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Why CDFs in Africa?: Representation vs. Constituency Service

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Why CDFs in Africa?: Representation vs. Constituency Service

Abstract

Since 2002, constituency development funds (CDFs) have been established in nine African countries, and another two countries have created "approximations" of CDFs in that they address the perceived need by members of the legislature for budgeted funds to spend on the development of the districts they represent. Thus, just under one-quarter of the 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have adopted some type of CDF. In this paper, we consider three alternative explanations for the apparent popularity of CDFs. Using data from the African Legislature Project and Afrobarometer, we find that the best account of the rise of CDFs is that while MP rightly perceive the need to maintain close contact with their constituents, they wrongly believe that their constituents look to them mainly for "pork." Instead, African constituents' primary expectations of their MP is that they regularly visit the district to learn what is on their minds, and to then quite literally "re-present" or transmit these views back to the central government via the legislature. In other words, while citizens desire stronger representation of their needs at the centre, MPs respond by delivering services and favours at the periphery (i.e. the district) thinking mistakenly that the CDFs are the answer to what the public wants. We also find little evidence of "good governance" advocates that CDFs lead to increased corruption or entrench MPs in office.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore the political and societal contexts that give rise to constituency development funds generally, and across sub-Saharan Africa in particular. Since 2002, constituency development funds (CDFs) have been established in nine African countries,[1] and another two countries have

[1] We consider a country to have established a CDF when specific legislation has been passed and signed into law to create such funds, and when the legislation specifies some amount of money or budgetary formula to implement CDFs for all legislative constituencies (i.e. districts). Legislation that establishes CDFs also specifies the procedures to be followed for the allocation of the funds within each constituency, i.e. whether by the elected representative of the district alone or via a committee of which the representative may or may not be a member.

created "approximations" of CDFs in that they address the perceived need by members of the legislature for budgeted funds to spend on the development of the districts they represent.[2] Thus, just under one-quarter of the 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have adopted some type of CDF.

In this discussion we consider three alternative explanations for the apparent popularity of CDFs. The first potential explanation revolves around the conventional wisdom or "pork-barrel" argument. In Africa, this argument would proceed from the basic fact that CDF's and their approximations exist only in countries that elect their legislators from single member districts. It would conclude from this that CDFs or their approximations have been created by African MPs as a response to constant and intense constituent pressure "to deliver" both private (such as jobs or cash handouts for school fees, health dispensary bills) and public goods (such as development projects to build schools, roads, and health clinics) and thus increase their prospects for re-election. Even in one-party dominant party systems, MPs still have good reasons to worry about re-election. On average, between half to two thirds of incumbent MPs lose their seats in African elections, often through party primaries as much as in the general election. Stated simply, these MPs view CDFs as a critical element of their job security.

The "pork-barrel" explanation would also appear to make intuitive sense given two conditions that are widely prevalent across Africa. First, most African countries are both ethnically plural and agrarian societies. The result is that most people tend to define their political interests in terms of their geographical place of residence and the dominant identities of those areas. Second, political parties in Africa are weak with the result that election campaigns for both the executive and the legislature tend to be driven by candidate-centered clientelist organisations, often fuelled by the distribution of private goods to political supporters, rather than by programmatic political parties with clear alternative programs for public policy. Indeed, the prevalence of clientelism is a product of the composition and economy of African society. When combined with the election of members of parliament (MPs) from single member districts, these

[2] Ghana and Nigeria have approximations of CDFs. In Ghana, 5 percent of the District Common Fund is automatically re-allocated by law to the parliamentary constituencies existing within each district. In Nigeria, each MP is provided with an annual "constituency allowance" of 2,000,000 Naira ($12,500) to spend as he or she determines. In Ghana, legislation to create a stand-alone CDF was introduced in 2009 and supported by then President John Atta Mills prior to his death and parliamentary elections in 2012, but the legislation has yet to become law. In addition, the possibility of CDF legislation has also been discussed in the Botswana National Assembly, but no legislation has yet been introduced.

conditions put pressure on MPs to provide for the geographic constituency they have been elected to represent.

The "pork-barrel" explanation is also consistent with early research on what legislators do when back in their districts. In his landmark study *Homestyle* published in 1978, Richard Fenno found that members of the U.S. House of Representatives spend considerable time identifying "pork barrel" type projects desired by their constituents because they were preoccupied with the prospects of reelection (Fenno, 1978). Barkan found the same type of behavior in an early study of Kenyan MPs under the "competitive one-party regime" in which MPs faced competitive elections within the single ruling party similar to American party primaries. Indeed, the variance in the vote share obtained by incumbents was largely explained by citizen evaluations of how successful their MPs were at delivering development projects back to the constituency (Barkan, 1976; Barkan, 1978).

A second explanation for the emergence of CDFs is a "counter-intuitive" argument about MP *mis*perceptions, or what we call the "mismatch" argument. Here, MPs rightly perceive the need to maintain close contact with their constituents, but *wrongly* believe that their constituents look to them mainly for "pork." Instead, African constituents' primary expectations of their MP is that they regularly visit the district to learn what is on their minds, and to then quite literally "re-present" or transmit these views back to the central government via the legislature. In other words, while citizens desire *stronger representation of their needs at the centre*, MPs respond by delivering services and favours at the periphery (i.e. the district) thinking mistakenly that the CDFs are the answer to what the public wants. One indication of the validity of this mismatch argument is the finding that reelection rates in the countries that have established CDFs do *not* appear to have risen compared to the period before there were CDFs.

