Citizen or Client? An Analysis of Everyday Politics in Ghana

LAUREN M. MacLEAN

Abstract: This paper reconsiders the abstract concepts of citizenship and clientelism based on the political attitudes and everyday practices of people living in Ghana. Drawing on survey and ethnographic research at the village level in Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana as well as two rounds of Afrobarometer data, the paper reveals a hybrid conception of politics that departs strikingly from scholarly theories. I argue that the particular patterns of hybridity highlight the importance over time of the historical construction of the colonial and post-colonial state. Overall, the paper emphasizes that future scholars and policymakers need to understand indigenous conceptualizations of everyday politics rather than assuming that African practices exemplify or fall short of an externally imposed normative ideal.

Introduction

In the 1990s, many African states began a process of political liberalization whereby the formal rules of political contestation changed. In many countries across the continent, military rulers and leaders of one-party states begrudgingly allowed multi-party elections for the first time in decades. Ghana was emblematic of this "third wave" of democratization in Africa.[1] In the spring of 1992, a new constitution was approved by popular referendum, which led Flight Lieutenant J.J. Rawlings and his Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) to remove the ban on party politics and prepare for elections by the end of the year. Opposition parties gained recognition and were permitted to open offices and hold rallies. Furthermore, official restrictions on the media were relaxed, and the state-run monopoly on information was overrun with new radio stations and newspapers.

The early optimism about "the winds of democracy" blowing across Africa has been tempered by events on the ground, however.[2] With devastating election violence in Kenya in 2008, and returns to authoritarian rule by coup and constitutional manipulation in Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Nigeria, and elsewhere, many scholars have understandably turned their attention away from studying the conditions for democratic transition toward analyzing the factors that support democratic consolidation.[3] At this point in time, Ghana is often held up as a model of democratic consolidation. Indeed, the Obama administration intended to

Lauren M. MacLean, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Political Science at Indiana University. Her research focuses on the political economy of state-building, social welfare policy, energy policy, and democratic citizenship in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and the U.S. Her first book, *Informal Institutions and Citizenship in Rural Africa* (2010) was the winner of the APSA 2011 Sartori Book Award and finalist for the ASA Herskovits Award.

communicate precisely this message with Ghana chosen as the President's first head-of-state visit in Africa in July 2009.[4] Observers have noted that while the initial elections were imperfect, Ghana has now completed six multi-party elections and two peaceful transfers of power to the opposition, even remaining calm in the context of a razor-thin victory for the opposition in December 2008 and protracted court battles over results in December 2012.[5]

While many political scientists have focused on explaining the dynamics of party politics and voting behavior at the national level during these highly contested electoral periods, this paper shifts the lens to explore how Ghanaians think about participating in politics on an everyday basis at the local level.[6] In particular, do they conceptualize their role as citizens or clients? Hence, this paper explores the meaning and everyday practice of democracy on the ground to ordinary people in Ghana outside of and between heated national elections. In particular, the paper examines a critical turning point in the late 1990s, immediately prior to the first alternation of power to the opposition, to see how Ghanaians thought about participation in politics before the political system had become a more consolidated democracy and widely considered a model of success on the continent. The paper intentionally does not focus on the most recent empirical data on political behavior from Ghana, as its objective is to make a broader, conceptual point: it is crucial for scholars to study how concepts of political participation--whether they be based on notions of clientelism or citizenship, or both—have been constituted by Ghanaians over time at the local level. Indeed, while the democratic governance of Ghanaian politics in 2014 may not be representative of the continent as a whole, the political period highlighted in this paper from the late 1990s is more typical of the hybrid regimes experienced by many Africans today.

The paper begins by comparing the literatures on citizenship and clientelism to see how scholars conceptualize the key differences between the two. Then, the paper analyzes the sub-national variations in public opinion within Ghana from the Afrobarometer Project survey in 1999 and 2008. In the second half of the paper, I draw on original data from two villages in Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana from 1998-99 to interrogate from below these differences in how Ghanaians conceptualized their role in politics.[7] The analysis reveals that village residents from Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana did not articulate a pure type of citizenship or clientelism, but instead they described a hybrid conception of everyday politics.[8] I argue that regional differences in the history of state formation critically shape how people imagine their role in negotiating their political communities. This paper's analysis from below suggests that indigenous notions of citizenship and practices of clientelism are more entangled and less distinct on the ground than our abstract social theories would predict.

Conceptualizations of Citizenship and Clientelism from the Literature

This paper brings into dialogue two literatures that do not usually speak to one another—one on citizenship, and the other on clientelism. These literatures seem to have evolved quite separately within the discipline of political science, developed by different sets of scholars with dissimilar subfield specializations, usually working in divergent empirical contexts. Thus, citizenship has been largely the domain of normative political theorists working frequently from abstract models of logical reasoning, or, when empirically grounded, on a small number of Western, advanced industrialized countries. By contrast, clientelism has been historically an

area of expertise for scholars of comparative politics based on their field research in the developing world. While each of these literatures is admittedly quite diverse, this paper highlights some core assumptions that dominate the conceptualization of politics in each area. Table 1 is a conceptual typology that highlights the very different ways that scholars tend to theorize citizenship versus clientelism. The side-by-side comparison of these scholarly conceptualizations illuminates how the selection of empirical cases, or even the researcher's own positionality, can inform the conceptualization of key ideas and subsequent theory development. This paper unpacks the normative assumptions that are loaded into social science theories by subsequently investigating the indigenous conceptualizations of everyday politics.

TABLE 1. SCHOLARLY CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF EVERYDAY POLITICS

	CITIZENSHIP LITERATURE	CLIENTELISM LITERATURE
Orientation of political claim-making and identity	National State-centered	Local Organized outside of state
Nature of interactions	Universal, impersonal, and detached.	Customized, highly personalized, and face-to-face.
Formal transparency and accountability of claim-making	Formal institutions guarantee claims with transparent mechanisms for accountability.	Informal institutions sanction behavior with little transparency or accountability.
Notions of rights and duties	Liberal notion of equal individuals who claim rights and liberties.	Illiberal notion of unequal individuals who claim reciprocal rights and duties.
Effect of political claim-making on broader system	Integrative effects associated with wealthy democratic regimes.	Disintegrative effects associated with impoverished authoritarian regimes.
Normative evaluation	Positive	Negative

To begin, the literature on citizenship is extensive and certainly heterogeneous. While drawing from diverse theories of citizenship, including liberal, republican, deliberative, multicultural, and cosmopolitan models, this paper emphasizes some core assumptions that dominate these scholarly conceptualizations of politics.[9] The most pervasive assumption is that the relevant political identity is at the level of the nation-state, and thus, political claims are oriented toward the central state. In much of this literature, the nation-state actually "bestows" citizenship status and thus formally defines and constructs its citizens in legal language.[10]

A second dimension of politics theorized in the literature on citizenship is that the interactions between citizens and the state are universal. The uniqueness of the person or their attributes has nothing to do with the citizen's interactions with the state. In fact, communications with the state's politicians or bureaucratic personnel are rare, and when they

do occur, usually it is mediated by the television, radio, or web-based e-mail or application forms. In-person interactions are very infrequent and often involve a one-way, top-down (state-to-citizen) receipt of information or instructions.

