures Donations to individuals and groups Football pitches (Astroturf) Holding of meetings, organisation of events Extra-parliamentary lawsuits that have national importance Petitions Television appearance Radio show participation

Source: Field interview/ Press data

Away from the rural-urban determinants of representational foci, Figure 4.2 shows that MPs representing safe constituencies comparatively concentrate more on parliamentary activities (26.9 percent) than those from swing constituencies. Even though MPs from swing constituencies also engage in state-wide representation but hardly as a primary focus. This is why I found no MPG(s) from swing constituencies owing up primarily as a universalist but more as constituency servants. As the graph again shows, constituency representation is rather more popular among 'swing' MPs and this is in response to their electoral vulnerability (see Chapter Six). In safe electoral constituencies, on the other hand, individual legislator's representational behaviour has little effect on their electoral outcomes. Parliamentarians in such contexts are therefore less motivated to develop a reputation within the constituency and thus focus more on their work in parliament. This certainly explains the popularity of parliamentary focus amongst the MPGs representing safe constituencies. But again, we see from Figure 4.2 that the focus on constituency is still popular among 'safe' MPs despite their electoral security. This is explained by the joint effect of the complexity of their geographical constituency and electoral safety. This is a point I pay more elaborate attention to in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4. 2: Representational foci and MPs' background (%)
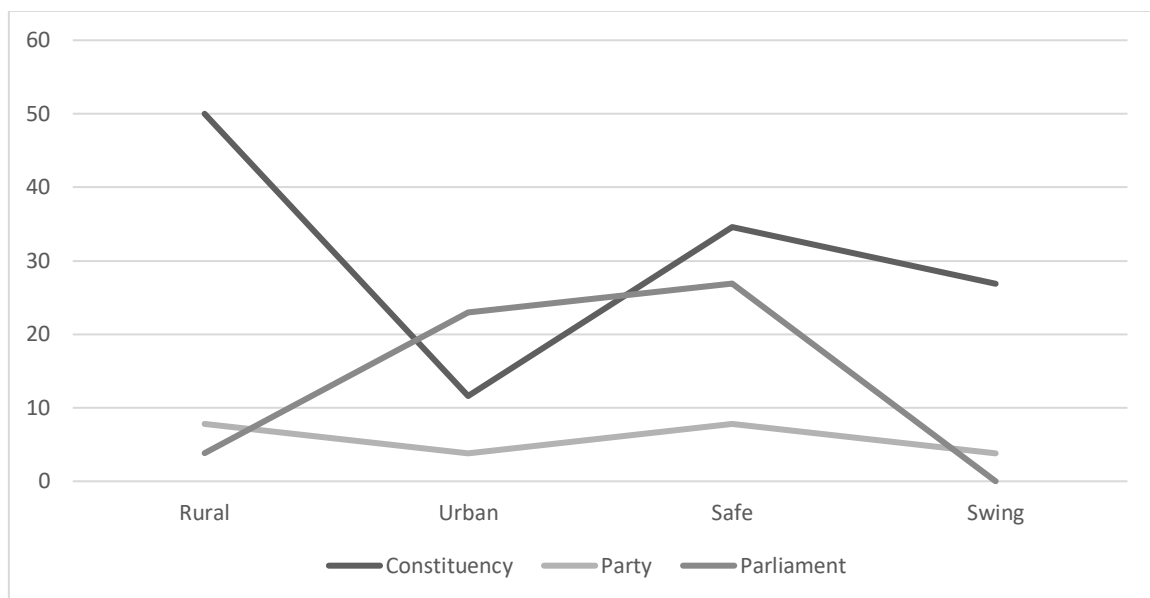
Source: Field interviews, press data and election data

Understandably, the focus on political parties is rather low among Ghanaian legislators. For this reason, it is difficult to clearly distinguish which background characteristics are associated with party representation. We can, however, say that MPs who represent rural

constituencies are slightly more party-oriented than their urban counterparts. As Figure 4.2 shows, 7.8 percent of MPGs from rural constituencies commit more to partisan representation than the 3.8 percent from urban constituencies. This means that those MPGs who spend the bulk of their time serving their parties in such capacities as party communicators, financiers and campaign strategists are usually representatives from rural constituencies. Also, MPs who enjoy electoral security engage more in party representation (7.8 percent) than those representing marginal electoral districts (3.8 percent). Since the focus on parties is not very popular among MPs in Ghana, we would still need a bit more data to be able to clearly disaggregate the responses against the background variables.

Figure 4. 3: Crossed background characteristics and representational foci (%)
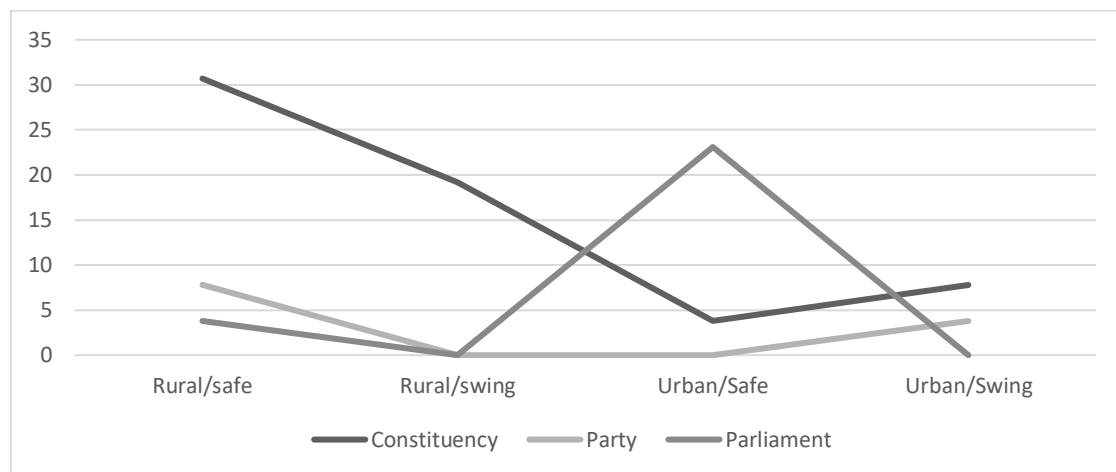
Source: Field interviews, press data and election data

The rural-urban and safe-swing categorisation of the MPs implies that none of the MPs included in the analysis possesses a singular background attribute. For the purposes of clarity, each of them is identified by two features: (1) the complexity of their geographical constituency and (2) their electoral vulnerability profile. Therefore, an MP representing a rural constituency, for instance, could simultaneously represent a safe constituency. Because these two background variables could both individually and jointly affect representational outcomes, I cross the 'constituency complexity' data with that of 'electoral vulnerability' to appreciate how the interplay of the two variables jointly affect the representational focus of Ghanaian Parliamentarians.

Figure 4.3 displays the interactive effect of the two background variables on representational focus. Although electoral safety, for instance, is individually shown in Figure 4.2 to be

consequential for high constituency effort, MPs who represent safe constituencies commit very little resources to constituency service when they represent urban constituencies simultaneously. So that representing urban and safe constituencies jointly reduces constituency commitments. Only 3.8 percent of the MPGs with both urban/safe attributes commit primarily to constituency representation. Differently stated, as shown in Figure 4.3, the only instance where the focus on constituency is not fashionable is when the MPGs represent urban and safe seats at the same time. Rural/swing MPs, for instance, commit more to constituency representation (19.2%) than to party or national representation. This is expected since they operate in rural contexts with the presence of influential local elites and at the same time are electorally vulnerable. Rural/safe MPs also commit to constituency work in response to the pressure local elites mount even on electorally secured MPs. Urban MPs occupying swing seats were also found to respond to their electoral vulnerability with comparatively more constituency work despite the absence or weakness of local elites to demand disproportionate constituency representation. I delve deeper into this in Chapter Six.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter brought to the fore the various representational foci that legislators in Ghana display. The findings in the chapter both confirm and confound theoretical expectations on the representational behaviour of MPs elected under majoritarian (First-Past-The-Post) systems or MPs from former settler colonies and in contexts where electoral clientelism is prevalent. On the one hand, it is true that MPs in Ghana are predominantly constituency servants. This confirms expectations associated with the country's electoral system, history and electoral clientelism profile. However, beyond this casual observation, I show, more importantly, that the MPGs' constituency activities concentrate on a few local figures instead of the median voter. Additionally, there are also MPs who primarily focus on universal as well as partisan representation. These findings also sharply contradict representational behaviours that are expected in candidate-centred systems.

The chapter also demonstrates a divergence between public perception of the constituency effort of MPs in Ghana and the actual constituency activities of the legislators. First, while public opinion survey reports of infrequent MPG-constituents contacts, the MPs, on the other hand, report of close constituency attentiveness. Secondly, while MPs in Ghana are perceived to spend only a small fraction of their time in the constituency, the analysis of their media engagements and interviews point to continuous constituency presence. I have

shown in the chapter that the answer to this yawning chasm lies in the 'nature' of the constituency activities that MPs in Ghana roll out. I have shown that Ghanaian MPs focus more on such influential local elites as traditional chiefs, branch level and constituency executives of the party, as well as the clergy in their representational activities. As a result, even though they are active in the constituency, they are only visible to these few powerful local elites. Constituency representation in Ghana is therefore highly elite-centred. The reasons for this are both electoral and reputational. The MPs rely on local vote brokers to secure their parliamentary office and build a reputation with them also for career advancement. Focusing on them instead of the voter, therefore, makes more political sense.

I have lastly shown that the representational strategies of Ghanaian parliamentarians are differentiated by their contextual or background characteristics. I find that two background features influence the inclination of the MPs in Ghana to either focus on the constituency, parliament, or the political party. These are the complexity of the geographical constituencies they represent – i.e., representing either a rural or urban constituency, and their electoral vulnerabilities – i.e., representing either safe or swing constituency. While these variables individually affect representational outcomes, their interplay shows a more complete picture of the drivers of the variations in legislative representation in Ghana. The chapter shows that with the exception of Ghanaian MPs who represent urban and safe constituencies simultaneously, the rest [i.e., MPs representing rural/safe, rural/swing and urban/swing constituencies] display disproportionate constituency attentiveness. As such, the only condition under which the focus on constituency representation is not fashionable among Ghanaian MPs is when they represent urban and safe seats at the same time.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONSTITUENCY FOCUS DESPITE PERFECT PROPORTIONALITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

"I am assigned to the Daveyton-Etwatwa constituency... It is a great honour to continue to serve the residents... An issue I am currently driving is the electrification of Lindelani informal settlement where residents have had little to no basic services for the past 20 years. I have completed several site visits in the area to meet with the community, tabled a members' statement in the National Assembly as well as submitted questions to the relevant Minister to intervene in this matter"

- Mathew Cuthbert, DA Member of the National Assembly

"My constituency is Stellenbosch. The team and I in Stellenbosch work with the community every week to ensure Neighbourhood Watches are well equipped, residents can access housing opportunities and residents receive quick service delivery in cases like fixing potholes. Where appropriate, I also escalate local issues to the national level through Parliament".

-Leon Schreiber, DA Member of the National Assembly

"The ANC is an organisation established by the kings of the country, the Bafokeng, the Swazi, and others, so how can we become enemies of traditional leaders?"

-Thabo Mbeki, Former President South Africa.

5.1 Introduction

Mondays are 'constituency days' on the calendar of the National Assembly of post-apartheid South Africa. This means that every Monday, the four hundred (400) Members of the South African Parliament (MPSAs) [are expected to] visit their designated constituencies, hold meetings and assist in solving local-level problems. Beginning on Tuesdays [until Thursdays], the MPSAs [are expected to] travel to the country's legislative capital, Cape Town and get involved in portfolio committee works. They also partake in plenary sessions and attend party caucus meetings. Typically, on Fridays, the parliamentarians return to their various constituencies again to "do more constituency work[47]". This is what a typical weekly

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[47] PA_28: Interview, 12.02.2020, Cape Town

itinerary of parliamentarians in South Africa looks like when the National Assembly is in session.

When the House goes on recess, additional weeks are set aside and specifically labelled 'Constituency Period', during which the MPSAs are ordinarily expected to concentrate on constituency work exclusively[48]. They typically travel to and within their constituencies to interact with constituents, provide information on what happened in parliament during the previous session, attend to individual caseworks and gather constituency concerns for onward ventilation on the floor of parliament [or at the appropriate portfolio committee] on the next resumption of parliamentary sessions (Parliament of South Africa, n.d.).

Despite not being directly elected based on geographical constituencies, MPs in South Africa still spend an incredible amount of time focusing on their 'post-election' assigned constituencies. As reported in the 2019 parliamentary programme, out of a total of 239 active parliamentary days, 96 were allocated for constituency work. This comes against 65 days assigned to portfolio committee meetings and 71 for plenary sessions (Grant and Clifford, 2020). The Parliament of South Africa, therefore, allocates more than 40 percent of its working days to constituency service on the average against 29 and 27 percent for plenary and committee meetings, respectively.

All of this[49] could be labelled as parliamentary-level guarantees for constituency work. But even beyond these guarantees, many individual parliamentarians on their own conceive of services rendered to their local constituents to be a very integral component of their job as representatives. For this reason, they do not only visit regularly; they also frequently conduct oversight of government programmes in the constituencies, hold meetings and ultimately get keenly involved in finding solutions to local constituency problems.

On his constituency activities, for instance, Mathew John Cuthbert, a Member of Parliament[50] on the ticket of the Democratic Alliance (DA) political party – quoted above – shares a few highlights worthy of attention. First, his constituency service is not only perceived as a duty but also as a source of reputation and honour. Second and most

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[48] SA_17: Interview, 27.02.2020, Cape Town; PA_4: Interview, 12.02.2020 Cape Town
[49] The designation of 40 percent of parliamentary activities to constituency work as well as the setting aside of every Monday as constituency days
[50] PA_4: Interview, 12.02.2020 Cape Town

importantly, these activities involve the collection of intangible requests for onward statements in the plenary or questions to relevant Ministers, and physical constituency presence to procure tangible projects like electricity to deprived communities.

As I show in some depth in subsequent sections in this chapter, MPs in South Africa do not only engage in constituency service rhetorically by making constituency-centric statements in the plenary or by only being physically present in the constituency. In fact, hundreds of millions of Rands of public resources in the form of 'Political Party Constituency Allowance' (PPCA) are also put at their disposal to establish Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs) (Letshele, 2020). These offices operate with Management Committees and resourced staff – usually Administrators and Field workers – who interface with constituents in the absence of the MP during parliamentary sessions. This demonstrates the importance of the 'constituency' as a focus of representation amongst MPs in South Africa. Yet interestingly, they are embedded in an institutional, historical and structural context that is widely hypothesised in the literature to evince any other form of parliamentary representation but local constituency representation.

As discussed in Chapter Two, an important rule of thumb for students of comparative legislative behaviour is that electoral systems have consequences and that, different models of representation are underpinned by electoral institutional and structural variables (Carey and Shugart 1995; Saalfeld and Müller, 1997; Tsebelis and Money, 1997; Strom, 2012; Blomgren and Rozenberg, 2012). As such, representatives elected under closed-list proportional representation (PR) systems, such as in South Africa, are theorised to display an inclination towards political party representation. The reason is straightforward. Because citizens vote for their preferred parties rather than individual candidates, re-election seeking MPs would have the incentive to cultivate closer ties with the party. If we look at South Africa's electoral system where voters cast their ballots for their preferred parties without opportunities to alter the priorities presented on the party list, we should have good theoretical reasons to expect MPs in the country to demonstrate strong party-centeredness[51].

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[51]Even under the open list system or Single Transferrable Vote (STV) where voters can re-order the arrangements on the list, institutional scholars expect re-election seeking parliamentarians to still display higher levels of party-centeredness in order to get access to the list, in the first place.

Yet, legislative representational outcomes in the country confound these theoretical expectations.

In this chapter, my preoccupation is multiple folds. On the one hand, I elaborate on the constituency obsession of Members of Parliament in South Africa. I do this in comparison with the MPs' work in the parliamentary arena – plenary and committees – and their work in their political parties. More importantly, the argument is cast within a broader framework; I place the discussion in the context of the 'legislative role theories' discussed in the previous chapters. I throw empirical light on the primary focus of representation among legislators in South Africa, how they carry out their representational activities and what explains variation in the emphasis the MPs place on the various activities associated with their office. I will be addressing specifically the following questions:

1. Why is the focus on 'constituency' more popular among the varied representational functions of South African MPs [when local representation is expected to produce minimal electoral payoffs?]
2. What is the nature of constituency service in South Africa?
3. How do South African MPs vary regarding their representational behaviour, and what explanations underlie the different patterns of representation they roll out?

To address these questions, I partition the chapter into several sections. In the first part, I discuss the subject of 'whom' or 'what' South African parliamentarians primarily represent. I will proceed to discuss how they vary in focus and how this variation can be specified and explained. I argued in the preceding chapters that parliamentarians do not have singular representational foci. They represent multifaceted interests and groups such as their constituents, political parties, businesses, ideologies, unions, states, all the people in a country, among several others. In what is to follow, I throw empirical light on these theoretical postulations focusing on the Members of the South African National Assembly. I show that legislators in the country attach incredible relevance to their constituency obligations contrary to what we would ordinarily expect.

5.2 Argument and methods

In Chapter Two, I outlined the shortcomings of some existing models of legislative representation for emerging democratic contexts. In this chapter, I move a step further by

uniquely combining different sets of empirical data on the representational activities of South African parliamentarians to first suggest the need to rethink these existing hypotheses and, more importantly, to bring to the fore the essence of having a dichotomous approach to understanding legislative representation in emerging democracies. The central argument of this chapter is that constituency service is popular among Members of Parliament in South Africa. Not only that, the focus on constituencies also confounds theoretical expectations on the country's institutional, historical and structural contexts. I demonstrate how contextual factors interact with electoral institutional variables to shape legislative representation in ways that defy conventional expectations.

I show that political parties in South Africa condition both intra-party re-selection at the ward level and list placements at the national level on constituency popularity. This empirical reality renders existing generalisations and conventional wisdom on representational behaviour far too insufficient in new democracies similarly circumstanced – however theoretically appealing they may be. I conclude that parliamentarians are differently situated even within the same institutional and historical context. MPs representing constituencies in the rural countryside and urban 'townships' and slums tend to exhibit different constituency effort from their counterparts representing affluent urban areas. The same variations are valid for senior MPs who occupy top positions on the party list[52] and their counterparts whose chances are slim as a result of their placements on the bottom of the party list. Therefore, focusing on specific contextual realities and the behavioural incentives they present to representatives embedded in similar institutional, historical and structural contexts provide a more nuanced approach to understanding legislative representation.

I will briefly recap a few of the previously[53] discussed institutional, structural and historical characteristics of South African on which the arguments in this chapter rest. First, Members of the South Africa National Assembly are elected under a closed-list proportional representation system. This institutional feature is expected to lead the MPSAs to display high party-centeredness. Second, as a former settler colony, South Africa is expected to possess all the trappings of a strong legislative institution, an elaborate parliamentary

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[52] In this case National lists not Provincial or Regional lists. I explain the differences in section 5.3
[53] These arguments are spelt out elaborately in Chapters Two and Three.

infrastructure and a parliamentary sub-culture that essentially elicits the prioritisation of internal parliamentary activities by the country's MPs. Differences in colonial programmes along the lines of settler and non-settler colonies are expected to be consequential for the post-independence role orientation and behaviour of parliamentarians. Legislators in former settler colonies like South Africa are expected to be comparatively more universalistic and national policy-oriented and more inclined to collective parliamentary activities than their counterparts in former non-settler colonies.

Lastly, as the most urbanised and advanced industrial economy in Africa, political competition in South Africa is largely devoid of the usual electoral clientelistic transactions between parliamentarians and voters that exist elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa (Barkan, 2005). It has been pointed out in the last chapters that the offer and acceptance of cash handouts in return for votes typically characterises political contexts where poverty is acute. A common assumption points to how politics in the developing world is dominated by the issuance of private and club goods to poor populations whose votes are ready to be sold to the highest political bidder (Jensen and Justesen 2014; Blaydes, 2011; Kitschelt, 2000). As a consequence, political actors in these contexts also deploy patronage strategies for the mobilisation of votes. In particular, political competition in these contexts is said to be limited to a transaction between political actors and voters in which the former offer cash-handouts or tangible benefits to the latter in return for votes and support. So that, if politics in South Africa does not follow the typical clientelistic logic in the rest of the continent, then the limited pervasiveness of clientelistic demands from constituents should free up the MPs in South Africa to concentrate on more collective functions either in parliament or in the party.

Table 5. 1: Existing hypothesis and projected representational behaviour of MPs

Extant explanations for representational behaviour	Expected patterns of representational behaviour
Formal institutional determinants of representational behaviour; the effects of Proportional Representation, the effects of hybrid intra-party candidate selection on the representational choices of MPs	South African MPs are elected via closed-list PR electoral system, which is expected to elicit party-centred representational behaviour. Parties in South Africa such as the ANC and the DA employ hybrid candidate selection mechanism involving selected local councillors and branch party officials both at the grassroots and the National party. This should produce MPs who are beholden to the party.
Historical legacies of parliaments in former settler colonies; the effects of being a former settler colony on representation	South Africa (Cape) was officially colonised by the Dutch in 1652 and later the British until independence in 1994. As a former settler colony, South Africa is expected to have a more elaborate parliamentary infrastructure, institution and a parliamentary sub-culture that focuses on internal parliamentary work.
Voter behavioural impact of economically weak voters; the effect of electoral clientelism on representational behaviour	As the most urbanised and advanced industrial economy in Africa, South African politics tend to not follow the usual neo-patrimonial, clientelistic politics in the rest of Africa. The issuance of handouts to sway voters has tended not to be a clear characteristic of politics and elections in South Africa. MPs should therefore spend little to no time catering to local level clientelistic demands and consequently be more available for state-level or party representation.

To empirically demonstrate the popularity of constituency service in South Africa in contrast to the expected representational priorities espoused above, I uniquely combine different strands of data. The analysis combines data from semi-structured interviews conducted on the MPs with press data, internal parliamentary records and Afrobarometer data. In all, twenty-nine (29) interviews were conducted on the MPSAs, focusing primarily on their representational functions. For this chapter, two principal interview topics were focused on. These were (1) whom or what the MPSAs represent in their daily activities and (2) how they go about representing those entities or groups. The interviews were conversational in nature, and this led to the discussion of several equally important ancillary sub-topics, including demand-side factors that influence the MPSAs' adoption of one representational focus over others, their activities in the plenary, portfolio committees and in their assigned constituencies, among several others.

The interviewees were non-randomly selected. This was intentionally to ensure that different categories of MPs with varied years of experience (newcomers-incumbents), geographical characteristics (rural-urban), electoral marginality (top-bottom of the list) and type of representation; that is, MPs elected on provincial/regional or National party lists are included in the sample. At a point in the latter part of the fieldwork, the selection of interviewees was based on chance and availability of the respondents. I would hang around the parliamentary precinct or send out bulk emails to quickly arrange interviews with readily available MPs. This was necessitated by two reasons. The first was to ensure that as many interviews were conducted to be able to get a general overview of the representational activities of MPs in the country. Secondly, the spread of the COVID-19 virus meant that any delays in the interview organisation process would deny me access to the MPs. But at the end of the day, sufficient interviews were conducted and effectively triangulated with the other datasets I have mentioned above.

All the interviews but two were tape-recorded and transcribed against copious notes taken during the interview sessions. Theory-derived codes, as well as open codes derived from the data itself, constituted the basis of the analysis. This is the mixed approach to interview analysis (Campbell et al., 2013). On the one hand, the coding frame placed emphasis on the stated focus of representation parliamentarians display, i.e., whether they claim to represent their constituents, parties, the whole state, or any other entity. On the other hand, I coded for the specific weekly activities of the MPSAs to ensure that their claimed focus of

representation matches their typical activities. Again, the analysis covered why some MPSAs set their priorities on universalistic/national policymaking while others focus on the local constituency or party work. This is to say, the key forces or factors that influence the representational foci of legislators in South Africa. Absolute anonymity of the interviewees in publications was discussed and promised.

I also relied on rich and copious data collected by the Parliamentary Monitoring Group's[54] People's Assembly (PA) project. This project seeks to bridge the gap between ordinary South Africans and their elected representatives. The PMG's data is based on the MPs' self-assessed understanding of their work as representatives, what their job typically entails in their own viewpoint and how they go about performing their constituency duties. This large qualitative dataset provides a very rich resource to glean not only the activities but also the time budgets and role perception of parliamentarians in South Africa. Like the interview data, this dataset was coded with the aid of the MAXQDA data analysis software. I used interpretive textual analysis strategy in making sense of the data. This implies that premium was placed on the meanings and content of the given text rather than the quantitative generation of frequencies for specific keywords.

Again, to show the constituency effort of South African legislators on the one hand and the perception of their performance by the constituents they represent on the other, I used the Afrobarometer dataset. This survey covers 34 African countries[55] and broadly measures the attitudes of Africans towards democracy and political leadership. With its nationally representative random sample of over 2400 respondents spanning all the nine provinces of South Africa and a margin of error of +/- 2 percent at a 95 percent confidence level, the Afrobarometer dataset helps in gauging public opinions on the relationship between South Africans and their elected representatives. Specifically, the data shows how South Africans judge (1) the accessibility of their legislators to their constituents (2) legislator-constituents accountability relationship, and (3) the amount of time their representatives spend in the constituency.

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[54] The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) is a Cape Town based organisation that monitors and reports on the works MPSAs do especially in their portfolio committees.
[55] This number is as of the Round 7 of the Afrobarometer survey in 2019

In what follows, I demonstrate that constituency work is popular amongst MPs in South Africa in contrast to theoretical expectations. What is more, I show that constituency effort in South Africa is inextricably linked to reputation building and re(s)election seeking. While at the individual level, MPs consider their engagements in the constituency as a necessary condition for reputation and job security, political parties equally premise their electoral prospects on their constituency effort. I again show that constituency service in South Africa is hardly conducted without local intermediaries. MPSAs usually utilise local party functionaries, brokers, and informal local elites to reach out to the voter. Parliamentary representation in South Africa is also demonstrated in this chapter to be differentiated across geographical and electoral contexts. MPSAs assigned to poor rural areas, and those who do not find themselves in the top 20 percent of their party's list have more incentive for constituency work than their counterparts who represent urban constituencies and those highly ranked on the party list.

5.3 Constituency salience of legislative representation in South Africa

Members of the South African National Assembly exhibit considerable variation in their representational foci. These dissimilarities manifest in "whom or what" they individually consider as the primary beneficiary of their representational activities. While a section of the MPs displays high levels of party centeredness, others spend most of their time in the parliamentary arena in Cape Town working in committees, contributing to parliamentary debates and engaging in collective and more comprehensive state-wide policymaking. The party and the state, therefore, become two key competing principals served by legislators in South Africa. But not all the MPs are 'partisan' or 'national' in their approach to representation. The evidence suggests that many representatives in the National Assembly are primarily locally-oriented rather. Advocating for local concerns and solving parochial constituency problems remain one popular representational activity of MPs in South Africa.

Even though elected to perform the same function of representation, a typical week on the individual itineraries of the 400 Members of the South African National Assembly is manifestly dissimilar. For the MPs who are strongly "partisan", their weekly representational activities usually bother on defending their party's positions in media debates, debating on the floor of parliament in line with the party position and voting in accordance with directions from the party's parliamentary leadership. Some go about raising funds for their parties or functioning as financiers themselves by generously supporting the party with

periodic financial contributions. Others also actively seek to join portfolio committees that bring strategic benefits to their parties or seek leadership positions on important committees to aggressively champion the party's interest. I find, for instance, that 'partisan' MPs usually serve as whips for their parties in committees. This affords them the opportunity to build a disciplined and formidable legislative party. As a party loyalist and a whip of the African National Congress (ANC) for a committee mentioned in the interviews, his main aim is to put his party first in his work and make sure party dissent in committee deliberations is as minimised as possible in his committee. He organises periodic meetings with the ANC members of his committee (study group), chairs the meetings of the caucus and ensures that he presents a formidable ANC front in committee deliberations and voting:

> "The ANC comes first in all I do here. That is my work. Now, myself as a whip of the committee, I first become a whip of the ANC; I chair the study group, so the affairs of the party, the party line, I manage it to ensure that there are no fragmentations here and there"[56].

> "(…) Together with the chief whip of the party, we ensure that the Thursday morning caucus takes place and that the party line is adhered to. Mondays are dedicated to party work which includes being at your parliamentary constituency office (PCO) assigned to you".[57]

For party loyalists like the MPs quoted above, everything concerning the ANC party "comes first" in their representational activities. The fact that the "ANC comes first in all" they do as MPs means at least two things. First, they as well as like-minded party loyalists, subordinate all other activities connected with their office [such as constituency service] to party work. Second, even if they engage in constituency work or collective parliamentary work, they do so because of the expected benefits such engagements may accrue to the party. As quoted above, even though Mondays are ordinarily for constituency work, the quoted MP dedicates it primarily to party work in the constituency.

> "Mondays are dedicated to party work which includes being at your parliamentary constituency office (PCO) assigned to you".[58]

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[56] SA_23: Interview, 14.02.2020, Cape Town
[57] PA_88: Interview, 27.09.2017, Cape Town
[58] PA_88: Interview, 27.09.2017, Cape Town

Such a strong party obsession usually blurs the distinction between party work and constituency focus. For instance, party loyalists could embark on constituency visits and do caseworks not for the sake of serving their constituencies per se but for the purposes of recruiting members for the party. As an MP[59] from the Democratic Alliance (DA) party mentioned, sometimes he embarks on membership drives in the countryside for the party even when parliament is in session. Although this may empirically be construed as constituency engagement with local voters, the partisan character of the engagement makes it an outright party work. His constituency engagements involve the mobilisation of political bases for the DA party in "activities such as the registration of voters and getting them [voters] out to vote[60].

> "…I work closely with my Councillors and Activists doing party work like door to door, info tables, membership drives"[61].

Party loyalists in the South African National Assembly also take such positions as campaigners for candidates standing on the party's ticket. As a Democratic Alliance (DA) MP indicated, his work in Parliament has recently taken a turn towards campaigning for the DA party as he has been appointed a Campaign Manager for the party[62]. The fact that his "work in parliament" has "taken a turn" towards partisan campaigns means that party representation and loyalty has taken centre stage in his work, at the expense of other equally important pressures on his resources. Even though he may certainly attend plenary meetings, engage in local constituency work, and also take part in portfolio committees, his primary point of reference in all of this is the role he plays for his party. Party agents in the South African National Assembly as elsewhere primarily put the party first and engage in representational activities that yield strategic benefits to the party.

But as to be expected, not all the MPs in South Africa function as party loyalists in the manner described above, even though all of them belong to one of the 14 political parties presently represented in the House. Some MPs primarily define their representational functions in terms of the work they do in the parliamentary arena. They rather get deeply involved in debating, passing legislation, asking questions, and making statements[63] on the

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[59] PA_69: Interview, 07.04.2016, Cape Town
[60] PA_69: Interview, 07.04.2016, Cape Town
[61] PA_10: Interview, 23.10.2019, Cape Town
[62] PA_45: Interview, 10.02.2017, Cape Town
[63] PA_4: Interview, 12.02.2020, Cape Town

floor of the House. While their fellow MPs may be at the countryside campaigning for their parties[64] or embarking on party membership drives, they would rather stay back to contribute to the discourse in parliament. Donald Searing (1994) calls this category of legislators, 'Policy Advocates' or 'Parliament Men'. Some of the MPs I interviewed were very concerned with their parliamentary work and tend to invest the lion's share of their resources in the growth of the institution. One mentioned that:

> "All we have got for South African democracy to survive is this House… When we pride ourselves as a democracy…, it is because we have a working parliament. The day we stop investing in this House is the day we lose everything we have struggled for all over these years"[65].

> "…we should definitely look at ways in which the committees can be more robust… this is, after all, where the bulk of the work takes place"[66].

MPs like the above-quoted consider the work in the parliamentary arena their most important representational function. They seek to contribute to the development of the institution of parliament itself by indulging in intra-parliamentary activities that help the growth of the House. The conviction to focus on collective parliamentary policymaking may be derived from the inalienability of parliaments to democracy, as quoted above. Although they also belong to political parties like their "party loyalist" counterparts, doing state-wide bidding by staying in parliament to enact overarching policies is primary on their roster. In one interview, a Democratic Alliance (DA) MP reiterated to me that MPs in South Africa are elected not on a constituency basis, and that makes them Members of Parliament of "South Africa" and not members representing specific geographical constituencies. This places his focus of representation directly on internal parliamentary issues and also functionally nationalistic.