The third potential explanation focuses on the role of a category of MPs we call "institutionalists" or "institutional reformers"; that is to say, "members who are intent on transforming their institution from a weak rubber stamp of the executive into a modern autonomous legislature" (Barkan, 2009: 18). The logic is as follows. As Fenno (1978) pointed out over thirty years ago, legislators' personal goals cannot simply be reduced to re-election. At least some legislators desire a greater degree of personal influence in the political process. Under Africa's one-party regimes, African MPs often satisfied this need by making themselves crucial links in "big man" networks, frequently becoming "little big men" in their own constituencies. Since the return of multi-party politics, however, some things have begun to change. As Barkan and his colleagues have noted (2009), at least some African MPs have started to pursue political influence not through their role back in the constituency, but through the

legislature as an institution. Though they are a minority of all MPs, these "institutionalists" have in some cases been able to join together with a larger group of "opportunists" to bring about crucial reforms that have strengthened the capacity and power of their institution (Barkan, 2009).

However, "institutionalists" face a key problem. While they want to devote much of their time to writing legislation and conducting oversight, this comes at the cost of less time for travelling back home to visit and listen to constituents and conduct constituency service. Thus, "institutionalists" incur the greatest risk of losing the support of their constituents when they stand for reelection. For this reason, institutional reformers are sensitive to the need to provide all MPs with adequate salaries, travel allowances, and other forms of support to enable them to devote more time and energy to legislating and oversight while simultaneously tending to constituents' needs. Viewed from this perspective, a major goal behind the establishment of CDFs is quite clear. CDFs not only help MPs deal with their constituents and raise their prospects for reelection, they also free MPs to become better legislators *within* the legislature and, by so doing, contribute to the emergence of the institution.

Some critics, usually civil society activists concerned with "good governance" have argued that CDFs often lead to corruption. Although these downside risks are real, the establishment of CDFs is part of a larger process of institution-building by those committed to advancing that project. As such, CDFs are also part of the larger process of democratisation. This is because legislatures–as institutions of countervailing power—are essential institutions for the realisation of democracy because they scrutinize and check the power of the executive branch and hold the executive to account.

Legislatures are particularly important for democratisation across Africa because of the continent's history, since independence, of neo-patrimonial or "big man" regimes. With a few exceptions,[3] all of sub-Saharan Africa's 48 countries have resumed multiparty elections since 1989, though as of the end of 2012, only eleven were classified by Freedom House as "liberal democracies,"[4] and another six as "electoral democracies"[5] (Puddington, 2013). Pointing to Steven Fish's (2006) cross national evidence of the impact of increases in parliamentary power and democratisation, we would argue that many of Africa's liberal and electoral democracies are the countries with the strongest and most powerful legislatures vis-à-vis the executive branch. Their legislatures are no longer rubber stamps, but periodically challenge and limit executive power.

[3] Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea and Somalia.
[4] Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and South Africa.
[5] Comoros, Liberia, Malawi, Niger, Tanzania, and Zambia.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into two sections. In the first, we test the three arguments we have just laid out for the popularity of CDFs and why some African countries have them while others do not. In the second, we examine the consequences of CDFs. Thus, our focus is on what compels parliamentarians to look to CDFs as a mechanism of distributive spending. We will not, however, explore their size, nor how they function. In both sections, our approach will be cross national and comparative using evidence from 17 countries included in both the African Legislatures Project and Afrobarometer.

*Table 1: Adoption of CDF's in Africa**

No	**Ambiguous**	**Has CDF**
Benin	Botswana	Kenya (2003)
Burkina Faso	Ghana	Malawi (2007)
Cabo Verde	Nigeria	Tanzania (2008)
Lesotho		Uganda (2005)
Mali		Zambia (2006)
Mozambique		Zimbabwe (2010)
Namibia		
Senegal		
South Africa		

* Limited to countries included in Afrobarometer Round 4 and African Legislatures Project (N=17).

Before we turn to the relevant data, three caveats about CDFs should be kept in mind. First, their establishment in Africa is a recent development of the first decade of the 21st Century. They have not been around very long, and they are still relatively few in number. As previously noted, and as indicated in Table 1, only twelve sub-Saharan African countries either have CDFs, their approximations, or are considering their adoption. Second, because they are both new and few, little is known about how they operate or vary in the way they are constructed or in the benefits they bring to constituents and MPs. Indeed, a major purpose of this volume, and one addressed in the chapters that follow, is to provide initial insight into the operations of CDFs. Third, notwithstanding the fact that CDFs are new and few, their popularity in the countries where they have been established appears to be high amongst both members of the public and MPs. MPs like them because they are a highly visible mechanism in providing resources to constituents. Citizens like them, because they view the CDF for their constituency as a helpful entitlement that cannot be taken away or reallocated to the members of some "other" region or ethnic community. The number of African countries establishing CDFs is

therefore likely to rise, as it is increasing elsewhere around the world. Put simply, CDFs are an idea whose time has come.

Explaining the Presence of CDFs in Africa

Country Context Variables

We begin our exploration of the context of CDFs in Africa by examining the impact of three country level variables: (1) the type of electoral system a country uses to elect the members of its national legislature; (2) whether the country was once a British colony; and (3) whether the country is located in Eastern or Southern Africa.

As indicated above, by the end of 2012 nine African countries had established CDFs: Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda,[6] Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Two countries, Ghana and Nigeria had established approximations of CDFs while the members of the national legislature in a third, Botswana, had expressed interest in creating such funds. When viewed against the backdrop of all 45 countries that currently have legislatures elected through multi-party elections, it is apparent that CDFs are more likely to be established in some types of countries than others, and that country context is an important determinant of where CDFs exist, regardless of whether there is a demand for them by citizens and/or MPs. As shown in Table 2, and as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, African countries that elect the members of its national legislature from single member districts (SMDs) are far more likely to have CDFs than those which do not. In fact, no legislatures elected from multi-member districts by proportional representation (PR) have, or anticipate creating, a CDF. Thus, legislators elected to respond to the needs of constituencies defined solely by their common geographic area of residence are far more likely to respond to such expectations than legislators elected to respond to constituencies defined by their support for a particular political party.[7]

[6] It should be noted that Uganda ended its six year experiment with CDFs in 2011, because MPs regarded the amount of funds allocated to the funds as too small and insufficient for achieving their purpose.