A third component of politics theorized by citizenship scholars is that state institutions formally guarantee individual rights with greater transparency and mechanisms for accountability. Often a national constitution enshrines this popular and shared agreement on rights within the nation, which citizens can invoke and appeal when their rights have been transgressed.

A fourth aspect of politics that is most often shared by citizenship theorists is the liberal notion of free and equal individuals claiming rights and liberties.[11] Even scholars such as Kymlicka (2001) and Young (1989), who highlight the existence of social difference and inequality, express hope for a more just, but liberal, future when they make arguments for expanded group or differentiated representation on the premise that these institutions eventually would become unnecessary.[12]

Finally, much of citizenship theory emphasizes the integrative effects of political claim-making by citizens on the broader political system. Marshall argued that the expansion of civil, political and then social rights would reduce the experience of social inequality and enhance integration and stability.[13] Theorists of deliberative democracy such as Jurgen Habermas (1994) and Seyla Benhabib (1996) have argued that the participation of citizens in deliberative processes would strengthen the popular legitimacy of policy and of the regime itself. Overall, citizenship theory tends to imagine citizenship as emerging from wealthy, democratic regimes and evaluates the concept of citizenship as normatively positive. Citizenship can be improved, according to multicultural theorists, or perhaps become more cosmopolitan, according to others, but none of these theorists reject the concept as something to eliminate from the everyday practice of politics.

The scholarly conceptualization of citizenship stands in stark contrast to that of clientelism. Despite a recent renewal of scholarly interest among comparative politics scholars, the study of clientelism is not nearly as widespread across the subfields of the discipline as the work on citizenship.[14] The first commonly espoused characteristic of clientelism is that these interactions start locally, and can pyramid upward or downward, but, unlike citizenship, are not officially sponsored or legislated by the nation-state.[15] Hyden, in his theory of "the economy of affection," has argued that the state is actually irrelevant for much of African politics floating like "a balloon suspended in mid-air."[16] The peasants' ability to exit into the reciprocal relationships of the economy of affection gives politics a more "community-centered orientation."[17] Of course, certain patrons may operate from within the state and distribute their greater access to public jobs, resources, and perquisites to their clients.[18] Clientelism, however, particularly according to Africanist scholars, extends well beyond public sector patronage and decision-making.[19]

The second dimension common in theories of clientelism is that politics are highly personalized, consisting indeed of face-to-face interactions and exchanges of gifts, favors, and support.[20] The unique personality and personal relationships are at the very foundation of politics in this system. These interpersonal dynamics are important even when the exchanges are generalized over a long time period, for example, over multiple generations.[21] In highlighting the personal networks and local customization of clientelism, theorists emphasize

the high level of variation in empirical forms that does not necessarily correspond to world regions or nation-states.[22]

The third aspect of clientelism is that the informal rules dominate any formal system officially on the books.[23] In their summary of the core analytical characteristics of patron-client relations, Eisenstadt and Roniger even write that clientelist relations are informal and "often opposed to the official laws of the country."[24] Van De Walle distinguishes between patronage, which is often legal, although "frowned upon," and prebendalism, the more prevalent type of clientelism in Africa, "in which important state agents unambiguously subvert the rule of law for personal gain."[25] Clientelism is not necessarily illegal (as corruption necessarily is) but the interactions are governed through informal institutions that are less transparent. As a result, accountability is more personalized, privatized, and perhaps contingent.

The fourth core assumption seemingly unanimously-shared by theorists is that clientelist interactions are essentially vertical, built on inequality and social difference.[26] Eisenstadt and Roniger, for example, insisted on the strong inequality involved, highlighting how patrons have "greater access to the means of production, major markets and centres of the society."[27] In the analysis of contemporary clientelism in Europe, Piattoni also emphasizes the "unevenness of power resources" between the individuals or corporate groups involved, but maintains that the relationship is not necessarily exploitative or involuntary on the part of clients.[28]

The fifth dimension shared by many theorists of clientelism is that these practices are disintegrative, both for political stability and for economic development.[29] Even Piattoni, who considers the possibility that clientelism is a different type of interest representation, ultimately concludes that clientelism "tends to generate economic and political externalities which may accumulate with devastating effects."[30] Van de Walle argues that since clientelistic politics in most of Africa are more narrowly concentrated within a small, political elite, citizens are less likely to receive any material distributive benefits and more likely to vote based on ethnic rather than programmatic appeals.[31]

Finally, clientelism certainly conjures a negative normative evaluation by theorists. In most cases, it is associated with the failures or 'pathology' of African states and leaders.[32] My point below is not to reify what have been used as binary opposites of citizenship versus clientelism.[33] Rather, this paper's objective is to blur the boundaries between these abstract scholarly concepts by examining from below how Africans actually think about politics on an everyday basis.[34]

Research Design and Methods

In order to investigate how Africans think about everyday politics, this paper both narrows the focus from the level of continental generalizations and shifts the perspective from the top-down to the bottom-up. To begin, the enormous political, historical, and cultural variation across the continent makes generalizations about Africans extraordinarily challenging. Instead, this paper uses a careful subnational comparative case study research design to explore the dynamics in particular regions and critical time periods of Ghana in more depth. The paper's research design essentially has two parts that complement each other.

FIGURE 1: MAP OF GHANA WITH REGIONS

Source: http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/geography/region.php

First, the paper engages in a subnational analysis of three different regions within Ghana in 1999 and 2008 (see map). This subnational analysis investigates the role of ethnic culture, geography, and infrastructure as these factors vary considerably across the country's different regions. While all of the regions were examined, the data from three regions is highlighted in the paper: Brong-Ahafo, Greater Accra, and Northern Regions. These three regions were chosen both because they had large enough samples, and because they varied considerably in terms of level of urbanization, poverty, infrastructure, education levels, and ethnic and occupational composition (see Table 2).

TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF POTENTIAL EXPLANATORY VARIABLES FOR AFROBAROMETER RESPONDENTS FROM AFRICA, GHANA, AND THREE SUBNATIONAL REGIONS IN 1999 AND 2008

		AFRICA		GHANA		Brong-Ahafo		Greater Accra		Northern	
		1999	2008	1999	2008	1999	2008	1999	2008	1999	2008
Number of respondents		21,462	24,000	1407	1,200	148	112	223	184	98	112
Urban/ rural	Urban	54	35	36	44	28	36	86	87	28	29
	Rural	46	65	64	56	72	64	14	13	72	71
Education	No formal schooling	19	17	23	26	18	25	7	2	56	62
	Primary only	28	35	15	37	15	46	11	23	8	21
	Secondary	38	38	40	29	49	27	40	54	22	16
	Post-secondary	15	10	22	7	18	3	41	20	13	1

Listened to radio news	Never	12	15	20	10	19	5	7	4	33	38
	Less than 1X/mo	3	3	6	3	7	5	2	2	4	2
	About 1X/mo	3	*	5	*	4	*	3	*	3	*
	About 1X/week	8	7	13	4	17	6	15	4	12	7
	Several times a week	22	22	15	18	12	10	18	18	7	18
	Every day	52	53	41	65	41	75	55	72	42	35
Poverty [Gone w/o food over past year for you and family]	Never	49	43	67	70	82	73	73	76	72	55
	Occasionally	33	39	23	22	15	21	21	21	27	30
	Frequently/often	10	14	9	4	2	5	5	3	1	8
	Always	1	4	1	4	1	1	0	0	0	7
Occupation	Farmer/fisherman	23	*	33	*	42	*	4	*	49	*
	Informal marketer	10		12		12		16		3	
	Artisan/appren-tice/carpenter	5		8		8		7		2	
	Unemployed	4		10		5		12		4	
	Business	5		5		4		7		4	
	Teacher	3		6		8		5		9	
	Govt worker	3		3		4		4		0	
	Prof/ nurse/a/c	4		5		2		13		0	
	Student	10		6		4		9		9	
	Services worker	10		4		3		8		2	
	Housewife					1		3			
Primary languages spoken in the home in Ghana	Akan	--	--	60	46	88	72	41	39	2	1
	Ewe			12	15	1	5	10	15	12	0
	Ga			6	10	0	0	34	39	1	0
	Dangaare			1	3	1	0	1	0	4	0
	Dagbane			2	7	1	1	1	1	23	60
	Hausa			2	1	1	0	3	5	2	1
	Frafra			2	1	0	2	1	0	1	2
	Dangbe			1	+	0	0	8	+	-	+
	Kasem			1	1	0	0		0	-	2
	Konkomba			1	1	0	0		0	15	2
	Mamprulni				1	0	1		0	11	5
	Gonja					0	0		0	12	0
	Brong					1	0				0
	Nafaana					4	0				0

+All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number to ease interpretation.

* = Not asked.

This time period of the late 1990s in the country of Ghana was chosen explicitly as a critical case study for two reasons. First, Ghana is a fascinating country case as it has emerged from decades of political instability and authoritarian rule to become by 2014 one of the most consolidated democratic systems in sub-Saharan Africa. And, yet, Bob-Milliar's paper in this special issue reveals some of the limitations of the contemporary democratic system in Ghana,

with the increase of low-intensity violence among young party foot soldiers during the second political alternation when power was returned to the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Hence, an investigation of this earlier time period is also critical because this is the moment immediately prior to the first alternation of power to the opposition political party in Ghana in 2000.

In a similar vein, Brong-Ahafo Region, the subnational region with the highest scores for political knowledge and participation in 1999, which then saw subsequent declines in knowledge in 2008, was chosen for further investigation in the second half of the paper. Here, I compare the way individuals describe politics and their political behavior in two village communities in the Tano District of Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana in 1998-1999.[35]

In addition to narrowing the focus to subnational regions within Ghana, this paper also adopts a perspective from below. The paper uses a combination of ethnographic observation, survey research and focus group interviews to reveal individual-level differences in political opinions and everyday practices. The Afrobarometer data was collected by the Afrobarometer Project using a nationally representative sample of adults in Round One from July 1999 to June 2001 in twelve countries and in Round Four from March 2008 to June 2009 in twenty countries.[36] The paper draws on the most recent round of publicly available data (2008-09) as well as the earliest round of data (1999-2001) in order to increase comparability with my fieldwork data.[37] The survey research from the two villages of Brong-Ahafo Region was original data I collected interviewing a multi-stage, stratified sample of nearly two hundred adults.[38] I also draw extensively in this paper from single-sex focus group discussions that were recorded and transcribed. The interpretation of the survey and focus group data was heavily influenced by additional in-depth interviews, ethnographic observation, oral histories, and archival research completed in the field.

Conceptualizations of Everyday Politics: A Sub-National Analysis within Ghana

Having examined earlier how various scholars view politics, what do Ghanaians think? In particular, beyond their sporadic participation in a national election, how do they conceptualize everyday politics? Below, I examine the conceptualizations of everyday politics across several subnational regions within Ghana. I take the conceptual typology of everyday politics generated from the literature on citizenship and clientelism as a starting point, and then use different parts of the Afrobarometer survey data to gain insights into these five dimensions of everyday politics.

Orientation of Political Claim-Making and Identity

The orientation of political claim-making on an everyday basis is revealed in the Afrobarometer survey through the variation in the Ghanaian respondents' awareness of their various political representatives (see Table 3 below). Survey respondents were asked to name their local government representative, their legislative representative (in the national legislative body), their finance minister, and then, finally, their vice president. When compared to all Africans participating in the Afrobarometer survey that year, more Ghanaians knew the correct answer for all four political representatives. What was particularly illuminating, however, was that Ghanaians demonstrated a particularly strong awareness of the politicians that represented

their specific constituency, rather than those that were elected or appointed to represent the nation as a whole. Hence, the Ghanaians' awareness of their legislative representative (49 percent) was over three times as strong as awareness by all Africans overall (15 percent), and Ghanaians correct knowledge of their local government officials (59 percent) was nearly twice as strong as awareness by all Africans overall (32 percent). Meanwhile, only 32 percent of Ghanaians knew their finance minister, slightly better than 21 percent of Africans overall, and 60 percent named their vice president, compared to 52 percent of Africans overall.

TABLE 3. AWARENESS OF ELECTED POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES FROM AFROBAROMETER ROUND ONE 1999 AND ROUND FOUR 2008

		AFRICA		*GHANA*		*Brong-Ahafo*		*Greater Accra*		*Northern*	
Year		1999	2008	1999	2008	1999	2008	1999	2008	1999	2008
Number of respondents		21,462	14,399	1,407	1,200	148	112	223	184	98	
Named local government representative	Incorrect	5	*	10	*	11	*	12	*	28	*
	Correct	32		59		64		38		63	
	Don't know	49		31		24		50		9	
Named Legislative representative	Incorrect	5	9	6	8	3	9	4	10	23	3
	Correct	15	51	49	48	59	43	47	42	49	63
	Don't know	70	32	45	34	38	30	50	41	28	33
	Know but can't remember[1]	*	8	*	10	*	18	*	7	*	2
Named Finance Minister	Incorrect	4	3	6	4	3	2	4	2	25	1
	Correct	21	29	32	22	36	20	47	39	14	11
	Don't know	66	60	62	64	61	63	49	46	61	86
	Know but can't remember*	*	8	*	11	*	16	*	14	*	3
Named VP	Incorrect	4	*	4	*	1	*	0.3	*	17	*
	Correct	52		60		66		82		36	
	Don't know	36		36		33		18		46	

+All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number to ease interpretation.
* = Not asked.