> "The electoral system here is such that we are elected on party lists to be representatives in the national parliament… we don't represent specific areas in the country, strictly speaking… there is a national debate going on about this. Our work

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64 PA_45: Interview, 10.02.2017, Cape Town
65 PA_91: Interview, 11.09.2018, Cape Town
66 PA_87: Interview, 25.05.2020, Cape Town

is to make laws for South Africa… the provincial legislatures have more specific geographic duties"[67]

For this MP, the work of the National Assembly is supposed to be unambiguously "national". And that MPs in South Africa should primarily focus on conducting the businesses of parliament. Consequently, showing a preference for or focusing on extra-parliamentary representation of geographic constituencies or political parties may constitute a deviation from the core mandate of members of the National Assembly. This position syncs perfectly with the theoretical literature on the behavioural impact of electoral systems discussed in Chapter Two. Ordinarily, the expectation is for legislators in South Africa to emerge predominantly as policy advocates who largely spend the bulk of their time in parliaments. But this is not entirely the case with South Africa.

The National Assembly of South Africa is composed of members elected by closed party lists, half (200) of whom come from the nine (9) regional/provincial "constituencies". The number of seats allocated to each region is proportional to the population of the region. This means that highly populous regions like Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal are allocated more seats in the National Assembly than provinces like Northern Cape and Free State with low population densities, as shown in Table 5.2. These regions or provinces thus become "constituencies" of a sort and elect multiple members to parliament on the basis of provincial lists submitted by the provincial parties. The remaining half of the MPs are elected from a single national constituency by lists provided by the national parties.

Additionally, political parties go beyond these statutory provincially delimited 'constituencies' to further partition the country into smaller geographical units. After every election, the political parties assign MPs to these smaller geographical constituencies as representatives. The aim is not only to encourage local participation in the governance of the area but also to afford representatives the opportunity to appreciate the challenges of the constituents at first hand and to understand local problems and echo them in the National Assembly (Parliament of South Africa, n.d). As a Member of Parliament on the ticket of the Africa National Congress (ANC) explained to me in the interviews:

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[67] SA_19: Interview, 19.02.2020 Cape Town

"After you have been elected, the ANC (…) will then say we have a constituency to service. Now, they allocated me in (*name of constituency withheld*) in a district called (*name of district withheld*). Now, what happens there is that all… the branches of the ANC are ward-based, so I need to service all the wards, not only party line. This becomes the most important one because you interact with people. People inform the legislation that you must pass. You just don't pass a legislation, you must be able to understand the grounds, connecting it with the people and translating it into law and drafting that law knowing very well what's happening on the ground"[68]

Table 5. 2: Provincial seat allocations to the National Assembly, 1994 – 2019

Province	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
Eastern Cape	26	27	28	26	26	25
Free State	15	14	13	12	11	11
Gauteng	43	46	45	47	48	48
KwaZulu Natal	40	38	37	39	40	41
Limpopo	20	20	21	19	19	19
Mpumalanga	14	14	14	15	15	15
North West	17	17	17	14	13	13
Northern Cape	4	4	4	5	5	5
Western Cape	21	20	21	23	23	23
National	200	200	200	200	200	200
Total seats	400	400	400	400	400	400

Source: EISA (2019)

Three observations are noteworthy from the quote above. First, the ANC, just like other parties, assign representatives to post-election delimited geographical constituencies. Not only that, the MPs also treat constituency service not as an extension of party activities at the grassroots. Thus, the MPs render their services to their constituents "not only [the] party line". Lastly, the parties strive, through their assigned representatives, to ensure that internal parliamentary activities such as legislation receive local constituency inputs. To make this happen, the MPs spend an incredible amount of time doing constituency work. As one

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[68] SA_23: Interview, 14.02.2020, Cape Town

Democratic Alliance MP indicated, they start their "week with constituency work on Mondays… [and they] tend to visit public institutions, such as police stations and schools [and] also have party meetings".[69] The observation of constituency Mondays cuts across parties. As an ANC MP reiterated, "in terms of the ANC, Mondays are declared ANC days and therefore, on those days, you try as far as is possible to attend to your constituency"[70].

While setting aside Mondays and particular periods of the year for constituency work may demonstrate the importance of the 'constituency' as a focus of representation in South Africa, it may not be very clear what exactly the MPs do in their constituencies. In other words, what is the nature of constituency service in South Africa? The answer to this question is not always straightforward as the conceptual umbrella of 'constituency' sometimes stretches too wide to cover activities that happen even outside the geographical constituency. Constituency work has, for instance, been defined in the literature to be more than the procurement of tangible benefits to the geographic constituency. It can also be expressed by the number of mentions the word 'constituency' makes in an MP's speech in parliament as a proportion of his aggregate parliamentary speeches or questions. This implies that constituency work may be done verbally as well. For instance, an MP may be doing constituency work by consistently mentioning the name of her constituency or specific constituency features or landmarks such as buildings, companies and so on in questions asked in parliament (see Martin, 2011). Constituency work, therefore, has several shades and may be done not only in the geographical designation labelled as the 'constituency'.

For South African MPs, constituency work is multifaceted and goes beyond asking parliamentary questions or making floor statements. As mentioned earlier, the MPs receive through their political parties an annual amount of about 339 million Rands (approximately 20 million Euros) of public resources in the form of 'Political Party Constituency Allowance' (PPCA) (OUTA, 2021; Letshele, 2020). These funds are made available to the MPs monthly and are intended to establish and maintain a parliamentary presence in local areas through the creation of Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs)[71]. There are currently more than three hundred and fifty (350) PCOs scattered across the country where voters and their MPs interface. The PCOs are mutually beneficial to the local constituents as

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[69] PA_4: Interview, 12.02.2020, Cape Town
[70] SA_17: Interview, 27.02.2020, Cape Town
[71] See Policy on Political Parties Allowances

well as the MP. For the local communities, the parliamentary offices help them get access to their MPs and also create a platform where their needs get ventilated and possibly, addressed. For the MP, on the other hand, the parliamentary offices help them make constant contacts with their communities as well as the local branches and wards of their parties to make appeals towards future elections:

> "The constituency office serves the community with over 70 different needs and is well visited on a daily basis. Coordination with each ward and branch structure functions well and regular activist training ensures continuous growth in number and activity. Themed campaigns like petitions, information tables and house meetings provide growth opportunity for involvement and connectivity to inhabitants of all the major towns, villages and farms"[72].

5.4 Constituency styles of South African MPs

If constituency work is salient in South Africa, then how is it exactly implemented by the country's MPs? How do the MPs organise their work in the constituency? As I discuss below, constituency work in South Africa is anything but a homogenous set of activities. The MPs vary widely on the character of the services rendered to their constituents. They roll out a diverse range of activities when they either visit "home" or do constituency work in parliament. However, despite this diversity, patterns exist in their constituency styles, as illustrated in Figure 5.1 below. The MPs do not only get involved in social events and participate in a range of meetings with local interest groups and actors; they also use their time in the constituency for political purposes. They hold meetings with the party's branches and wards and either organise or participate in political events in the local communities. Many also spend hours in their Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs) listening to their constituents' concerns and making interventions where and when appropriate. This is the style of South African MPs, especially when the National Assembly is on recess:

> "For me, the core of my work is to sit down and interact with the people whenever I'm around"[73]

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[72] PA_30: Interview, 25.05.2020, Cape Town
[73] SA_10: Interview, 25.05.2020, Cape Town

I observed that interacting and making contacts with *people* in the constituency is one key style of constituency work in South Africa. The MPs usually make time to hear *people* out on their individual concerns while in the constituency. Which *people* are in reference here, and how inclusive is this engagement? This is a subject I thoroughly discuss under Section 5.8 below. In the following paragraphs, however, I highlight the key patterns of constituency styles common among MPs in South Africa. These include office hours, constituency outreach and visitations, the provision of basic services to the constituency and the championing of constituency concerns in the plenary or legislative committees in Cape Town.

5.4.1 Office hours

Many South African parliamentarians spend time in their Parliamentary Constituency Offices to interface with their constituents. As I indicated earlier, this type of constituency work appears very common among the MPs I interviewed. They usually receive complaints and requests for assistance from people who need public jobs, government-issued documents or are having any form of challenges accessing state services. In their day-to-day constituency work, they confront and intervene in issues relating to "unemployment, poverty and crime, in particular violence against women and children"[74]. One MPSA summarised his constituency work as follows:

> "My constituency work typically centres on assisting residents with service
> delivery queries dealing with national departments like Home Affairs, the South
> African Police Service, the South African Social Security Agency and
> Education. Given the massive service delivery failures of the (*name of
> Constituency withheld*) over the last few years I also deal with many enquiries
> of residents who bear the brunt of the collapse in delivery of basic services from
> the Metro"[75]

5.4.2 Visits

Spending time with constituents *in the constituency* is another key component of the constituency activities of South African MPs. After all, without visits, constituency service

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[74] PA_18: Interview, 04.09.2019, Cape Town
[75] PA_28: Interview, 12.02.2020, Cape Town

is very much unlikely (Barkan et al., 2010). The MPs visit regularly and interact with the constituents to get to appreciate the concerns they may have. Although the MPs strive to maintain a regular presence in the constituency through their Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs), they additionally hold meetings and embark on outreach programmes in the communities to appreciate the problems of their constituents at "first-hand":

Figure 5. 1: Nature of constituency service in South Africa
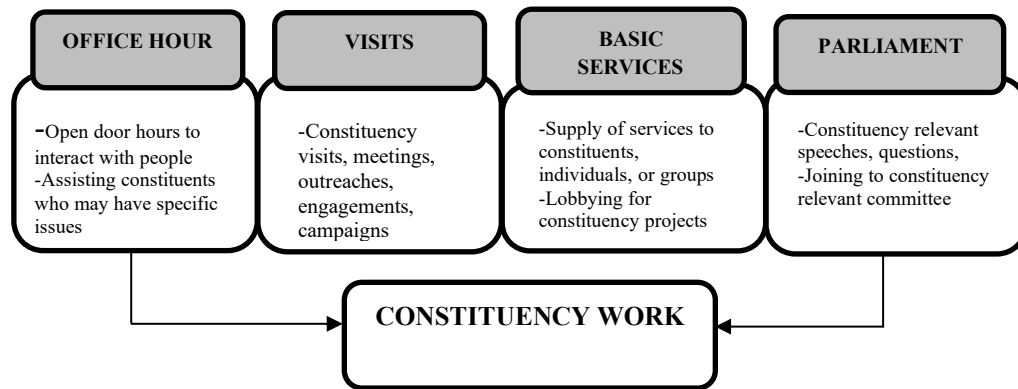
Source: Field interviews with South African MPs, 2020

"I strongly believe that an MP should be hands-on and heavily involved in community issues"[76]

"I sit down with my provincial caucus from Friday to Saturday and I visit different towns in the (*name of Province withheld*). It is unfortunate that unemployment in the province is currently sitting at 32.2% - highest unemployment in the country. It was also worrying that the number of school and university dropout rates is also higher in the (*name of Province withheld*) compared to other provinces"[77].

"I make a point of being available for person interactions with constituents over weekends, on Mondays and during constituency periods, although our job is a 24-hour one, so it is not unusual to be in contact with constituents even on days when I am in Cape Town. However, it is important to visit the constituency as much as possible to see problems first-hand. As Helen Suzman said: go and see for yourself!"[78]

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[76] PA_44: Interview, 24.10.2016, Cape Town
[77] PA_45: Interview, 10.02.2017, Cape Town
[78] PA_85: Interview, 02.05.2020, Cape Town

To be sure, being 'heavily involved in community issues' to 'see problems at first hand' was found to be more than merely visiting and immersing oneself in local issues. It has more to do with giving tangible handouts and procuring real solutions to constituency problems. Thus, depending on which individual, group, or community the MP visits, provisions are made to issue out targeted goods such as building materials, streetlights, cash donations, educational materials, among others. As one ANC MP remarked, she and her team sought collaboration with foundations like Vodacom to donate "dignity packs" to best performing High Schools in her constituency[79]. Other MPs also go all out in their visits to identify and solve local level problems such as "sewer leakages and inconsistent supply of clean water and electricity"[80]. The activities that come to the fore when the MPSAs visit their constituencies are as numerous as they are diverse. One MPSA mentioned, for instance, that:

> There's a lot of work I have done so far, including poverty alleviation programmes, community development, sporting activations and many programmes that speak to upliftment of the communities around my PCO[81]

5.4.3 Basic services

The constituency style of South African Members of Parliament also involves descending to the constituency to render basic services to the constituents. The MPs vary extensively regarding the scope of basic services they render their constituents, but common activities run through. These include rendering of security services to communities and campuses[82], provision of basic infrastructure[83], investing in agriculture and the like. I found that the constituency work of the MPs typically involves bringing or lobbying for physical development programmes to the constituency as well:

> "My constituency work mainly focuses on representing the public in any matter related to public service where politics has a role to play. This can be in terms of investment, roads, development, home affairs, agricultural or farm worker matters"[84].

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[79] PA_48: Interview, 30.05.2016, Cape Town
[80] PA_35: Interview, 19.02.2020, Cape Town
[81] PA_66: Interview, 18.11.2015, Cape Town
[82] PA_20: Interview, 09.09.2019, Cape Town
[83] PA_53: Interview, 10.02.2017, Cape Town
[84] PA_69: Interview, 07.04.2016, Cape Town

In cases where the MPs do not have the financial capacity to roll out big programmes, they partner with the private sector or community-based organisations for co-financing or outright sponsorship. This demonstrates how important the provision of basic services is for the constituency programmes of South African MPs. One MP specifically mentions how his collaborations with companies like Dell and local banks like Nedbank as well as donors have produced a computer centre for high schools in his constituency and a library in the constituency for financial literacy:

> "I have specifically worked with Dell in opening a computer centre at one of the high schools in my constituency area and we were also able to get teachers to attend a training course for computer literacy. We were also able to work with City Press and Nedbank in the opening of a library which focused mainly on financial literacy. I am working with a number of stakeholders and donors that would help to build a high school in my village, (*name of village withheld*), because the children there still have to walk about 4-5km to school"[85].

From the quote above, we realise that MPs in South Africa do not only pay attention to the particular issues of individuals and communities; they also collaborate with private entities to procure physical development to the constituencies they serve. The MPs move beyond their budgetary limits to engage with stakeholders and private companies to finance projects that could otherwise not have been solely financed by their limited allocated resources.

5.4.4 Parliament

There are also MPs who are passionate occupiers of the parliamentary precincts in Cape Town. They prefer using parliament as a platform to pursue their representational objectives, including constituency work. What this implies is that not all South African MPs serve their constituents by being physically present in the constituency or through their staff at the Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCO). Some prefer rather to do constituency work by utilising internal parliamentary structures and institutions such as portfolio committees, minister question times and lobbying from their offices in Cape Town. A few of the MPs I interviewed rather pick constituency issues for onward articulation on the floor of the National Assembly.

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[85] PA_49: Interview, 07.11.2016, Cape Town

This category of MPs (parliament-based constituency servants) is strategically distinct from those who embark on frequent constituency visits to either 'personally' get involved in local issues or deploy their staff or local party elites to work in the constituency in their stead (I call them constituency-based constituency workers). However, both categories of constituency workers share some commonalities. First, both devote more time to constituency service than they do for other aspects of their representational job. Second, the 'constituency' forms the basis of the further representational activities they embark on as representatives. Even in cases where parliament-based constituency workers spend time in the constituency, they do so with the aim to gather constituency concerns for onward articulation in parliament in Cape Town.

> "Through consistent advocacy on the floor and several engagements with the minister, we have been able to solve, in part the perennial water problems at the (*name of constituency withheld*) informal settlements… The aim is always to highlight the challenges of these communities by making statements in parliament.
> I think that quick solutions are often handy when I escalate constituency issues in parliament this way"[86].

An orientation towards local constituencies in South Africa is therefore displayed not only in the constituency. It also takes place far away in Parliament in Cape Town. I find that making constituency-related contributions on the floor, asking questions, or joining committees to shape constituency-specific agenda are some of the ways parliamentarians in South Africa display their constituency effort.

5.5 Representational overlaps among South African MPs

The foregone is not to argue that the MPSAs exclusively focus on local representation at the expense of their duties inside parliament or in their political parties. Mention must be made of how the different foci of representation; constituency representation, party representation and parliamentary representation, inseparably overlap in a number of respects. For instance, while representing the interests of their local communities, the parliamentarians do not necessarily ignore their party obligations. They tend to simultaneously engage in party activities like campaigning, financial contributions and defending the interest of the party in

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[86] SA_19: Interview, 19.02.2020, Cape Town

the media. In fact, doing party work in the constituency and rendering constituency service to local communities are difficult to empirically distinguish. Therefore, while it is true that South African MPs pay particular attention to their assigned geographical constituencies, it is also true that their representational activities contain considerable attention to other duties connected to their office.

5.6 Constituency popularity: A strategy for re-(s)election and reputation building

Why is there such a popularity of constituency service among Members of the South African National Assembly? Can this be explained by constituents' demands for local representation or by the MPs' own pursuit of local mandate? Can constituency effort in South Africa be conceived as a strategy to achieve political and electoral ends? As a starting point, Members of Parliament in South Africa, as elsewhere, seek re(s)election as a proximate goal. They are therefore motivated to pursue activities that make them electorally appealing to the gatekeepers who exercise control over re(s)election. In political parties in South Africa, these important party gatekeepers spring from the branch level to the provincial and to the national party levels. I found that building reputation for constituency work and attending to local issues represent some of the key benchmarks for assessing the goodness of South African MPs to access the ballot in branch level re-nomination and, more importantly, for re-election to the National Assembly.

5.6.1 Access to the ballot: Branch level re-nomination

The ruling African National Congress (ANC) – the most dominant political party in the politics of post-apartheid South Africa – operates a hybrid candidate selection mechanism. On the one hand, candidates may offer themselves for selection on the [decentralised] provincial/regional list[87] or compete for space on the centralised national list, on the other hand. The party thus divides the compilation of its list for the 400 seats in the National Assembly equally between the nine provinces (200) and the National party (200).

In order to qualify to contest for a place in the regional selection, aspiring candidates or re-selection seeking MPs need to demonstrate a commitment to the party, must have no

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[87] The provincial level candidate selection will be our focus under this section. The next section focuses on the compilation of the party list at the national level

criminal past, must be members of the party in good financial standing and must have been nominated by five branches. Candidates who pass this qualification stage are presented to branch-level delegates drawn from across the ANC branches in the province as well as the party's affiliate organisations such as the South African National Civic Association and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) to be voted upon. The delegates then rank-order the candidates for onwards submission to the ANC's provincial executive for approval.

A key determinant for branch-level nominations and access to the party list is the local constituency reputation of the aspirant. To be nominated by five branches to be on the provincial list, one needs to have built a demonstrably good constituency relationship with the branches and key local figures. For the ANC branch delegates, personal constituency reputation – more than anything else – is considered a necessary condition for an aspirant's access to the ballot (internal selection) in the first place. For this reason, it is the constituency effort and local performance during an MP's tenure in parliament that count in branch-level (re-)nominations and future rank ordering of the aspirant. Two key issues are brought to the fore here. First, the cultivation of closer ties with constituency actors is considered consequential for the building of local reputation. Second, local party officials, in turn, consider local reputation strongly in the compilation of the party list. As one MP mentioned about the delegates,

> No one cares about how articulate the MP is in the portfolio committee or on the floor. No one looks at that really. Your work in the communities and the relationship you have with the branches is the selling point[88].

For political parties like the Democratic Alliance (DA), courting constituency reputation becomes even more important for two reasons. First, each MP is made to determine for him/herself what the core focus for the five-year parliamentary term will be. This then constitutes a metric for measuring their productivity within the electoral term. Their suitability for future renomination and access to the parliamentary office becomes dependent on good ratings in these pre-parliamentary term metrics. Electing to focus on constituency work would therefore imply an unmitigated attention to the assigned constituency[89]. Again,

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[88]PA_51: Interview, 12.02.2020 Cape Town
[89] SA_24: Interview, 15.02.2020, Cape Town

in some cases, like in 1999, the DA national party completely outsourced the compilation of the list for the next parliament to the provinces without presenting a national party list. This increases the importance of constituency work as provincial delegates tend to be more constituency-minded and so reward constituency productivity more than parliamentary efficiency.

Thus, even though constituency service is supposed to filter down to the local constituents, the evaluation of one's constituency effort is in the enviable bosom of local party figures. To be renominated therefore, re-selection seeking MPs have to be adjudged suitable for the office by local party actors and branch executives. One important way of getting this endorsement is to cultivate a good MP-branch relationship and by extension, a good MP-constituency relationship:

> "If you have a bad relationship or you are an enemy to members of the executives, you might find yourself in a situation where you are at the wrong end of their decisions"[90].

> "The system is [such that] the list of names that the party submits to IEC… is influenced by branches of the ANC: they vote and say this is the person we want to represent us in the national parliament. So, interacting with them every day gives you more chance to getting elected. Say, here is a person who is working, we see his job; let him go again and represent us in the national parliament. The more you are voted for, the more you stand the chance to be in the list"[91].

Cultivating constituency reputation, especially with local party elites in South Africa is therefore considered a complete re-selection strategy in itself. It is therefore not surprising that many of the MPs visit and spend time in the constituency attending to individual issues and procuring developmental projects to the constituents. The reason is straightforward: these are the sort of activities that get rewarded with renomination by local or branch executives. Since in the renomination process, "no one cares about how articulate the MP is in the portfolio committee or on the floor[92]", constituency activities become the main benchmark for the decisions branch executives take.

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[90] PA_28: Interview, 12.02.2020, Cape Town
[91] SA_23: Interview, 14.02.2020, Cape Town
[92] PA_51: Interview, 12.02.2020, Cape Town

5.6.2 Party-list placement

Parliamentarians in South Africa do not only strive to make the party list. Making it to the top of the list or having a more comfortable place on the list is what really counts for one's access to the parliamentary office. Branch renomination alone is therefore not enough to secure a place in parliament unless the candidate in question is rank-ordered to an electorally safe position on the party list. This is especially so for the many smaller parties in South Africa, which hardly obtain any substantial votes above the statutory threshold. I find again that delivering distinguished services to one's assigned constituency is linked to the placement of a favourable position on the party list (re-election). In other words, electoral safety is a function of one's constituency popularity.

Thus, while personal vote-seeking may be considered a strategy for systems other than proportional representational systems, South African MPs have a way of honing their popularity and distinguishing themselves through local constituency representation to eventually secure increased chances of re-(s)election. There is, therefore, cross-party agreement on the relevance of constituency service among the representational tasks the MPs undertake. For some of them, constituency work is not only "crucially important", (NFP MP)[93] it is also "very rewarding" (DA MP)[94] and "incredibly blessing" (DA MP)[95].

5.7 Constituency work: A strategy for party reputation building

Various commentators have labelled South African elections as nothing more than racial census (Johnson and Schlemmer, 1996; Lodge, 1999; Mattes, 1995). It is argued that, for most South African voters, racial considerations tend to, more than anything else, influence their voting behaviour. As a result, since the first post-apartheid elections in 1994, African South African voters have predominantly voted for the African National Congress (ANC). In much the same way, non-African voters like European South Africans, Indian South Africans and Coloured South African voters tend to overwhelmingly vote for the Democratic Alliance (DA).

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[93] PA_115: Interview, 16.09.2014, Cape Town
[94] PA_7: Interview, 29.10.2019, Cape Town
[95] PA_23: Interview, 21.09.2015, Cape Town

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Yet, like all voters, racial voting may not be the singular consideration on the table. For many, what parties do, how they behave in government and in opposition are also key factors that may determine voting choices. Many scholars of South African electoral politics have examined this racial versus policy voting hypothesis and argued that the country's voters are particularly motivated by self-interest and not only influenced by racial and other emotional prejudices (Bratton and Mattes, 2003; Mattes and Piombo, 2001). The enormous support the ANC enjoys from the African South African population may therefore be due to the proximity of the party's ideological or policy positions to that of the African South African voters. As such, policy issues matter as much as race does in determining electoral choices and outcomes in South Africa. For the majority of South Africans, the predominant electoral issues over the years since 1994 have centred on unemployment, poverty, health, and education and the salience of these issues are more pronounced in rural but populous provinces like KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape (Kersting, 2009).

As an electoral strategy, South African political parties respond to these electorally relevant issues [of unemployment, poverty, health, and education] by honing their constituency-level activities. They assign parliamentarians to geographical areas across the country to get in touch with the local people towards the solution of their problems at that level. The MPs try to intervene in specific local constituency issues and convey heavier problems back to the plenary for central government's intervention. Constituency attentiveness in South Africa is therefore largely a function of party assignment. On the one hand, parties have the incentive to be seen to be constituency minded for the purposes of appealing to the voter. On the other hand, MPs have the incentive to be seen to be individually constituency-minded owing to re-selection and re-election ambitions. Assigning parliamentarians across the country gives the parties visibility and creates a platform for local engagements, membership recruitments and political campaigning. As mentioned previously, for many of the MPs, constituency work and party work are not mutually exclusive. As a result, through constituency visits, engagements, caseworks and the delivery of basic services, the MP sells the party and recruits members in the process.

> "I work closely with my Councillors and Activists doing party work like door to
> door, info tables, membership drives. I meet with Constituents to discuss their

issues and then drive those issues at a national or provincial level, where necessary"[96].

Political parties in South Africa, therefore, place considerable premium on constituency work as a strategy for the MPs to promote the image of the party in the communities. The parties, therefore, take centre stage in outlining the very content of the constituency work they expect their parliamentarians to roll out. This is to ensure some form of coherence and compliance with the party's overarching constituency programme. The parties use these local-level activities to endear themselves to the voters and thus always ensure that constituency service would be beneficial to its electoral fortunes. For many of the parties, the ANC party, for instance, a special portfolio called "MP Responsible for Constituency Work" is created and headed by a Member of the National Assembly who ensures that constituency work across the country is properly coordinated, supervised and speaks to the party's overall framework.

While it is true that the National Assembly of South Africa votes funds for the establishment of constituency offices, it is also true that political parties themselves consider the building of constituency reputation a good electoral strategy. They therefore utilise constituency service to reach this goal. The importance attached to the establishment of Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs) and the outlining of party-specific frameworks to coordinate and supervise constituency activities demonstrates the relevance of the constituency to the electoral calculation of parties in South Africa.

5.8 Constituency service: A mediated venture

Parliamentary representation in South Africa happens within a complex network of actors and mediators. In the foregone, I have shown that South African parliamentarians spend an incredible amount of resources on constituency service. Constituency effort, I have argued, is also not only a re-(s)election strategy for individual parliamentarians but also a strategy for building local reputation and electoral viability by the country's political parties. But the MPs typically represent their constituencies through layers of local actors who rather

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[96] PA_69: Interview, 07.04.2016, Cape Town

interface with the constituents. Thus, while South African MPs may be present in their Parliamentary Constituency Offices to do surgeries with local individuals and groups, their constituency work generally involves mediated representation. They rather establish or work through local party structures and informal local actors in much of their representational activities.

It is not surprising that an average of 29.8 percent of South Africans claim that their parliamentarians 'never' spend time in the constituency as shown in Figure 5.2. This is against an average of 4.1 percent who think that their MPs spend 'almost all their time' in the constituency. 15 percent of the respondents indicated that their MPs spend time once annually in the constituency, while 14.8 percent think that they do so once monthly. The last category of respondents thinks that their MPs are in the constituency at least once every week.

Figure 5. 2: Time MPSAs spend in their constituencies (%)
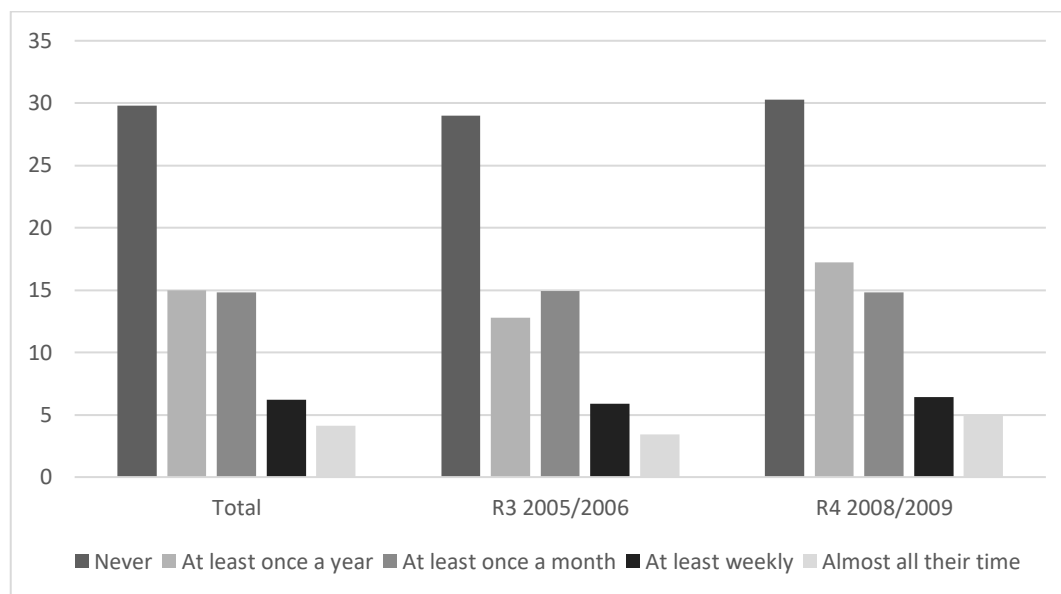
Source: South Africa Afrobarometer, Rounds 3-4

Each MP on the ticket of the ANC, for instance, is encouraged to set up a Constituency Management Committee comprising an Administrator, the ANC local council representatives and the ANC's Alliance organisations. These committees facilitate the MP's constituency work in the local communities. The success or otherwise of the constituency effort of South African MPs largely depends on the effectiveness of the Constituency Management Committees members who essentially implement the MP's constituency

programme. Beyond the Constituency Management Committees, South African MPs also conduct their constituency activities through several actors, including local chiefs, religious leaders, heads of community-based organisations and interest groups, among others. A key character of constituency work in South Africa is, therefore, its mediated character. For this reason, while constituency service is popular among the country's MPs, few voters directly encounter their representatives. Many South Africans therefore rate their MPs poorly on their constituency effort. The impression that constituency interface between MPs and their constituents in the country is low or non-existent is widespread.

Given the nature of constituency service in South Africa [office hours, visits, provision of basic services and parliamentary advocacy], it does not come as a surprise that voters do not seem to be abreast with the constituency effort of their MPs that much. While the constituency style of South African MPs may seem open, they are highly mediated by local political actors. Office hours for instance may put the MP directly at the disposal of constituents who make the effort to get the attention of the MP but not every constituent may visit the Parliamentary Constituency Office (PCO) to ventilate a grievance or a problem. And I show shortly in this chapter that the rest of the constituency styles the MPs display [visits, provision of basic services and parliamentary advocacy] are largely carried out with local party figures or structures such as Constituency Management Committees and informal local authorities like traditional chiefs and leaders of local religious bodies.

Table 5. 3: Frequency of MPSA – Constituent contact (%)

Category	Total	2002/3	2005/6	2008/9	2011/2	2014/15	2017/18
Never	92.7	95.3	93.9	86.3	94.9	95.7	89.8
Only once	3.0	2.4	2.6	5.6	1.7	1.8	3.9
A few times	2.5	1.2	1.8	5.1	1.6	1.6	3.7
Often	0.8	0.3	1.3	2.0	1.1	0.8	1.5
Don't know	1.0	0.8	1.3	2.0	1.1	0.1	1.0
(N)	13815	2400	2400	2400	2399	2388	1,828
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Source: South Africa Afrobarometer, Rounds 2-7

Mediated constituency service, therefore, severs contacts between ordinary voters and their parliamentarians and recast this relationship between the MPs and prominent local party

leaders and informal elites. Contacts between MPs and voters are weak as a result. For example, as shown in Table 5.3, an average of 92.7 percent of South Africans did not have contacts with the parliamentarians in the period between 2002 and 2012. Only a small percentage of 0.8 had frequent contacts with their MPs. 3 percent of the respondents had contacted their MPs 'only once' while 2.5 percent made contacts 'a few times'. This is also not surprising because constituency service in South Africa is often mediated by local figures and structures.