[7] In sixteen of these 45 sub-Saharan African countries, all citizens elect a legislator to the lower house of the legislature from a single member district with a plurality rule, though some complement this with members elected by proportional representation from parallel or top-up multi-member lists or with appointed members (Botswana, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

Table 2: Comparing National Predictors of CDFs (45 SSA Countries)

	Country Elects All MPs From Single Member Districts		**Country is a Former British Colony**		**Country Located In East or Southern Africa**	
	Yes	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Country Has CDF	50%	0%	64%	0%	35%	8%
Ambiguous	19%	0%	21%	0%	5%	8%
Country Does Not Have CDF	25%	100%	14%	100%	60%	84%
N =	16	29	14	31	20	25

Note: N=45: Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with functioning legislatures chosen through multiparty elections as of 2011. For those countries with CDFs, democracy ratings are for the year preceding passing of CDF enabling legislation.

The seventeen countries included in the African Legislatures Project can therefore be grouped into three categories as depicted in Table 1—those that do not have CDFs, those we label as "ambiguous", and those that have established the funds.

SMDs are largely though not exclusively a legacy of British colonialism. Some former French colonies elect MPs from single member districts, but others employ a second round runoff majority run-off, or use parallel systems featuring multi-member districts, or list proportional representation. That said, we note that no Francophone or Lusophone country has created a CDF. At the same time, not all Anglophone countries have created CDFs (e.g. Lesotho). And not all Anglophone countries retained the plurality SMD system (e.g. South Africa). Thus, another important factor appears to be region: countries located in East and Southern Africa are far more likely to have a CDF than elsewhere in the continent.

That almost all former British colonies located in Eastern and Southern Africa which use a common system of running elections have CDFs, suggests the presence of a significant contagion effect. It diffuses through legislators from neighbouring countries with a shared colonial heritage and official language who are likely to be aware of each other's efforts to strengthen the legislature and especially efforts to improve the terms of service for MPs. MPs from these countries, especially activists within the legislature, periodically interact with each other at regional forums and meetings of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, African Parliamentary Association, or the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum, where they compare notes on their respective experiences. For example, when members of the Uganda

National Assembly raised their salaries in the late 1990s, members of the Kenya National Assembly took note and followed suit in 2001. Similarly, in 2001, the Uganda National Assembly asserted itself again by passing the Budget Act which gave itself increased powers in the budget making process. The Kenya National Assembly followed with their own and more ambitious budget act in 2007. Conversely, when members of the Kenya National Assembly established CDFs in 2003, the members of neighbouring parliaments soon sought CDFs for themselves. Though impossible to measure quantitatively, the likely impact of such cross national learning appears profound.

However, while these macro level linkages are tantalizing, without micro level evidence, we can only guess at the underlying mechanisms driving them. Fortunately, we do have such data. We thus turn to evidence derived from two cross-national research projects conducted in 17 African countries. The first is the African Legislatures Project (ALP) which carried out surveys of 838 legislators randomly chosen from the legislatures of 17 countries.[8] The standard ALP study conducted face-to-face surveys of random and representative samples of 50 members in each country.[9] The surveys of MPs were conducted between 2008 and 2012. The second is Round 4 of the Afrobarometer public opinion survey, which carried out surveys in 20 countries in 2008-2009. A standard Afrobarometer survey consists of face-to-face surveys of random, nationally representative samples of 1,200 respondents (larger samples are used in Nigeria and South Africa). The rest of this chapter focuses on the 17 countries covered by both surveys.

Citizen Demands

One of the reasons that we see such sharp differences between Anglophone and other Sub-Saharan countries may lie in the political culture that has developed based initially on the traditions inherited from the United Kingdom, but subsequently maintained by SMD plurality electoral systems. In this context, it is likely that the citizens of Anglophone societies have learned to expect their MPs to focus their activities on the local district, listening to people and securing private and public goods for constituents. In contrast to this "localist" orientation, Francophone and Lusophone societies may have inherited a tradition consistent with the centralised political systems of their respective colonial

[8] For a full description of the methodologies employed for the African Legislatures Project and for the Afrobarometer, readers are directed to www.africanlegislaturesproject.org and www.afrobarometer.org .

[9] A somewhat larger sample of 60 members was interviewed in Nigeria while smaller samples of 40 MPs were interviewed in Benin and Namibia.

powers where legislators are expected to focus their attention on *"les affaires de la nation"* and citizens develop significantly different orientations toward the role of the MP.

To test the argument that the presence of CDFs is a response to the national political culture, we turn to responses to two questions from Afrobarometer Round 4. The first question gives respondents a forced choice between two statements that when electing a member of parliament they "prefer to vote for a candidate who can deliver goods and services to people in this community" or "prefer to vote for a candidate who can make policies that benefit everyone in our country." In Table 3, we display the relationship between preferences for a locally oriented MP by the country's status with regard to CDFs. *Both* of the countries (i.e. Malawi and Tanzania) with the highest levels of "localist" orientations—over 60 percent—have CDFs, whereas *none* of the countries with low levels (under 30 percent) have them. There is a clear and strong relationship between the presence of CDFs and political culture, expressed either in categories (Tau b=.736***) or as an absolute percentage of localist orientations (Pearson's r=.730***). Moreover, with one exception, all of those with low levels are either Francophone or Lusophone in their colonial heritage.