A comparison of the results in Round 1 in 1998 with Round Four nearly a decade later show that Ghanaians have now lost their edge over Africans as a whole in having great knowledge of their political representatives. Perhaps with greater democratic consolidation, and more certainty about the prospects of regime continuity, Ghanaians were slightly less attuned to political information and less likely to correctly identify their representatives.[39] Democratic consolidation does seem to have produced a shared normative pressure that citizens *should* be able to name these politicians, as more Ghanaians than Africans claimed that they knew this information but simply could not remember it.[40]

While fascinating to compare Ghanaian responses to Africans in Round One and 4 of the Afrobarometer project overall, these aggregate numbers for "Ghana" obscure important regional variations in the awareness of political representatives within the country. Respondents from Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana, which is examined in more detail in the second half of the paper, had an even greater awareness of their local (64 percent) and legislative representatives (59 percent) than Ghanaians overall in 1999. Perhaps not surprisingly given their physical proximity to the national corridors of power, the respondents from Greater Accra had the greatest ease in naming the vice president and finance minister compared to respondents from any other region but then struggled to name their local government or legislative representative in 1999.

Again, over the next decade, however, a greater number of respondents from both Brong-Ahafo and Greater Accra Regions were incorrect in naming their representatives, or claimed that they knew but could not recall the name. Respondents in Northern Region revealed the most dramatic improvements in political knowledge, starting with the greatest number of respondents offering an incorrect answer for all four representatives in 1999, and becoming the most accurate, with the least frequent excuses about knowing but not remembering.

The orientation of everyday politics in Ghana was further revealed with an analysis of the Afrobarometer questions on the frequency of different types of political participation.[41] For Ghanaians overall in 1999 and 2008, the type of participation that involved both the greatest number of Ghanaian respondents and the highest frequency over time was attendance at community meetings.[42] This exercise of citizenship was explicitly oriented toward the local community level whereas the other acts of participation where more likely occurring outside of the individual's immediate residence. But, once more, the variation across the regions was also significant, with respondents from Brong-Ahafo Region again reporting a higher percentage involved in community meetings at a higher frequency than the other regions in 1999 and 2008.[43] Overall, the respondents from Brong-Ahafo Region demonstrated a higher level of political knowledge and frequency of political participation than other regions, particularly for the more localized level of political officials.

Nature of Political Interactions

The nature of political interactions was more difficult to glean from the Afrobarometer survey data. One pair of potentially useful questions inquired about the patterns of contacting that people used to resolve problems.[44] Notably, in 1999 only one out of every ten Ghanaians reported ever contacting any government ministry official over the past five years. This number seems extremely small but may reflect the wording of the question, which could suggest a

narrower conceptualization of contacting only a government official located in the central ministry offices in Accra, rather than someone based in the district or region, which would be much more feasible and likely for the majority of respondents. Still, when the wording was broadened in the 2008 Afrobarometer survey to include "any official of a government agency," only 13 percent of respondents replied affirmatively. Notably, too, it was respondents from the Northern Region who were most likely to contact a government official (20 percent) as compared to those from Greater Accra (10 percent) and Brong-Ahafo (8 percent).

Over 27 percent of Ghanaian respondents did report contacting "some other influential person" however. This data suggests that nearly three times as many Ghanaians sought the assistance of a power broker outside of the state government than within it to resolve their problems. Because of the ambiguity of the first question, however, the results are difficult to evaluate. In 2008, in a newly formulated multi-pronged question designed to uncover the authority base for these non-state leaders, nearly 46 percent of Ghanaians replied that they contacted religious leaders, almost 26 percent contacted traditional rulers, and nearly 19 percent maintained that they contacted some "other" influential person. Similar to contacting of government officials, respondents from Brong-Ahafo Region attested to greater numbers and intensities of contacting influential people in 1999, but they were outpaced in 2008 by respondents in Greater Accra for contacting religious leaders or some other influential person, and by those in Northern Region for contacting a traditional ruler.[45] Ironically, as Ghana's democracy became more consolidated by 2008, citizens from all three regions seemed to converge on Brong-Ahafo's earlier pattern of more intense political interactions with non-state and more local political authorities.

Mechanisms of Accountability

Despite very high voter participation rates in the last election across the regions in Ghana, a relatively small minority of Ghanaian respondents cited voting or multi-party elections as the first thing that came to mind when they thought about the meaning of democracy in 1999 (unfortunately, this question was not asked again in the 2008 survey to enable comparison over time). [46] Only 9 percent of Ghanaian respondents described voting or multi-party politics, one percentage point lower than the response from Africans overall (10 percent).

More frequently, Ghanaians responded that democracy meant "government by the people, of the people, and/or for the people" (22 percent). This conceptualization of democracy is a much broader, more inclusive and collective notion of democracy than the individual exercise of voter choice. This notion of government by the people also involves a much more sustained and active participation of the group in the system than the sporadic and more passive exercise of an individual's voter choice. Notably, nearly 41 percent of respondents from Brong-Ahafo Region described democracy in this way as government by the people. This was the single most frequently articulated meaning of democracy in the region and remarkably higher than the other regions. This data reinforces the earlier finding that Ghanaians, and in particular, those respondents from Brong-Ahafo, were more actively and directly participating in politics by attending community meetings and getting others to raise an issue. Participation in demonstrations or writing to the newspaper was more infrequent for Ghanaians than even for Africans overall in 1999 and 2008.[47]

Notions of Rights and Duties

When asked about the meaning of democracy, one of the most frequently mentioned response for Ghanaians was "civil liberties and personal freedoms." Nearly 28 percent of Ghanaians described civil rights so this answer was slightly more frequent than "government by the people" discussed above. Political rights such as voting were much less frequently mentioned (9 percent), and social and economic rights to development were only cited by less than 3 percent of Ghanaian respondents.

T.H. Marshall (1950) might have predicted these results as they reflect his theory of a linear expansion of rights from civil, to political and culminating in the state's guarantee of social rights. But, the results do not square with either the non-linear political history of rights in Ghana, or my fieldwork data from Brong-Ahafo Region, which suggests a much more dominant emphasis on collective social rights. These puzzling results could be an artifact of the question wording, which might have prompted a liberal individualist response because it asks about the meaning of "democracy." It might have been illuminating to also ask an even more open-ended question that investigated how people imagined their responsibilities and ability to make claims on whatever type of political community.