Constituency service in South Africa often begins after parliamentary assignment with visits to local traditional chiefs. Because local areas in South Africa come under traditional authorities, MPs assigned to constituencies start by visiting the traditional leaders in the communities, first for introductory purposes and then to seek their support in running the constituency. Aside from the traditional leaders, assigned MP also often meet with such influential local figures as leaders of religious bodies in the constituency for introduction. The reason is not farfetched; while the traditional leaders 'own' the local communities, the religious leaders control large chunks of congregants. The success or otherwise of the MP is, therefore inseparably linked with the cooperation of these figures:

> "When I was appointed or deployed to this constituency, the first thing we did was to constitute the Constituency Management Committee and then took a decision that we must go and introduce ourselves to the traditional leaders in the area, there are about five traditional leaders in our constituency area so we went to each one of them, introduced ourselves and explained that for the next five years unless something happens, we will be working together and we will want to work with them and we will want them to cooperate with us and where there are suggestions, they must bring them forward"[97]

> "...The usual practice is that when you descend to a constituency office, you first call all chiefs and religious leaders of the area, introduce yourself, because you may not be from where you are deployed, and build relationship. In every event or programme that you have, you need to recognise and invite them"[98].

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[97] SA_17: Interview, 27.02.2020, Cape Town
[98] SA_23: Interview, 14.02.2020, Cape Town

"I have a Constituency Management team and together we drive all the DA political activities in the constituency"[99]

The above quotes do not only summarise the mediated character of constituency service in South Africa but also bring to the fore three important intermediaries in the constituency service chain. First, after MPs are assigned to constituencies, we are told that they form Constituency Management Committees. As I have mentioned earlier, these committees are made up of core party functionaries in the local areas in the constituency. So that local party figures become very crucial in the constituency engagements of parliamentarians in South Africa. Not only that, the MP and the committee proceed to 'introduce' themselves to the traditional leaders in the constituency and indicate to them that they will be 'working together' for the next five years and also solicit for their cooperation and suggestions. The third group of intermediaries the MPs construct informal relations with, prior to the commencement of their constituency work, are leaders of religious bodies in the constituency.

It must be emphasised that the evidence does not show that the first community engagements by MPs in South Africa include the introduction of themselves to the entirety of the people in their constituencies in the form of community durbars or townhall meetings. What they do rather is meet with influential religious leaders, traditional authorities, and local party figures. That effectively places these local actors ahead of the constituency electorates in the organisation of the first constituency activities of newly assigned parliamentarians. The rationale for the seeming neglect of popular constituency voters in the MP's constituency work for the building of relationships rather with influential local actors is the subject of the next chapter.

But most importantly, introductory meetings with local figures prior to the beginning of the MPs' constituency work do not end there. As the quotes suggest, these introductory meetings are meant to usher in long periods of 'relationship building' and to put in place a mechanism where 'suggestions' on the constituency activities of the MPs could flow from the local elites. The MP's constituency activities in the next five years would therefore revolve around these local level actors and not necessarily the local community voters. Whenever they visit

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[99] PA_69: Interview, 07.04.2016, Cape Town

during Constituency Mondays or Constituency Periods, they pay courtesy calls on the traditional leaders, party officials at the branches and influential religious leaders. These informal relations tend to drive the constituency work of parliamentarians in South Africa. Same relations have the potential of cutting out citizens from participating in the MP's constituency work.

From Table 5.4, we realise that, apart from 'office hours', which directly place the MP at the disposal of the constituents, the other constituency styles may happen at the blind side of the constituents – even if those activities are in their interest. It is therefore not surprising that public opinion in South Africa considers MPs far detached from their constituents. Actual informal relations with local party figures in the form of Constituency Management Committees and influential religious and traditional authorities rather become integral in the constituency engagements of MPs in the country. One parliamentarian was emphatic in explaining how informal relations with religious leaders in his constituency work. He talks of how regular their interactions are 'throughout' the electoral term. They do not only wait until election periods to relate with the leaders of religious groups in the constituency. Their relations commence with the first constituency visit[100] where they get introduced and are maintained through their time in office or as long as they remain assigned to that constituency:

> "So, we maintain these relationships throughout… we do not go there [only] during
> elections but like now, we work with religious leaders in my constituency"[101].

The provision of basic developmental projects and services, which is another key constituency style in South Africa, is equally done in 'collaboration' with stakeholders and donors, including the local party, informal traditional leaders and heads of religious bodies. I have argued that both re-selection and re-election in South Africa are largely constituency service dependent. But the MPs may not possess sufficient budgets for massive capital projects in the constituency. They therefore collaborate especially with local actors for donation in the form or cash or most commonly labour. The organisation of labour in many settings requires the involvement of traditional leaders or religious heads (see Baldwin, 2015 for instance). This means that, just like constituency visits, rendering basic services or

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[100] SA_23: Interview, 14.02.2020, Cape Town
[101] SA_17: Interview, 27.02.2020, Cape Town

embarking on constituency developmental projects requires the participation of important local figures and not necessarily the involvement of ordinary constituents.

> "I am working with a number of stakeholders and donors that would help to build a high school in my village, Mnqaba village"[102]

> "They (chiefs) are very helpful because you don't have the mandate to call people. For instance, if I want to talk to people in a particular community, I can't do that without informing the chief. So, you need to build that relationship, so they can call their people for you to talk to them in their presence"[103].

Table 5. 4: Constituency style and focus of South African parliamentarians

Constituency style	Content	Local elites	Constituents
Office hours	Open door hours to interact with the constituents who may have specific issues	Inclusive	Inclusive
Visits	Constituency visits, meetings, outreach, engagements, negotiations, etc	Inclusive	Exclusive
Basic services	Supply of services to constituents, individuals, and groups, lobbying for constituency developmental projects	Inclusive	Exclusive
Parliamentary advocacy	Giving constituency relevant speeches in parliament, asking questions, joining constituency-relevant committees	Exclusive	Exclusive

The centrality of the role of chiefs and other local informal and party actors in mediating parliamentary representation in South Africa cannot be overemphasised. As seen from the above quotes, MPs do not even consider themselves as having the 'mandate' to summon residents of communities in their constituencies to solve social dilemma problems. Either the chief, the Constituency Management Committee or the leaders of local religious bodies must be involved for much of the constituency programmes of South African

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[102] PA_49: Interview, 07.11.2016, Cape Town
[103] SA_23: Interview, 14.02.2020, Cape Town

parliamentarians to see the light of day. This demonstrates the importance of these actors in the constituency activities of MPs.

5.9 Legislative representation in South Africa: A differentiated activity

Post-Apartheid South Africa remains one of the most divided countries in the world. While poverty, crime and disease continue to afflict large proportions of historically disadvantaged South Africans especially in rural areas, a section of the population on the other hand continue to live in affluence and power in urban neighbourhoods. Models of representation rolled out by different legislators are largely reflective of these diverse dynamics. In other words, I find that parliamentary representational choices in the country vary along rural-urban lines.

Additionally, the electoral context within which the MPs find themselves equally affect their representational choices. Although recent elections have seen the ANC making huge concessions to opposition parties in many of the areas it controls, the party still enjoys lots of goodwill from the median South African voter. This is especially so in the non-coastal provinces of Free State, Mpumalanga, and Northern Cape. MPs finding themselves on the lists from these provinces are more likely to return to the National Assembly than those on the list of the DA-controlled Western Cape, for instance. Top placements on the party lists in strongholds tend to evince more universalistic representation. In other words, the MPs' electoral context largely has a determinative effect on their choice of representational focus.

5.9.1 Rural-urban determinants of representational foci

The strategy of representation that MPs in South African adopt is found to be dependent, to a large extent, on the degree of complexity of their assigned geographic constituency. I first partitioned the MPs into two categories by distinguishing between those who represent rural constituencies and those representing urban constituencies. As done in the case of Ghana in Chapter Four, the same strategy employed by Richard Fenno (Fenno, 1978) was used here. I arrived at a [rural–urban] categorisation of the constituencies in South Africa by 'seeing' through the MPs themselves how they 'see' their constituencies. This is done by directly asking them to describe the key characteristics of their assigned constituencies and by further

finding out whether they themselves conceive of the constituency as rural or urban[104]. I coded the responses using the keywords and phrases they used in the description of their constituencies. The same coding strategy was applied to the PMG data. I looked for key features that make a constituency either urban or rural in the responses from the MPs. The rural constituencies are mostly made of small-scale farming communities, mono-ethnic societies, low population densities, slums and so on, as shown in Table 5.5. Urban constituencies, on the other hand, are usually international, host big universities, have large businesses, dense population, among others.

Table 5. 5: Rural-Urban distinction of the representational activities of SA MPs

Constituency type	MPs' Self-description of Constituency	Examples of main areas of focus of representatives
Rural	Mono-ethnic, Township, poverty, agricultural and horticultural communities, low population, detachment from big cities, Slums, and informal settlements within cities	Tackling unemployment, social exclusion, rural electrification, constructing football pitches, donation to especially schools and hospitals, road infrastructure, construction works, housing, attendance to public functions and events, allocation or donations to individuals or groups, water and sewage problems etc.
Urban	International, multi-ethnic, Students' enclave, Central Business District (CBD), youthful population, dense population, affluence, immigration	Performance monitoring of government and party structures, portfolio committee work, party caucus assignments, assistance with civil procedures, etc.

Source: Field interview/ PMG PA project

MPs in South Africa who perceive their constituencies to be rural, poor, deprived and disadvantaged deploy sufficiently distinct representational styles from those who represent urban, affluent and wealthier suburbs. In rural areas, the MPs focus more on allocational and

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[104] See Chapter Four for more

service-oriented aspects of their representational obligations. One MP representing a rural constituency had this to tell me:

> "(…) If I am not mistaken, I am the country's foremost expert in labour law and related issues. The party specifically designated me to serve the informal settlements of (*name of village withheld*) and its contagious areas as well as (*name of village withheld*) to assist with the growing problem of youth unemployment and underemployment. I spend most of my time in (*name of village withheld*) because that is where I do the hardest amount of work and I am pretty excited about that. There are a lot of small businesses in (*name of village withheld*) and I am busy helping them seeing how they can overcome some of the labour laws and bad regulations which are holding them back from becoming big businesses in the future".[105]

Figure 5. 3: Representational foci and MPs' background (%)
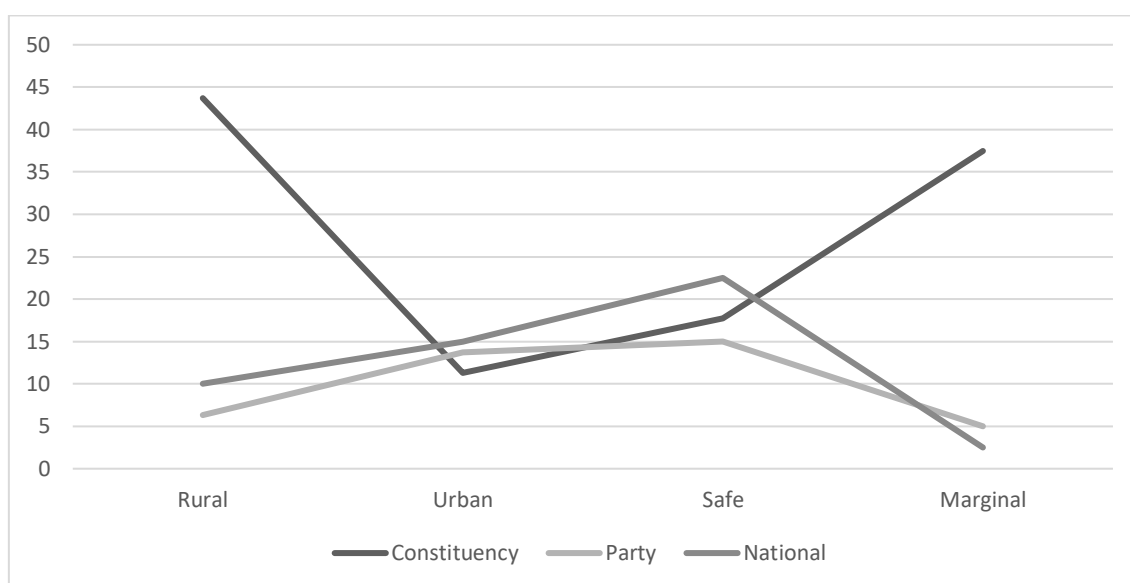
Source: Field interviews/ PA dataset

I find that an assignment to a rural constituency invariably implies an overt instruction for constituency attentiveness. While more than 4 out of every 10 MPs from rural constituencies commit to constituency work, as shown in Figure 5.3, only a little over 1 in every 10 MPs from urban constituencies commit to constituency representation. MPs who are assigned to

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[105] PA_1: Interview, 18.02.2020, Cape town

urban areas rather commit more to the party (13.7%) or activities inside parliament (15%). While a distinction between the activities of South African MPs can be a straightforward exercise, there is phenomenal fuzziness in the lines between the two categories of MPs and their work. As shown in Table 5.5, rural MPs tend to deal more with such issues as unemployment, allocation, among others, while their counterparts representing urban constituencies place a comparatively little premium on these local-level issues. The MPs overlap considerably as urban MPs show bits of constituency effort while rural MPs do not also exclusively concern themselves with local representation.

5.9.2 Rank effects on representational foci

Apart from the rural-urban divide, another key source of variation in the representational focus of parliamentarians in South Africa is the degree of electoral safety. I found that the display of parliamentary focus is more popular with senior legislators as well those who hold institutional positions in the legislature than the relatively new MPs. Chairpersons of portfolio committees, caucus leaders and whips, for instance, tend to focus less on constituency representation than the relatively junior and new members. These experienced group of parliamentarians also tend to occupy top positions on their party's lists. They enjoy a certain degree of electoral security, given their prominence to both the party and the National Assembly. In most cases across parties, lots of these prominent individual MPs receive double nominations both on the National lists as well as the Provincial lists for ultimate electoral safety. Parties like the African National Congress (ANC) also tend to isolate senior and experienced MPs and, in some cases, members like wars veterans for higher ranking in a compensatory fashion and thus, special electoral protection[106].

South Africa operates one of the world's most permissive electoral systems. Competing political parties have to cross as little as 0.25 percent (a quarter of 1%) threshold to secure representation in the National Assembly (Ferree, 2018). Whereas the 'hoped-for' effect of such a perfect proportional[107] electoral system tend to be high level multipartyism and consensual democracy, South Africa still reels under the dominance of the African National

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[106] SA_24: Interview, 15.02.2020, Cape Town
[107] The term perfect proportionality as a description of South Africa's electoral system was borrowed form Gouws and Mitchell (2005:353).

Congress party. Every post-apartheid election since 1994 has produced an overwhelming victory for the ANC. Although recent results have consistently shown a decline in the vote share of the ANC (for instance, a decline from 62.15% in 2014 to 57.5 % five years later in 2019), the party still possess a stranglehold over electoral politics in South Africa.

The ANC's dominance on the one hand and the presence of many small, electorally not-so-significant parties on the other hand [save for the DA and recently the EFF] makes a uniform measurement of electoral safety for individual parliamentarians in South Africa cumbersome. For instance, a candidate in the ANC ranked 80th on the ANC's national list may be still much electorally safer than a candidate ranked similarly on the list of the Democratic Alliance (DA) party. This is because the DA barely wins anything substantially above the region of 80 seats. Such a uniform comparison even gets complicated when parties like the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) or the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) are added to the analysis. This is due to the limited number of seats they garner in the National Assembly. However, for the purposes of this analysis, a standardised thread is useful to appreciate the variation in the representational focus of MPs whose electoral circumstances differ. A candidate is therefore conceptualised as safe when she is, by virtue of her ranking on the party list, fully secured and assured of re-election. Candidates occupying the top 20 percent of the party-list will be deemed to be sufficiently electorally safe to be elected to the next parliament.

Table 5. 6: Rank ordering/electoral safety

Party	Share of seats		Top 20% on the 2014 list	Top 20% on the 2019 list
	2014	2019		
ANC	249	230	at least 50th rank	at least 46th rank
DA	89	84	at least 18th rank	at least 16th rank
EFF	25	44	at least 5th rank	at least 9th rank

As shown in Table 5.6, all candidates on the ticket of the ANC for the 2014 election who were ranked 1 to the 50th position will be considered electorally safe for the purposes of this analysis. Equally for the 2019 election, due to the reduction in the ANC's votes share and, consequently, its number of seats, the electoral safety mark reduces to at least the 46th position. What this means is that candidates ranked 47th and above are not counted as safe in the analysis. The same procedure applies to the Democratic Alliance (DA) party. Only

candidates who were ranked 18th and 16th or below in the 2014- and 2019-party list respectively were counted in the analysis to be electorally safe. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) has gained a lot of electoral attention in South Africa since its first elections in 2014. Gaining 44 seats in 2019, only candidates who occupied the top 9 positions on the party list were included in the analysis to be electorally safe.

Rank ordering of candidates by the political parties affects the representational choices the MPs make. As I mentioned previously, experienced MPs, members of the executives or chairs and whips of committees who tend to be highly ranked also tend to get less involved in constituency related activities. On the contrary, marginal candidates show more preference for and demonstrate more constituency efforts. As shown in Figure 5.3, 37.5 percent of them spend more time on constituency work than they do on parliamentary or party work. The MPs who fall outside the electoral safety bracket yet prioritise nationwide representation in the parliamentary arena and party representation account for only 2.5 percent and 5.0 percent, respectively. The evidence suggests that electoral safety provides the incentive for more parliamentary work (22.5 percent) as shown in Figure 5.3. This may be because the individual legislator's representational behaviour is expected to have little effect on electoral outcomes.

This also tells us that South African MPs respond to their electoral vulnerability by building constituency reputation. MPs falling outside the top 20 percent safe region show stronger constituency focus. Interesting however is the 17.7 percent MPs who are electorally safe yet demonstrate a preference for constituency work. This means that the mechanism underlying the effect of ranking on representational choices is not primarily related to electoral incentive; it is also mediated by district features as shown in Figure 5.4. Rural MPs ranked within the top 20 percent still find more incentives for constituency work, notwithstanding their electoral safety. They tend to respond to constituency-specific pressures emanating from local patrons and elites:

> "If you have a bad relationship or you are an enemy to members of the executives, you might find yourself in a situation where you are at the wrong end of their decisions"[108].

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[108] PA_28: Interview, 12.02.2020, Cape Town

This quote highlights the relevance of local-level actors in the representational decisions of parliamentarians in South Africa. Even the most electorally safe MPs still have to build and maintain local level networks and hence get involved in constituency work. Another MP representing a rural constituency probably puts this better:

> "Unless you are sure that your constituency assignment will change in the future, you are better taking the counsel of the chiefs in the constituency. We have four traditional rulers in my area at (*name of constituency withheld*) in Mpumalanga … and they always have keen interest in the affairs of the people. That makes also them interested in the affairs of my office and how passionately we serve the people"[109].

Figure 5. 4: Crossed background characteristics and representational foci (%)
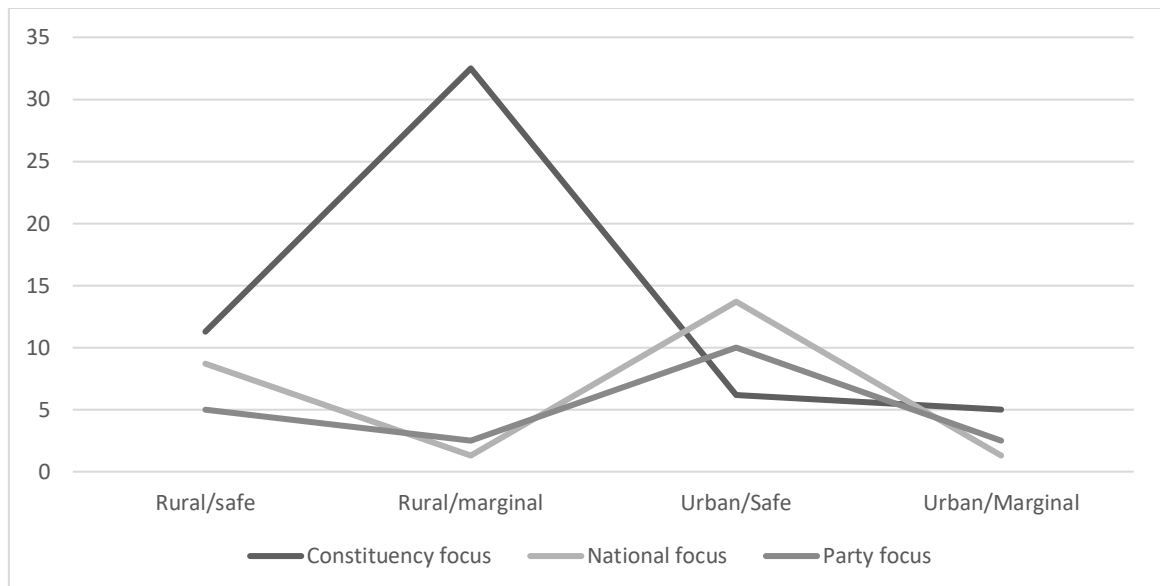
Source: Field interviews/ PA dataset

The evidence, therefore, suggests that being electorally safe and at the same time representing a rural constituency provides no insulation from constituency work given the presence of and pressure for constituency focus from party and informal elites in the constituency. In Figure 5.4, rural/safe MPSAs still do more constituency work (11%) than parliamentary (8.7%) and party work (5.0%). The enormous political clout and influence the local elites possess is what provides the incentive for rural MPs, notwithstanding their electoral safety, to show priority

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[109] PA_67: Interview, 12.12.2014, Cape Town

for local constituency representation. This informal relationship of demand and supply of parliamentary representation for MPs differently circumstanced both geographically and electorally is the subject of the next chapter.

5.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that, in spite of the expectations connected with South Africa electoral system, historical legacies and clientelism profile; constituency service is a dominant focus of the country's parliamentarians. It will be recalled that the first post-apartheid election in South Africa in 1994 was striking in many respects. Aside from being the first non-racial election that allowed for universal adult suffrage, the majoritarian electoral system that elected representatives to parliament for several decades was replaced with the closed-list proportional representation system. This institutional arrangement was to have several effects. First, the number of effective competing political parties in the country was expected to increase. This was to eventually ensure that hitherto silenced voices found expression in the new political dispensation. Most importantly, electing MPs with closed party lists aimed to concentrate political representation around political parties. This would provide incentives for party-centred parliamentary representation.

Again, South Africa is a former settler colony. As such, it is expected to possess all the trappings of a strong legislative institution with MPs that prioritise internal parliamentary activities. Lastly, as the most urbanised and advanced industrial economy in Africa, political competition in South Africa is largely devoid of the usual electoral clientelistic transactions between parliamentarians and voters that exist elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa. The limited pervasiveness of clientelistic demands from constituents is expected to free up the MPs in South Africa to concentrate on more collective functions either in parliament or in the party. The institutional, historical and structural context of South Africa is therefore conducive for parliamentarians to prioritise any other form of representation than local constituency representation.

However, in this chapter, I have shown that, South African parliamentarians spend an incredible amount of resources attending to constituency issues. The MPs spend every Monday on constituency work, mostly in their Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs) and vote several additional days in the year to the service of their constituencies. The Parliament of South Africa allocates more than 40 percent of its working days to

constituency service on the average against 29 and 27 percent for plenary and committee meetings respectively.

I have also demonstrated that direct MP-Constituents contacts are low due to the constituency styles South African MPs adopt. This is not to be misconstrued as a demonstration of weak constituency effort as actual constituency engagements largely excludes constituency participation. Constituency work in South Africa is done through local agents such as local party officials, traditional authorities and religious leaders.

The chapter highlighted the motivation behind the popularity of constituency service in South Africa. Although elected on closed lists, political parties encourage the building of personal reputation as a benchmark for making branch nominations and finally to occupying favourable positions on the party list. For many of the MPs, a good relationship with local party figures and informal elites at the grassroots through a distinguished constituency performance is one of the means of reputation building for re(s)election. Parties in South Africa also employ constituency presence and activeness as an electoral strategy. They therefore tend to reward MPs who demonstrate constituency productivity with higher positions on the list.

The degree to which South African MPs show constituency effort is dependent on both their geographical and electoral contexts. MPs who perceive their constituencies to be rural, deploy distinct representational styles from those who represent urban constituencies. In rural areas, MPs focus more on the allocational and service-oriented aspects of their representational obligations. Universalistic and party representation however dominate among MPs representing urban constituencies. Again, the display of universalistic focus is more popular for senior legislators as well as those who hold institutional positions in the legislature than relatively new MPs. This implies that portfolio committee chairs, caucus leaders and whips tend to focus less on constituency representation than the relatively junior and new members. Coincidentally, these experienced group of parliamentarians tend to occupy top positions on their party's lists. They enjoy a certain degree of electoral security, given their prominence to both the party and the National Assembly.

CHAPTER SIX

A CASE FOR LOCALNESS: COMPARISON OF LOCAL ACTORS AND CONSTITUENCY FOCUS IN GHANA AND SOUTH AFRICA

"In a situation where a chief chooses to endorse you, 80% of his subjects are likely to vote for the [endorsed] political party" - Anonymized ANC Member of Parliament, South Africa.

"An eligible voter on my land who makes an attempt to vote for the MP for the area would be banished…. Any radio station that grants him interview or even airplay will be forced to close down. If his posters are found on your walls, house or structure, you will also be summoned to the palace for further action to be taken" - Nana Boakye Yiadom, Sub-Chief and Spokesperson for the Atebubu Traditional Area.

"I will not be the MP. You pastors, you the ministers of God will be the MPs of this constituency. It is you, the pastors, who share the obligation. You must mentor me, teach me, and call me back if I am not fulfilling my mandate. If I fail, it's the failure of you pastors. It's the failure of the Church" - Nii Lantey Vanderpuye, NDC MP.

"The Pope recommends that Catholics and Marshallans should seek to enter politics and do better politics and use politics to evangelize the temporary world" - Most Rev. Matthew Kwasi Gyamfi, The Catholic Bishop of Sunyani.

6.1 Introduction: A tale of the 'rejected' and 'endorsed' MPs

The previous two chapters have highlighted variations in the representational foci and activities of legislators in Ghana and South Africa. Nevertheless, providing services to constituents was found to dominate among the varying set of representational activities the MPs engage in. Members of the South Africa National Assembly, for instance, commit to constituency representation when there ought to be minimal electoral payoffs for territorial representation, at least as hypothesised in the mainstream literature on legislative representation. On the contrary, under Ghana's First-Past-the-Post electoral system, although constituency servants equally dominate, there are also legislators whose main priority is on party or state-wide representation. Meanwhile, theoretically speaking, representing entities outside the electoral district should provide minimal electoral profit for MPs elected under First-Past-the-Post electoral systems. Why then would the MPs bother

focusing on representational activities that bring in little reward? Are there any interactions between electoral incentives and context that better explain why representational behaviour in these contexts confound theoretical expectations?

Recall in the previous chapters that legislative representation in both South Africa and Ghana is highly mediated and elite-centred. In both countries, representational activities are vastly embedded in informal local networks. Thus, rather than representing voters directly, MPs in Ghana and South Africa focus more on building relations of power and reciprocity with influential informal local actors like traditional chiefs and leaders of religious bodies. Not only that, local party officials also tend to be central in the representational activities of the legislators. But if legislators are elected directly by popular votes in Ghana and by party lists in South Africa, then which factors underlie the dominance of a [few] local actors in the representational activities of the legislators [instead of, and perhaps at the expense of, the very voters and parties that elect them?] To answer this question and to put the discussions in this chapter into perspective, I begin with a 'tale of two' Ghanaian legislators.

The 'rejected' MP - On 3rd April 2016, the Traditional Council of the Atebubu Traditional Area in Ghana issued a statement banning the sitting Member of Parliament of the Atebubu-Amantin constituency from campaigning in the area. The Honourable Sanja Nanja was also proscribed from either visiting the chief's palace or engaging with the Traditional Council. The Paramount Chief (Omanhene) and his Sub-Chiefs again threatened to boycott any event organised by the government if the embattled MP was present (Adu-Gyamerah, 2016). Additionally, the chiefs impressed on all eligible voters in the Traditional Area not to vote for the MP or in defiance, face banishment (Dayee, 2016). As if this was not enough, any Traditional Leader, Sub-Chief or Village Headman (Odikro) who defied the [campaign ban] directive was to be deposed from office (destooled). The media was not spared. Granting airtime to the MP was to attract an immediate closure of the radio station in question. The ban was the punishment the MP was to face for bringing the name of the Queen mother of the Traditional Area into disrepute. To add an official seal to the ban, the chiefs openly sacrificed a sheep to signify its enforcement. A sub-chief (the Nsumankwaa hene) explained that "the sacrificing of the sheep [was] to purify their stools, the gods of the land and also ban Sanja Nanja from campaigning on our land for disrespecting the Queen mother" (Asare-Donkoh, 2019).

Expectedly, the MP could not survive the ban. He lost the seat to the opposition New Patriotic Party's (NPP) candidate. This was the first time the National Democratic Congress (NDC) lost that seat. To be sure, the constituency had traditionally been safe for the party both in presidential and parliamentary elections since its creation in 2003. The chiefs made it clear that they were not against the NDC as a political party but rather the parliamentary candidature of the Honourable Sanja Nanja. As a result, the party's presidential candidate won the presidential race in the constituency, but Sanja Nanja lost the parliamentary election. The defeat shows the effect of the campaign ban on the MP's re-election.

The 'endorsed' MP - In the same election in 2016 at the Akwatia constituency, the Chief of Akyem Okumaning; Osabarima Adu Gyamfi III, openly endorsed the candidature of the New Patriotic Party's (NPP) Mercy Adu Gyamfi and entreated all his subjects to vote for her. He lamented over how the votes of the electorates in his area had not been accompanied by the benefits and developmental interventions they deserved. This time, he stepped up his endorsement and overtly entreated the people under his jurisdiction "to change things and not be static about how [they] vote to elect [their] leaders" (Daily Guide, 2016). His endorsement did not end there. Several other chiefs followed suit. Prominent amongst them were the chief of Aboabo, the chief of Apraku and several Queen mothers. The chiefs took centre stage in the campaign in the various villages, broadcasting the capacity of the NPP candidate to deliver the needed developmental programmes in the constituency (Daily Guide, 2016).

It must be emphasised that the NPP's candidate, Mercy Adu Gyamfi, came into the parliamentary contest with several electoral disadvantages. First, she had been widely publicised as an illiterate hairdresser who lacked the requisite English language competence to follow and contribute meaningfully to proceedings in parliament (Ghanaweb, 2020b). She was also criticised as being an underdog and a political neophyte with no clout to lobby for development projects to the constituency. While these criticisms could have ordinarily affected her chances of unseating the incumbent MP, who was an astute Lawyer, a deputy minister and a prominent member of the NDC, the exact contrary happened. She won! Among other things, the wide endorsements by the traditional authorities in the constituency may have neutralised the political disadvantages she carried, culminating in her electoral victory.

Open political endorsements and rejections of parliamentary candidates by traditional leaders and other influential local figures are commonplace in Africa (see Baldwin, 2015; Gottlieb and Larreguy, 2016; Gyampo, 2008; Paller, 2014). In Malawi, for instance, politicians are quick to post pictures and videos of themselves with influential chiefs to signal the latter's endorsement (Baldwin, 2015). The story is not different in Senegal. To gain electoral advantage, candidates often seek photo opportunities with influential kingmakers, put out pictures of their visits to local religious leaders and advertise public endorsements to bait voters (Mark and Ba, 2012). In South Africa, videos of 'prophesies' by local preachers forecasting impending electoral victories for parliamentary candidates are frequently circulated before elections (Nkanjeni, 2019). Across many African democracies, political endorsements and rejections of candidates by informal local actors often carry lots of electoral weight on the voting population. Why is that so? Why do voters get swayed by the endorsements of their chiefs or religious leaders when casting their ballots? Are there any variations in the degree of influence chiefs or religious leaders wield over voters? If so, what accounts for these variations? Again, how and to what extent does the influence over voting decisions make chiefs and religious leaders equally influential over the endorsed parliamentarians' post-election behaviour?