Table 3: CDF Status by Citizen Demand for Locally-Focused MPs

	<30%	**30-60%**	**>60%**
Country Has CDF		Zambia (52%) Kenya (44%) Uganda (36%) Zimbabwe (34%)	Malawi (74%) Tanzania (64%)
Ambiguous		Botswana (59%) Ghana (46%) Nigeria (39%)	
Country Does Not Have CDF	Lesotho (29%) Mozambique (22%) Mali (21%) Senegal (16%) Benin (16%) Burkina Faso (13%)	South Africa (38%) Namibia (33%)	

Note: Kendall's Tau b = .736**** / Pearson's r = .730***, N=17.
"Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2. Statement 1: In electing a Member of Parliament, I prefer to vote for a candidate who can deliver goods and services to people in this community. Statement 2: In electing a Member of Parliament, I prefer to vote for a candidate who can make policies that benefit everyone in our country." Cells display the percentage of respondents in that country who choose Statement 1.
Source: Afrobarometer, Round 4.

The second Afrobarometer question asked respondents "Which of the following do you think is the most important responsibility of your Member of Parliament:" (1) "listen to constituents and represent their needs," (2) "deliver jobs or development projects back to the constituency," (3) "make laws for the good of the country," or (4) "monitor the president and his government?" The results are displayed in Table 4. All *three* countries where 60 percent or more of the respondents say that MPs should "listen to constituents" have CDFs whereas *none* of the countries with very low expectations of representation (those under 30 percent) have them or contemplate getting them. Again, there is a strong relationship, whether demand for representation is expressed as ordinal categories (Tau b=.664***) or as an absolute percentage (Pearson's r=.795***)

Table 4: CDF Status by Citizen Demand for MPs to Listen to Their Constituents

	<30%	**30-60%**	**>60%**
Country Has CDF		Kenya (58%) Malawi (53%) Zimbabwe (53%)	Uganda (66%) Zambia (63%) Tanzania (61%)
Ambiguous		Botswana (60%) Ghana (45%) Nigeria (41%)	
Country Does Not Have CDF	Mozambique (26%) Burkina (21%) Benin (20%) South Africa (18%)	Senegal (57%) Mali (41%) Lesotho (35%) Namibia (31%)	

Note: Kendall's Tau b = .664*** / Pearson's r = .795***, N=17.
"Members of Parliament have different responsibilities. Which of the following do you think is the most important responsibility of your Member of Parliament: 1. Listen to constituents and represent their needs. 2. Deliver jobs or development projects back to the constituency. 3. Make laws for the good of the country. 4. Monitor the president and his government." Cells display the percentage of respondents who choose Option 1.
Source: Afrobarometer, Round 4.

MP *Mis*perceptions

We have thus far interpreted the results to these questions as a preference for a "localist" oriented MP. Yet one might be tempted to interpret the responses to the first question ("deliver goods and services to people in this constituency") as a preference for clientelist delivery of private goods. Much depends on whether one focuses on the contrast between "goods and services" only for people of this area versus "policies that benefit everyone" or on the contrast between

"community" versus "country." In order to probe this matter further, we look at the percentage who, in the second question, say that the most important role of an MP is to "deliver jobs or development projects back to the constituency" and examine its relationship with a country's CDF status (Table 5). In this case, there is *no* statistically significant association between citizens' beliefs that MPs ought to produce economic goods and whether the country had established a CDF (Tau b=-.353, Pearson's r=-/247). This suggests that MPs may have established CDFs in response to a *mis*perception of what citizens want. To the extent that African MPs establish CDFs as a response to demands for geographically targeted goods and services, they probably are mistaken.

Table 5: CDF Status by Citizen Demand for Jobs and Development in Their Constituencies

	<30%	**30-60%**	**>60%**
Country Has CDF	Kenya (29%) Zambia (26%) Uganda (20%) Tanzania (18%)	Malawi (39%) Zimbabwe (35%)	
Ambiguous	Nigeria (25%)	Ghana (41%) Botswana (32%)	
Country Does Not Have CDF	Mali (24%) Senegal (16%)	Lesotho (42%) Mozambique (42%) Namibia (36%) South Africa (34%) Benin (34%) Burkina Faso (31%)	

Note: Kendall's Tau b = -.353 / Pearson's r = -.247, N=17.
"Members of Parliament have different responsibilities. Which of the following do you think is the most important responsibility of your Member of Parliament: 1. Listen to constituents and represent their needs. *2. Deliver jobs or development projects back to the constituency.* 3 Make laws for the good of the country. 4. Monitor the president and his government?" Cells display the percentage of respondents who choose Option 2.
Source: Afrobarometer, Round 4

Additional evidence of the misperception explanation for CDFs is provided when we examine citizens' role expectations of their MPs and then compare them with MPs' own role orientations. Figure 1 presents *citizens'* responses to the Afrobarometer question "Which of the following do you think is the most important responsibility of your member of parliament?" As can be seen, citizens express a clear "localist" orientation in that only 13 percent chose "making laws," or legislating, and just 5 percent selected "monitoring the president and his government," or oversight. By contrast, a combined 78 percent expressed the view that MPs should focus on their constituents.

However, within this group, far more respondents (45 percent) indicated that MPs should listen to their views and represent their needs than those who thought MPs should concentrate on constituency service (31 percent).