Finally, another question that sheds light on how Ghanaians thought about rights and duties is the Afrobarometer question on individual versus government responsibility for well-being (which was not replicated in the 2008 round). Compared to Africans overall (47 percent), a greater number of Ghanaians (55 percent) placed more emphasis on the individual's responsibility for their own well-being. In Ghana, government was not seen as holding the primary responsibility for the population's welfare, a finding that is reinforced by my fieldwork and discussed in more detail in the second half of the paper. Here again, though, respondents from different regions varied tremendously in their views on this issue. In 1999, an even bigger number of respondents from Brong-Ahafo (49 percent) said that they "strongly" agreed that people were responsible for their own well-being than in Greater Accra (25 percent) or Northern Region (19 percent).

Effects of Everyday Politics on the Regime and Normative Evaluations of Democracy

One of the primary objectives of the Afrobarometer project is to investigate people's normative evaluations of democracy. The primary message from the analysis of Afrobarometer data has been that most Africans viewed democracy positively and were supportive of its prospects for the future.[48] My analysis also supports this characterization of the majority opinion. But, I would contend that it is important to disaggregate the data further and investigate the minority opinions as well. For example, one very interesting dimension of the Afrobarometer data that might be missed is the number of Ghanaians (26 percent) that responded "don't know" to the question about the meaning of democracy in 1999. Ghanaians answered "don't know" almost twice as often as Africans overall (13 percent). The replies to this question varied substantially by region too. So, fewer respondents from Brong-Ahafo (14 percent) replied "don't know", more like Africans overall, whereas 63 percent of the respondents from Northern Region answered "don't know."

Their inability to provide a response to this question was not because they were simply not interested in politics or did not like to discuss politics. Nearly 72 percent of the Ghanaian

respondents reported that they were interested in politics in 1999, which was even greater than the results for Africans overall (63 percent).[49] Similarly, nearly 68 percent of Ghanaians said that they discussed politics sometimes or frequently, compared to 66 percent of Africans overall. Again, similar patterns of cross-regional variation persisted in the responses to this question with a greater number of Brong-Ahafo respondents reporting an interest in politics (87 percent) than for Ghanaians or Africans overall.

What was equally interesting was the sizable minority of respondents who approved of single-party or traditional rule in response to other questions.[50] Again, the dominant majority disapproved of these alternative options for governance. But, in Ghana, in 1999, over 19 percent of respondents approved of single-party rule, and nearly 25 percent approved of decisions made by a council of traditional elders. By 2008, over 15 percent of respondents approved of single-party rule, a still significant share of respondents given the extent of democratic consolidation by that time. And, yet again, the extent of minority support for authoritarian regimes varied substantially from region to region within Ghana during this time period. For example, in Brong-Ahafo Region in 1999, only 23 percent approved of traditional rule whereas in Northern Region, over 38 percent approved of this option. Similarly, in Brong-Ahafo Region in 2008, only 4 percent approved of military rule compared to 11 percent in Northern Region, and only 5 percent approved of one-man rule, whereas 8 percent did so in Northern Region.

Summary and Brief Explanation for Sub-National Differences

This section of the paper highlighted some advantages and disadvantages of the Afrobarometer survey data. Where the Afrobarometer survey project had an advantage was that they were able to draw a nationally representative sample from every region in the entire country of Ghana. This allowed us to estimate the "average" response from the country as a whole and to compare this mean score with the average for all of the twelve countries included in Round One and the twenty countries included in Round 4 of the project. In this way, we were able to put the "Ghanaian" response in a broader context.

Another advantage of the Afrobarometer data was that the stratified sampling techniques at multiple stages allowed us to compare the different scores for each highlighted region. This analysis revealed important variation across the three regions, which previously was obscured by the national aggregate score.[51] These regional comparisons suggest that individuals from Brong-Ahafo Region have greater political knowledge and participate in a broader range of politics more frequently than respondents from Greater Accra or Northern Regions in 1999. Surprisingly, after nearly a decade of further democratic consolidation, by 2008, some of these regional differences in political knowledge and participation have reversed, for example, with respondents in Northern Region better able to identify their national legislators and ministers.

The regional variation remained puzzling, however, because there were so many factors that varied simultaneously, including, but not limited to: pre-colonial ethnic culture and politics; ethnic heterogeneity; geography; local economies and extent of poverty; and, levels of public infrastructure including schools, health, roads, and markets (see Table 2 above). Additionally, several of these potential explanatory factors changed in unexpected ways between 1999 and 2008. For example, the Afrobarometer self-reports on the lived experience of poverty actually worsened in both Brong-Ahafo and Northern Regions, compared to the nation

as a whole.[52] Perhaps less surprising, given the donor emphasis on primary education beginning in the 1980s, is the dramatic drop between 1999 and 2008 in the percent of respondents across all regions who had a secondary or post-secondary education, and marked increase in those who had experienced only primary, informal, or no schooling at all. Hence, in these regions, during this time period, the increased experience of poverty, and declines in educational achievement might have hindered some of the positive effects of democratic consolidation on the exercise of citizenship. In an attempt to reduce some of this causal complexity, the next section of the paper zooms in to focus our analysis on just two villages in Brong-Ahafo Region.

Conceptualizations of Everyday Politics: A Case Study of Tano District in Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana in 1998-99

Below, we turn to concentrate our analysis on two villages in the Tano District of Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana in 1998-1999 during the early phases of the democratization process. This in-depth analysis allows us to control more carefully for many potential explanatory factors that varied significantly among Brong-Ahafo, Greater Accra, and Northern Regions of Ghana. To begin, the villages in this region shared a similar ethnic demographic, with an approximate population of 1,000-2,000 residents, who were predominantly indigenous Akan. These Akan groups had resisted incorporation into the Asante Empire in the mid-17th century and migrated about an hour's drive further westward of Kumasi. The villages had similar Akan village chieftaincies, matrilineal family systems, and customary land tenure systems. Likewise, approximately 12-15 percent of the village populations were non-indigenous migrants.

In this district, the villages also shared similar agricultural economies, wealth, geographies, market incorporation, and infrastructure levels. Farmers had started to grow cocoa for export at around the same time in the early decades of the 20th century and were relatively prosperous compared to other regions in Ghana. By the 1980s, Brong-Ahafo Region had experienced significant deforestation and serious bushfires, which had prompted grave declines in cocoa production.[53] The villages in this district of Brong-Ahafo were also located on a dirt road with frequent "taxi" service even in the rainy season, approximately one hour to the regional capital and six hours from the national capital. The villages each had moderate levels of infrastructure for schools, health clinics, and markets, which tended to emanate from the coasts upward.