In this chapter, my preoccupation is twofold. First, I discuss the role and relevance of local political actors in shaping electoral outcomes in Ghana and South Africa. By local political actors[110], reference is particularly made to traditional chiefs, religious leaders, and branch/polling station and constituency officials of political parties. Secondly, and related to the first, I discuss how the leverage over voting decisions by local actors empower them to exert control over the post-election representational choices of legislators. To do this, I set out to answer the following questions:

1. What exactly is the role of local political actors in the election of legislators in Africa?
2. How do institutional and contextual factors interact to systematically explain the influence of local elites over electoral decisions of voters?

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[110] This is used interchangeably with local elites, local actors

3. What explains the extent of influence local actors have over the representational choices of legislators?

The rest of the chapter proceeds as follows. In the next section, I outline the central arguments and methods driving the chapter. I then proceed to discuss the modern political roles of traditional chiefs, local party elites and religious leaders in Ghana and South Africa. I do so by paying particular attention to the nature and the extent of influence they wield over voters and how this influence differs within and across contexts – geographically and electorally. This is followed by a discussion of MP – local elites' relationships in Ghana and South Africa, how they are constructed and what explanations underlie the dependency/reciprocal relationships between the two. This enables us to appreciate how legislators differently circumstanced contextually display varying levels of dependency and/or obligation towards local elites in response to the quest for re(s)election and how this ambition influences their representational choices – mainly towards constituency representation.

6.2 Argument and methods

I demonstrate how and the extent to which local political elites determine the course of legislative representation in predictable ways in weak and soft state contexts. A state is weak and soft when its formal institutions are fragile, underdeveloped and largely incapable of constraining and enabling political behaviour. Weak states are characterised by governments that are not only frail but also face hegemony and legitimacy challenges. Such hegemonic difficulties could consequently strip weak states of the capacity and autonomy to exercise firm control over society and eliminate internal competing claims of legitimacy. The concept of state weakness usually, therefore, comes with connotations like illegitimacy, lack of transparency, unaccountable political institutions, the rule of man instead of law, physical insecurity, among others.

A state may be conceptualised as weak not only in political terms but also in socioeconomic and security terms. As discussed in Chapter Three[111], economically, the concept

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[111] For a complete discussion on the concepts of weak and soft state, see also Joel Migdal (1988); Goran Hydén (2013); Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg (1982b); Rice and Patrick (2008).

encompasses the inability of states to deliver sustainable economic growth, redistribute income equitably and enact binding policies that engineer private sector development (Rice and Patrick, 2008). In terms of security, a state may be weak and soft if it is unable to protect its citizens against violent conflicts and gross human rights abuses. A state is again weak if it is either unwilling or incapable of serving the social welfare needs of its citizens in the form of nutrition, access to quality and affordable healthcare, education, clean water, among several others (Rice and Patrick, 2008).

I argue in this chapter that, in contexts where the state is weak and soft, informal institutions like patronage and personal networks, religion, and traditional forms of authority usually step in as relevant substitutes to state power. In many parts of Africa, the state is not only weak and soft but also unwilling or lacks the capacity to control society and supply such basic collective goods as law and order, basic infrastructure and social welfare needs (Hydén, 2013; Jackson and Rosberg, 1982b; William, 2010). Consequently, in many parts of Africa, informal actors like traditional chiefs, religious leaders and local party elites have been integral in the performance of such [otherwise central or local government] functions as healthcare provision, safety and security, welfare, registration of births, deaths and customary marriages, arts and culture, land administration, justice delivery, among a host of others (Crook, 2005; Haag, 2017; Shale, 2017). The weakness of the African state in providing these services ends up casting informal providers of similar services in a legitimate light in the minds of voters (LiPuma and Koelble 2009; Williams 2010).

State weakness and softness (*scope conditions 1 and 2 in Figure 6.1*) therefore create a platform for local informal elites and institutions to assert themselves by accommodating and addressing the gaps and lapses created by the state. This is especially the case in rural areas where local government structures are either absent or ineffective in responding to local community issues (Bratton, 2010). By filling in for the state, local elites gain performance legitimacy and moral credibility that enables them to accumulate resources and followers to hone their political/electoral bargaining power (*Argument 1 in Figure 6.1*). The state-substitution role and functional effectiveness of the informal local elites eventually leave voters structurally dependent on them. Voters rely on them not only for the delivery of services but also as pressure channels (Lindberg, 2010) to demand performance efficiency from their elected representatives (*Explanation 1 in Figure 6.1*).

Figure 6. 1: How leverage over voting decisions affect representational choices

Scope condition 1

Argument 2
Control over voting decisions enables local elites to the shape the representational choices of MPs

Explanation 1
-Channel is more effective
-Requires less effort
-Delivers community result

MP
(Q)

Local elite
(R)

Voter
(S)

Explanation 2
-Channel is less costly
-Requires less effort
-Delivers bloc votes

Argument 1
Functional effectiveness enables local elites to shape voter decisions

Scope condition 2

Source: Author's illustration

Informal local elites are, consequently, able to exploit this local dependence electorally by either endorsing or rejecting parliamentary candidates while expecting voters to vote along. Leverage over voters is the ability of an elite to make proposals to electorates in respect of which candidate to vote for and ensure or threaten compliance. In the context of weak and soft states, local elites' leverage over voting decisions is derived from the important role they play in the community in the absence of an effective state. Voters become structurally dependent on alternative institutions like chieftaincy, religion, and patronage structures to access many essential services. The functional effectiveness of the informal elites is what clothes them with an electorally significant fund of followers who may consider their opinions before voting (see Baldwin, 2015). These local elites consequently become very important vote brokers in their communities, whose support and endorsement re-election seeking parliamentarians must always court.

But as to be expected, the influence of traditional chiefs, local preachers and local party officials in brokering votes for parliamentary candidates varies enormously. Their abilities largely depend on (1) the moral and performance credibility they wield and (2) the degree of structural dependence of local voters on them. Voters are more likely to be influenced by elites who demonstrate overtime credibility in providing services that should otherwise have been delivered by the state. Their influence, however, does not terminate at the level of the voter. Where they enjoy 'performance and moral credibility' and consequently succeed in influencing voters' decisions, they tend to additionally wield incredible leverage over MPs' representational choices (*Argument 2 in Figure 6.1*).

This assumption takes inspiration from the electoral incentive argument I laid out in the third chapter of this dissertation. Parliamentarians are assumed to seek re-election as a proximate goal, as Mayhew observed in 1974. They, therefore, tune the activities they engage in and pursue those ones that yield the ultimate goal of re-election. One way of doing this is by paying close attention to the demands and preferences of relevant gatekeepers in their electoral context on whom their electoral success may largely depend (*Explanation 2 in Figure 6.1*). And local elites are critical vote brokers who can leverage their performance and functional credibility in weak states to influence voting decisions. My argument, therefore, is that, in contexts where formal rules are weak, non-state forms of authority emerge with more elaborate weight on the re(s)election chances of MPs. This is because voters become reliant on clues from local influencers before casting their ballot.

If MPs are seekers of re(s)election, then we would expect them to have the incentive to align with influential local elites and work through them (*channel Q – R – S in Figure 6.1*) for re(s)election purposes. The local elites are then able to use their local political influence to impress upon parliamentarians to roll out styles and foci of representation that are in sync with local interest (*Argument 2 in Figure 6.1*). This implies that local elites influence the representational choices of legislators by exploiting the legislators' own self-interest of re(s)election. And as Baldwin (2015) observed, since their very well-being and the development of the local communities in which they live are interconnected, we would expect the local elites to disproportionately demand more constituency development from the MPs. Due to their prominence to the career of Members of Parliament, local elites are able to induce parliamentarians to prioritise constituency service disproportionately over other aspects of the MPs' job. Their success in this bargain resides strongly in their ability

to utilise promises of future electoral rewards or punishments to shape MPs' behavioural choices. This alternative framework thus prioritises the presence and relative strength of informal local political institutions and elites as explanatory variables for the representational foci legislators adopt in Africa.

To analyse the electoral role of local elites and observe how they influence the representational choices of legislators empirically, I compare MPs in South Africa and Ghana. The two cases are most appropriate for the comparison because both are (1) structurally and historically different, as discussed in the introductory chapter and in Table 6.1 below. Notwithstanding these differences, (2) parliamentarians in both countries prioritise constituency service more than party and state-wide representation. Additionally, (3) legislative representation in both countries is conducted through intermediaries who are usually local party officials and influential informal figures like traditional chiefs and leaders of local religious groups. These characteristics help us to investigate how the presence and influence of the local elites contribute to the prioritisation of constituency service[112].

Given the dissimilarities in the contexts in which South African and Ghanaian MPs are embedded despite similarities in the dependent variable [the representational foci], I employed Mill's Method of Agreement to draw conclusions on the relationship between the presence of influential local elites in MPs' electoral context in both countries and the representational choices they make. The analysis isolates four key factors that affect MPs' representational priority. As discussed in Chapter Two and summarised in Table 6.1, the following variables have been widely hypothesised as causing MPs to prioritise either party, state-wide or local constituency representation: x_1: electoral system variables (André and Depauw, 2013; Carey and Shugart, 1995; Shugart et al., 2005; Sieberer, 2006), x_2: candidate selection mechanism (Hazan, 2014; Rahat, 2007), x_3: colonial legacy (Alabi, 2009; Thomas and Sissokho, 2005; Barkan, 2009a; Le Vine, 1979; Opalo, 2019) and x_4: resource constraint and political clientelism (Blaydes, 2011; Jensen and Justesen 2014; Kao et al., 2017). While explanatory factors x_1 to x_4 differ across the two cases, x_5 shows presence in both. This enables us to draw conclusions on the effects of x_5 on the popularity of constituency service for MPs in both cases.

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[112] For a complete discussion on the criteria for case selection, see Chapter One

Table 6. 1: Possible explanations for representational behaviour in Africa

Case	Institutional Design		Colonial legacy	Resource constraint	Local elites	Focus of representation
	Electoral System (x1)	Candidate Selection (x2)	(x3)	(x4)	(x5)	
South Africa	**Closed-list proportional representation:** Parties prepare and submit ranked lists of candidates to the Independent Electoral Commission. Although the parties may advertise the list prior to voting, the ballot contains no name but only the name of the party and symbols and sometimes the photo of the leader. Seats gained in the National Assembly are proportional to vote share.	**Hybrid selection:** Inclusive ward-based Provincial lists balanced with exclusive national party-list. Parties divide the compilation of the list for the 400 seats in the National Assembly equally between the nine provinces (200) and the National party (200).	**Settler colony**: The arrival of Europeans in large numbers in 1652 led to the establishment of a settler colony in the Cape region. Political institutions, including legislatures, encouraged the participation of the settlers and expected to be more focused on intra-parliamentary work	**Non-clientelistic:** Politics is devoid of the usual clientelistic politics in the rest of Africa. This is supposed to free up space for MPs to concentrate on parliamentary work	**Present and influential:** Traditional chiefs, the clergy and local party officials are present and exert considerable political influence	Constituency
Ghana	**Majoritarian (First-Past-The-Post):** Parties present their candidates to be voted on by the electorates. Pictures and party symbols of the competing candidates appear on the ballot. Candidates represent single member geographically demarcated constituencies. Candidates winning a simple majority of the votes get the nod to represent in parliament	**Exclusive:** Constituency level party delegates drawn from polling stations or branch level officials as well as constituency executives vote in party primaries to select parliamentary candidates for the party	**Non-settler:** The quasi-institution of parliament (LegCo) was formed in 1850 but remained an advisory council with no legislative powers. They remained so after independence. Circumstances of its formation and function is supposed to entrench institutional weakness	**Clientelistic:** The issuance of clientelistic handouts is a prominent feature of political competition. MPs tend to commit time and resources to maintaining clientelistic relations	**Present and influential:** Traditional chiefs, the clergy and local party officials are present and exert considerable political influence	Constituency

Source: Author's compilation from Ferree (2018); Afrobarometer; Barkan (2009a); Alabi (2009)

In outlining the mechanism that underlies the influence of local actors over the representational choices of legislators, I put the MPs in South Africa and Ghana into two categories; those who represent rural constituencies and those who represent urban constituencies. I have argued that the relevance of traditional chiefs, religious leaders as well as local party officials on parliamentary representation vary across geographical contexts, as discussed in Chapters Four and Five. I have also argued that the bargaining power of local elites takes its source from their relevance in the community. So that, the political power they are able to accumulate in order to exert influence on legislators equally differs along the lines of their societal relevance. And state institutions are more ineffective or absent in rural than in urban areas (Logan, 2011). With these, I expect local informal elites to play a substitution role, build a strong power base and influence parliamentary representation more in rural than in urban areas.

Parliamentarians also vary regarding their electoral context. While some represent very safe electoral constituencies or occupy comfortable places on their party's lists, others are electorally vulnerable by representing competitive constituencies. In Ghana's simple majoritarian, Single Member Constituencies (SMC), a constituency is coded as 'safe' when the same political party has won that seat for four consecutive times, counting from the 2008 elections. For South Africa's PR system, a candidate is safe if she occupies the top 20 percent of the party list. In safe electoral constituencies, the individual legislator's representational behaviour has minimal effects on electoral outcomes. Parliamentarians in such contexts are therefore less motivated to develop a reputation within the constituency and thus focus more on either universal/national or partisan/party. On the other hand, MPs representing marginal electoral districts or those ranked low on the party list respond to their electoral vulnerability by showing a strong constituency focus.

Methodologically, the chapter relies on multiple datasets. I conducted a total of fifty-five (55) interviews with MPs in South Africa and Ghana. The interviews bothered on three principal topics: (1) the main type of actors, groups, programmes, or entities the MPs attends to outside the parliamentary precincts in Cape Town and Accra and especially in the constituency upon visiting. In other words, their main points of call in the constituency, why they are relevant, and how they describe their relationship with those contacts (2) the electoral significance of the actors, groups, or entities mentioned in 1 above, especially those in the constituency and (3) how the MPs campaign during primaries or general elections and

whether voters get influenced by the endorsements, support, backing or validations of local political elites. The conversational nature of the interviews led to the discussion of several related and equally important sub-topics. I also rely on rich and copious data collected by the Parliamentary Monitoring Group's People's Assembly (PA) project. I finally rely on the Afrobarometer dataset to gauge voters' perception on (1) the role of informal local elites against formal government structures in the local community (2) membership of religious bodies (3) popularity of informal local elites (4) the comparative levels of trust Africans have in the community and political leadership (5) contacts with informal local elites and political leaders among others.

6.3 Informal institutions and actors: role, context and variations

What exact roles do chiefs, religious leaders and local party elites play in contemporary African democracies? What are the variations and similarities across space in their structural composition, power and roles in Africa? I show in this section that informal institutions and actors vary in terms of power and influence both within and across African democracies. Discussing their roles, therefore, requires an understanding of their nature and differences within the dissimilar contexts they function. The intention here is to caution against the use of one brush to paint the roles of different local informal elites in different contexts without acknowledging their differences.

6.3.1 Chieftaincy systems and the role complexity of chiefs

The chieftaincy institution in Africa is diverse and complex. There are multiples of differentiated cultural and historical contexts across and within states in Africa that present enormous variability in chiefly authority, structures and dynamics. These distinctions may manifest along the lines of:

1. Centralisation – This has to do with where the powers of the leaders of traditional institutions are exercised from. That is whether power emanates from a centralised authority or a decentralised, stateless and acephalous authority.
2. Mode of appointment – Different modes of appointments exist for the different chieftaincy institutions on the continent. Chiefs may be appointed by inheritance or through non-hereditary processes.

3. Lineage – This has to do with whether matrilineal or patrilineal procedures are applied in the selection of the chief.

As a result of these differences, the exact role of traditional leaders in contemporary African democracies is not only difficult to accurately specify and generalise, but also their precise political standing in modern African societies is highly contested, controversial and complex[113]. While their relevance in society is generally not in dispute[114], their power and role are highly context-driven. In other words, their role takes inspiration from their socio-cultural, political and historical contexts and, therefore, may be difficult to have a generally valid conception of chiefly roles across different contexts in African democracies.

Among the *Asantes* of Ghana, for example, the authority structure of the chieftaincy system is completely centralised, matrilineal and hierarchical. The King of Asante (Asantehene) functions as the head of the kingdom and presides over a federated union of several paramount chiefs (Amanhene) across the Asante state. The paramount chiefs, in turn, command the allegiance of chiefs down the hierarchy to the lowest unit - the village headman (Odikro). The political clout of the Asantehene and the Amanhene is enormous, and their modern roles span across different facets of life in the traditional society, including land control, cultural and ceremonial leadership, community representation, dispute adjudication, among several others – a point I return to under section 6.6 of this chapter.

Unlike the *Asante* empire, however, the *Igbos* of Nigeria, the *Gurage* in Ethiopia and the *Baito* in Eritrea operate stateless or acephalous, elder-led systems. In these societies, overarching chiefly authority may be absent, but a form of decentralised structure of governance based on community eldership and opinion leadership exists to steer communal affairs. Power dynamics and role construction of community leaders in these contexts tend not to be as elaborate as the Asante of Ghana, for instance. Again, the mode of selecting traditional chiefs across Africa is another source of distinction in the institutional make-up and dynamics of the chieftaincy institution in the region. While in South Africa and Lesotho, hereditary selection of chiefs dominates, the *Aqils* of Somalia, for instance, are appointed by

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[113] See Mengisteab's (2017) edited volume: Institutional fragmentation in Africa and its implication
[114] At least now. This is not to say that the institution of chieftaincy has not received its fair share of antagonism in African politics. For many years, many scholars and political actors alike in Africa dismissed the relevance of traditional chieftaincy institutions. See Chapter Three for more.

the state (Mengisteab, 2017). Also, along the patrilineal and matrilineal spectrum, chieftaincy institutions in Africa show wide variations.

These varieties in traditional chieftaincies in Africa [centralised-acephalous, hereditary-appointment, matrilineal-patrilineal] do not only indicate where exactly power in the community is concentrated but also the exact expectations people place on the traditional leaders. In other words, the diversities are also consequential for the institutional power and influence chiefs wield. So that, whether a traditional leader is empowered to manage and allocate community resources such as land or provide essential services such as dispute adjudication to the community depends on the cultural and historical contexts of the chieftaincy system in place.

6.3.2 Religious pluralism and the role of religious elites

Like traditional systems, Africa is a pluralistic religious society hosting many religious brands, groups, organisations and sects (Mugambi and Getui, 2004). As each religious body or sect is driven by a unique set of beliefs and theology, their role in society and relationship with the state also differ enormously. These variations also associate with the public expectations connected to the different religious groups. Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) in Africa have consequently been diverse in their core foci. While churches in the orthodox tradition tend to focus more on tangible sectoral developmental programmes in such areas as health, education, poverty alleviation inter alia (Ayiemba et al., 2015; Sekhaulelo, 2014), those from the (Neo-)Pentecostal tradition tend to place emphasise on intangible teachings on faith, healing, and prosperity (Togarasei, 2018; Wariboko, 2012; Obadare, 2016; Mapuranga, 2018).

The sharp rise in the number of Islamic adherents as well as Islamic Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Africa (Salih, 2002) also brings more diversity into the picture regarding the foci of Islamic religious activities on the continent. The marriage of orthodox Islamic proselytization with the provision of essential services in the education and health sectors shows how religion has become an active supplier of public goods in Africa. However, different religious sects operate with different belief sects and therefore are diverse in their relationship with the state as well as society. In the same vein, the role, institutional power and influence of religious leaders in society are varied along the lines of the societal relevance of the religious organisation in question.

6.3.3 Relational clientelism and the role of party officials

The job description of local party elites is supposed to be straightforward. Yet, in most cases, they differ across parties and along the formal and informal spectrum. In most cases, they sink party ideologies down to the local communities, mobilise voters for general elections and for party-related activities and recruit party leadership (Bowman and Boynton, 1996). They also typically get involved in local party campaigns and the recruitment of new members for the party. Yet, in many instances, they may also be drawn into relational clientelistic networks where they serve as a medium for dispensing selective favours from politicians to the grassroots (Brierley and Kramon, 2020; Shenoy, 2021).

As such, the roles local party elites play could differ along the lines (1) official party duties like grassroot mobilisation, candidate selection, membership recruitment and (2) informal clientelistic and exchange duties for political actors, including being used as a medium to dispense targeted patronage like jobs, school admission, cash and state-provided services. Members of Parliament may utilise local party agents for electoral purposes by creating a patron-client relationship through which private and club goods are channelled to the local party members or the entire electorate. Just like chieftaincy systems and religious plurality in Africa, the role of local party leadership within and across parties also hardly agrees.

6.4 Informal institutions and actors: Similarities across contexts

The foregone demonstrates how difficult it is to put local elites [i.e., traditional chiefs, local religious elites, and party elites at the grassroots] in different contexts together and define them with a common role denominator without accounting for variations in the nature of the power and influence at their disposal. But their variations notwithstanding, they have a lot of shared similarities as well. Key amongst them is their importance and indispensability to the socioeconomic and political life of the communities in which they are embedded. As highlighted before, they are, for instance, not only integral in the management of local lands and the resolution of local conflicts, they also implement local customary laws and perform a host of otherwise central or local government functions in the areas of healthcare provision, security, social welfare, registration of birth, death and customary marriages, arts, and culture, among a host of others (Crook, 2005; Haag, 2017; Shale, 2017).

It is noteworthy that such functions are very important in contexts such as rural areas where the state tends to be insufficiently 'present' to provide for the welfare needs of the people (Logan, 2011). In many parts of Africa, the state is either incapable or unwilling to supply such basic collective goods as those mentioned above. Even where state-funded programmes are rolled out, in the many fiscally fragile states in Africa, community contribution may be required before they can see the light of day (Baldwin, 2015). This makes local elites the 'go to' actors for Africans who require solutions to their daily problems. Table 6.2 shows that many Africans prefer to turn to their religious leaders (43.2%) or traditional chiefs (30.9%) for solutions to their personal or community problems. Even though, on average, contacts between Africans and political party officials are comparatively lower than with chiefs and religious leaders, they are nonetheless more frequent (16.8%) than with officials of formal government agencies (15.7%) and Members of Parliament (11.5%).

Table 6. 2: Contacts with informal local elites and political leaders (%)

	Local government councillor	Member of Parliament	Official of government agency	Political party official	Religious leader	Traditional leader
Ghana	28.4	15.6	12.1	20.9	29.7	27.3
South Africa	33.0	9.1	15.6	17.3	40.5	14.8
2 country average	30.7	12.4	13.9	19.1	35.1	21.1
34 country average	22.2	11.5	15.7	16.8	43.2	30.9

Source: Afrobarometer R7 (2016/18)

In Ghana, for instance, aside from the category "official of government agency", Members of Parliament are the least 'contacted' by Ghanaians for solutions to local issues. In answering the question, "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", most Ghanaian respondents (29.7%) gave the indication of having contacted a religious leader compared to 15.6% contact of MPs. In South Africa, the numbers are even comparatively more striking. Only 9.1% made contacts with their MPs, while a large majority of 40.5% sought personal or community-level assistance from their religious leaders. In both Ghana and South Africa, therefore, formal government officials both at the national and local levels as well as MPs

are contacted far less frequently for solutions to personal and collective local problems than informal local elites.

There is also a remarkable cross-country similarity between Ghana and South Africa regarding the relevance of local informal institutions and actors. As shown in Table 6.2, if we categorise "Local government councillor, Member of Parliament and Official of government agency" under the conceptual umbrella of formal state elites and "Traditional leader, Religious leader and Political party official" under local informal elites, we see that the latter category plays much more role in the lives of Africans than the former.

6.5 Shared governance? Informal elites in a dualised political space

Many observers agree that in Africa's emerging democracies, formal state structures and informal institutions intricately coexist. It is puzzling why the transition to democracy, periodic competitive elections and the process of democratic consolidation have failed to annihilate informal institutions and their salience in African politics (Tieleman and Uitermark, 2019; Baldwin, 2015; Paller, 2014). But noteworthy is the fact that, even beyond the mere existence and endurance of the informal way of life in Africa, emerging evidence suggests that their salience is even on the ascendency in many parts of the region (Kleist, 2011; Różalska, 2016; Tieleman and Uitermark, 2019). Chiefs, for instance, enjoy enormous following, trust and legitimacy (see Table 6.7 below; Haag, 2017). In some cases – especially in rural areas – chieftaincy institutions have evolved into very important political institutions controlling large chunks of the population. The continuous resilience of informal institutions can equally be expected since local informal institutions have consistently shown no sign of withering. Survey data in Africa suggests that more than 3 in every 10 Africans aspire for the power and influence of chiefs to be enhanced in the modern governance framework (Logan, 2011).

What pertains in Africa is, therefore, a governance space where two players [formal state-sanctioned authority and informal authority] coexist harmoniously under a form of power-sharing arrangement. Although in strict Weberian thinking, the logic underpinning these two forms of authority – rational and traditional – may be contradictory, state authority and informal institutions in Africa do not exist as adversaries that struggle for power and control in a zero-sum fashion. The two forms of authority rather have remained malleable over time and evolved a fused working relationship. One thing, however, separates the two. Unlike

formal governments that enjoy state-wide jurisdiction, informal institutions and actors vary enormously in power and make-up across the local areas they operate within states. Their variations notwithstanding, the relevance of informal institutions and actors to African societies is largely not in dispute.

If informal institutions [as well as the power local informal elites wield] in Africa vary contextually, yet their relevance is similar across the contexts in which they are embedded, then it makes sense to wonder what the exact role they play is. In other words, what specific role do they play in their communities to make them indispensable? The objective of the following sub-section is to discuss the role of traditional leaders, religious leaders and local party leaders in Ghana and South Africa to appreciate their indispensability in their communities. The section also looks comparatively at the roles played by central and local government bodies in Ghana and South Africa.

6.6 Traditional chiefs in Ghana and South Africa

More than four in every ten Ghanaians live in rural communities[115] and thus come directly under traditional leadership[116]. Recent evidence points to how the chieftaincy institution in Ghana is transcending the borders of traditional and rural communities to garner a presence and popularity also in the country's fast-growing cities and previously unoccupied areas in urban areas (Tieleman and Uitermark, 2019). Just like Ghana, in post-apartheid South Africa, more than three in every ten people live in rural communities and thus are governed directly by traditional and customary institutions (Haag, 2017). In these rural contexts, the country's approximately 2400 traditional leaders (William, 2009) wield high levels of influence over community affairs (Haag, 2017).

Notwithstanding the multifaceted character of their influence, there are specific responsibility areas where traditional chiefs in both countries lay more emphasis. Among eight lines of responsibility outlined by the Afrobarometer survey; sanitation, school management, health care provision, settlement of local disputes, land administration, rivers, and forest management and finally, the maintenance of law and order, traditional chiefs in

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[115] World Bank see https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS
[116] I use rural areas, rural population, rural communities as proxies for areas, population or communities that come directly traditional rulership. See Kidane Mengisteab and Gerard Haag's (2017) edited volume on traditional institutions in contemporary African governance.

Ghana, for instance, are perceived to play more role in the areas of local dispute resolution, land administration and the protection of rivers and forests than they do in the areas of school management, healthcare provision and tax administration as shown in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6. 2: Perceived distribution of primary responsibilities in Ghana (%)
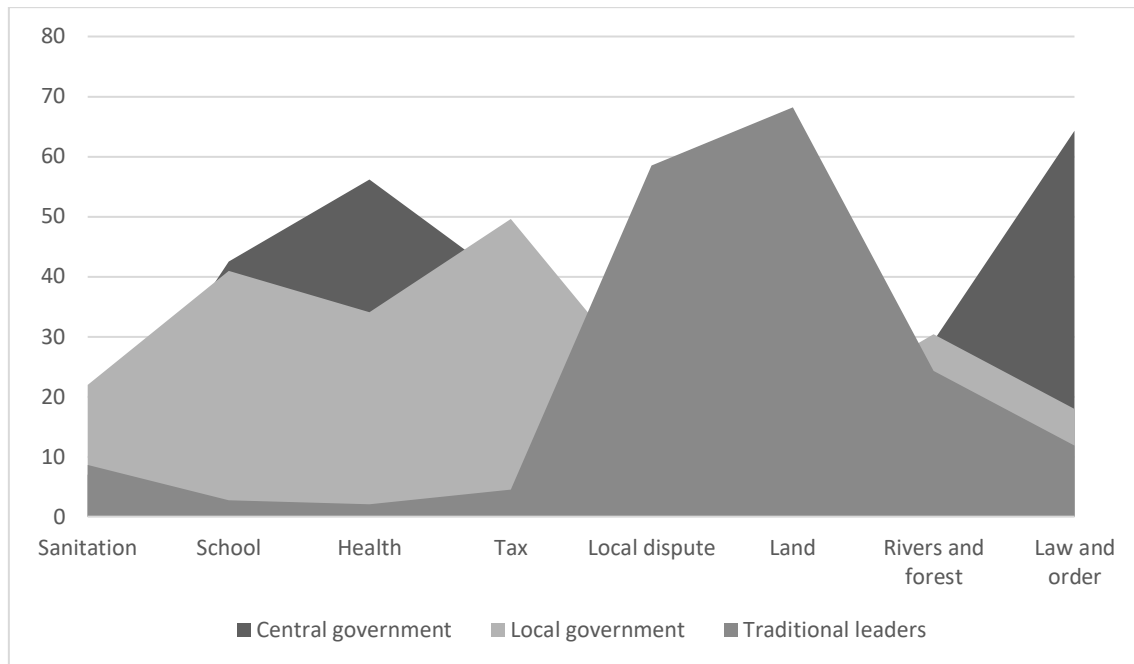
Source: Afrobarometer, R4 (2008/2009)

Even though the influence of traditional chiefs may be marginal in the affairs of education (2.7%) and healthcare management (2.1%), Ghanaians still recognise their relevance in those areas, even if comparatively less significant. Again, we can conclude on a certain level of shared responsibility in such areas where [formal] central and local government institutions are more prominent as sanitation provision and the maintenance of law and order. This means that while Ghanaians perceive their traditional rulers to be largely responsible for the allocation of lands and the settlement of local disputes, they still do not overlook their relevance entirely in other areas of their lives, such as sanitation management and the preservation of law and order.

For the most part of Ghana, traditional chiefs remain custodians of the land in a complex customary land tenure system. Three legal land regimes are recognised in the country. These are the customary land tenure system, statutory land regime, and common practice (Alhassan, 2006). Out of these, customary authorities alone hold around 80% of the land (Ubink, 2009). Access to land in Ghana and security of tenure have become a notoriously

complex hurdle, especially for vulnerable and financially disadvantaged groups like the youth and women to cross. Meanwhile, with most of its population being food and cash crop producers, land for agricultural purposes in Ghana becomes an essential commodity. This is especially so in the rural areas where more than 4 in every 10 Ghanaians live and make their living (World Bank, 2018). In urban and peri-urban areas, also, land ownership does not get any easier due to rapid urbanisation and its consequent pressure on land acquisition (Owusu and Agyei, 2007). Ghana's customary land regime, therefore, places significant levers of influence in the hands of traditional chiefs.

Again, even though disputes over lands may be adjudicated by formal state courts, Ghanaians prefer to rather resort to informal traditional courts, arbitrations, and family tribunals for settlement (Asaaga, 2021). Aside from the perceived prestige and merits of the customary courts, they are also said to be more accessible, flexible and above all, more socially embedded. Statutory courts, on the other hand, are few, hardly accessible, poorly resourced and lack the capacity to adjudicate justice to the entire population. A recent African Union report points to how basic conditions for efficient justice delivery in Ghana are missing. The report cites affordability, flexibility, comprehensibility and responsiveness as the sources of unequal access to justice in the country (Africa Union, 2019; see also Asaaga, 2021).

Additionally, Ghanaians do not only see officials of state courts as corrupt and untrustworthy (Ghanaweb, 2020a), they also cite elite capture[117] and high cost of justice delivery as disincentives for utilising the formal court system (Osse and Asiamah, 2020). Access to justices in Ghana is also urban biased as basic justice tools such as the Legal Aid Commission [which is clothed with the mandate of rendering free legal services to Ghanaians] only operate in the cities (Donkor, 2019). This effectively cuts the poor and vulnerable people who live in the rural areas out from accessing legal assistance. Traditional courts naturally become the alternative 'go to' fora for dispute resolution for not only the

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[117] Popular opinion in Ghana points to a seeming bias of the Ghanaian formal court system in favour of the rich and powerful. In an Afrobarometer survey (round 8, 2019/2020), Ghanaian were asked this question: What three most important reasons would prevent you or any Ghanaian like you from using the formal justice delivery system in Ghana? More than 3 in every 10 Ghanaians think that the courts in the country have been elite captured.

rural and underserved segment of the population but also for those who have lost confidence in the formal court system.