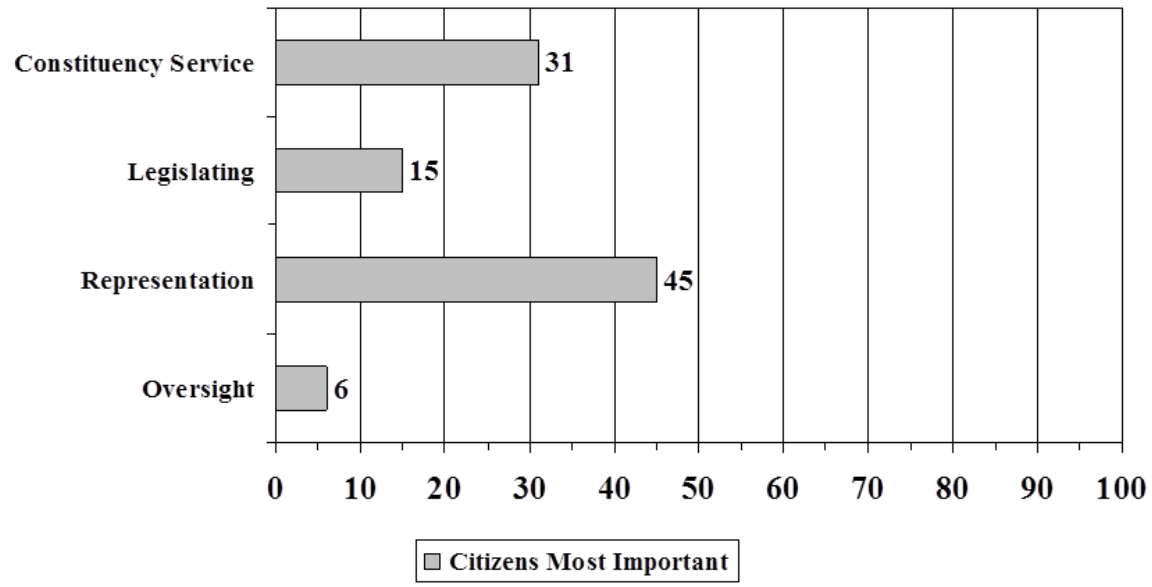

Figure 1: Citizen Role Expectations

Note: Members of Parliament have different responsibilities. Which of the following do you think is the most important responsibility of your Member of Parliament? Listen to constituents and represent their needs? Deliver jobs and development to your constituency? Make laws for the good of the country? Monitor the President and his Government?
Source: Afrobarometer Round 4, N=20,339.

The distinction between the two dimensions of "localist" orientations is even more pronounced when citizens' expectations are compared with MPs' own role orientations. In its surveys, ALP asked MPs, "In your opinion, which of these following jobs is the *most* important part of being an MP?" as well as "For you personally, which role brings you the most satisfaction?" Figure 2 indicates the emphasis MPs place on constituency service relative to the citizens. When African MPs were asked what is "the most important job of an MP" and what is the "the most rewarding" part of the job," constituency service was not only cited by more MPs than any other function, but it is also the aspect of their job that gives them the greatest job satisfaction.

Across the same 17 countries, there is a 4 percentage point difference between the cross-national percentage of MPs (35 percent) who prioritise constituency service as the most important role they are expected to perform compared to citizens who prioritise constituency service (31 percent). There is also a 26 point difference between the overall percentage of citizens who selected

representation (45 percent) compared to MPs (19 percent). The differences are even greater when one compares citizens' expectations to those MPs regard as the most rewarding. Thus, while citizens are more likely than MPs to emphasize representation, they are less likely to focus on constituency service. Although both citizens and MPs emphasize tasks that take place in the constituency and outside the parliament itself, they subscribe to very different interpretations of what this "localist" role entails.

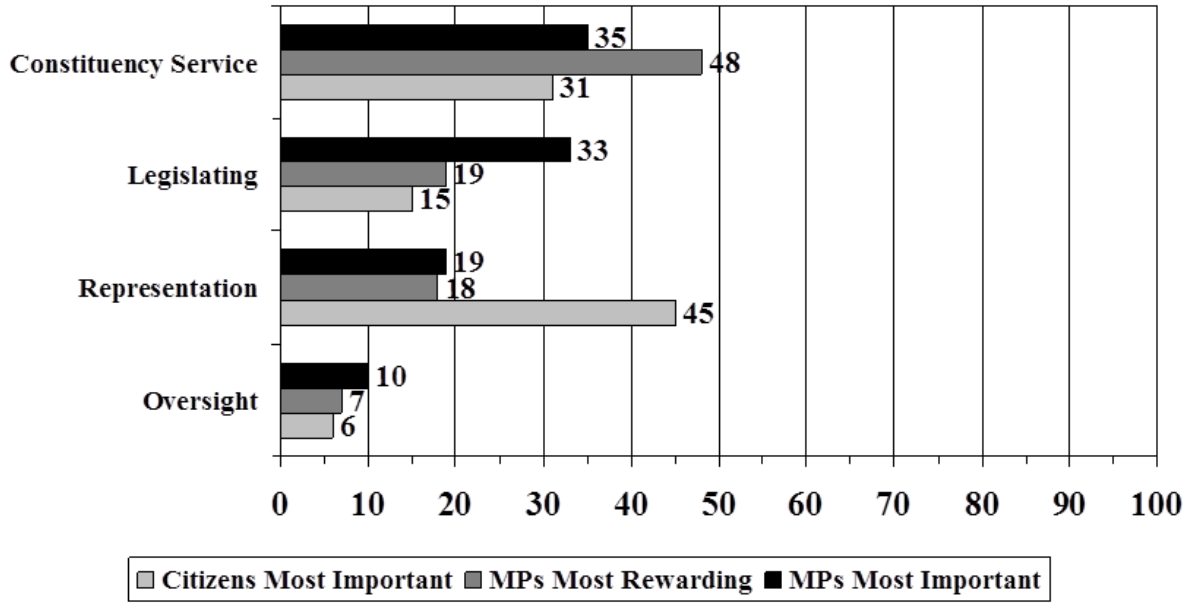

Figure 2: Citizen Role Expectations and MP Role Expectations Compared

Note: "In your opinion, which of these following jobs is the most important part of being an MP?" And "For you personally, which role brings you the most satisfaction?" For both questions, the responses were: "Debating bills and passing laws? Making public policy by writing laws? Overseeing the executive? Bringing development to your [constituency]? Representing constituents' views in parliament? Assisting constituents with their personal problems? Or soliciting funds for your constituency?"
Source: African Legislatures Project MP Survey

However, the cross national percentage difference is far less illuminating than the difference by country. Once we calculate the citizen-MP gap in emphasis on representation, we find that *the greater the gap between citizens and MPs*, the more likely the country in question will have established a constituency development fund (Table 6). In Burkina Faso, citizens are actually *less* likely than MPs to choose representation (-14 point difference). In Uganda and Tanzania, in contrast, the gap between citizens' demands for representation and MP role emphasis is +52 and 51 points.