In addition to a locally-grounded research design where data collection was concentrated in just two carefully selected villages, the methodological approach for gathering this data was also bottom-up. At the broadest level, all of the interpretation was informed by my full-time immersion in the daily life and routine of each village. Additionally, many of the quotes used as evidence were derived from focus group discussions where very open-ended questions were posed, and the group's conversation flowed more naturally. Even the survey questions in this section of the paper were frequently more open-ended than the Afrobarometer questionnaires. The enumerator posed intentionally broad questions or scenarios and then waited for the respondent to supply his or her own answer, in whatever form that might be. While more difficult to code and enter, this approach helped illuminate how village residents put their political opinions and practices into their own words.

So, how did village residents conceptualize everyday politics in these villages of Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana in 1998-1999? Overall, none of the village residents articulated concepts that were consistently similar to the ways that scholars of citizenship or clientelism portrayed everyday politics (see Table 4). Perhaps, not surprisingly, indigenous conceptualizations of everyday politics were mixed in complicated ways. This paper argues that this blurring of scholarly categories was done in regionally distinct ways. New regionally-specific hybrid patterns emerged that challenge the scholarly conventional wisdom. Again, the analysis below refers to the conceptual typology presented earlier in Table 1 as an initial frame of reference to assess how indigenous conceptualizations did or did not fit into existing scholarly categories.

TABLE 4. HYBRID CONCEPTUALIZATION OF EVERYDAY POLITICS IN TANO DISTRICT VILLAGES IN BRONG-AHAFO REGION OF GHANA

DIMENSION OF CONCEPTUALIZATION	*HYBRID VILLAGE CONCEPTUALIZATIONS IN BRONG-AHAFO REGION OF GHANA*
	Concepts associated with clientelism in italics **Concepts associated with citizenship in bold**
Orientation of political claim-making and identity	*Village or district-level* **Local state** and *non-state institutions*
Nature of political interactions	*Face-to-face* **Universal treatment by institutions**
Mechanisms of accountability	**Preferred formal accountability** *Dismissed electoral accountability* Active participation in more **formal accountability** frequently through *chieftaincy institutions at village level*
Notions of rights and duties	*Community reciprocity*
Effect of political claim-making on broader system	Rarely discussed
Normative evaluation	**More positive**

Orientation of Political Claim-Making and Identity

To begin, villagers from Brong-Ahafo Region more consistently described everyday politics as being oriented toward the village or, at most, the district level. Furthermore, political claim-making and decisions involved a diversity of local state and non-state institutions. When these Ghanaians described everyday financial or political problems encountered in the village, they almost always mentioned sources of help that were within the village community—usually a family member, friend, religious congregation, or village leader such as the chief, an elder, or a unit committee member.[54] For example, in discussions of financial conflicts, village residents frequently described how the problem would be resolved by summoning the participants to an extended family meeting, or having the case heard in the village court presided over by the chief and his elders.[55] During my fieldwork stay, the village chief insisted on settling a problem that afternoon in his court in the village rather than sending the matter upward to the district authorities.

The survey data further supported these observations. The most frequently mentioned leaders for the development of the village in Tano District of Brong-Ahafo Region were the elected unit committee members (82 percent), the village chief (55 percent), and the District Assembly (24 percent).[56] Similarly, in focus group discussions of a broken borehole pump and embezzled funds, most of the village residents agreed that this problem was the water and sanitation or unit committee's responsibility, both of which were located within the village itself.[57] After the village leaders, the district assembly was often cited as the next source of help in resolving a problem such as the borehole or a corrupt contract.[58]

Village residents from this district never mentioned asking the regional government to intervene and rarely mentioned a relative or connection in Accra as the principal source of help with problems. Furthermore, villagers had a difficult time recalling the names of their members of parliament (MPs).[59] Finally, when village residents did invoke their national leaders, they almost never used their proper names, but referred simply to their political offices, for example, as "the Head of State" or "the President."[60]

Thus far, villagers from Tano District of Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana appeared to orient their political claims at a very local level. Some survey data tentatively suggests that the construction of their political identities was also more localized. After being prompted by the enumerator that any one individual belongs to several different social groups and possesses multiple identities, respondents were then asked to name which identity they would associate with most closely or list first. The majority of respondents listed their ethnic group first (68 percent), and only 11 percent declared a Ghanaian national identity.[61] Notably, religious identity was slightly more important (12 percent) than national identity in these Brong-Ahafo villages. In the next subsection, we explore whether political interactions were conceptualized in more universal or particularistic terms in these regions.

Nature of Political Interactions

In these Brong-Ahafo villages, political interactions were described as face-to-face but were highly universalized, with respondents referring more frequently to institutions and offices rather than individual names, and insisting on equal treatment, rather than customization. The importance of face-to-face interactions was emphasized by village residents, but the political

process was described as bottom-up and localized within the village community. Several respondents Brong-Ahafo Region described how the advice of village residents crucially informed and guided appropriate decision-making, in particular, of the elected village-level unit committee members.[62] Notably, several respondents from both villages described the unit committee as an association, not perceiving it as an "outside" governmental institution, but rather, a local, voluntary group that met monthly "to help the whole community."[63] When faced with conflicts, village residents usually proposed to call a meeting within the family or the village to meet in person and discuss the issue.[64] One woman described what should be done to resolve the water crisis in the village: "The town should call a general meeting and ask the committee to explain and make accounts to us."[65]

These villagers from Tano District expected concrete benefits to be delivered by their politicians, particularly those serving at the local level. While national-level politicians were rarely brought up by these villagers, when asked about the local MP, several men described how she had failed to bring the hospital or cassava mill that they wanted for the village. The district chief executive was also criticized for failing to fulfill his promise to rehabilitate village school buildings.[66] In contrast, the unit committee members were remembered for being instrumental in getting electricity to the village.[67] Again, each of these politicians was almost never mentioned by name but instead by their office title.

The importance of face-to-face interaction for villagers in this region was also highlighted in their critiques as they lambasted the MP for not coming to the village to thank them or see them after her election.[68] Also many respondents expressed frustration at the big gap between themselves "down here" and "those at the top."[69] Village residents agreed that they lacked power, and that their input "does not reach anywhere."[70]

In Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana, village residents expressed their frustration that political decisions about allocating resources were not universal or equal, but targeted toward certain favored groups. For example, respondents described how the village chief, elders, unit committee members, and cooperative leaders would have more access to help than "those without connections."[71] Several respondents described how ruling party members would also have more access to funds or programs than opposition political party members.[72] Political ties were not the only way to curry favor, however; several respondents explained that recognition as participating in the communal work of the village was also a determinant of political access.[73] This last criterion, of service done as part of the collective within the village community, was perceived by villagers as more just and fair than when an individual benefited due to their individual, particularistic connections.