These important roles played by traditional chiefs are not peculiar to Ghana alone but cut across Africa. In Botswana, for instance, about 80 percent of all criminal cases are tried by the traditional court system (Crook, 2005). In Malawi, the percentage of disputes resolved in traditional courts is between 80 and 90 (Wojkowska, 2006). Similarly, in Senegal, approximately 85% of the population use traditional courts (Wojkowska, 2006). Survey data[118] suggests that in countries such as Lesotho, Kenya and Zimbabwe, traditional leaders are more dominant in the adjudication of local disputes than formal local and central government structures. And as highlighted earlier, the judicial services provided by traditional courts obviously come at a lower transaction cost than similar services rendered by the state (Mengisteab, 2017).

Not surprisingly, as displayed in Figure 6.3, among the roles of sanitation, education, health, taxation, local dispute resolution, land administration, environmental protection and the maintenance of law and order, South Africans consider traditional chiefs to be more responsible for local dispute resolution (12.9%) and land administration (17.7%). In post-apartheid South Africa, control over communal lands is largely left in the hands of traditional chiefs (Mnwana, 2018). Like Ghana, while many people in the rural areas depend on the lands for agricultural purposes, South Africans also rely on land supply from the traditional authorities for their subsistence. The quest for agricultural lands makes rural South Africans especially dependent on customary authorities to get by economically. If communal lands in South Africa are in the hands of traditional leaders and it is the very resource that creates economic opportunities for the people, then we could assume a certain relation of power between the people and their traditional leaders. This is even more the case in recent times after several legislations have been passed by the South African state to appease, mollify and extend the powers of traditional leadership. The institution of chieftaincy has received a new facelift and has been given a more central role in the governance architecture of the country.

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[118]Afrobaromenter Round 4, 2008

Two recent legislations deserve special mention. First is the passage of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (TLGFA) in 2003 to approve the operation of local traditional councils alongside formal local government institutions. The Act did not only (1) recognise traditional communities legally but also (2) established and recognised local traditional councils to operate side by side state structures at the local level and finally (3) provided a legal framework to regulate the operations of traditional leadership. The legal recognition empowered, solidified and expanded the statutory power of traditional leaders in South Africa in the areas of land administration, health and welfare, security, the management of natural resources, disaster management, among others[119]. It is therefore not surprising that South Africans consider such functions as sanitation (2.6%), education (4.6) and health management (4.5%) as part of the duties of traditional leaders.

Figure 6. 3: Perceived distribution of primary responsibilities in South Africa (%)
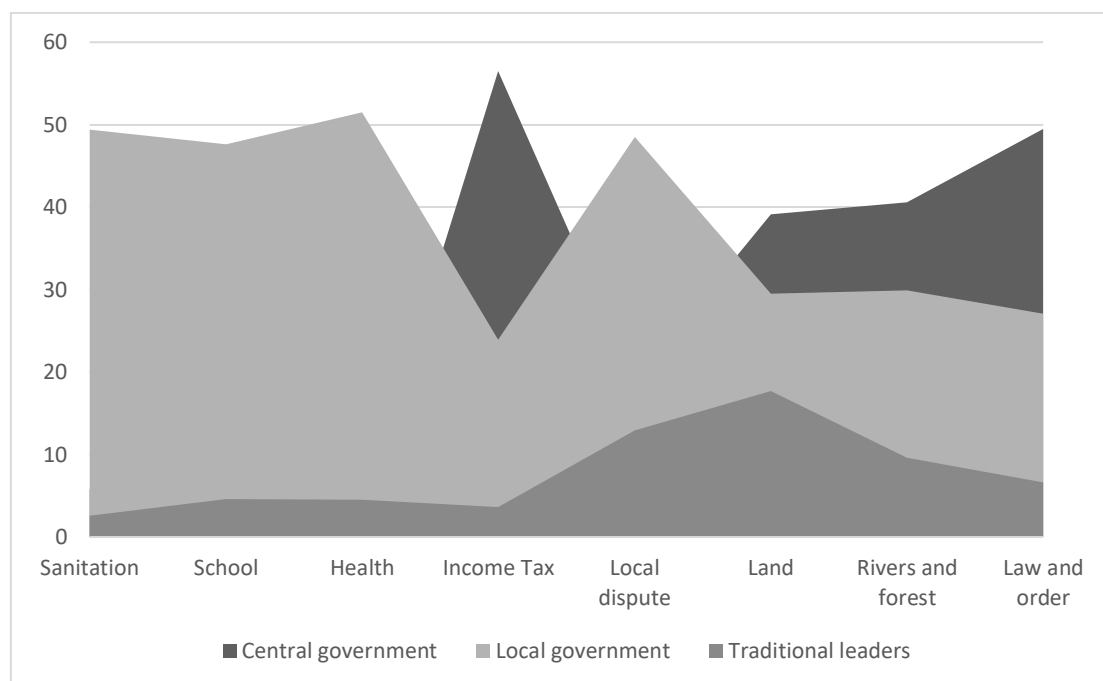
Source: Afrobarometer, R4 (2008/2009)

The second legislation that officially empowered traditional authorities in South Africa and increased their responsibilities in society is the Communal Land Rights Act of 2005 (CLaRA). This legislation recognised traditional leaders' role in the allocation and control

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[119] See Section 20 of Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (TLGFA), Act 41 of 2003.

over communal lands and therefore sought to transfer the ownership of communal lands from the state to the local communities residing in the areas in question. Aside from the important recognition of traditional leadership, the Act placed significant levers of influence in the hands of customary authorities to directly control land access and all the economic opportunities connected with land ownership.

These interventions intricately put state-sanctioned institutions as well as traditional and customary authorities in a harmonious relationship regarding responsibilities over sanitation provision, education and health management, tax administration, local dispute resolution inter alia, as shown in Figure 6.3. Even though these responsibilities are shared between formal state structures and traditional institutions, local rural communities in South Africa utilise the latter more as they are more socially embedded, in tune with local realities and come at a comparatively lower transaction cost (Mengisteab, 2017). State-sanctioned programmes in Africa, on the other hand, do not usually encourage community participation and may therefore not be compatible with community expectations (Baldwin, 2015).

6.6.1 Voters and traditional chiefs: Mutual dependence?

Traditional chiefs in Africa are unelected leaders, yet their salience in their communities creates a form of mutually beneficial informal relationship between them and voters. While the electorates benefit directly or indirectly from the broad range of services the chiefs provide (see Table 6.3), the traditional chiefs on their part rely on the masses of people in their communities to build and broaden their political power base.

The socioeconomic lives of many Africans are inseparably connected to the chieftaincy institution and the services it renders to society. To get by economically and, in most cases, politically, people become reliant on their chiefs. Because the chiefs are at the forefront of land administration, dispute adjudication and social welfare provision, they tend to have a lot of sway over their subjects who are the beneficiaries of their services. The people become willing followers while the chiefs use this following to enhance their political power.

Table 6. 3: A summary of the role of chiefs in Ghana and South Africa

	Land manager	Community leader	Local customary gatekeeper	Political representation	Dispute resolution	Services	Mobilization	Development agent	Security
Ghana	-Customary or stool lands in Ghana are vested in Chiefs who administer them in the interest of the living, the dead, and generations yet to be born.	-Chiefs in Ghana serve as leaders of homogenous local populations in defined jurisdictions. -They are the first point of call on community affairs, e.g., business, politics etc.	-Chiefs are in charge of the protection of the customs, values and traditions of the people. Chiefs embody the local traditional and cultural values of the areas they rule.	-Chiefs serve as points of liaison between local communities and state-level institutions. -Chiefs serve as intermediaries between the central government and their subjects.	-Chiefs in Ghana operate traditional court systems that adjudicate local disputes. Informal arbitration in customary courts is common.	-Chiefs provide services in the areas of education, health, agriculture among others. Some institute scholarships for brilliant students in their communities.	-Local community mobilisation for political activities and communal works. Mobilising for elections and providing voter education are also some of the roles of chiefs	-Government relies on chiefs to gain access to the hinterlands for development purposes. - They organise local inputs in the development projects the state finances.	-Chiefs play foremost role in providing physical security to their communities. Community watchdog groups are commonplace at the behest of chiefs.
South Africa	Communal Land Rights Act of 2005 recognised chiefs' role in the allocation and control over communal lands in South Africa.	-Chiefs provide leadership to the local community in their dealing with the state or external bodies. -They take decisions on the general welfare of the community.	-Traditional councils advise the municipality on matters bothering on customary law, customs, traditional leaders and traditional communities.	-Chiefs assist local communities in their dealings with the state. -They consult communities to reach decisions and champion same to the political system.	-Chiefs in South Africa may be assigned to administer justice in traditional communities following provisions in the TLGFA	-Chiefs mobilise resources to build schools and clinics in their communities. -They play key roles in the fight against diseases such as HIV.	-Traditional leaders mobilise rural populations for elections, development, and local governance issue etc	-Chiefs lobby government and other agencies for developments to their communities -They provide partnership to the state in developing rural areas.	Chiefs organise local communities to form groups to provide security in the absence of regular police service.

Source: Author's compilation based on Field interviews in Ghana and South Africa 2018 – 2020; Crook (2005); Tieleman and Uitermark (2019): William (2009); Haag (2017); Mengisteab (2017).

6.7 Pillars of hope in times of adversity? Religion in Ghana and South Africa

Africans are overwhelmingly religious. Evidence across time and space suggests that more than nine out of every ten Africans has some religious affiliation (Howard, 2020)[120]. Additionally, Africans tend to make more contacts with their religious leaders for solutions to their personal or community problems than with their elected representatives or formal state actors (see Table 6.2 above). Religious elites are also considered more trustworthy than Members of Parliament in Africa, for instance (see Table 6.7 below). But religion in Africa is a complicated and multifaceted subject. As I mentioned in Chapter Three of this dissertation, it is framed not only spiritually but, more importantly, politically as well (Paller, 2014). This implies that, beyond the regular traditional faith-based conceptualisation of religion in Africa, there is an interesting political and electoral angle as well.

The reason for this framing is not difficult to discern. In weak state contexts, the relevance of religious bodies is not only felt in churches, mosques or synagogues but also and perhaps, most importantly, physically out of the church. In many [of the socioeconomically deprived] African democracies, religious leaders, with their huge financial resources and following, become very instrumental in the provision of social welfare and infrastructural buffers that the state is incapable or unwilling to deliver. Their massive presence across the continent and their landmark spiritual, infrastructural and social welfare programmes project them as a strong political force (Paller, 2014). Aside from being the centre of religious activities globally, it is estimated that Africa's share of global religious believers and religious organisations will explode by 16 percent in the next forty years[121]. This invariably is likely to translate directly into more political power for faith groups on the one hand and especially religious elites on the other[122]. The daily hope-filled interactions, sermons and support-based interface between religious leaders and the masses of followers – many of whom may live under conditions of economic deprivation – create a fund of trust, dependency, followership and for that matter, personal prestige and political power for the religious elite.

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[120] See Afrobarometer data on religious affiliation in Africa https://afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis/analyse-online
[121] The PEW Research Center estimates that Africa's share of the population of Christians worldwide will explode to 42 percent by 2060 up from 26 percent in 2015 (McClendon, 2017). The situation with Muslim population in the region will not be any different. It is projected that within the same timeframe, it will increase to 27 percent from 16 percent (see McClendon, 2017).
[122] See Table 6.2 in this chapter for contacts to religious leaders compared to other local and national political actors in Africa for solutions to personal and community problems.

In Ghana, for example, three major religious traditions exist (Omenyo, 2006)[123]. Aside from the dominant Christian and Islamic religions, there are also indigenous African traditional religions with all their varieties and forms. As shown in Table 6.4, more than 50 percent of the Ghanaian population are active members of one religious organisation or the other. Additionally, a little more than 1 in every 10 Ghanaians belong to faith groups but may not necessarily be 'active' members. Interesting also is the fact that an additional whooping 7.1 percent of Ghanaians belong to the category of religious priesthood. The overall effect is that close to 70 percent of Ghanaians consider themselves religious (i.e., either they are active, inactive or officials of religious groups).

Table 6. 4: Membership of religious bodies (%)

Category	Total	South Africa	Ghana
Not a member	37.1	42.8	30.1
Inactive member	14.5	16.5	12.0
Active member	43.4	37.7	50.6
Official leader	4.5	2.4	7.1
Completely free	-	-	-
Don't know	0.5	0.6	0.3
(N)	28,810 (100)	16,016 (100)	12,794 (100)

Source: Afrobarometer R1 – 7 (1999 - 2018)

South Africa is equally plural religiously, and just like Ghana, Christians dominate. Their dominance notwithstanding, other creeds and faiths also exist and practice freely. There are Muslims, Hindus, Jews, and people who conform to African traditional religions. In all, 37 percent of South Africans belong actively to religious groups while 14.5 percent are members but not regular. It must also be mentioned that the number of people who are not members of any religious group in both Ghana and South Africa is somewhat significant. In South Africa, more than four in every ten people are not members of any of the religious bodies in the country. The story is a bit different from Ghana's, where three of ten Ghanaians do not belong to religious groups. The difference may not be so much between the two cases but still relevant to appreciating the meaning and significance of religion to people in both countries. On average, we see that more than six in every ten Ghanaians and South Africans

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[123] There are also several minor religious groupings proliferating in Ghana such as Hinduism, Rastafarianism, Buddhism among others.

are either active, inactive, or official leaders of religious groups. It is, therefore, difficult to deny the relevance of religion in both countries, as presented in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6. 4: Importance of religion in Ghana and South Africa
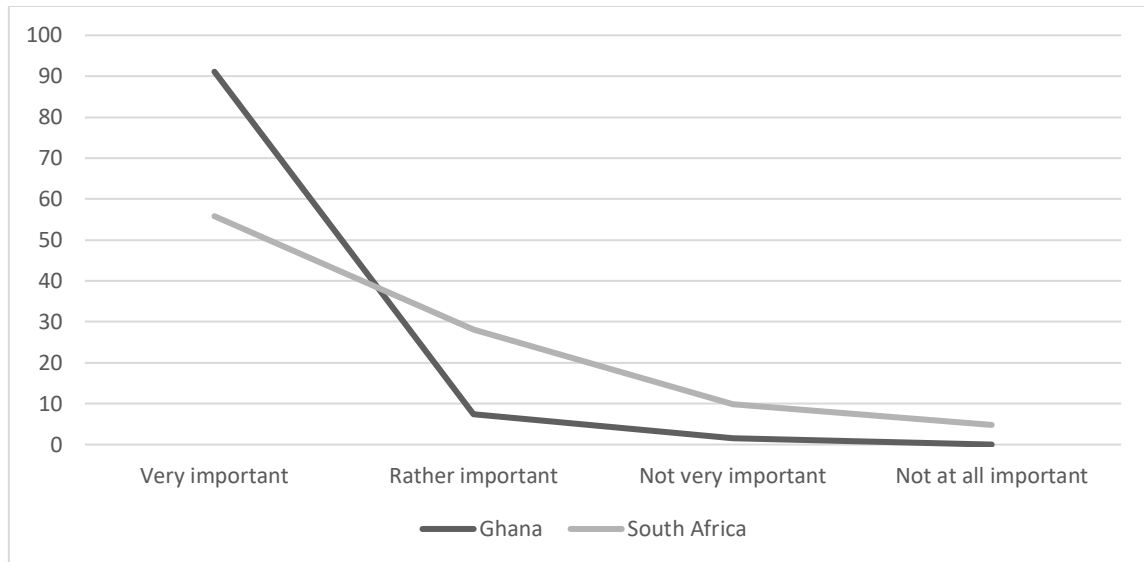
Source: World Value Survey wave 6 (2010-2014)

Due to the centrality of religion in the life of Ghanaians and South Africans, religious leaders tend to be not only highly revered but also carry a lot of responsibilities. Among a host of official and informal political actors in both countries, such as the president, courts, political parties and traditional chiefs; religious leaders tend to be the most trustworthy[124]. They are also, on average, more contacted in both countries over personal and community level problems than official state actors[125]. They thus possess immense societal influence. Their role and influence, however, ought to be understood within the context in which they operate – weak and soft states. In contexts where the state lacks the capacity or the willingness to provide basic amenities for citizens to get by in life, informal actors like the clergy become very important. The sermons of bliss in the afterlife, hope, endurance, love, forbearance that they preach and their provision of basic infrastructure like school, hospitals, among others, increase their societal standing and relevance. This is not to mention their constant prayer

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[124] Table 6.7
[125] Table 6.2

support and 'deliverance' of church members from hostile spirits and disease and poverty-causing demons.

Several examples of powerful religious figures in Ghana and their role in society immediately comes to mind. Inaugurated in Ghana in 1984, Pastor Mensa Otabil's International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) has rapidly grown and expanded to several parts of the country with membership attendance of about 50,000. It is considered one of the fastest-growing churches in Ghana (Ghanaweb, 2017). Aside from its stated commitment to shaping the vision of generations and influencing society with the principles of the Kingdom of God, the ICGC church has, for the past thirty years, impacted the lives of several thousands of Ghanaians tremendously. The church currently owns Central University, the largest private institution of higher learning in Ghana.

In 1988, a flagship scholarship programme was instituted by the church and christened Central Aid to function as the corporate social responsibility arm of the church. The programme supports the pre-tertiary education of brilliant but needy Ghanaians with financial assistance across the country. In terms of the numbers of beneficiaries, it is now the biggest Non-Governmental Organisation funding students in Ghana[126]. Central Aid has in recent times, at least since 1996, expanded its scope of operation beyond the education sector into offering relief services and supporting community development, healthcare provision and social welfare services. As part of its programme dubbed 'Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh', the church makes yearly donations to hospitals in the country. In 2020, for instance, an amount of 200,000 Ghana Cedis was donated to the children's cancer unit of the Korle-Bu Teaching hospital in Accra. The annual donations have since 2011 contributed to the treatment of some 1500 children in the unit[127].

The church has also contributed tremendously to poverty alleviation in many parts of the country, most especially in peri-urban Ghana. Its community development initiative has seen contributions to schools, orphanages, hospitals and several infrastructural projects across the country. Most notable amongst these projects include the expansion of the Marie Louise Children hospital in Accra, the renovation of a classroom block for students of the

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[126] https://www.centralgospel.com/74
[127] https://philanthropy.space/ghana/icgc-christ-temple-donates-ghs200000-to-childrens-cancer-unit-at-korle-bu/

Akufful-Krodua Catholic Junior High School and the construction of a hostel facility for the Osu Children's Home in Accra (Benyah, 2012).

Figure 6. 5: Royal House Chapel's Compassion Ministry

PRISON MINISTRY Regular visits to prisons to distribute food, clothes and for medical screening	COMMUNITY OUTREACH Poor communities benefit from social relief actions	RESTORATION Restores ex-convicts, drug addicts, alcoholics, sex workers etc	SENIOR CITIZENS Provides for the emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs of the old

SCHOLARSHIP Provides scholarships to brilliant but needy students from pre-school up to the tertiary level	FEED THE HUNGRY Supplies food and drinks to very poor people such as street hawkers, orphans, street children	HOSPITAL MINISTRY Supports patients with prayers, medical supplies, and hospital bill payment

Source: Royal House Chapel[128]

The social intervention programme of the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) is just one of the many programmes run by churches in Ghana to respond to the economic gaps created by the state. It is not uncommon to see different churches in the country embarking on one programme or the other with the aim of transforming the lives of the poor, the less privileged and citizens who ordinarily are left out as beneficiaries of state-sponsored welfare programmes. One of the most notable of such programmes is Royal House Chapel's Compassion Ministry. With the aim of bringing people to God's presence through prayer and worship, the church led by Reverend Sam Korankye Ankrah preaches hope-filled sermons to the destitute and additionally bring society to comfort through its 7-point Compassion Ministry (Figure 6.5).

This is a programme-packed ministry that makes provisions for Ghanaians in almost all facets of life – from students to street children, the sick, hawkers, the poor, among others. The Compassion Ministry includes prison ministry, community outreach, restoration programme, support to the older generation, scholarships, food supply and health-related projects. The 'prison ministry', for instance, includes periodic visitation and preaching of Christ to prisoners and the distribution of food and clothing to people who have been incarcerated. The 'community outreach' programmes, on its part, targets deprived communities where the poor are supported with several social relief packages.

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[128]For more, visit http://www.royalhousechapel.org/compassion-ministry/#1453375563673-301b779c-f550

Table 6. 5: A summary of the role of religious elites in Ghana and South Africa

	Spiritual protection	Teaching	Social network	Political representation	Dispute resolution	Services	Mobilisation	Development agent	Ceremonial role
Ghana	-Religious elites in Ghana take the lead in praying for deliverance for members who are believed to have been afflicted by demon-caused sicknesses and poverty.	-Religious elites in Ghana preach daily hope-filled sermons to their members. -They preach sermons that highlight the fact that poverty is not God's intent for man and instil hope.	-Religious affiliation is a form of social capital in Ghana. Atheism invites stigma. Religious elites create platforms [using church affiliations] for social connections.	-Religious leaders serve as the mouthpiece of their members. They use their platforms to convey the interest of their members to political leaders and state institutions.	-With inaccessible, elite-captured courts, religious leaders double as agents of dispute resolution among members who may have issues.	-Religious groups and their leaders provide services in the areas of education, health, etc. -Some institute scholarships for brilliant students in the congregation.	-Preachers use their religious platforms as avenues to mobilise votes for politicians who display similar creed or display a willingness to work with the group post-election.	-Religious bodies and organisations are at the forefront of infrastructural provision in Ghana. Leaders spearhead community development by mobilising labour and finance.	-Churches and religious elites in Ghana preside over and perform such rites of passage for the population as outdooring, weddings, and funerals etc.
South Africa	-Evil spirits are blamed for every misfortune. Religious elites pray to deliver their members in South Africa from the wicked jaws of evil spirits.	-Churches and Mosques etc. are where messages of hope and prosperity are preached, and religious leaders are the preachers of the sermons.	- Religious elites use their platforms, whether churches or mosques, as social networking arenas where support is sourced.	-Religious leaders in South Africa are important opinion leaders whose views are sought due to their representation of large constituencies of congregants.	-Settlement of disputes among parties in the religious group is also a key function of religious elites in South Africa.	-Elites are relevant from the building of schools and hospitals to medical supplies to poorly resourced medical facilities and communities.	-Religious elites are key political mobilisers. They use their platform to either endorse candidates for elections or advocate for participation.	-Many community development interventions in South Africa, like infrastructure, schools are under the influence of religious bodies and elites.	-Religious elites in South Africa play important ceremonial roles, including officiating naming, marriage, and burial ceremonies

Source: Author's compilation based on Field interviews in Ghana and South Africa 2018–2020; Paller (2014); Benyah (2012)

It must be emphasised that, the spiritual and physical programmes by the two Neo-Pentecostal churches discussed above (the ICGC and Royal House Chapel) are even on a smaller scale compared to the grand programmes of older protestant churches like the Presbyterian Church, Anglican Church and the Methodist Church. This is not to mention the wide range of programmes and social welfare interventions by the Roman Catholic church. Established in December 1828 by Basel Missionaries from Switzerland and Germany, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, for instance, currently has over a million members divided across some four thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine (4889) church branches across Ghana[129]. It owns two thousand, four hundred (2400) basic schools scattered across the country. The church also boasts of thirty (30) Senior High schools, three (3) Vocational training schools, five (5) Colleges of Education, Four (4) Nurses Training Schools and two (2) universities. The influence of the church and its leadership across the country cannot be overemphasised. Two reasons account for this. First, because they are at the forefront of social welfare provisions, they tend to have a lot of sway over the beneficiaries of their programmes. Secondly, the huge number of people in the church and the importance they attach to matters of religion[130] place significant levers of control in the hands of religious leaders.

6.7.1 Voters and religious leaders: Mutual dependence?

As it is with traditional leaders, religious elites in both South Africa and Ghana are unelected. However, there is a mutually beneficial informal pattern of exchanges between them and voters that structure a dependency relationship. While the electorates benefit directly or indirectly from the infrastructural, welfare and spiritual programmes of the church; the clergy, on their part, relies on the voters in their organisations to build, sustain and broaden their political power base. The clergy thus delivers at least two kinds of goods to the electorates. First is physical infrastructural and social welfare buffers. The second type of goods is spiritual, intangible and ethereal. In contexts where socioeconomic deprivation is widespread, and the presence of the state is weak, these interventions are key in deflecting attention from immediate plights to eternal salvation and bliss. Consequently, the weakness or absence of the state, on the one hand, and the strong presence and social interventions of

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[129] See http://pcgonline.org/?option=com_content&view=article&id=12&Itemid=10 for more
[130] See Table 6.4 and Figure 6.4

the clergy, on the other, lead to the construction of a relationship of mutual reliance between the people and their religious leaders[131]. Because religious bodies are operational in the very remote parts of the country where state institutions may be absent or malfunctional, it is the church that creates a platform where people are openly invited to bring in their fears, anxieties and all kinds of problems for redress (Maimela, 1985).

In post-Apartheid South Africa, for instance, religious denominations like – Neo-Pentecostal Churches (NPCs), otherwise known as Pentecostal Charismatic Evangelic (PCE) Christianity – have succeeded in garnering huge membership and societal influence. Their 'Prosperity Gospel[132] and its three-pronged message of (1) deliverance from poverty (2) deliverance from sickness, and (3) deliverance from demons may explain the explosion in their numbers. Prevailing conditions of poverty, social deprivation and hopelessness in weak states is what creates the fertile soil for the membership of Neo-Pentecostalism to thrive and explode (Hunt, 2002). In these churches, various testimonies of improved living situations of members are commonplace, and they are usually aired live on both traditional and social media. Congregants usually testify to improvements in their conditions of "hunger, emptiness, powerlessness, lovelessness, aloneness, unfulfilled life, deadness carnality" (Study Committee Report, 1975:403) after joining the church. The liberation or deliverance from these afflictions is what forms the foundation of the dependence of the masses of people in these congregations on their religious leaders. Religious elites in South Africa, as elsewhere in Africa, tend to frame problems such as unemployment, marital challenges, poverty, barrenness, among others, as owing their origins to evil forces (Resane, 2016). This then urges them to offer prayer interventions towards deliverance. These interventions then leave church members dependent on them for solutions to their daily problems.

A mutually beneficial informal pattern of exchange consequently develops between voters and their clergy based on this dependency relationship. To put this into perspective, consider youth unemployment in Post-Apartheid South Africa, for example. The rate of joblessness is almost hitting roof levels and remains the highest globally in Bloomberg's world survey

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[131] In Table 6.4, I show that an average of 4.5 percent of Ghanaians and South Africans are leaders of religious organisations. This is not only a significant number, but it also demonstrates the extent of the distribution of the clergy in the countries and how widespread they may be across both cases.

[132] Prosperity Gospel is 'the teaching that believers have a right to the blessings of health and wealth and that they can obtain these blessings through positive confessions of faith and the 'sowing of seeds' through the faithful payments of tithes and offerings'. Lausanne Theology working Group Statement on the Prosperity Gospel, Evangelical Review of Theology (2010:99).

(Naidoo, 2020). According to Stats South Africa's 4th Quarterly Labour Force Survey in 2019, the rate of unemployment in the country for people aged between 15 and 24 is almost 70 percent[133]. In the area of health, South Africans have to deal with a broken and inequitable health system *(*Furlong, 2016). Under such a system, religious leaders gain performance credibility with their material and spiritual interventions that alleviate their plights.

6.8 Exchange relations between voters and party

The African National Congress (ANC) is perceived to be one of the few structured and hierarchical political parties (Darracq, 2008) in a region with poorly institutionalised party organisations (Basedau and Stroh, 2008; Riedl 2014; van de Walle and Smiddy, 1991). Starting from the very bottom of the party's strata, are the Branches which function as the grassroot structure of the organisation. There are over 3800 ANC branches across South Africa (Mde, 2017). There are also zonal and sub-regional structures, provincial structures as well as the national party in this hierarchical order. The national party forms the apex body of the ANC[134]. The main opposition party in South Africa, the Democratic Alliance (DA) party is also similarly organised and structured with smaller party units at the local community level through to provincial and the national DA party.

Local branches of the ANC remain the fulcrum around which all political activities in the party revolve. Although the National conference is the highest decision-making body of the party, in practice, the conference itself is made up of about 90 percent of delegates drawn from the branches around the country (Darracq, 2008). Local ANC branches, therefore, can be said to be the key decisionmakers for the party. They do not only elect national party leadership; they also perform key roles in the determination of the policy positions of the party. Just like the ANC and the DA, the national conference of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in Ghana comprises of delegates drawn from the various polling stations, constituencies, and regional parties across the country. Hierarchy-wise, these parties are similar, and local polling station/branch levels are the central pillars of the parties. As an ANC Member of Parliament mentioned:

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[133] Quarterly Labour Force Survey, http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/P02114thQuarter2019.pdf
[134] See the Constitution of the ANC https://www.anc1912.org.za/constitution-ANC

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"The branches is the real party. That is where the actual power emanates from, and you can't do anything in the ANC that the branches don't approve of. It will definitely fail"[135]

Decisions and activities taken in the party, in general, must enjoy the popular support of the branches if they are to work. This observation in the ANC is also true for parties in Ghana such as the NPP and the NDC. Within the organisational structure of the NPP, for instance, polling station executives hold very prominent decision-making positions. The party holds periodic national delegates conferences to discuss matters of interest. These conferences draw in more than 6500 local party elites across the 16 regions of Ghana to deliberate on issues that affect the popularity of the party or the party's electoral prospects, among others (News Ghana, 2019). Local party elites in Ghana and South Africa, therefore, do not only form an important class of activists at the grassroots, but they are also nationally relevant in the decision-making processes of the party (see Table 6.6).

Beyond rendering party-related services, local party elites, more importantly, function as community actors who provide social support and welfare services to their communities. Local party leaders' social responsibilities include supporting very poor members and poor communities. When a branch member or relative is bereaved, the social policies of the branches see to the provision of every needed support, including contributions to defray the cost of the funeral and its auxiliary costs. This support system in Ghanaian political parties also covers contributions towards wedding expenses, medical bills, school fees, among several others. In socioeconomically deprived communities, these contributions and social buffers are very substantial in alleviating the plights of community members. In South Africa, in communities where unemployment is rife, ANC branch party officers make interventions by either circulating job advertisements during branch meetings or constituting self-help groups where available opportunities are shared (Darracq, 2008).

Branch party meetings in the ANC are therefore not strictly a party business. They are also social fora where individual and community problems are articulated and addressed. As Darracq (2008) puts it, ANC branches in the local communities usually function as the administrative extensions of the ANC-led government and the South African public service.

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[135] SA_10: Interview, 25.05.2020, Cape Town

Table 6. 6: A summary of the role of local party elites in Ghana and South Africa

	Distributive roles	Education	Local campaigns	Political representation	Local party cohesion	Candidate selection	Grassroot Mobilisation	Recruitment of members
Ghana	-Polling station executives share selective benefits like jobs and cash handouts from politicians to the locals, especially party members.	-Local party executives in Ghana oversee the sinking down and dissemination of the core ideals, programmes and achievements of the party to the very bottom of society.	-When campaign programmes are drawn, it is the duty of local party executives to execute them by going from house to house to market party candidates and programmes.	-Local party leaders serve as the mouthpiece of their members. They use their local positions and clout to convey the interest of the local party members to political leaders and state institutions.	-Local party leaders in Ghana ensure that there is always internal party cohesion at the grassroots to make the party attractive to the voters.	-Polling station executives, as well as other party officials, oversee the selection of parliamentary and presidential candidates for general elections in the country.	-During elections, local party elites usually engage in mass mobilisation in Ghana. They move around the communities to mobilise their supporters to vote.	-Party membership is key to the electoral survival of parties. And polling station officials are used for membership drives in the communities to increase party numbers.
South Africa	-Local party officials oversee the distribution of benefits from the MP to the party members at the grassroots or the community.	The core ideologies and policies of the political parties in South Africa are explained down to the masses at the grassroots by local party officials.	- During election campaigns, the national parties in South Africa rely on the local structures to sink the message down.	-In the ANC for instance, local party officials represent the interests of the party and the people to the MP using local party committees.	-Ensuring that there is internal party peace and togetherness to attract others into the party is the duty of local party elites in South Africa.	-Local party officials in political parties in South Africa are integral in the compilation of the provincial list of candidates for elections.	-Rallying the public for party programmes, activities and campaigns are usually the duty of local political officials in South Africa.	-Political party officials at the grassroots usually embark on community campaigns to recruit more members into the party.