What we see in Table 6 is that CDFs exist in those countries with a very high gap, *or level of misperception* about what citizens want from their MPs (i.e. +30 points or more). Indeed, the relationship is striking (Tau b=.830***). MPs in these societies accurately perceive citizen demands for a local orientation, but misperceive this as a demand for goods, services or favours, rather than representation. A crude, but apt analogy might be that of an amorous suitor who showers the object of his affection with jewels and expensive clothes, while the woman secretly confides to her friends that "I just want someone to listen to me."

Table 6: CDF Status by Citizens-MPs Gap in Emphasis on Representation

	-30-0	**+1-30**	**+31-60**
Country Has CDF			Uganda (+52) Tanzania (+51) Kenya (+46) Zimbabwe (+37) Malawi (+32) Zambia (+32)
Ambiguous		Ghana (+27) Botswana (+25)	Nigeria (+32)
Country Does Not Have CDF	Burkina Faso (-14)	Mali (+29) Senegal (+25) Lesotho (+25) Mozambique (+8) South Africa (+8) Namibia (+6) Benin (+3)	

Note: Kendall's Tau b = .830*** / Pearson's r=.792***, N=17.
The number for each country is the percentage point difference between the percentage of Afrobarometer respondents minus the percentage of MPs from each country who answered that listening to constituents and representing their needs is the most important job for MPs to perform.
Sources: African Legislature Project MP Survey; Afrobarometer, Round 4.

In sum, although MPs frequently speak about the pressures they are under to provide jobs and development projects back to their districts, and although their establishment of CDFs is a logical response, it appears that when aggregated at the country level—which is the level at which the decision to establish or not establish CDFs is made—the funds are most likely to be found in the countries where MPs misread the desires of their constituents the most.

Parliamentary Reform and Parliamentary Strengthening

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, a third possible explanation for the spread of CDFs is that they are supported by reform-minded MPs who see it as a way to strengthen the legislature as an institution of countervailing power vis-à-vis the executive branch. Because CDFs are assumed to raise MPs' prospects for reelection generally, it is also assumed that that they protect "institutionalists" who are the MPs most vulnerable at the polls. If true, then countries with the highest percentages of MPs who can be classified as institutionalists or "reformers," should also be those with CDFs.

Table 7: CDF Status by MP Support for Parliamentary Reform

	<30%	**30-60%**	**>60%**
Country Has CDF		Kenya (56%) Zimbabwe (55%) Uganda (51%)	Malawi (76%) Tanzania (73%)
Ambiguous	Botswana (14%) Ghana (6%)		
Country Does Not Have CDF	Mozambique (28%) South Africa (14%)	Lesotho (43%) Namibia (39%) Burkina Faso (30%) Senegal (34%) Mali (33%)	Benin (62%)

Note: Kendall's Tau b = .214 / Pearson's r = .539*, N=15 (Questions not asked in Nigeria or Zambia).
"Regardless of whether your country already has this please tell us whether you support or oppose measures that would allow this Parliament to: 1. Increase the number of sitting days for the Parliament; 2. Set salaries for MPs and Staff; 3. Increase oversight of the executive; 4. Approve senior appointments to the civil service." Cells display the percentage of MPs who support all four reform proposals.
Source: African Legislatures Project MP Survey.

To test this proposition, we turn to a series of questions asked in the ALP MP surveys which attempted to tap support for institutional reform. In particular, we use the responses to four questions that asked MP: (1) Whether parliament should have increased powers to oversee the executive branch; (2) whether parliament should increase the number of days it is in session; (3) whether the salaries of MPs should be increased; and (4) whether parliament should have the power to approve appointments to the senior civil service. MPs answering "yes" to all four questions were categorized as reformers.

With the exception of Benin, the greater the percentage of reformist MPs in a given legislature, the more likely the parliament of that country will have passed legislation establishing CDFs (Pearson's r = .539*). Indeed, Benin is a clear outlier where MPs are twice as likely as their colleagues in other Francophone legislatures to support a full basket of reforms. If we removed Benin from the analysis, the correlation becomes even stronger (Pearson's r = .646**). Put differently, this corroborates the argument that MPs see CDFs as part of the same basket of other reforms designed to strengthen their institution even though they address that part of the MPs' job that exists outside the legislature.

The Consequences and Impact of CDFs

In this section, we move from probing arguments about the spread of CDFs in Africa, to a test of conventional propositions about their impact. In particular, we investigate whether CDFs have changed MP behavior by allowing them to spend less time travelling home and focus more time on activities that build the legislature as an institution. Second, we examine whether or not CDFs have resulted in more positive views of MPs in particular (specific support) or the legislature as an institution (diffuse support).

Constituency Service

In what ways have CDFs shaped the activities MPs undertake back in their constituencies? As we have demonstrated, CDFs tend to occur in those countries where MPs are most likely to perceive intense constituent demands for frequent visits and constituency service, as well as in those legislatures with high levels of support for institution-strengthening reforms. Has the existence of CDFs reduced MPs perceived need to travel home and engage in constituency service? To test this, we examine MP responses to a series of questions in the ALP survey about the frequency of their travel home, and the amount of money they spend on travel and other types of constituency service.