Ironically, it seemed that the Brong-Ahafo villagers' ideal of universality and equality diverged from the political reality described above. Village residents from this district of Brong-Ahafo repeatedly insisted that health care "should be free for all of us."[74] Similarly, in a discussion about what would be a fair premium to pay for national health insurance, almost all respondents agreed that the monthly payment should be equal for all participants.[75] Even when there was some initial disagreement among focus group participants as to what a fair premium should be, the respondents discussed and settled on a consensus amount.[76] Some villagers even argued explicitly that by having universal and equal rights, rather than targeted benefits, it was possible to avoid corruption and subsequently, injustice.[77] Villagers in this Ghanaian region also

highlighted on many occasions how the Ghanaian government's contemporary policy of providing free health care to certain vulnerable populations such as the elderly was not actually implemented as a further justification for more equal and universal policies.[78]

Mechanisms of Accountability

Ironically, in a context where political accountability on an everyday basis occurred most frequently through unofficial channels, village residents in Brong-Ahafo Region expressed a preference for more formal avenues. The crucial dimension of formality to villagers was that the rules and procedures be publicly known and agreed upon. Several respondents invoked "the law" as the primary mechanism of accountability in discussions of everyday politics. While villagers often highlighted the role of the law that was written and enforced by the central state, this also included the legal process of the village chieftancy, which was highly formal, albeit through verbal rather than written transmission.[79] For example, one man described how participation in communal labor was high because whoever refused to take part was "sent to where the law is."[80] Another man explained that only a man's children had recourse to legal action as if it were the most effective and binding sort of mechanism of accountability.[81] According to villagers from this region of Brong-Ahafo, the law was simultaneously enforced by village courts and the central state.

In other discussions, Brong-Ahafo village residents expressed their preference for formal accountability when they became disgruntled with the uneven implementation of the formal rules. For example, one respondent in Brong-Ahafo Region described how political elites from a few large families dominated multiple local political institutions which informally hindered any checks and balances between these institutions and prevented formal accountability. He could not put forth his complaints in any outlet because all of the political leaders were informally connected—in this case, sharing family ties.

Despite the shared yearning for more formal paths of accountability by Ghanaians in these villages of Tano District, elections were not seen as the answer by anyone. In repeated interviews and discussions, the village residents in Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana seemed dismayed with formal electoral accountability. Recall, that at the time of this data collection, previously authoritarian incumbents had won two rounds of "democratic" elections in Ghana, so there had been no successful turnover of power to the opposition yet. Voting was seen by these village residents in the late 1990s as an exercise and a citizen duty but clearly not the way to influence politics.[82] When one woman described her discontent with the government's management of the economy, she was then asked why she continued to vote for the government. She replied, "What can my individual opinion do?"[83]

So, if elections were not viewed as an effective avenue for seeking accountability, what did these Ghanaians in the Tano District of Brong-Ahafo do on an everyday basis? Village residents described an active role in seeking a formal and public type of accountability, at least at the local level. At the national level, Ghanaians from these villages often explained that they did not have the time to complain or hold national politicians accountable because they were so busy doing farm work to make ends meet.[84] But at the local level, they organized public meetings to discuss past actions of their political leaders or address grievances amongst themselves. These meetings might be chaired by the unit committee chairman (a village-level institution of the

central state) or the village chieftaincy but were always held outdoors after villagers had returned from their farms and were open to anyone. When describing the process of seeking political mediation by the village chief, village residents clearly shared a common understanding of the formal rules involved in asking for a case to be heard. For example, villagers all understood that because you had to pass through the *okyeame* (or chief's spokesperson) first, the cost was doubled, in terms of the numbers of bottles of schnapps presented. Village residents often relayed that this entry cost was important for screening out matters that were not serious. Furthermore, this cost was certainly more affordable to the majority of residents than travel and lodging to and from the national capital. Village residents in this region of Ghana not only faced lower costs with a more local system of accountability, but they also had more leverage. Villagers explained how their local political leaders were more responsive because they actually lived in the same community and experienced the same problems as they did. One man defended the unit committee members' efforts by highlighting their physical proximity to the villagers and their role in resolving problems that they also experience such as drinking water. "They are with us here."[85] One overall indicator of the relative success of this system of local accountability mechanisms was that Ghanaians seemed more satisfied with the job done by their village and district-level politicians than the national-level ones.[86]

Notions of Rights and Duties

Villagers from Tano District also differed in their notions of rights and duties vis-à-vis their political community (see Tables 5 and 6). Villagers did not articulate an expansive list of rights that would be consumed primarily by individuals. Most frequently, respondents mentioned the state's role in providing free health care and education.[87] One woman stated simply, "We need electricity and good roads."[88] Only very rarely did a respondent mention the provision of credit, and even then, these were described as loans to establish a business or expand farming, rather than grants to ameliorate an individual's standard of living.[89]

TABLE 5. COMPARISON OF CONCEPTUALIZATION OF RIGHTS

	GHANAIAN REGION
Three most frequently mentioned rights	Social services (33 percent) Employment (24 percent) Roads/markets/electricity (21 percent)

TABLE 6. COMPARISON OF CONCEPTUALIZATION OF DUTIES

	GHANAIAN REGION
Three most frequently mentioned duties	Develop the community/country (47 percent) Pay taxes (22 percent) Perform communal labor (21 percent)

In general, village residents from the Tano district of Brong-Ahafo Region did not view politics exclusively in terms of rights but quickly communicated the importance of communal duties. They tended to view politics as a paternalistic but clearly reciprocal relationship with their political leaders. For example, one woman gave this advice to improve governance of the village: "The elders or big people should do their part for us; the children, too, to do our part."[90] The giving and receiving was not equal but it was certainly two-way. Many respondents in these villages mentioned the "responsibility of the citizens to do communal labor."[91] Over 22 percent of respondents also cited their duty to pay taxes explicitly as the reciprocity owed for the state's provision of public goods.[92] The village residents were more ready to acknowledge the limits of the state's beneficence and appeal to citizens to help themselves. One 42 year-old man, originally from Burkina Faso who had lived in this Ghanaian village for over twenty years, declared, "The citizens are too many for the state to be able to help, so the citizen should rather do something to improve their lot instead of relying on the state."[93] When villagers cited their agricultural production as their duty to the state, they almost always described their production of food and how it increased the food security of the entire nation of Ghana, rather than in terms of the individual cash revenues earned by export crops. As one young Akan woman said, "I should work harder at my farming to produce more food to help feed Ghana."[94] In summary, villagers in this district of Brong-Ahafo Region conceived of themselves as reciprocal participants in a local community rather than autonomous individual claimants in the nation-state.

Effects of Everyday Politics on the Regime and Normative Evaluations

Unlike the scholars of the theoretical literature, village residents in this region of Ghana rarely discussed the broader effects of everyday politics on the regime as a whole. None of the villagers spent much time considering whether the different ways that problems were solved or decisions made on an everyday basis were integrative or disintegrative for the overall political regime. In many cases, villagers appeared to conceive of the everyday politics of the village as separate and disconnected from the politics of the regime. Many of the quotes above illustrated this point of view.