Source: Author's compilation based on Field interviews in Ghana and South Africa 2018 – 20; Brierley and Kramon (2020); Bowman and Boynton (1996); Darracq (2008).

They, therefore, serve as an interface between the government and the citizens in the areas under their jurisdiction. Additionally, they function as the hub for information on the policies and activities of the ANC government and also serve as the public relations extension of the government and play advisory roles in the communities by directing citizens to the appropriate quarters or administrative department to seek redress.

Given that local party elites in South Africa directly serve the general interest in their local communities, their work can be construed to be more than ambassadors of their parties. Most commonly in Ghana, local party leaders spearhead such community-wide activities as clean up exercises, health screening exercises, health walks, jobs and employment summits, among several other (Boakye, 2020; GNA, 2017). Local party elites also play very crucial exchange and distributive roles between party members at the basic levels and politicians. They are used as a medium to dispense targeted patronage like jobs, school admission and assist in accessing state-provided services to the local voters (Brierley and Kramon, 2020). Members of Parliament utilise local party agents for electoral purposes by creating a patron-client relationships through which private and club goods are channelled to the local party members or the entire electorates.

6.8.1 Voters and local party elites: Mutual dependence?

Local party officials in South Africa and Ghana are highly important community figures. Aside from playing party related roles such as campaigning, membership recruitment, mobilisation, candidate selection, among others, they also play very crucial community level roles. They function as the administrative extension of the ruling government. Many local branches also have locally based social support systems that contribute and assists members in times of need. Contributions towards wedding expenses, medical bills, school fees, among several others, are some of the common social provisions party elites at the grassroots make available to the community. Private and club goods such as jobs and cash handouts from top-level political actors like MPs are also channelled through local party officials.

The strategic position of local party officials and the critical roles they play in the community makes them important and influential community actors. In contexts where poverty is acute and socioeconomic constraints are widespread, an otherwise petty intervention like school fees payment or job placement is enough to make a big difference in the relationship between voters and the local party elite. One can better appreciate the influence of local party leaders

when these interventions are scaled up to the community level. The social welfare and distributive roles of party officials in the community is what heightens their influence given the severe lack of state capacity at the local level (William 2009), high rates of unemployment (Naidoo, 2020), a broken, corrupt, and inequitable health system (Furlong, 2016), and a virtually collapsed social institutions (Maluleke, 2014) in South Africa and Ghana.

Socioeconomic deprivation and weak state capacity condition a relationship of dependency between local party elites and voters. While the electorates benefit directly or indirectly from politicians through local party elites as distribution channels, the elites, on the other hand, rely on the masses of people in the locality to build and broaden their political power base. Due to their social proximity, welfare interventions and informational competence in the absence or incapacity of state-sanctioned structures at the peripheries, local party elites tend to wield significant levers of influence over the electorates and their choices. Again, their distribution of targeted patronage and assistance in accessing state-provided services gives them political influence over the voter.

6.9 Performance legitimacy, trust and electoral influence

Traditional leaders, religious elites and local party officials, I have shown, play very critical roles in the local community in the absence or weakness of formal state structures. But political offices and their corresponding functional requirements per se may not directly translate into performance legitimacy for the officer holder. That is to say that the centrality of the services local informal elites render to their communities notwithstanding, there is the need to further appreciate their functional efficiency and performance. How do Ghanaians and South Africans rank the performance of their traditional chiefs, religious leaders, for instance? How much trust do they have in them in comparative terms with formal state actors such Members of Parliament? And how does political trust in informal local actors translate into an ability to make electoral proposals or demands from voters and threaten compliance?

Afrobarometer surveys ask specifically about trust in several political institutions and actors in Africa, including the trustworthiness of chiefs, local government officials, parliament, president, political parties, police, opposition political parties, amongst others. Political trust connotes citizens' support for political institutions or actors (Thompson, 2017). The more

confidence people have in institutions or political actors, the higher their level of political trust. Trust, therefore, is an important indicator of political legitimacy and performance.

Citizens employ two standardised mental shortcuts in making trust judgements on their political leaders (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2001). These are based on 'process' and 'performance'. First, citizens are trusting of political actors who transparently involve them in the processes of political decision making. That is to say that, if there is demonstrated fairness and transparency in the process used in reaching policy decisions, citizens are likely to be trusting of their leaders (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2001). The second measuring rod for trustworthiness considers 'performance or outcomes' of policy decisions. That is, if there is demonstrated efficiency in the delivery of political leaders relative to their set policy goals and decisions, trust is likely to be built by the citizenry. Political trust is, therefore, a function of first, procedural integrity in reaching authoritative decisions and second, overall good performance in the political arena.

Table 6. 7: Average level of trust among religious leaders, traditional leaders and MPs in South Africa and Ghana (%)

	Not at all	Just a little	Somewhat	A lot	Don't know	N
Religious leaders	13.7	20.4	26.6	35.1	4.1	100
Traditional leaders	21.5	23.9	22.6	20.7	11.3	100
Members of parliament	19.3	28.4	28.0	18.6	5.6	100

Source: Afrobarometer R2 – 7 (2002 - 2018)

But as to be expected, different social scientists have different indicators for political trust. Trust could be exogenous of political institutions and result from cultural and socialisation factors, special location or social proximity (Mishler and Rose, 2001; Stein, 2021). Residence in the same locality and frequency of contact, for instance, could be a source of trustworthiness in political leadership. But whether trust is a function of leadership quality or sociocultural factors, public assessment in Africa presents an interestingly positive evaluation for religious and traditional leaders. That is to say that, on average, unelected informal local elites in Ghana and South Africa have consistently ranked higher than their elected counterparts relative to public trust. Patterns of trust between 2002 and 2018 show that religious leaders and traditional chiefs in both countries rank higher than Members of Parliament, for instance. In Table 6.7, we see that while more than 35% and 20% of

Ghanaians and South Africans are trusting of their religious leaders and traditional leaders respectively "a lot", a comparatively lower number of respondents representing 18.6% trust their parliamentarians.

While the margins of trust may not be entirely wide, they are very significant to demonstrate how citizens in both countries evaluate the efficiency, performance or accessibility of local informal elites on the one hand and their elected representatives on the other[136]. That is to say that, if good performance, procedural integrity and accessibility are the classic frameworks citizens employ in their trust judgements of their political leaders, then we may conclude that informal local elites in Ghana and South Africa exhibit a lot of transparency in their leadership roles and demonstrate over time good performance in their roles.

6.10 Local political power accumulation and vote brokerage

I have mentioned in the previous sections that informal local elites in South Africa and Ghana are more than symbolic or spiritual figures. They are also influential political actors who exploit the structural dependence of voters for vote brokerage. I have also demonstrated that informal elites are incredibly trustworthy[137] in South Africa and Ghana due to their functional efficiency and performance credibility. The opinions of traditional chiefs, local religious leaders and grassroot party elites, therefore, have considerable weight on the electoral calculations and decisions of the average voter. Religious leaders in Ghana, for instance evoke religious language to endorse and signal to voters which choices to make during elections. When brokering votes for politicians, they either pray for "spiritual votes" and offer their blessing to signal their support for the candidate or overtly make pronouncements that direct the church members on which candidate to go for (Paller, 2014). They offer open advice on which candidate to vote for, because they consider it a responsibility to ensure that only Godly or righteous candidates are in authority so that the people would rejoice, as stated in the scriptures[138].

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[136] See Table 6.2 for the comparative frequency of citizens' contacts with informal local elites such as traditional chiefs and religious leaders on the one hand and formal political leaders such as local government councillors and central government officials, on the other hand. Again, see Figures 6.2 and 6.3 for the perceived distribution of primary responsibilities in Ghana amongst between formal and informal actors.
[137] More than formal state actors such as local government councillors and Members of Parliament
[138] Proverbs 29:2

Electoral sermons are common in South Africa as well. Due to their influence, political actors flock to churches and places of worship to court the endorsement of religious leaders. They take pictures and videos of the endorsements of the pastor and circulate them to reach out to a wider audience with the aim of courting more and more votes from people outside the church who may be loyal to the pastors. As one African National Congress (ANC) Parliamentarian told me:

> "(…) In most cases, the religious leaders, when you are there, they pray for the ANC and then they would end up saying we have always been ANC and most of the places where I went, they end up declaring their support for the ANC and say to the congregants, you know what? We have always been voting for the ANC since 1994 and then the congregants will say yes! And they vote, after the votes, we come back to them and say we are here to thank you"[139]

Religious leaders in South Africa, from the quote, employ both prayer and open endorsements to signal to their congregants which choice to make. There is a contention in the literature on whether such endorsements indeed translate into votes, especially in the face of secret balloting. From the quote, there would be no need for the candidate to revert with thanksgiving if the endorsement did not translate into electoral victory. As some ANC MPs mentioned in the interview:

> "(…) when you get the endorsement, it also translates into a vote and if you say you will do something you do not do it, they will say yes, these people said they will come here they did not come and then they get angry, and it can affect you as well".[140]

> "…It would work if a priest were to choose to instruct his congregation that this is a person we are supporting as a church, you are likely to have about 98% of the people supporting that"[141].

The effect of religious elites' endorsements for parliamentarians on the voting choices of their congregants cannot be overemphasised. From the quotes above, there is a direct

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[139] SA_17: Interview, 27.02.2020, Cape Town
[140] SA_17: Interview, 27.02.2020, Cape Town
[141] SA_23: Interview, 14.02.2020, Cape Town

translation from endorsement into votes for the endorsed candidate. At the same time, when promises are not met and "they get angry", the politician will be punished. What is of interest here is the MPs' own evaluation of the electoral influence of religious leaders over their congregants. The observation that "about 98 percent of the people" in the church where priestly endorsements happen will vote as instructed is very significant. Since it is the politician that goes for these endorsements, such an assertion is an eloquent verdict on the political influence and leverage of the clergy in South Africa.

As already discussed, religious leaders have won the hearts and minds of many African voters by their timely responses to collective action problems and spiritual spells. As such, to be successful electorally, parliamentarians have the incentive of maintaining close association with the church and its leadership. The relationship between the clergy and church members mainly develop on a father and children fashion, where the latter depends on the former for direction and prophecy of the former. In Neo-Pentecostal churches in South Africa, direction-seeking from pastors before major decisions are taken is not only popular but also institutionalised. Pastoral pronouncements, including electoral suggestions, are therefore significantly weighty on the calculations of church members. One MP on the ticket of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in Ghana mentioned that:

> "The pastors exercise spiritual authority over their members… they *(the congregation*) take their (*pastors'*) words to be sanctioned by God. Some churches have very disciplined members, and they love the pastor… whoever he endorses will be the candidate they will elect"[142]

The quote illustrates the extent to which MPs in Ghana regard the electoral influence of Pastors over their church members. It is particularly interesting to point out that, from the quote, the source of this influence is 'divine' as church members deem pastoral endorsements as sanctioned directions from God. This finding is consistent with similar observations by Jeffery Paller in 2014 when his ethnographic study of the 'Missions to Nations Church' in Ghana found that religious leaders accumulate political power by

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[142] GH_25: Interview, 12.09.2020 Accra

building a mass of followership in their church members. Their political power emanates from their ability to raise huge numbers of followers who can deliver votes to political actors.

Brokering votes for politicians does not only happen in the churches or Mosques but also in the palace and inside the community. Traditional chiefs tend to have a good amount of influence over the electoral choices of the voters in their communities. Many people in Africa vote 'with' the chief (Baldwin, 2015). In other words, they consider the opinions or pick signals from the palace before casting their ballots. In some instances, powerful local elites will make direct pointers but usually behind the scenes (Ansa-Koi, 1998). Traditional chiefs in South Africa and Ghana come across as the informal representatives and advocates for the people's interests (Sithole and Mbele, 2008). They live with the people in the same community, maintain close social proximity with them and also ensure constant interaction with them. This status makes the local community voters willing followers of the political direction of the chief, however overt or covert they may be issued. As an MP in South Africa indicated:

> "In a situation where a chief chooses to endorse you, 80% of his subjects are likely
> to vote for the [endorsed] political party"[143].

The observation of the MP brings two understandings to the fore. First, endorsements are not a given and are exercised at the chief's own discretion. "In a situation where the chief chooses to endorse" implies that one cannot entirely bank hopes on such endorsements and must probably earn it or work for it. How, or the kind of activities MPs in South Africa should engage in to earn these endorsements is the subject of the next section. The second and perhaps most important observation from the quote is the assumed percentage of electorates who are likely to be swayed by chiefly endorsements. The fact that 8 out of every 10 electorates in the chief's area of jurisdiction are likely to vote in accord with the chief's endorsement shows how influential traditional authorities are in affecting electoral outcomes in South Africa. Although the perceived influence of chiefs over the electoral choices of voters trails behind religious leaders (80 percent and 98 percent respectively), they are still very significant political actors who affect electoral outcomes enormously.

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[143] SA_23: Interview, 14.02.2020, Cape Town

These observations were common throughout my interviews with the MPs in South Africa. MPs from [especially] the African National Congress (ANC) and the Zulu originated Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) appear to consciously build good relationships with traditional authorities to maintain their electoral appeal[144]. The Democratic Alliance (DA), however, did not appear to be very keen on endorsements by either traditional or religious leaders. Open political endorsements are becoming conventional across African democracies (see Baldwin, 2015; Gottlieb and Larreguy, 2016; Gyampo, 2011; Paller, 2014). In situations where chiefs [for obvious reasons of projecting their neutrality, at least in the open] are not willing to overtly endorse a candidate, they find ways of doing so behind the scenes (Ansa-Koi, 1998). Usually, due to the huge moral reputation at their disposal, they may try to act above partisanship at least, overtly notwithstanding their subtle, indirect involvements

The embeddedness of chiefs in local social networks, their functional efficiency, and the great respect they command usually accord them strong behind-the-scenes vote brokerage capabilities. When I sought more information on this in Ghana, a Member of Parliament on the ticket of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) explained to me the chieftaincy power constellations in his constituency and how he navigates around them to remain in their good books. First, he mentions how "weighty" chiefly endorsements are to his career. For that reason, he maintains contacts with them "anytime" he visits the constituency to report on his activities in parliament and seek inputs on his future parliamentary engagements. On the political and electoral influence of chiefs in his constituency, he indicates that:

> "…very very weighty. In terms of the Chief, I have to contend with three paramountcies, very prominent ones of course and the two (in Akan, they call them Abrempong). In English, they are not paramount chiefs; they are not in the House of Chiefs, but they have a prominent position in Otumfour's palace. So, they are very important and they are two of them here. So, I have five in all to contend with. These are the ones that I normally liaise with and anytime I find myself in the constituency, I have to pay them courtesy calls and we discuss what happened in parliament, some of the suggestions that came up, they will bring up, we discuss

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[144] SA_19: Interview, 19.02.2020 Cape Town

and then sometimes they will bring up their views and say, yes, this one we think
you got it right; this one we think you should have done it this way and all that".[145]

The local political clout and influence of traditional chiefs are understandable given their historical, functional and performance legitimacy in the Ghanaian context. They are able to identify properly with community sentiments and coupled with their accessibility to the ordinary people; they can influence their political choices. The same can be observed on local party officials in similar contexts. They live in the communities while the MP is in the capital attending to parliamentary business. They, therefore, are in constant contact with the voters in the absence of the MP. They become very important vote brokers in their communities. In situations where national executives of the party get down into community-level party activities, they rely on the local branches for access to the electorates[146]. They are very important actors who control the chunk of the votes Members of Parliament require to be in parliament. Their endorsement in the form of "loyalty" and "hard work" is key to swaying votes to the endorsed MP. On the other hand, disloyal local party elites can influence local despondency towards Members of Parliament and frustrate the re-(s)election chances. Two Parliamentarians in Ghana and South Africa respectively shared their electoral stories with me below:

> "what has helped me really in the past is, may be, the strength of the grassroots. I
> have maintained a group of very loyal polling station executives and foot soldiers…
> very hardworking people. They are firm on the grounds… it is their work that
> brings in our votes[147]"

> "If you have a bad relationship with or you are an enemy to members of the
> executives, you might find yourself in a situation where you are at the wrong end
> of their decisions[148].

Although local party officials are already party actors, and so their endorsements should ordinarily mean little to the voter. However, the salience of their distributive role, for instance, in the community, makes them indispensable in the electoral calculations of the

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[145] GH_3: Interview, 18.08.2018 Accra
[146] SA_10: Interview, 25.05.2020, Cape Town
[147] GH_4: Interview, 09.09.2018, Accra
[148] PA_28: Interview, 12.02.2020, Cape Town

voter. Just like the clergy and traditional leaders, they do not only mobilise voters and recruit party candidates for general elections, but their relevance also transcends party borders. The continuous supply of public goods and services by community actors in African democracies make local residents turn to them in order to get things done – making them influential vote brokers.

6.11 Constituency orientation: The effect of local pressure

MPs spend in South Africa and Ghana are perceived to spend little time in their constituencies and maintain very few contacts with constituents due to the nature of their constituency engagements that typically focuses on influential local figures (Chapters Four and Five). On a typical constituency visit, MPs engage with the chiefs in the areas, report to them on the happenings in parliament and take their opinions. They would meet with the local party officials, report to them and roll out her next constituency projects through them. On Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, they would complete the constituency visit by worshipping with a few churches and Mosques. As a Ghanaian MP told me on his frequent visit to the chief in his constituency:

> "I have to pay them courtesy calls and we discuss what happened in parliament, some of the suggestions that came up, they will bring up, we discuss and then sometimes they will bring up their views and say, yes, this one we think you got it right; this one we think you should have done it this way and all that".[149]

From the quote, paying courtesy calls on chiefs to discuss parliamentary matters is something that he must do anytime he visits his constituency. This shows the central role the chiefs play in the representational decisions of parliamentarians. It was apparent that the representational activities of South African and Ghanaian MPs typically involved paying courtesy calls on traditional chiefs or religious elites in the communities as well as holding party meetings with local Management Committees or branch executives. The purpose of these engagements is to pick suggestions from these local elites for representation. The representational focus of MPs in both countries are heavily influenced by local political forces. Frequenting the constituency for local engagements and focusing disproportionately

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[149] GH_3: Interview, 18.08.2018 Accra

on constituency issues is not only a re-(s)election strategy for individual parliamentarians but also a strategy for building local reputation and electoral viability by political parties.

There is, therefore, a relationship between electoral vulnerability and the constituency effort of MPs in Africa's new democracies. This could not have been put better when one MP in Ghana intimated that, suggestions from traditional chiefs are better considered for the "good" of the MP and the constituency. This is due to the huge electoral influence chiefs wield. For many MPs, their representational activities are directly under the influence of local chiefs, religious leaders, or party officials. After their elections, therefore, it is the pastors in the constituency, for instance, who "mentor" and "teach" them on how to conduct their representational activities (see Paller, 2014). Again, whenever they fail, it is the church that ought to take the responsibility, as quoted below. This invariably implies that the MP basically holds office at the convenience of the clergy and, therefore, they have unfettered influence over his representational choices.

> "…They [*i.e., the chiefs*] represent the people in various ways and are in touch with their plights and needs. They usually try not to impose their thoughts on you but when they make any suggestion, you really have to consider it for your own good as well as for the good of the constituency"[150].

> "I will not be the MP. You pastors, you the ministers of God will be the MPs of this constituency. It is you, the pastors, who share the obligation. You must mentor me, teach me, and call me back if I am not fulfilling my mandate. If I fail, it's the failure of you pastors. It's the failure of the Church"[151]

Although balancing activities in the party, constituency and parliament proportionately is at the heart of legislative representation, MPs in South Africa and Ghana spend time unevenly attending to constituency issues to the disadvantage of party and national representation. Two election-related reasons account for this. On the one hand, constituency effort is tied to intra-party re-nomination by the branches of political parties in South Africa. Similarly, in

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[150] GH_15: Interview, 23.09.2018, Accra
[151] Nii Lantey Vanderpuye, MP for Odododiodio constituency, Ghana, in Paller (2014:129)

Ghana, parliamentarians commit to constituency productivity to signal to polling station and constituency executives to re-select them in the next constituency primaries. The second election-related reason concerns the quest for re-election. This is the quest to secure a favourable position on the party list after nomination in the case of South Africa or to win the First-Past-the-Post constituency parliamentary election in the case of Ghana.

But how do local informal elites influence legislative representation in favour of constituency work? They do so by exploiting the legislators' own self-interest - that is, the quest for intra-party re-selection and inter-party re-election. Since parliamentarians in Ghana and South Africa are better off electorally when aligned with chiefs, the clergy and local party officials, they use their local political influence to encourage parliamentarians to roll out styles and foci of representation that are in sync with local interest. As displayed in Table 6.8, due to their prominence to the career of Members of Parliament, local informal elites can induce parliamentarians to prioritise constituency service disproportionately over other aspects of the MPs' job and their success in this bargain resides strongly in their ability to utilise promises of future electoral rewards or punishments to shape MPs' behavioural choices.

While MPs have unfettered access to the electorates, they prefer to campaign mostly indirectly through local brokers. They utilise local chiefs, religious leaders and religious elites due to their social proximity to the people[152], their firmness on the grounds[153], the power of their endorsements[154], among several other reasons. Again, as one MP observed, the chiefs are representatives of their local communities[155]. They, therefore, become a means through which local aspirations and preferences are conveyed to the MP. It is not uncommon to see chiefs lead delegations to parliament to impress on MPs in their constituencies to fulfil a promise made or to lobby for projects to the community (see Lindberg, 2010). Consequently, while avenues for direct MP–constituents interactions exist and are utilised, both actors prefer mediated engagements through informal local elites.

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[152] SA_17: Interview, 27.02.2020, Cape Town
[153] GH_4: Interview, 09.09.2018, Accra
[154] SA_23: Interview, 14.02.2020, Cape Town
[155] GH_15: Interview, 23.09.2018, Accra

Table 6. 8: Constituency focus as a consequence of local elites' demands

Steps 1-4	Intra-party candidate selection	Inter-party parliamentary election
1. Local elites' electoral influence	-Branches nominate candidates for selection on the party list or select candidates for general elections. -Traditional and religious leaders step in to discourage others from contesting preferred candidates	-Community level campaigns rests on local party executives and branches. Provincial and national parties play only limited roles in local campaigns. -Community voters cast their ballot on endorsement signals they pick from their chiefs or pastors
2. MPs' (career) reliance on local elites	The re-selection prospects of parliamentarians are tied to their being in the good books of influential local figures	To be returned to parliament, MPs are better off enjoying the endorsements of powerful chiefs, religious leaders and local party elites
3. Local elites' preference for local constituency work	Local elites are embedded in the local community and care more about local development. They reward MPs who display local constituency effort	Community development is key on the agenda of local elites due to their residence in the local community. Endorsements and campaigns are tied to constituency productivity
4. MPs' quest for parliamentary office	They exploit the MPs' quest for re-selection against them by tying the success of intra-party selection with constituency productivity	Since MPs care about re-election, they invest the lion's share of their time and other resources in constituency service to be electorally appealing

Again, as addressed in some details in the next section, parliamentarians in South Africa and Ghana face bottom-up pressure from informal local elites for constituency service much as they face top-down pressure from formal state-level institutions simultaneously - like compulsory parliamentary attendance[156], mandatory participation in party caucus meetings,

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[156] Article 97(1)(C) of Ghana's 1992 Constitutions states that "A member of Parliament shall vacate his seat in Parliament if he is absent, without the permission in writing of the Speaker and he is unable to offer a reasonable explanation to the

etc. Yet, they strategically respond to the incentive or pressure that has a more determinative effect on their re-(s)election prospects – i.e., the incentives emanating from local informal institutions. They do this because, formal state institutions are fragile, soft and weak. As Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999) observed, state officials know that they could circumvent formal rules and suffer very little to nothing for it. This is what led them to christen the continent as *institutionless* due to the ineffectiveness of the formal rules of the political game to bite political actors who appear largely "*untamed*" (Prempeh, 2008).

If Parliamentarians can get away with chronic absenteeism in parliament, for instance, but not from the chiefs' summons for local engagements, then why would they concentrate on parliament? As a result, the constitutional injunctions for parliamentary attendance, notwithstanding, truancy is common and postponement of parliamentary sittings for lack of quorum in Ghana is commonplace. In 2017, a parliamentary monitoring group in Ghana, Odekro, reported that thirty-nine (39) MPs were absent for more than the 15-day constitutional limit without the Speaker's express permission[157], yet the provisions of Article 97(1)(C) failed to apply. Thus, in determining representational outcomes in contexts with strong community forces and weak/soft state structures, informal networks are key even though they may operate side by side formal institutions. But it must be pointed out preliminarily that the relevance of both types of institutions may vary along electoral contextual and geographical lines – a point I discuss in the following sub-section.

6.12 Party and parliamentary focus: Effects of geography and marginality

I find that not all MPs in South Africa and Ghana are constituency minded. As the analysis in Chapters Four and Five showed, some South African MPs ignore their "Constituency Mondays" and remain in Cape Town to continue working on their portfolio committees or attend to party issues or fly to Pretoria for executive/ministerial functions. Also, as of September 2018, one Ghanaian MP had gone to his constituency only twice since the commencement of their term in January 2017[158]. What explains why some MPs show great constituency effort while others do not? I find that representation of rural-urban

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Parliamentary Committee on Privileges from fifteen sittings of a meeting of Parliament during any period that Parliament has been summoned to meet and continues to meet"
[157] Odekro (2017) see report http://www.odekro.org/Images/Uploads/Absenteeism%20Report_18_Dec_17.pdf
[158] GH_14: Interview, 28.09.2018 Accra

constituencies and rank ordering of candidates on the party list or electoral safety have strong explanatory power over MPs' disposition towards constituency productivity.

Table 6. 9: Electoral/geographical context and representational focus

	Swing	Safe
Rural	*constituency*	*Constituency*
Urban	*constituency*	*Parliament/Party*

Based on (1) the MPs' self-description of their constituencies and (2) the primary focus of their representational activities, it was found that those who represent rural constituencies tend to focus more on constituency representation. A similar influence is present but weaker in urban constituencies where informal institutional actors like chiefs and religious leaders mainly play marginal roles relating to cultural, spiritual, ceremonial, or advisory roles (Różalska, 2016). Their consequential relevance and power to influence representational outcomes are weaker. As a result, MPs who represent urban constituencies in South Africa and Ghana tend to focus more on activities at the country-level[159]. The focus on parliament or party is also popular amongst MPs who hold institutional positions in the legislature. That is to say that chairpersons of portfolio committees, caucus leaders and party whips tend to focus less on constituency representation than the relatively junior and new members. These experienced groups of parliamentarians tend to coincidentally occupy top positions on their party's lists. They enjoy a certain degree of electoral security, given their prominence to both the party and parliament.

6.13 Conclusion

A comparison of legislative representation in Ghana and South Africa shows that MPs in both cases show great constituency effort notwithstanding their embeddedness in dissimilar

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[159] See previous Chapters, especially Four and Five

formal institutional, structural and historical contexts. I sought to find out which variables explain the popularity of constituency representation in both cases. Chapters Four and Five pointed to the mediated character of legislative representation in both countries. The chapters showed that the representational activities of MPs in South Africa and Ghana happen within a complex network of actors and mediators. The MPs establish and/or work through local party structures or informal local actors in much of their representational activities. In this chapter, I drew conclusions on the relationship between the presence of these influential local elites in the MPs' electoral context in both countries and the popularity of constituency representation.

I first analysed the exact role of local political actors in the election of legislators in both countries and analysed the institutional and contextual factors that interact to explain the influence of local elites over the electoral decisions of voters. Lastly, the chapter looked at the extent to which the influence over local voting decisions cloth local elites with additional influence over MPs' representational choices. I find that the weakness, unwillingness or inability of the South African and Ghanaian states to provide basic social welfare programmes as well as the fragility of formal institutional constraints in both cases, create a platform for traditional chiefs, religious elites and branch executives of political parties to address local social dilemma problems and hence play state-substitution roles. This informal role, in effect, enables these local elites to accumulate resources and followers to hone their political and electoral bargaining power. They consolidate this power over time and use it to mount pressure on legislators – whose electoral fortunes depend largely on the mobilisation and endorsements of these local elites – to focus disproportionately on the constituency.

CHAPTER SEVEN

LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATION IN AFRICAN DEMCRACIES: A CONCLUDING REMARK

> "After the process of writing this Act, we should be able to proudly proclaim the country as a Republic of the United Kingdoms of South Africa"
>
> Patekile Holomisa, Traditional Leader and Member of the National Assembly on the ticket of the Africa National Congress (ANC) political party.

> "Oftentimes when it comes to making laws, you don't see more than 50 people in the House, and of the 50, the business of crafting legislation rests on not more than 20"
>
> Hon. Osei Kyei Mensah Bonsu, Majority leader, Ghana's Parliament

7.1 Introduction: Goal of the research

In this dissertation, I analysed the trade-offs African legislators make in performing their representational functions and discussed the institutional as well as contextual factors that underlie legislative representational choices. I have argued that who or what MPs in Africa represent and what they do exactly in the act of representation is hardly explicitly regulated. Additionally, why they choose to focus on the entities they primarily represent is scarcely straightforward. As a result, understanding the factors that underlie legislative representational behaviour in Africa can be particularly complex. This complexity is especially evident in contexts where both informal norms and formally established institutions intricately co-exist to provide a multifaceted array of behavioural incentives and constraints for MPs. To be sure, even in advanced democracies, formal institutions usually tend to place very limited constraints on individual legislators in the performance of their collective parliamentary functions (Cain et al., 1987). This means that MPs are largely left on their own to figure out which aspect(s) of their multifaceted representational roles to focus on.

Consider individual parliamentarians in Ghana and South Africa, for example. Despite the dedication of full constitutional chapters and Standing Orders to the collective functions of 'Parliament', individual MPs are left out to operate on very ill defined lines of responsibility. Just as Bruce Cain and his colleagues observed of the US Constitution, while Chapters 10 and 4 of the Constitutions of Ghana and South Africa respectively have well-elaborated

provisions on the functions, powers, etc. of the 'legislature', the same cannot be said of the 'legislator'. This lacuna opens the floodgates for the placement of all manner of mutually conflicting sets of representational expectations on the legislators.

Voters in the constituency, for instance, expect their MP to either be present in the constituency or otherwise commit selectively to championing or redressing local concerns. The state, on the other hand, expects the same legislator to be in the parliamentary chamber to sponsor legislations, ask questions, attend portfolio committee sittings and contribute to debates on the floor. All of these activities require the MP to leave the constituency to rather be at the parliament arena in the capital. The MP must therefore deal with the dilemma of either focusing on the constituency or the parliamentary office. Membership of parliamentary parties also simultaneously puts another layer of expectation on MPs. They are expected to always fall in line with the party whip system in parliament, join committees that bring strategic benefits to the party and debate and vote in line with the party's position. These expectations are without respect to the possibility of the party's position conflicting with the constituents' preferences.

The MP's job, therefore, requires a constant need to navigate thick layers of mutually incompatible sets of pressure and demands. Incompatible in the sense that, paying more attention to activities in the parliamentary arena may adversely affect those in the local constituency or the party and vice versa. Owing to finite resources, legislators may lack the ability to attend to these competing activities in equal measure. Trade-offs are therefore eminent since it is practically not possible to perfectly divide time and effort to satisfy intra-parliamentary duties, extra-parliamentary assignments and party work uniformly. In selecting which representational option(s) to emphasise, how do the legislators make trade-offs and which cohort of factors underlie their eventual representational focus? What are the key explanations for the representational foci legislators in Africa adopt? The study investigated these issues drawing empirically on Members of the Ghanaian Parliament and the South African National Assembly.