As shown in Table 8, the establishment of CDFs makes no difference in the number of trips MPs make back to their constituencies while parliament is in session. In both countries with CDFs and those without, the median MP returns to their constituency two times a month (while parliament is in session). The presence or absence of CDFs also appears to have no impact on the duration of

each trip, where the median member stays in the constituency three days per trip (a typical Friday through Sunday stay).[10]

Table 8: MP Behaviour in Constituencies by Access to Constituency Funds

		MP Does Not Have Access to Constituency Funds	MP Has Access to Constituency Funds	Test Statistic	N
Mean Monthly Trips Home During Session	Mean Median	3.0 (2.0)	2.8 (2.0)	Eta=.031	736
Mean Number of Days Per Trip	Mean Median	6.4 (3.0)	4.4 (3.0)	Eta=.126***	712
Average Monthly Amount MP Donates to Individuals	Mean Median	$823 ($406)	$1207 ($660)	Eta=.099*	599
Average Monthly Amount MP Donates to Development Projects	Mean Median	$3492 ($146)	$948 ($500)	Eta=.046	571
Electoral Security (MP Expects To Win Re-Election By Large Margin)	Percent	33%	58%	Tau b= .257***	818

Note: Cells display the average response of MPs to each question. For question wording, see Appendix.
Source: African Legislatures Project MP Survey.

The presence of CDFs makes a sharper difference in the amounts of funds MPs donate to both individuals and local community development projects. In respect to the former, in countries that have established CDFs, the median MP donates roughly one-third more funds to constituents for personal problems than MPs in countries without CDFs. In terms of donations to local development projects, MPs in CDF countries outspend their counterparts by a four to one margin. These differences are very large, but whether they are due to MPs' access to CDFs, or access to other state provided allowances that support their work in their constituencies, or to donations that come out of their own pockets, or to some combination of all three, cannot be determined from our data. The magnitude of these differences, however, suggests that some of these monies do

[10] In this section, we report medians since the data on travel and spending is skewed by a smaller number of MPs who travel home far more frequently (usually because they live in districts close to the legislative capital) or who spend very large amounts of money.

come from the CDF. Indeed, MPs constantly strive to control or at least influence disbursements from CDFs in countries where they exist. On the other hand, civil society organizations and other watchdog groups argue that CDFs are misused precisely because MPs seek to use the funds to solidify their positions back home.

What about the impact of CDFs on MP's prospects for re-election at the next election? A major motivation of MPs when passing legislation to establish CDFs was the need to address the high probability of electoral defeat. This was particularly true for legislators devoting increased time to their duties inside the legislature. Evidence supporting this interpretation comes from an ALP question that asks MPs about their re-election prospects. A significantly greater percentage of MPs with access to CDFs (58 percent) expect to win re-election "by a large margin" than those in countries without (33 percent). Whether the rates of reelection are actually higher in countries with CDFs, we cannot say at this stage of our analysis. Anecdotal data from Kenya and Uganda, however, suggest that CDFs have not raised the prospects for reelection as much as MPs expected.[11] Indeed, in Kenya, the reelection rate for incumbents has declined since the CDF was established.

MP Time Allocation

Notwithstanding the finding that MPs appear to view the establishment of CDFs as part of the same basket of reforms that strengthen the legislature, the actual impact of CDFs is not so simple. Table 9 examines the relationship between whether or not a country has established a CDF and how members of the legislature report allocating their time to various activities. Just as MPs who have access to CDFs are no less likely to travel home, neither are they any less likely to apportion their time to constituency matters or any more likely to devote time to committee or plenary work (in fact, the difference is slightly in the opposite direction). For example, MPs in countries without CDFs devote an average of 24 percent of their time to participating in plenary sessions of the legislature compared to 21 percent in countries where MPs have access to CDFs. Similarly, MPs in countries without CDFs devote an average of 26 percent of their time to serving on committees within the legislature compared to 21 percent in countries with CDFs.

[11] For example, in 2007 in Kenya when the first parliamentary elections were held following the establishment of CDFs in that country in 2003, 72 percent of the incumbent MPs—a record high—were not re-elected to the next parliament.

Table 9: MP Time Allocation by Access to Constituency Funds

	MP Does Not Have Access to Constituency Funds	MP Has Access to Constituency Funds	Test Statistic (Eta)	N
Plenary	24%	21%	.117***	796
Committee	26%	21%	.181***	761
Party Meetings	16%	11%	.233***	723
Constituency	24%	31%	.228***	783

Note: Cells display the average percentage of time MPs report spending on each type of the four listed activities.
"In a year, what percentage of your time is devoted to each of the following?"
Source: African Legislatures Project MP Survey

To be sure, these differences do not only reflect the presence or absence of CDFs, but also the type of electoral system and whether the MP operates in a one-party dominant system or a highly competitive one. Since no country that elects its national legislature via PR has established CDFs, it is not surprising that the percentage of MPs who devote the most time to party meetings and the least amount of time to constituency work, are the countries that have not established CDFs. At the same time, this data cautions us against making any simplistic assertions that CDFs, by themselves, have major impacts on MP activities.

Support for MPs

Regardless of their electoral fates, do CDFs allow MPs to deliver a sufficient amount of goods and favours to their constituency to affect citizens' evaluations of the legislature and its members in any material way? To test this, we turn to a series of Afrobarometer questions that ask people for their evaluations of the MP in terms of responsiveness, corruption, trust and overall performance. But as demonstrated in Table 10, citizens' evaluations of MPs are not substantially higher, and if anything are worse, in countries that have CDFs compared to does that do not. By the smallest of margins, and well within the margin of error, slightly more citizens in countries with CDFs (30 percent) report that their MP visits the constituency at least once a month, compared to citizens in countries without (27 percent). That said, slightly few people (19 percent compared to 22 percent) believe their MP is interested in public opinion and what citizens have to say. On the other hand, the percentage of citizens in countries with CDFs who believe that they are able to make their MP listen to them (30 percent) is higher than the percentage in countries without CDFs (23 percent). Citizens in

countries with CDFs are also more likely to regard MPs pejoratively than citizens in countries without. The percentage who think "all or most" MPs are involved in corruption is higher in countries with CDFs—perhaps because they have or are perceived as having access to these funds— while the percentage who approve of the job performance of their MP is less (45 compared to 50 percent). While not definitive, taken together, these findings strongly suggest that CDFs do not provide MPs with a political advantage that some might wish to use if they spend more time engaging the legislative process or exercising oversight within the legislature.