I sought to explain why some MPs set their priorities on national policy work in parliament while others focus on the local constituency or party work. I have emphasised based on previous research that, legislators strategically adopt and switch roles owing to at least four factors. The first is the electoral institutional contexts within which they operate. This explanation conceives of representational behaviour as a product of the electoral institutions

that preside over the election of MPs. Constituency-orientation is, for instance, deemed a function of candidate-centred electoral institutions like the majoritarian system. Legislators elected under party-list proportionality, on the other hand, are hypothesised to take on more party or nationwide representational roles. Secondly, the mechanism of internal party candidate selection is equally theorised to have a determinative effect on the representational choices of MPs. Those elected under inclusive selection procedures are expected to demonstrate greater constituency effort than those selected by an oligarchy of top party officials. Exclusive selection, therefore, makes legislators highly party conscious. Thirdly, history is said to matter for the adoption of representational foci. This argument underlines the salience of resilient legacies of the past, such as colonial programmes. For instance, MPs in former settler colonies in Africa are expected to have a higher inclination towards internal parliamentary duties than those in non-settler colonies. Finally, resource constraint and its attendant prevalence of electoral clientelism are also said to affect legislators' representational priorities. In contexts where electoral clientelism is prevalent, parliamentarians are expected to focus more on constituency clientelistic networks to the disadvantage of party or parliamentary work. Conversely, the limited pervasiveness of clientelistic demands from constituents is expected to free up MPs to concentrate more on their collective functions, either in parliament or in the party.

While the above conclusions may be plausible, I have highlighted their analytical limits. Therefore, utmost caution ought to be taken not to overstress their effects in emerging democracies in Africa. I have argued that these hypotheses present grave weaknesses in explaining representational behaviour in Africa for three main reasons. First, formal institutions have questionable explanatory capacity in Africa's predominantly informal context. I have shown that, despite the gradual entrenchment of democratic culture in South Africa and Ghana, it does not look like the informal realm is on the verge of annihilation. If anything, the relevance of informal institutions is on the ascendency. It is, therefore, problematic to attempt to explain political behaviour in largely informal contexts with exclusively formal institutional theories. Additionally, empirical evidence in the literature paints either a mixed or gloomy picture about the effects of such institutions as electoral systems on political behaviour. While some authors have utterly condemned formal institutions as being generally symbolic and weak to have any meaningful effect on political behaviour, this dissertation took a different position. I have argued that it will be untenable to completely dismiss their relevance in the study of legislative representation in Africa,

however weak they may be. Their explanatory power is, however, contextually bounded. Second, empirical evidence points to the fact that, the role orientation and actual behaviour of legislators in Africa are not differentiated along any clear-cut patterns representing colonial legacies. As such, colonial indicators do not help much in appreciating contemporary legislative representational choices. Lastly, since material handouts to voters are seasonal and periodic, it is difficult to continuously shape legislative representation in between elections.

With these theoretical conclusions in mind and with the aim of understanding the drivers of representational choices, I went out to gather two sets of evidence. The first focused on the representational activities and priorities of African legislators. I secondly investigated the factors that underlie those choices. From the above theoretical postulations, it might appear intuitive to assume that South African MPs would prioritise partisan or universal/nationwide representation while their Ghanaian counterparts might be expected to focus primarily on the constituency. But my findings showed, on the contrary, as follows:

1. Despite the formal institutional, structural and historical disincentives – there is a relevant level of constituency orientation among Members of the South Africa National Assembly.
2. In the same way, despite formal institutional, structural and historical incentives – constituency orientation is not the exclusive focus of MPs in Ghana, even if dominant.

The second goal was then to investigate the exact forces that systematically underlie the MPs' priorities and explain variations in the representational foci of the various MPs. The aim here was to propose an alternative explanation for the legislative representational choices of African MPs.

7.2 Lessons learned

In the following sub-sections, I summarise the main result of the study in four thematic areas. First, I present findings on the constituency obsession of MPs in both South Africa and Ghana. Secondly, I show that, despite the popularity of 'the constituency' as a representational focus, MPs in both cases immensely utilise local intermediaries when interfacing with the constituents. In what follows, I provide a summary of the nature,

resources, power and consequential influence of these local intermediaries on (1) the voting behaviour of the electorates in their jurisdiction and (2) the representational foci of the MPs representing constituencies in their jurisdiction. I conclude by highlighting the limits to their influence, particularly how (1) electoral and (2) geographical factors affect the influence of the local elites on MPs' representational choices.

7.2.1 Constituency popularity

In spite of South Africa's perfect party-list proportionality, Members of the National Assembly were found to commit a lot of resources into constituency work. However, the popularity of constituency work does not mean the non-existence of MPs who primarily focus on their parties and their work in portfolio committees. I found wide variations in the representational focus of MPs in South Africa, notwithstanding the dominance of constituency servants. A section of the MPs displays high levels of party centeredness. Not only that, but there are also others who spend most of their time in the parliamentary arena in Cape Town working in committees, contributing to parliamentary debates and engaging in collective state-wide policymaking. We can therefore conclude that political parties and the state constitute two competing principals that legislators in South Africa serve, albeit on a comparatively lower scale. There is humongous evidence suggesting that most of the members of the National Assembly are primarily locally-oriented rather. Advocacy for local concerns and solving parochial constituency problems remain the most popular representational activity of MPs in South Africa.

In contrast to existing theoretical expectations, MPs in South Africa were found to spend every Monday in their assigned constituencies in a funded parliamentary programme dubbed "Constituency Mondays". For many of the MPs, 'Constituency Mondays' is usually a natural follow up on the activities in the constituency the previous weekend. This finding is puzzling if one considers South Africa's PR electoral system and the expectations that come with it. While Ghanaian MPs, for instance, usually spend their weekend "home" in their local constituencies, they do not operate on a sanctioned programme by the Parliament of Ghana. They also do travel back to Accra usually on Mondays for the commencement of the week's plenary and committee work starting on Tuesdays. This means that Mondays are technically not constituency days on the calendar of Ghanaian MPs. But they are MPs who are theoretically expected to spend comparatively more time "home". As such, ceteris

paribus, South African legislators spend 24 hours more on constituency service than their Ghanaian counterparts.

Additionally, South African MPs are paid hundreds of millions of Rands through their political parties in the form of 'Political Party Constituency Allowance' (PPCA). These funds are made available to the MPs every month and are intended to establish and maintain a parliamentary presence in the local constituencies. The funds are also to be used for the creation of Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs). There are currently more than three hundred and fifty (350) PCOs scattered across the country where voters and their MPs are expected to interface. The PCOs are mutually beneficial to the local constituents as well as the MP. For the local communities, the parliamentary offices help them get access to their MPs. It again creates a platform where their needs get ventilated and possibly, redressed. For the MP, on the other hand, the parliamentary offices create an avenue for constant contact with civil society as well as the local branches of their parties.

I found again that many Ghanaian MPs also operate constituency offices across the country, but there is hardly any data to appreciate its operations and numbers. This does not, however, imply the absence of local representation. Although some Ghanaian MPs commit to party and parliamentary representation, a large majority of them emphasise the constituency as their primary focus of representation. One of the main differences between South Africa and Ghana relative to constituency work is the funding for Parliamentary Constituency Offices that is present in the former but not the latter. Whereas the National Assembly votes special allowances for the establishment of these offices in South Africa, I found no such funding programme in Ghana. Ghanaian MPs, therefore, rent their own spaces and employ office staff at their own expense.

It is particularly important to reiterate that constituency service in both countries is anything but a homogenous set of activities. I found that the MPs vary widely regarding the character of the services they render to their constituents. Both within and across the two cases, the MPs were found to typically roll out a diverse range of activities when they either visit "home" or do constituency work in the legislative capitals, Cape Town or Accra. However, despite this diversity, four main patterns exist in the constituency styles of Ghanaian and South African legislators:

1. Office hours: I found that making time to interface with constituents in the parliamentary office in the constituency and making targeted interventions for those with questions or issues is a core constituency style in both cases.

2. Visits: Again, meeting, touring, engaging, attending public functions and inspecting ongoing projects are also popular in both cases.

3. The provision of basic services: MPs in both engage in services such as lobbying and supplying local infrastructural projects and providing community-relevant services in the areas of security, agriculture, among others.

4. Constituency advocacy inside Parliament: The MPs lastly use parliament as a platform to pursue constituency objectives. Many MPs in both cases pick constituency issues or concerns for onward articulation on the floor of Parliament instead of addressing them in the local constituency.

7.2.2 Mediated local representation

Another key finding of this study is the elite-centeredness of legislative representation in both South Africa and Ghana. In Chapters Four and Five, I showed how MPs in both countries conduct their constituency activities usually through a thick layer of local actors who rather interface with the constituents. I found that while the parliamentarians may be present in their Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs) to do surgeries with local individuals and groups, their other constituency work strategies (e.g., visits, meetings, advocacy and basic services provision) usually involve mediated representation. This means that the MPs rather [prefer to] establish or work through local party structures or informal local actors such as traditional and religious elites in much of their representational activities. I found that some political parties in South Africa especially encourage their MPs to, as the first step after their constituency assignments, put together a committee of locally-based party functionaries to facilitate the MPs' work in the constituency in their absence.

The ANC, for instance, impress on its MPs to establish Constituency Management Committees comprising an Administrator, the ANC local council representatives and the ANC's Alliance structures. Members of this committee become pivotal in the constituency activities of the MP. But also, beyond them, MPs in both cases conduct their constituency activities through several actors, including local chiefs, religious leaders, heads of community-based organisations and interest groups, among others. Although the MPs know that a direct engagement with the constituency voter is possible, they rather show a

preference for mediated representation, as depicted in Figure 7.1. The utility in this indirect, mutually beneficial engagement is the subject of the next sub-section. The point here is that, although constituency service is popular among MPs in Ghana and South Africa, few voters directly encounter their MPs. I have presented public opinion data that points to the disconnect between MPs in Ghana and South Africa on the one hand and their constituents on the other.

Figure 7. 1: The mediated relationship among local elites, MP and the voter
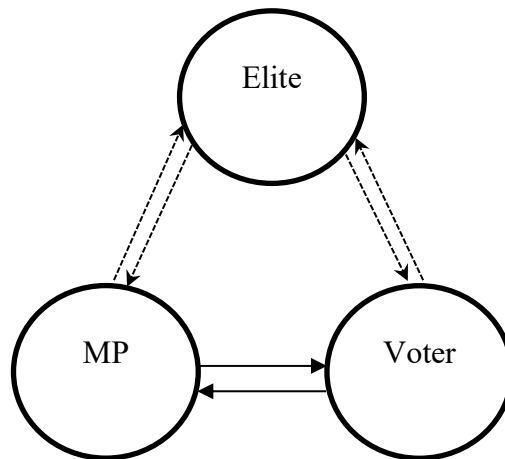
Source: Own illustration

In sum, except for 'office hours', the rest of the constituency activities of the MP either entirely excludes or partially includes the median voter. I found that there is a distinction between 'constituency work' and maintaining 'contacts with the median voter' in Ghana and, to a higher extent, South Africa. This means that while the MPs engage disproportionately in constituency work, they do so not directly with the constituents but, as I have mentioned, usually through local constituency elites. So that while the MPs are perceived to be disconnected from the average constituents, they maintain informal relations with local party figures in the form of Constituency Management Committees/polling station executive bodies and influential religious and traditional authorities. These engagements rather become integral in the constituency work of MPs in the country.

7.2.3 Strong elites in weak states: Networks, resources and influence

Another point that was brought to the fore in the study was the popularity of informal elites in weak state contexts. The transition of Ghana to democracy in 1992 and the demise of the Apartheid regime in South Africa in 1994 have not succeeded in completely annihilating the

informal realm of politics. The analysis presented in this dissertation showed that informal local elites are still very crucial in the representational decisions of Members of Parliament in Ghana and South Africa. I found, however, that their relevance is context-driven and sourced from the weakness and softness of the Ghanaian and South African state. The working definition of elites for the study was from Benedicte Bull (2014:120), who sees them as "groups of individuals that, due to their control over natural, economic, political, social, organisational, symbolic (expertise/knowledge) or coercive resources, stand in a privileged position to formally or informally influence decisions and practices that have broad societal impact". The study has shown that because the Ghanaian and the South African states are weak, informal elites become stronger in affecting legislative representational outcomes.

The concepts of state weakness and softness were used by Göran Hydén (2013) to capture the fragility and wobbling capacity of the state in Africa. In this study, I found at least, three strands of empirical evidence on Ghana and South Africa to support Hydén's claim. First, in many circumstances, the state tends to succumb to community pressures and gets shaped by it instead of the other way around. An immediate example is the many concessions of the Post-Apartheid South African state to traditional authorities mentioned in Chapter Six. One of these community pressures led to the passage of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (TLGFA) of 2003, which effectively shared state-sanctioned local governance power with unelected traditional leaders. Succumbing to these pressures, the South African state, through the TLGFA empowered, solidified and expanded the statutory power of traditional leaders in the areas of land administration, health and welfare, security, the management of natural resources, disaster management, among others.

In this scenario, the authority of the South African state got compromised by community entities and sentiments that ordinarily ought to be subordinated to it. The weak Ghanaian and South African states, therefore, supervise societies that are stronger and sometimes competitive and this makes the state rather subservient in exercising controls over it. Again, I have shown that, in many rural parts of the countries, the reach of the state appears too weak. Hydén scales this contention up to cover the entire continent when he argued that the state of Africa is weak and especially so in the peripheral parts within its own borders. This is to the extent that the state is forced, in some instances, to rely on informal actors like chiefs and non-state forms of authority like the clergy for access to many rural parts.

Secondly, I found evidence to support the claim the state in Africa is soft. Soft in the sense that formal institutions in Ghana and South Africa are fragile and do very little to shape political outcomes. State officials could, as a result, circumvent formal rules and suffer very little to nothing for it. This means that the presence of formal rules does essentially little to coerce rule-bound behaviour. This claim, perhaps, finds better expression in Ghana's constitutional injunction on MPs to not miss more than fifteen parliamentary sittings without an express permission from the Speaker. However, absenteeism is rampant and has caused Ghana's parliament to suspend several sittings for lack of quorum. But there is hardly any application of the laws against chronic absentee MPs. I have shown that in two parliamentary meetings in 2017, as many as thirty-nine MPs were absent for more than the constitutional limit of 15 days but escaped sanctions. While Ghana has very elaborate legal frameworks and clearly laid out rules of the game, their application to political life has been weak. There is wide admission among several Africanists, as discussed in Chapter Three, that formal rules in Africa largely exist on paper and have only symbolic value.

Finally, the Ghanaian and South African states were found to be weak owing to their struggling fiscal capacity. I have highlighted the inability or unwillingness of the two states to deliver sustainable economic growth, redistribute income equitably and enact binding policies that engineer private sector development. Unemployment in South Africa, for example, according to the Bloomberg world survey, is the highest globally, as discussed in Chapter Six. This is against the more than 3.5 million South Africans citizens of school-going age who are not yet enrolled. With collapsed social institutions, poverty and a defunct public system, the South African and Ghanaian governments struggle to meet the social welfare needs of their citizens in the form of access to quality and affordable healthcare, education, clean water, among several others, as discussed in Chapter Six.

These empirical findings corroborate Benedicte Bull's (2014) observation that wherever the state is weak, elites and their networks amass strength and influence. I found that the poor performance of the governments of Ghana and South Africa, especially at sub-national levels, in delivering socioeconomic outcomes, invariably creates space for informal institutions and elites to respond to the social welfare needs of the people in their jurisdiction. This creates a system of dependence of voters on informal elites in the community. Such elites include traditional leaders, religious elites, and polling station party officials at the grassroots. The study found in Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six that informal elites have

become integral in the performance of such [otherwise central or local government] functions as healthcare provision, safety and security, welfare, registration of births, deaths and customary marriages, arts and culture, land administration, justice delivery, among a host of others in Ghana and South Africa. Not only does the provision of these services come at a lower transaction cost to voters, but they also encourage community participation and are more in harmony with local customs and traditions than similar services provided by the state.

As a result, Ghanaians and South Africans perceive such local elites as religious leaders and chiefs as having demonstrated overtime venerable performance in their roles than state-sanctioned local government officials. They have consequently garnered comparatively better levels of trust than civic political actors such as MPs. With this high level of public trust, these local elites have gained performance legitimacy and moral credibility that has enabled them to accumulate resources and followers and consequently political/electoral bargaining power. The venerable performance of their state-substitution roles and functional effectiveness eventually leaves voters structurally dependent on them. Informal local elites are, consequently, able to exploit this local dependence electorally by either endorsing or rejecting parliamentary candidates while expecting voters to vote along.

In South Africa, more than 80% of voters are expected to vote for the chiefs' endorsed candidate, as highlighted in the analysis in the previous chapters. At the same time, when religious leaders endorse a parliamentary candidate, about 98% of voters under the leader are likely to vote in accord with the endorsement. Their indispensability in the community due to their elaborate roles spelt out in detail in Chapter Six is what clothes the local elites with an electorally significant fund of followers who consider their inputs and opinions before voting. They consequently become very important vote brokers in the communities, whose support and endorsement re-election seeking parliamentarians always court.

But informal elites are not only influential over voters in inter-party competitions; they also exert a lot of influence in internal party primaries. Local polling station executives or branches are part of the delegates that nominate candidates for selection on the party list or select candidates for general elections, as in the case of Ghana. Consequently, they have a huge role to play in the career continuation of Members of Parliament. Traditional leaders and religious elites also influence MPs' stay in office by discouraging others from contesting the 'blessed' candidate at the intra-party competition stage in what Jonah (2003) calls

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Patronage by Restriction of Competitors (PRC). This is where chiefs and the clergy maintain their influence by convincing, discouraging or coercing rival candidates out from contesting their preferred candidate. Loyal candidates are also pushed through by Chiefs by way of making sure that voters in their communities either register to vote or abstain from voting, whichever suits his purpose.

Leverage over voting decisions also brings re-election seeking parliamentarians into the dependency picture. MPs in South Africa and Ghana are better off electorally with the endorsement of the local informal elite. I have shown how important politicians in South Africa consider their relationships with traditional leaders and religious elites. Their representational activities are never complete without the involvement of the local chief and the religious big man. These are ways of ensuring the continued support of the local elite. During election campaigns, they throng the palaces and worship centres for prayers, prophesies, endorsements and encouragements. They are also quick to broadcast statements of endorsements to signal the local elite's support to the electorates. But I found that the support and endorsements of the local elites are conditional. They attach conditions and expect that parliamentarians will meet their demands as a condition precedent to future endorsements.

As I gathered in my interviews, MPs regularly pay courtesy calls on the chiefs and religious bodies in the constituency on their visits. The purpose of these engagements is to pick suggestions from local elites for representation. The representational focus of MPs in both countries is therefore heavily influenced by local political forces. The local elites use the opportunity of the MP's visits to espouse constituency concerns for redress. Because most of these local elites live and make their living in the communities as well as front for local developments themselves, they condition their endorsements on local constituency representation. Frequenting the constituency for local engagements and focusing disproportionately on constituency issues, therefore, is not only a re-(s)election strategy for individual parliamentarians but also a strategy for building local reputation and electoral viability by political parties.

While MPs in Ghana and South Africa face pressure for parliamentary work in Accra and Cape Town, respectively, they have more incentive to attend to constituency service. Moreover, even though their party caucuses expect party representation, they have more incentive to disproportionately represent the interest of their constituents. The presence and

influence of informal local elites at the MPs' electoral context affect and direct the MPs representational focus unduly to the constituency. The reason is straightforward; while the weakness of the state accentuates the relevance of community actors, thereby increasing their electoral bargaining powers, the softness of the state renders formal institutional injunctions on the MPs to concentrate on party or parliamentary issues ineffective.

7.2.4 Geographical context

The analysis demonstrated that the effects of informal elites on the representational foci of Ghanaian and South African legislators vary across geographical contexts. This implies that the representational strategy parliamentarians adopt, i.e., whether to focus on the state, party or constituency, is dependent on the degree of complexity of the constituencies the MPs represent. The analysis categorised parliamentarians in the two countries into two groups. The first comprised those who perceived their constituencies to be rural, deprived or underdeveloped and the second consisted of those who considered their constituencies to be urban. Without imposing these categories on the MPs, I sought to "see" the constituencies through the eyes of the very representative. This helps in matching various constituency complexities with specific representational foci. In the next step, I looked into the representational focus and the content of the representational activities of both groups of MPs for patterns of universal, party or constituency representation. I found that MPs focus more on the allocational and service-oriented aspects of their representational obligations when they represent rural constituencies. Rural MPs were found to deal more with constituency-related issues as unemployment, allocation, among others, while their counterparts representing urban constituencies place a comparatively minimal premium on local issues.

The concentration of rural-based MPs on constituency representation was not unexpected, given the presence and salience of local informal elites in those communities. Since local elites such as traditional chiefs get their influence and bargaining power from the absence and ineffectiveness of the state in rural peripheries, it was expected that they would play a state-substitution role, build strong power base and influence parliamentary representation more in rural than in urban areas. Even though religious organisations keep flourishing in major cities in Ghana and South Africa and new chieftaincies keep sprawling up in cities, informal elites in the cities only enjoy marginal significance in the lives of constituents in the city due to the strong presence of the state in those areas.

7.2.5 Electoral context

Again, the analysis showed that the MPs vary regarding their state of electoral vulnerability. The representational behaviour of MPs in South Africa who occupy top positions on the party list has very little effect on their electoral prospects. As such, these individual MPs concentrate mainly on parliamentary work without the fear of future electoral retribution. The effect of the independent variable is therefore minimal for electorally secured legislators. I also found that very senior MPs in the ANC, for instance, those who chair portfolio committees or lead their party's parliamentary caucuses or serve as party whips, tend to equally focus less on constituency representation than the relatively junior and new members.

The experienced group of parliamentarians who additionally hold institutional positions in the National Assembly tend to coincidentally occupy top positions on their party's lists. In the analysis, a candidate is ranked top on the party list if she occupies the top 20 percent of the party list and there is a sort of assurance that she is sufficiently safe to be elected to the next parliament. In the same vein, candidates whose seats have been won by their parties for four consecutive elections starting from 2008 are considered electorally safe in Ghana. Such MPs display lesser constituency focus than their electorally vulnerable counterparts. MPs representing marginal electoral districts, therefore, respond to their electoral vulnerability by showing strong constituency effort.

7.3 Sources of variation

Expectedly, the activity profiles of the legislators representing rural and urban constituencies were somewhat empirically difficult to clearly distinguish. The MPs overlap considerably as urban MPs show bits of constituency effort while rural MPs do not also exclusively concern themselves with local representation. But this is understandable as legislators do a bit of everything in their representation functions. The self-confession of their primary focus of representation was, however, helpful in clearly assigning them to their appropriate representational categories of universalist, party loyalists and constituency servants. As the analysis has pointed out, the various categories interestingly interact. For instance, there were parliamentarians who are electorally safe and at the same time represent rural constituencies. I found that such MPs' representational activities tilted more towards constituency works such as fronting for community projects, jobs for unemployed

constituents, constituency visits, attendance to constituency function, among other constituency-based activities.

It was found that Rural-Safe MPs have a great incentive for constituency representation due to the presence and strength of local informal institutions and actors in the rural constituency. Although electorally safe, the MPs do not consider themselves entire weaned from the influence of the local actors. They still face local pressure for constituency work. This is because, aside from general elections, informal local elites have enormous leverage over the MP's re-selection chances and by actually taking part in the selection process in internal party competitions. Second, Rural-Safe MPs display disproportionate constituency focus to build personal reputation for career enhancement. Some of the MPs have career advancement plans beyond the parliamentary office. I found that building reputation in the constituency is a way of projecting oneself for positions in the executive of or higher intra-parliamentary positions.

Figure 7. 2: Variation in constituency foci across geographical and electoral contexts
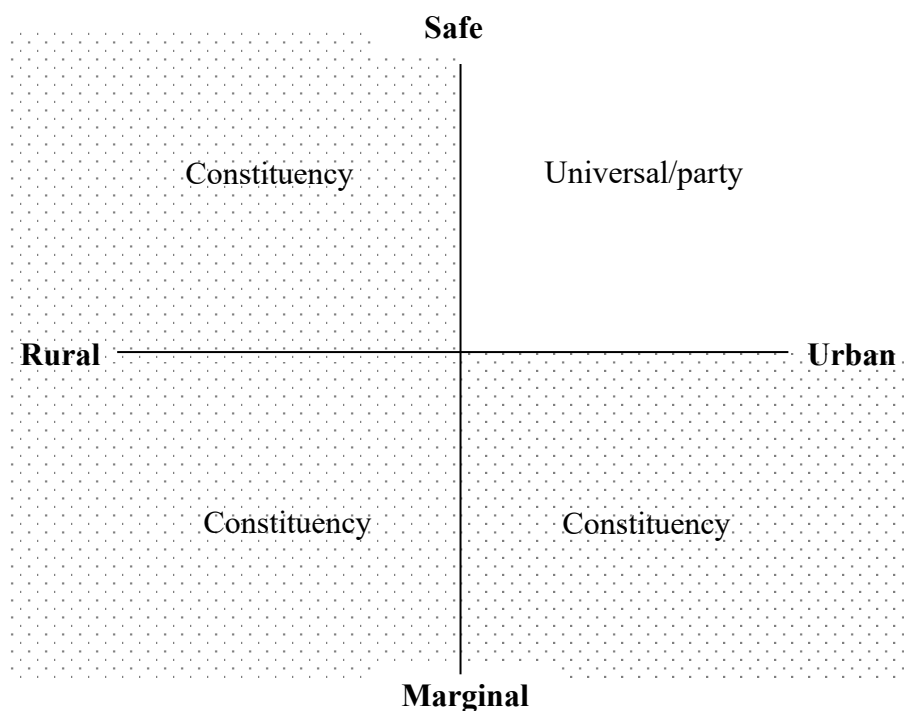
Source: Own illustration

Urban-Safe MPs in South Africa and Ghana are more concentrated on internal parliamentary or party representation. Two reasons account for this. First, they do not have urgent electoral incentives to dabble in constituency work to build a reputation for re-election. Secondly,

since informal institutions and elites play only symbolic, ceremonial and marginal roles in urban areas, they do not tend to have the leverage, and clout rural elites wield to affect parliamentary representational outcomes. Although they may also make suggestions to parliamentarians and endorse parliamentary candidates, they tend not to have the critical fund on followership and a structurally dependent cohort of electorates to threaten compliance.

I also found that Rural-Marginal as well as, Marginal-Urban MPs focus more on constituency representation than universal or party representation. First, due to their electoral marginality and the rurality of their constituencies, Rural-Marginal MPs have more incentive to commit to constituency service. They face two types of demands for constituency work. As it is with the Rural–Safe MPs, the first emanates from the local elites in whose constituency they operate. The second originates from the need to prioritise constituency work to endear themselves to the electorates for re-election. Although Marginal-Urban MPs do not represent constituencies where informal institutions are salient, they commit to constituency work, nonetheless in response to their electoral insecurity.

7.4 Contributions, limitations and implications for future research

The findings summarised above contribute to several bodies of academic scholarship. First is the research and debate on the salience of formal institutions on political processes and outcomes in emerging democracies in Sub-Saharan Africa. It also contributes to the democratisation-formalisation debate in African politics. The study supplies new evidence to show that the return to democracy of many states in Sub-Saharan Africa has not necessarily occasioned the formalisation of politics in the region. Again, the findings contribute to the literature on parliamentary representational roles and behaviour in new African democracies as well as contribute 'the context of Africa' to area studies on what accounts for the representational behaviour of different parliamentarians in different contexts. It also advances research on the salience of local political elites in weak and soft states. The study also adds to research on intra-party clientelism by distinguishing particularly between electoral and relational clientelism and spelling out their unique as well as differentiated relevance for parliamentary representational choices. Finally, the findings are relevant for advancing our knowledge on political behaviour in weak and soft state contexts. I elaborate on these points below.

The institutional landscape of African politics is still very polarised. Africanists still debate about the constraining and enabling effects of informal viz-a-viz formal institutions on African politics. There is hardly any conclusion on which strand of institutions should form the operative framework for understanding politics in the region. To be sure, two main schools of thought have dominated the literature of African politics: one represents the formal or optimistic school and the other represents the informal or pessimistic school. While the 'formalists' believe that formal institutions matter and ought to guide the analysis of political phenomena in Africa, the pessimists object to this position. They argue instead that analysts ought to exercise caution when dismissing the explanatory capacity of informal institutions and thus, informal institutions ought to be the framework within which to understand politics in Africa. While both positions are obviously convincing, they independently lead the study of African politics nowhere.

Based on the evidence presented in this study, I propose a dichotomous framework of institutional strength based on contextual factors. The study shows how the effects of formal institutions get moderated by the presence of strong informal institutions and actors in different geographical contexts within the same country. It concludes that instead of painting a generalised, independent picture of the constraining effect of either formal or informal institutions, attention must be paid to the context (the degree of rurality, for instance) and the salience of the providers of state-substitution programmes in detached peripheries of the state. The state's absence from remote constituencies encourages and emboldens informal institutions and actors to substitute formal institutions. The effect of institutions, therefore, whether formal or informal is more a contextual question. A such, informal institutions [just like their formal counterpart] provide enormous analytical and methodological leverage to institutional analysts.

Again, the findings of this study align with earlier observations that, the democratisation of Africa in the 1990s has not done much to completely annihilate the informal realm of politics. While we could talk of the strength of formal institutions in urban constituencies in Ghana and South Africa, I found that there is a huge 'state gap' in the countryside filled by informal elites. Although traces of formal political behaviour like the electoral culture exist in these areas, informal institutions largely dominate in determining political outcomes. The institution of chieftaincy, for instance, remains a very central political feature across the continent. This is especially so in the remote peripheries where the state's absence is most

felt. In spite of the region's democratisation, contemporary politics is not totally formalised. Traditional leaders aside, the study highlighted how local level religious elites and grassroot party activists control large followers as a result of their provision of local goods. This resource enables them to shape the representational choices of formally elected legislators. The presence of the modern state and the democratisation of Sub-Saharan Africa notwithstanding, wide-ranging formalisation is yet to take effect.

Given the above, political behaviour ought to be deconstructed and understood within the informal lens too, most importantly. This is inclusive of the study of legislative representational roles and behaviour – which still appears infant in the overall study of Africa politics. Although parliamentarians are indispensable to democracies, systematic theory-based empirical analyses of the behaviour, routines and activities of legislators in Africa and the underlining explanatory forces have been rare. This study, therefore, contributes to legislative studies by adding the context of Africa to the mainstream literature. Not only that, it provides an explanation for the representational options and expectations African legislators face, the primary entities they choose to represent, why they do so and how the institutions and contexts within which they are embedded shape these choices. As a starting point, Africanists investigating representational roles ought to focus more on the explanatory strength of informal norms and networks since representational choices are socially embedded and shaped by the preferences of powerful local elites in the MPs' electoral context. The study also contributes contextual knowledge to the research on representational behaviour of legislators. This is necessary to foster comparison of representational behaviour in Africa with other contexts.

Perhaps for Africanists, one important concept that has had a lot of explanatory impact is the concept of clientelism. While the behavioural impact of mutually beneficial exchange relations has been adequately documented, I distinguished between what Simeon Nichter (2010) calls electoral and relational clientelism to argue that the former – however popular it is with scholars – does not help much in understanding legislative behaviour as the latter. I have argued that electoral clientelism involves dispensing benefits to clients at specific times, especially during political campaigns. It is seasonal and ad hoc. As such, the patron establishes no constant patterns of interaction with the clients after elections. Relational clientelism, on the other hand, establishes long-lasting, constant exchange relations between the patron and the client. Parliamentarians who employ relational clientelism as a basis for

vote mobilisation strategically build personal networks at the grassroots through whom they reach out to the rest of the population. This relationship forms the basis for influencing the representational choices of re(s)election seeking MPs. So that, there is the need not to conceive of clientelism as a homogenous concept without understanding how its unique variants provide divergent behavioural incentives for political actors.

The findings, in addition to the scholarly contributions, will be relevant for political decision-makers in Africa, parliaments, civil society actors and the general citizenry whose interests are represented by parliamentarians. The study brings to the fore the need to prioritise extra-parliamentary (informal) institutions if legislative representation in Sub-Saharan Africa is to be made optimal. I have mentioned how debates are rife in South Africa to alter the country's list proportional representation system ostensibly to generate more incentives for constituency representation. I have also shown how legislative representation in Ghana, which uses the First-Past-The-Post is elite-centred and not voter-centric – a diametric opposition to the expected effects of FPTP systems. In fact, the constituency effort of representatives in Africa is shown to have little to do with the electoral systems under which they are elected. The time African MPs spend in their constituencies attending to local issues is not differentiated along any clear cut electoral institutional lines[160]. Although attention to formal institutional changes usually appears the easy target in reforming legislators' incentives, they are likely to yield sub-optimal consequences. Institutional engineers and policymakers, therefore, should recognise the social embeddedness of formal political behaviours like legislative representation and consequently attempt to approach changes from the informal standpoint.