Table 10: CDFs and Citizen Views of MPs

	MPs Have Access to Constituency Funds	**MPs Have Access to Constituency Funds**	**Test Statistic (Tau b)**	**N**
MP In Constituency At Least Weekly	27%	30%	.040***	20,398
MPs Interested In Public Opinion	22%	19%	-.020**	20,399
Able to Make MP Listen	44%	50%	.038**	20,400
All/Most MPs Involved in Corruption	23%	31%	.060***	20,399
Approve MP Job Performance	50%	46%	-.086***	20,400

Note: Cells display the average response of respondents to each question. For question wording, see Appendix.
Source: Afrobarometer, Round 4.

Support for the Legislature

Finally, we turn to the question of whether CDFs materially affect citizens' support for the legislature as an institution, especially its law making and oversight functions. By modest margins, citizens in countries that have established CDFs are more likely to support legislative autonomy with respect to law making and oversight, two defining functions of the legislature. Citizens in countries with CDFs are also more likely to reject the idea that parliament should be shut down and replaced with presidential dictatorship. Again,

however, the differences between the two groups of countries are not overwhelming though they are consistent with the argument that CDFs help strengthen the autonomy of the legislature. At the same time, citizens in CDF countries are *less* likely to trust the legislature as an institution than in countries without CDFs, perhaps because they are suspicious of MP corruption in the administration of the funds. Once again, however, these finding could be a function of the type of electoral system and whether or not citizens reside in a one party dominant political system where the legislature is arguably more likely to follow a predictable path in respect to its approach to public policy.

Table 11: CDFs and Citizen Support for the Legislature

	MP Does Not Have Access to Constituency Funds	**MP Has Access to Constituency Funds**	**Test Statistic (Tau b)**	
Supports Legislative Autonomy in Law making	60%	69%	.098***	20,398
Supports Legislative Oversight	57%	63%	.063***	20,398
Rejects Shutting Down Parliament and Allowing President to Rule	75%	85%	.128***	20,397
Trusts Legislature a Lot	33%	26%	-.049***	20,398

Note: Cells display the average response of respondents to each question. For question wording, see Appendix.
Source: Afrobarometer, Round 4.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we first employed relevant data from the African Legislatures Project and the Afrobarometer to test three alternative hypotheses about the spread of CDFs in Africa. In our view, the best evidence supports the MP misperception hypothesis. That is, in the countries with CDFs, MPs have correctly gauged the extent of popular demand for a "localist" MP style, or an African form of "home style." At the same time, this is precisely where MPs get it wrong and interpret these localist orientations as a demand for the delivery of goods and favours to the district, and miss the fact that what citizens want is for their elected representatives to *listen* to their concerns and facilitate a suitable government response. They want to be represented in the decision making

processes of the state so that public policy responds to their needs and their preferences. However, while the establishment of CDFs may be a response to MP misperceptions of public opinion, they may in the long run contribute to what citizens do want—better social service delivery, infrastructure, etc. back in their constituency—that is to say, the very public goods they seem to eschew when they emphasize the need for MPs to listen to and represent their concerns. This is a paradox, but one that broadens our understanding of the significance of CDFs and why the spread of these funds to other countries will no doubt increase.

Second, this chapter has explored the contexts within which CDFs operate and offered some preliminary assessments of the impact of the funds, particularly with respect to contributing to reforms to strengthen African legislatures on the one hand, and sustaining the careers of key parliamentary players on the other. The data presented suggests that the "CW pork barrel" explanation of why CDFs are established, though logically persuasive, is not supported by the available evidence. CDFs do not appear to enhance the stature of MPs or their prospects for re-election. Though arguably viewed by MPs as part of a larger basket of institution-strengthening reforms, the impact of CDFs may be just the opposite. MPs in countries with CDFs do not spend more time in plenary sessions of the legislature than MPs in countries without the funds. Nor do they devote more time to the work of parliamentary committees, the heart of modern legislatures, or less time back in their constituencies. Finally, when back in their districts, MPs in countries with CDFs seem to dish out more cash in the form of both private goods to individuals and public goods in the form of donations to local community development projects. Put differently, CDFs do *not* seem to contribute to the development of the legislature as an institution of countervailing power that is more likely to hold the executive accountable for its actions.

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Appendix

Table 8

When Parliament is in session:
-How many trips did you make to your constituency during a typical month?
-On average, how long did you stay (in days)?

Members of Parliament often incur significant costs in constituency service. What is your best estimate of each of the following?
-The average contributions you personally make to individual constituents to help them with personal problems per month? *IN [LOCAL CURRENCY] PER MONTH*
-The average contributions you personally make to local community development projects per month (excluding [Constituency Development Funds])? *IN [LOCAL CURRENCY] PER MONTH*

How would you rate your own electoral prospects in the next election in [xxxx]?

Table 10

How much time does your Member of Parliament spend in this constituency?

How much of the time do you think the following try their best to listen to what people like you have to say: members of Parliament?

In your opinion, how likely is it that you could get together with others and make your Member of Parliament listen to your concerns about a matter of importance to the community?

How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Members of Parliament?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past twelve months, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? Your Member of Parliament

Table 11

Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.
Statement 1: Members of Parliament represent the people; therefore they should make laws for this country, even if the President does not agree.
Statement 2: Since the President represents all of us, he should pass laws without worrying about what Parliament thinks.

Statement 1: Parliament should ensure that the President explains to it on a regular basis how his government spends the taxpayers' money.
Statement 2: The President should be able to devote his full attention to developing the country rather than wasting time justifying his actions.

There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives? Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything.

How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? Parliament