One key feature of parliamentary elections in Africa is the high rate of legislator turnover. The high electoral volatility in the region means that very large numbers of MPs do not return to parliament each time after elections. Usually, only 30 to 50 percent of old MPs are re-elected to African parliaments (Warren, 2019). This is against the about 65 percent rate in advanced democracies (Gouglas et al., 2018; Matland and Studlar, 2004). In order not to deplete institutional memory, public resources are spent on training new MPs at the start of every parliamentary term. The findings of this thesis show that such investments are likely

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[160] See Appendix 2 for an example

to yield minimal payoffs if the structure of incentives that elicit disproportionate constituency focus is not rather tackled from the level of the constituency.

I must mention, in conclusion, that this study is not without limitations. The first has to do with the generalisability of the findings. I reckon, as mentioned in the analysis, that the findings of the study are generalisable to constituencies embedded in strong informal institutional contexts. However, at first glance, it is difficult to accurately decipher similarly circumstanced contexts. That is, contexts with strong informal elites with the leverage to affect political outcomes – to form the basis for the external validity of the study. Future research could therefore focus on the unique influence of different local elites across a larger spectrum of cases. This is because the character, power and influence of local elites vary enormously across time and space. The power of the chieftaincy institution, for instance, vary enormously, making it difficult to generalise the leverage, strength or weakness of chiefs to influence political outcomes.

Again, aside from the finding that the leverage of chiefs moves in tandem with the degree of rurality of their areas of jurisdiction, it is possible that some urban chiefs could be more influential while the opposite could be true for some rural chiefs. There is, therefore, the need for future research to attempt a systematic profiling of local chiefs in different contexts to appreciate their level of influence, the resources they control and how they amass wealth and influence in the local political context. Similarly, religious groups differ in their theological makeup as well as influence. Future research agenda could create a portfolio of local elites in African democracies and investigate their influence over political outcomes, especially legislative representation.

There is also the need for a quantitative study on how background characteristics affect the representational behaviour of MPs in Africa. While this study opens up this debate with in-depth case studies, it would be interesting to see how MPs from a wider spectrum of backgrounds in Africa respond to different contextual incentives in forming their representational decisions. Last but not least, knowing how MPs behave at different periods in between elections will be an interesting contribution. Further studies could focus on how representational behaviour changes or remain unchanged within the parliamentary period – for example, whether proximity to elections has any effects on the MPs' focus of representation.

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Appendix 1: The representational focus of Ghanaian and South African Legislators

Code for inferring the representational foci of the interviewed legislators	Main activity area of emphasis	Content, description and examples of activities to infer the foci of representation with MAXQDA	Representational focus
Constituency reference	Community development financing	-Donations – Development projects – Sod cutting for the commencement of projects – Sponsorships. Key examples include: provision of streetlights to the constituency, cash donations, donation of motorbikes to district education directorates; distribution of Fabric, donation of electronic appliances, donation of food items including bags of rice, sugar, bottles and sachets of water, crates of minerals, gallons of oil; donation of educational materials, building materials; donation of ambulances to hospitals in the constituency, donation of computers and accessories, donation of exercise books to schools in the constituency, construction of pavement for market in the constituency, water projects for the supply of portable water for constituents, rural electrification projects; donation of classroom furniture to basic schools, drilling of mechanized boreholes for constituents, distribution of mathematical sets to examination candidates; donation in support of sanitation day celebration, donation of cocoa seedlings and fertilizers to farmers, construction of classroom blocks with statutory funds, painting and roofing of classroom blocks, among several others.	Local constituency focus

	Public functions/ events	- Attendance to public functions or events in the constituency. Key examples include: Attendance to wedding ceremonies, Funerals, church programmes, local festivals, community gatherings, inaugural ceremonies for Assemblies, school activities or programmes, events organised by interest and organised groups in the constituency, presence at the launching of programmes or projects, and the like.	Local constituency focus
	Outreach, meetings and events	-Holding of meetings – Organization of events – Holding of functions. Key examples include: Yearly parties and similar events for women in the constituency on Mothers' Day, organization of town hall meetings for party delegates and constituents, organisation of picnics for sections of the constituents, organisation of football tournaments for constituents, holding of health screening exercises for the constituents on specific illnesses, organization of mock examination for students in the constituency, organization of entrepreneurial training programmes for constituents	Local constituency focus
	Constituency Tours	-Constituency visits – Touring the constituency – inspection of ongoing projects in the constituency – constituency trip. Key examples include visit to the constituency to ascertain the progress of on-going development projects	Local constituency focus
	Provision of basic services	-Helping with access to state-issued documents such as passports, National Identity Cards, Driver's License, among others – Assisting community members with =service delivery issues and advising communities to petition Parliament or sister institutions of state on	Local constituency focus

		varying service-related issues – Assisting citizens to access social welfare, especially grants and human settlements matters – making sure any service delivery issues are channelled to the relevant department among related services.	
	Constituency effort in the parliamentary arena	-Engagement in constituency-relevant legislative initiatives in the parliamentary arena. Examples may include actively seeking committee membership in specific committees that yield strategic benefits to the local constituency. Or asking constituency related questions to ministers or heads of departments. This could also take the form of making floor speeches or statement that bring attention to problems of circumstances in the local constituency.	Local constituency focus
	Advocacy	-Activism – Crusades – Campaigns. Key examples include: Calls for arrest and prosecutions, for the passage of specific legislations to alleviate local constituency problems; for instance, to regulate and punish fake pastors and preachers, for women's reproductive health rights, for proper road networks in the constituency, advocacy for proper sanitary conditions for school-going girls, calls for the care of the inmates of prisons and calls to organise distance learning programmes for them	Local constituency focus

| | Appeals
Cautioning
constituents | -Public requests – pleas – Condemnations – demands for attention to constituency issues. Key examples include: Appeals for public discipline in the constituency, demand for apology on local constituency issues, requests on constituents to use appropriate grievance ventilation channels, appeals for constituency peace and cohesion, appeal for religious tolerance, appeals to constituency youth to pursue education or venture into agriculture; appeals for punishment of parents and guardians who flout their payment of PTA levy responsibilities; appeals to constituents to resist the decriminalisation of homosexuality; appeals to the government to diversify its investment in the petroleum industry to the benefit of locals; appeals for assistance for the construction of an office unit for the domestic violence division of the police in the constituency; appeals for the tackling of perennial flooding in the constituency; appeals to young National Service Personnel to stop "sex for job trade";, appeal for new approach to independence day celebration with proposals to decentralise the celebrations; appeal for joint yam festival for the people in the constituency; appeals to churches to be ambassadors of peace in their local areas; appeals to the police to stop brutalizing civilians; calls for the prosecution of certain individuals or groups in the constituency; appeals to recruit more constituency folks in the security agencies.

-Giving out warnings, Alerts – Notifications. Key coverage includes: Caution statement to tourists and merrymakers for the observance of water health in the constituency, warnings on environmental safety practices in the constituency, to take mental health in Ghana seriously | Local constituency focus |

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Universal/ National reference	Parliamentary questions	-Asking Questions (written and oral) in the plenary – To sector ministers or heads of departments and agencies on issues with national concern or importance. Key examples include: Questions on national budget statements and governments public policy; questions on reproductive health, rising suicide cases, mental health, role misconception by the public of parliamentarians' work; questions bothering on the need for the fishing communities to access loans, increasing the role of young people in the governance of the country, the need to make local festivals a key for national development, issues of double salaries for MPs in previous administrations, the need to control gambling among the youth in the country, the need to rekindle national spirit in Ghanaians, questions regarding name calling and mudslinging of MPs, questions on the sports committee's approach to work.	Universalistic/ national focus
	Committees	-Committee assignment or placement on non-constituency-specific committees – Taking position role (Searing, 1994) in committees such as committee chairs or Ranking members. Parliamentary committees may either be of constituency importance or not. MP serving on constituencies that have no specific constituency relevance are coded as being universally minded. Such committees may include but not limited to Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee, Communications Committee, Defence and Interior Committee, Foreign affairs Committee, Government Assurance Committee, Committee on Selection amongst others.	Universalistic /national focus

	Speeches and debates	Debating and making speeches in parliament as a priority – Frequently engaging in these activities as compared to the activities in the constituency is coded as having a universalistic focus – making speeches or debating in issues that do not have specific geographical or constituency impact. Such issues may include debating budgets statements, debating international loans and contracts, giving floor statements or speeches on ills in the country in general or on constituencies other than the speakers' own constituency.	Universalistic /national focus
	Extra-parliamentary advocacy	-Extra-parliamentary lawsuits that have national importance and character – Petitions – Court actions - Advocating through the utilisation of sister state agencies or authorities for the entire state. Key examples include: Judicial action against the government over procurement and contract breaches, petition to the Special Prosecutor allegations of procurement infractions against a government agency (Ghana Export Promotion Authority), court action to stop the Parliament of Ghana from proceeding with the endorsement of a nominated Minister of state.	Universalistic /national focus
	Regular attendance	Punctuality to parliament – Even if not directly involved in introducing bills, giving speeches on pressing issues or also filing parliamentary questions, regular presence in the parliamentary arena demonstrates parliamentary focus (see Searing, 1994).	Universalistic /national focus

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Partisan reference	Media engagement	-Television appearance – Radio show participation – Phone in radio or TV segments. Key examples include: Defence of political party's position and interest on radio, example in the double salary payment for members of the previous government, pressure on political opponents to retract and apologise for unsavoury comments, propagation of the ruling government's Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy, critique of the policy alternatives of the main opposition party on the sitting government's industrialization plan, condemnation of attacks on journalists by party thugs, calls for electoral support for political parties, propagation of party position on proposed vigilante bill, expression of disappointments in the government/opposition	Party focus
	Party loyalty	-Serving and being diligent to the parliamentary party – Falling in line with the party's whip system in parliament - Debating and voting in accordance with directions from the party's parliamentary leadership - Joining committees that bring strategic benefits to the party and debate and vote in line with the party.	Party focus
	Partisan campaign	Extra-parliamentary partisan support – Key examples may include campaigning for other candidates on the party ticket (Strøm, 2012), supporting the party periodically with financial allocations and defending the interest of the party in the media.	Party focus

Appendix 2: Time MPs spend in/out of their constituencies (%)

Electoral system	Country	Time MPs spend in their constituencies			
		Round 3		Round 4	
		Always	Never	Always	Never
Plurality in SMC or MMC	Botswana	3.4	16.6	4.1	12.0
	Ghana	1.3	31.9	4.4	31.0
	Kenya	0.9	26.4	1.1	37.1
	Lesotho	3.6	201	5.9	23.9
	Madagascar	1.3	48.3	3.3	33.1
	Malawi	4.5	55.8	8.3	47.7
	Nigeria	2.7	24.6	2.9	21.8
	Tanzania	3.1	31.7	1.5	31.9
	Uganda	0.7	39.9	1.1	29.8
	Zambia	2.7	30.3	1.7	47.8
	Zimbabwe	0.7	40.1	3.3	34.8
Absolute majority in SMC or MMC	Mali	4.4	34.9	3.3	44.8
Mixed systems	Burkina Faso	-	-	2.3	36.7
PR in small MMC	Benin	0.3	70.1	2.5	44.3
	Cape Verde	1.0	40.9	3.6	31.4
	Senegal	2.8	36.4	4.1	62.4
PR in large MMC	Liberia	-	-	15.3	21.8
	Mozambique	3.4	35.5	1.0	47.0
	Namibia	9.2	18.5	3.1	32.2
	South Africa	3.4	29.0	4.9	30.5

Source: Afrobarometer (Rounds 3 and 4)

Appendix 3: Select committees

Committee	National	Local
Communication	Y	N
Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs	Y	N
Defence and Interior	Y	N
Education	N	Y
Employment, Social Welfare and State enterprise	N	Y
Environment, Science and Technology	N	Y
Food Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs	N	Y
Foreign Affairs	Y	N
Health	N	Y
Lands and Forestry	N	Y
Local Government Rural Development	N	Y
Mines and Energy	N	Y
Roads and Transport	N	Y
Trade, Industry and Tourism	N	Y
Works and Housing	N	Y
Youth, Sports and Culture	Y	N
Poverty Reduction Strategy (ad hoc)	N	Y

(Y) means the said committee has national (or local focus)
(N) means the said committee has no national (or local focus)

Appendix 4: Standing committees

Committee	National	Local
Appointments	1	0
Business	1	0
Committee of Selection	1	0
Finance	1	0
Gender and Children	1	0
Government Assurance	1	0
House	1	0
Judiciary	1	0
Privileges	1	0
Special budget	1	0
Standing orders	1	0
Subsidiary legislation	1	0

(1) means the said committee has national focus
(0) means the said committee has local focus

Appendix 5: Guide for qualitative interviews conducted on Members of Parliament in Ghana and South Africa

-Could you describe your personal parliamentary programme or your typical activities as an MP?

-Personally, what do you consider to be your most important role(s) as an MP?

-Who or what do you primarily consider yourself a representative of?

-How much of your working time do you commit to:

- Constituency Service
- Party Work or
- Plenary work

-Can you tell me about your typical activities in:

- Your constituency
- Your political party
- Inside parliament

-When you visit the constituency, do you have specific people or groups you must necessarily meet?

- Who are they?
- How important are these contacts?
- Why 'must' you meet with them

-Prompt: Could you rate the importance of your relationship with the following people/groups in your constituency duties

- Members of the Traditional council/authority in your constituency
- Members of the local council of churches/Islamic leaders in your constituency
- Grassroot party officials of your party
- Any other groups you could think of

-Would you say you only have periodic engagements with these groups or frequent contacts?

-What was the process like contesting to become an MP?

-What role did the groups/people mentioned above play or continue to play in your stay in office?

-Prompt: Do you consider the following to be electorally useful

- Members of the Traditional council in your constituency
- Members of the local council of churches/Islamic leaders in your constituency
- Grassroot party officials of your party?

- Any other groups you can think of?

-Did you seek any form of endorsements from the following in the last and your previous elections?

- Members of the Traditional council in your constituency?
- Members of the local council of churches/Islamic leaders in your constituency
- Grassroot party officials of your party?
- Any other groups you can think of?

-What can you say about the influence of these endorsements on your votes?

-When you do party work, are there any specific contacts or relationships you must work with?

- Who are they?
- How important are these contacts?
- Why must you meet with them?

-Could you describe your constituency - using typical district features and characteristics?

-Given these features you have mentioned, would you say you represent a rural or urban constituency?

Appendix 6 Trust in political leaders/institutions

Ghana

Trust in Traditional leaders - Urban

Category	Total	R2	R4	R6	R7
Not at all	23.8	17.3	17.2	28.7	24.3
Just a little	26.4	30.8	23.5	25.8	26.4
Somewhat	27.6	37.1	24.8	23.4	28.7
A lot	18.6	10.3	30.5	19.5	16.6
Don't know/Haven't heard enough	3.6	4.5	4.1	2.5	4.0
(N)	3,700	572	526	1,299	1,303

Trust in Traditional leaders - Rural

Category	Total	R2	R4	R6	R7
Not at all	13.4	8.4	9.0	17.8	14.4
Just a little	20.3	26.1	13.6	20.9	20.4
Somewhat	28.5	43.0	26.0	22.4	27.7
A lot	35.2	16.9	50.0	35.9	35.8
Don't know/Haven't heard enough	2.7	5.6	1.4	3.0	1.6
(N)	3,486	628	673	1,091	1,094

Trust in Religious leaders - Urban

Category	Total	R6	R7
Not at all	13.6	17.3	9.9
Just a little	23.3	22.6	24.0
Somewhat	31.6	28.5	34.7
A lot	29.7	30.3	29.1
Don´t know	1.8	1.4	2.3
(N)	2,603	1,299	1,305

Trust in Religious leaders - Rural

Category	Total	R6	R7
Not at all	9.5	12.7	6.2
Just a little	16.4	15.3	17.4
Somewhat	25.2	21.4	28.9
A lot	46.7	47.6	45.7
Don´t know	2.3	2.9	1.8
(N)	2,182	1,088	1,095

Trust in Parliament - Urban

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Not at all	21.6	14.5	10.8	11.6	21.0	37.9	17.5
Just a little	27.0	30.2	18.5	27.9	29.9	28.0	25.1
Somewhat	29.1	35.1	31.6	28.9	31.6	20.6	31.6
A lot	19.1	13.5	34.5	28.9	16.5	10.9	21.8
Don't know/Haven't heard enough	3.2	6.6	4.7	2.8	0.9	2.6	4.0
(N)	5,562	572	557	526	1,305	1,301	1,301

Trust in Parliament - Rural

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Not at all	17.1	11.1	10.0	12.8	16.8	30.4	14.1
Just a little	24.1	30.3	12.0	17.8	32.2	24.7	22.9
Somewhat	27.4	36.0	26.4	25.6	30.1	19.9	28.8
A lot	26.7	11.6	43.8	40.5	19.3	21.1	29.8
Don't know/Haven't heard enough	4.8	11.0	7.8	3.3	1.5	3.9	4.4
(N)	5,224	628	640	673	1,095	1,094	1,095

South Africa

Trust in Traditional leaders – Urban

Category	Total	R2	R4	R6	R7
Not at all	25.9	34.6	22.8	21.3	25.5
Just a little	24.1	32.4	22.4	19.8	22.0
Somewhat	16.3	11.1	19.1	19.1	15.4
A lot	12.1	3.3	11.6	15.2	19.1
Don't know/Haven't heard enough	21.5	18.7	24.1	24.5	18.1
(N)	5,769	1,446	1,495	1,576	1,251

Trust in Traditional leaders – Rural

Category	Total	R2	R4	R6	R7
Not at all	19.8	25.7	15.6	13.3	25.9
Just a little	24.7	35.0	22.2	17.8	21.4
Somewhat	21.6	19.5	22.4	28.5	14.1
A lot	22.7	7.0	27.1	32.7	27.9
Don't know/Haven't heard enough	11.1	12.8	12.7	7.7	10.7
(N)	3,241	954	905	812	570

Trust in Religious leaders - Urban

Category	Total	R6	R7
Not at all	16.8	13.8	20.6
Just a little	21.6	20.0	23.7
Somewhat	24.6	29.1	18.8
A lot	29.7	30.7	28.5
Don´t know	7.3	6.4	8.4
(N)	2,829	1,576	1,253

Trust in Religious leaders - Rural

Category	Total	R6	R7
Not at all	14.6	10.6	20.3
Just a little	19.1	18.5	20.1
Somewhat	23.7	27.4	18.4
A lot	38.1	41.6	33.2
Don´t know	4.5	1.9	8.0
(N)	1,382	812	570

Trust in Parliament - Urban

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Not at all	21.1	23.7	13.1	15.1	13.1	29.6	33.3
Just a little	31.8	43.1	21.0	29.0	29.9	33.6	33.7
Somewhat	27.4	20.5	33.1	28.0	41.1	22.8	18.2
A lot	13.9	7.4	23.1	12.3	14.6	13.2	12.8
Don't know/Haven't heard enough	5.8	5.3	9.6	15.6	1.3	0.8	2.0
(N)	8,645	1,446	1,386	1,495	1,486	1,576	1,255

Trust in Parliament - Rural

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Not at all	16.2	14.6	10.6	14.4	13.1	19.6	32.3
Just a little	28.8	42.9	22.6	25.0	26.7	27.7	26.8
Somewhat	28.1	30.5	26.1	23.5	36.5	33.0	14.9
A lot	17.9	5.7	25.6	18.7	20.5	17.9	19.7
Don't know/Haven't heard enough	8.9	6.3	15.0	18.5	3.3	1.7	6.3
(N)	5,168	954	1,014	905	913	812	570

Appendix 7: Contacts with political actors

<u>Ghana</u>

Contacts with traditional leaders - Urban

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4
Never	80.8	81.6	80.0	80.8
Only once	4.5	4.5	3.1	5.9
A few times	7.8	7.3	7.7	8.5
Often	6.2	5.8	8.5	4.3
Don't know	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.5
(N)	1,655	572	556	527

Contacts with traditional leaders - Rural

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4
Never	63.0	61.5	59.4	67.8
Only once	6.8	7.6	5.9	6.7
A few times	14.3	15.9	14.5	12.5
Often	15.2	14.3	19.4	12.2
Don't know	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.8
(N)	1,941	628	640	673

Contacts with religious leaders - Urban

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R6	R7
Never	60.6	56.1	54.8	50.1	65.7	64.0
Only once	7.0	8.7	5.6	12.4	4.8	6.7
A few times	15.8	20.3	20.1	23.3	10.8	13.9
Often	16.3	14.3	18.9	13.9	18.3	15.1
Don't know	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.2
(N)	4,264	572	557	527	1,303	1,305

Contacts with religious leaders - Rural

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R6	R7
Never	54.7	59.2	48.9	57.4	54.7	53.8
Only once	6.4	6.1	5.6	9.1	5.8	5.9
A few times	18.9	20.2	19.5	16.9	17.0	21.0
Often	19.7	13.5	25.3	16.7	22.2	19.3
Don't know	0.3	1.0	0.6	-	0.2	0.1
(N)	4,127	628	640	673	1,093	1,093

Contacts with political party official - Urban

Category	Total	R2	R3	R5	R6	R7
Never	84.2	86.2	79.4	85.2	87.0	81.4
Only once	4.6	4.7	4.1	5.1	3.7	4.9
A few times	7.1	4.7	9.0	6.3	5.8	9.3
Often	3.7	3.3	7.0	2.8	2.8	4.2
Don't know	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.2
(N)	5,043	572	557	1,305	1,304	1,305

Contacts with political party official - Rural

Category	Total	R2	R3	R5	R6	R7
Never	80.9	81.1	76.7	84.7	84.6	75.8
Only once	5.0	5.1	4.1	4.2	3.9	7.5
A few times	9.0	8.9	11.6	6.9	6.6	11.9
Often	4.4	3.7	6.7	2.9	4.9	4.4
Don't know	0.7	1.3	0.9	1.3	-	0.4
(N)	4,550	628	639	1,095	1,094	1,095

Contacts with parliamentary representative - Urban

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Never	86.9	88.8	84.0	89.1	87.3	88.1	85.0
Only once	4.6	4.9	3.4	2.2	5.8	4.0	5.5
A few times	5.4	3.3	8.1	5.5	4.7	5.5	5.9
Often	2.3	2.3	3.9	2.3	1.6	1.8	3.1
Don't know	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.4
(N)	5,571	572	557	527	1,305	1,305	1,304

Contacts with parliamentary representative - Rural

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Never	83.8	85.0	82.0	81.0	84.6	86.0	83.0
Only once	5.3	5.9	4.5	5.8	4.5	4.5	6.7
A few times	7.0	6.1	8.5	6.5	6.8	6.3	7.7
Often	3.2	1.8	3.8	5.2	2.9	3.2	2.5
Don't know	0.8	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.2	-	0.1
(N)	5,223	628	639	673	1,095	1,094	1,095

South Africa

Contacts with traditional leaders - Urban

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4
Never	91.6	93.6	90.9	90.4
Only once	3.3	2.2	3.6	4.0
A few times	3.1	2.5	3.2	3.5
Often	1.3	1.2	1.6	1.2
Don't know	0.8	0.5	0.8	1.0
(N)	4,327	1,446	1,386	1,495

Contacts with traditional leaders - Rural

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4
Never	79.2	83.0	75.9	79.0
Only once	6.7	5.4	5.9	9.0
A few times	8.5	6.3	11.2	7.9
Often	4.6	4.3	6.3	3.1
Don't know	0.9	1.0	0.7	1.1
(N)	2,873	954	1,014	905

Contacts with Religious leaders - Urban

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R6	R7
Never	72.3	71.0	71.8	75.1	73.3	69.8
Only once	7.4	10.5	7.6	7.6	5.8	5.6
A few times	11.8	12.1	12.6	12.6	11.0	10.5
Often	7.9	6.2	7.4	4.4	9.6	12.3
Don't know	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.3	1.9
(N)	7,161	1,446	1,386	1,495	1,576	1,258

Contacts with Religious leaders – Rural

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R6	R7
Never	65.2	64.4	63.1	74.0	58.6	65.5
Only once	10.0	9.9	9.8	10.1	11.4	8.1
A few times	14.9	16.2	15.6	10.7	19.5	11.6
Often	9.1	8.3	11.1	4.0	10.4	13.0
Don't know	0.9	1.2	0.5	1.1	0.1	1.8
(N)	4,255	954	1,014	905	812	570

Contacts with Political party officials - Urban

Category	Total	R2	R3	R5	R6	R7
Never	86.5	88.2	86.3	85.6	88.4	83.4
Only once	5.4	4.1	6.5	5.9	4.7	6.2
A few times	5.5	5.6	4.7	5.9	5.1	6.2
Often	2.3	1.9	1.7	2.5	1.8	3.6
Don't know	0.3	0.2	0.9	0.2	-	0.6
(N)	7,152	1,446	1,386	1,486	1,576	1,258

Contacts with Political party officials - Rural

Category	Total	R2	R3	R5	R6	R7
Never	84.4	83.2	83.0	89.3	85.7	79.4
Only once	6.4	8.9	7.3	3.6	6.2	5.8
A few times	5.6	4.0	7.3	3.4	6.7	7.2
Often	2.6	2.7	1.7	1.8	1.5	7.1
Don't know	0.9	1.2	0.7	1.9	-	0.5
(N)	4,263	954	1,014	913	812	570

Contacts with Parliamentary representative - Urban

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Never	93.4	96.4	94.7	88.0	94.5	96.1	90.1
Only once	2.8	1.8	2.3	5.4	2.4	1.3	3.7
A few times	2.3	1.3	1.5	4.3	1.7	1.7	3.7
Often	0.8	0.3	0.4	0.9	1.0	0.8	1.3
Don't know	0.7	0.1	1.1	1.3	0.4	0.1	1.1
(N)	8,647	1,446	1,386	1,495	1,486	1,576	1,258

Contacts with Parliamentary representative - Rural

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Never	91.7	93.6	92.7	83.4	95.5	94.7	89.1
Only once	3.2	3.2	3.0	5.8	0.6	2.9	4.3
A few times	2.7	1.1	2.3	6.3	1.6	1.5	3.9
Often	0.7	0.3	0.5	1.5	0.1	0.7	1.8
Don't know	1.7	1.9	1.5	3.0	2.2	0.1	0.9
(N)	5,168	954	1,014	905	913	812	570

Appendix 8: Notes on press data collection and analysis

Data on the representational activities of the MPs were collected from a varied number of media sources. The reliance on multiple sources was an attempt at responding to methodological issues that may bother on selection bias. A two–step search strategy was employed in the collection of the data. These are what I call generalized automated search and targeted search. The generalized automated search was done on the POLLUX platform using the FACTIVA databank. FACTIVA is a broad aggregator of newspaper contents, magazines and other sources across many countries. It provides a comprehensive range of newspaper archives to ground a systematic search on. The targeted search on the other hand followed up on the FACTIVA search and focused on particularly selecting newspapers and online sources via institutional access and storing them in a database. The platform allows for the user to limit the search to specific "subjects". The newspapers that report most on the "Legislative branch" were selected for closer search.

Using a combination of such keywords as parliament, representation, constituency work, legislation as well as names of selected MPGs and names of their constituencies on the FACTIVA platform, eleven newspapers kept returning high results. The search function on FACTIVA allows the user to distinguish among the "sources" of the news items displayed after a search. This means that the newspaper which returns the widest coverage on parliamentary news can easily the discriminated for closer attention. So that, while all of the results attained by the keyword search were recorded and the news items added to the analysis, I further used the above-described procedure to trim down the sample to major newspapers for deeper search on the online archives of the individual newspapers displayed. The targeted newspapers were those that have had continuous publications over a long period of time and covers a wide spectrum of political issues. The long continuous publication and wide coverage provides the opportunity to trace the activity levels of the MPs over time.

The search engines on the websites of the newspapers were used to search the archives for legislators' activities over time. Since the MPs under study entered parliament in different years, no baseline year was set for the search. It goes as far back as the first year of entry for each parliamentarian. So far, the oldest news item included in the analysis was published in 2009. Altogether, newspaper sources yielded 31 news items constituting 14.5% of the total news item analysed. By far, online portals were the most resourceful in the coverage of

parliamentarians' activities. Many of these news portals are the websites of leading radio stations. In the analysis, the most prominent among them in the reportage of the MPs' activities were Myjoyonline, Citifmonline, Ghanaweb and ModernGhana. Combining similar keywords as used in the newspaper analysis for each selected MP, a total of 162 news items representing 75.7% of the analysed news was produced. Unlike the newspaper analysis where specific outlets were selected for close concentration due to their relevance, the online news search was general. This means that, no restrictions or particular emphasis were placed on specific online portals. The rationale was to ensure as wide coverage of the activities of the MPs as possible.

Source	(N) news items covered	%
Newspapers	31	14.5
Online news portals	162	75.7
Blogs	18	8.4
Magazines	3	1.4
Total	214	100

It was also found that many of the MPs relied on blogs/WordPress for reporting their activities. For a couple of the MPs almost all their representational activities were captured on blogs. Turning attentions to such platforms was thus very useful for the analysis. Interestingly speaking, a huge 8.4% of the covered news items were from these sources. Traditionally, magazines are not found to be very useful as far parliamentary reporting is concerned. A few however reported seldomly on some MPs' representational activities. This yielded 3 news items representing 1.4% of the total news items used for the analysis.

Coding press data differs at least in principle and substance from coding interview data, for instance. Since journalists and editors already simplify and "code" news items before publication, researchers only re-code previously coded news items in line with their research design. This makes the coding of press data a bit more straightforward. In the coding process, every news item was assigned one main code since news reports are usually about an event and hardly about a couple or multiples of events. These main codes were again broken down into sub-codes for properly delineating the representational activities of the different MPs under study. All the gathered news items were coded into one content-based category

comprising of three (3) broad classifications for the purposes of structuring the descriptive analysis.

1. Universal representation: State-wide representational activities of the MPs comprising of internal parliamentary activities like floor statements, questions to government officials and state agencies, committee works and so forth.
2. Partisan representation: Those on party related activities including radio and television appearance or representations for political parties, co-partisan campaigning assignments among others.
3. Constituency service: These include constituency–related engagements of the MPs. Examples include constituency tours, inspection of projects, donations, meetings and all activities conducted in the constituency.

Erklärung über das selbstständige Anfertigen der Dissertation

Hiermit erkläre ich, dass die Dissertation von mir selbstständig angefertigt wurde und alle von mir genutzten Hilfsmittel angegeben wurden, dabei keine anderen Hilfsmittel als die im Quellenund Literaturverzeichnis genannten benutzt und alle aus Quellen und Literatur wörtlich oder sinngemäß entnommenen Stellen als solche kenntlich gemacht wurden.

Versicherung über die Vorlage bei einer anderen Prüfungsbehörde
Ich versichere hiermit, dass ich die Dissertation oder wesentliche Teile derselben nicht bereits einer anderen Prüfungsbehörde zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades vorgelegt habe.

Erklärung über die bisher erfolgte Publikation wesentlicher Bestandteile der Arbeit

Ich erkläre hiermit, dass ich die Dissertation im Ganzen noch nicht publiziert habe. Teile von früheren Versionen der Kapitel 4 und 6 sind als zeitschriftenartikel und Konferenzbeiträge veröffentlicht:

Acheampong, M. (2021). Legislators' pathway to power in Ghana: intra-party competition, clientelism and legislator-constituents' relationship, The Journal of Legislative Studies, 27(2): 300-316. 10.1080/13572334.2020.1814514

Acheampong, M. (2020). The disconnect between Ghanaian parliamentarians and their constituencies, Democracy in Africa, Link

Acheampong, M. (2020). Why members of parliament in Ghana can get away with ignoring voters, The Conversation Africa, Link

Acheampong, M. (2019). Legislators' pathway to power: intra-party competition, clientelism and unresponsive representatives in Ghana. Paper presented at the 10th Düsseldorf Graduate Conference on Party Research (GraPa), held on the 1st to 2nd February 2019 at Heinrich Heine University, Düsseldorf.

Acheampong, M. (2019). Legislators' pathway to power: intra-party competition, clientelism and unresponsive representatives in Ghana. Paper presented at the 14th Wroxton Workshop for Parliamentary scholars Parliamentarians, held from the 27th to 28th July at Wroxton, UK.

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Bamberg, 11.01.2022