Ironically, the only time that there was mention of disintegration or conflict was in the discussion of democratization, which, at the time of data collection, was less than a decade old and hence relatively new. The discussions about democratization reflected heated debates particular to Ghana in that time period of the late 1990s. The substantive content and themes of the discussions were not that surprising. Instead, what was fascinating was the process by which contention about regime politics was resolved, or not, within a village discussion group. In these Ghanaian villages, discussions were lengthy and often explicitly critical of the regime. Tensions between participants with different points of view were resolved through an emphasis on community problem-solving and local-level representation.

The village respondents rarely discussed "democracy" in all of their heated debates about politics, and when it was invoked, it was not necessarily positive. More frequently, villagers expressed a negative change in the political system. One respondent described how accountability had become more bureaucratic, less immediate, and less effective under the democratic system. He contrasted the past and current response to corruption: "In the past, if

someone misbehaved, he would be slapped. Now, we say democracy. If something happens, we say investigation. This investigation ends at the person who commits the crimes. It closes there."[95] Many villagers agreed that their non-elected village chiefs held more power than the democratically-elected unit committee or district assemblymen.[96] For example, one respondent described how the potential instability of frequent elections undermined the power of elected representatives in comparison to the village chief. "A chief is not deposed anyhow. Assemblyman can be changed at any time. The chief owns the village. Nothing is done here without his agreement. He has the greatest power."[97]

The respondents also seemed suspicious of the actual everyday practice of their democratic system. They talked freely about how elections were corrupted. Repeatedly, village residents described how the NDC bought votes in the 1996 elections. One Ghanaian man explained and everyone in the focus group concurred that: "The [NDC] government was voted into power a second time because of poverty."

The civil liberties of the Ghanaian democracy in the late 1990s were also questioned by villagers in this region of Ghana. The "culture of silence" of the previous Rawlings military regime (1981-1992) seemed to persist with the villagers, and they were reluctant to speak freely at this point in 1998-1999. Many villagers described their fear of repercussions if they expressed criticisms upward. One woman said at the very end of a lively focus group discussion, "If you go and stand somewhere and say he's not governing this nation well, you'll be killed. If you say he's destroying the nation, it won't go well with you. So the only thing you can do is pray for God to change him for everything to be okay." The conclusion here is to turn toward prayer. "What can I do? I am in a village, and they are in Accra. If you say something, and you are not careful, they will arrest you."[98] Another woman expressed her dismay, "Truly, because of fear, we do not voice our worries."[99] Interestingly, the above discussion of the possibility of political arrest led to the call for the community to "help each other" and resolve issues locally. Others highlighted how problems were routinely discussed with the district assemblyman, and they reminded each other how their voices were at least heard at the village and district level.

Summary of Patterns in Tano District of Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana

The village residents in this district of Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana clearly articulated an indigenous conceptualization of everyday politics. This indigenous conceptualization diverged in complicated ways from the scholarly conceptualizations of politics presented by theorists of citizenship and clientelism in the first section of the paper. These Ghanaian villagers described norms and behaviors that combined different aspects of citizenship as well as clientelism in a unique and specific hybrid form (see Table 4). Indeed, democracy, and particularly, multi-party elections, were not viewed as the most positive regime politics for either accountability or conflict resolution.

So what explains the existence of such hybridity in this particular place and historical moment? Recall that these villages in Tano District of Brong-Ahafo Region shared broadly similar pre-colonial cultures, geographies and agricultural economies, levels of infrastructure, and experiences of economic and political liberalization. This in-depth analysis of residents from comparable villages in this one district and region enables us to control for many of the potential explanatory factors that vary tremendously across Brong-Ahafo, Greater Accra, and

Northern Regions to likely produce significant variation in how people conceive everyday politics.

This case study thus allows us to perceive a specific type of hybrid conception that is shared by many of the village residents in this particular district and region. I argue that these villagers' striking conceptual departures from the scholarly notions of citizenship highlights the importance over time of the historical construction of the colonial and post-colonial state. It is not simply the relatively short-term experience with new electoral institutions that shapes how Africans think about and participate in politics but instead a more long-term experience of a broader range of state institutions. In other work, I uncover in much more detail the history of the construction of the colonial and post-colonial state in the areas of political administration, social service delivery, and agricultural policy in these villages in this district and region of Ghana. [100] I show how differences in the history of state formation are actually experienced on the ground and then shape informal institutions of social reciprocity and the norms of citizenship.

Building on earlier work by Boone, which theorizes that state formation varies significantly across regions within nations, we should therefore expect to see that conceptions of everyday politics in Greater Accra and Northern Regions would also demonstrate hybridity, but in different combinations.[101] We should also expect that the conceptualizations of everyday politics will have changed in Brong-Ahafo Region over time with the changing construction and local experience of state institutions. Further comparative analyses across and within regions would permit us to disentangle further the relative weight of the role of state formation versus ethnic culture, geography, economy, and infrastructure.[102]

Conclusion

This paper investigates the conceptual categories used by scholars to theorize citizenship and clientelism and then shows how their boundaries are actually blurred by Ghanaians on the ground. I find that the indigenous conceptualizations held by Ghanaians in Tano District of Brong-Ahafo Region did not map precisely to either set of theoretical categories. These village residents were neither perfect citizens nor clients but articulated their own conceptions of everyday politics. These Ghanaians thought about politics quite differently from academics. The paper highlights striking sub-national variations in the Afrobarometer data that persist from the early years of the democratic transition in 1999 to the later period in 2008, when more competitive elections produced two alternations of power. The village residents from Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana expressed a more active and community-based everyday politics, where people contributed communal labor at the village level and solved problems through local state and non-state institutions. By investigating indigenous conceptualizations, the paper revealed new patterns and identified alternative causal mechanisms for these puzzling variations between regions.

This paper also revealed the tensions and gaps between what respondents described as their everyday practices and what they expressed as their normative ideals. Future research on African politics needs to investigate both, but be aware of how practices and norms may actually overlap and co-mingle. This sort of interpretive analysis will often necessitate in-depth field research and a co-mingling of research methods as well.[103] The paper highlighted the

potential value of survey research and less structured focus group interviewing for revealing the meaning of indigenous concepts. But, these methods were critically informed by intensive ethnographic observation, historical research, and unstructured, in-depth interviewing. In addition to this mixed method, bottom-up approach, the comparative research design used in this paper was critical for shedding light on potential explanatory factors. In sum, future scholars and policymakers need to understand indigenous conceptualizations of everyday politics rather than assuming that African practices exemplify or fall short of an externally imposed normative ideal.

Notes

1   See Huntington 1991. On Africa, see Bratton and Van de Walle 1997.
2   "A Lull in the Wind. (Democracy in Africa)." 1993. *The Economist*, September 4. Van de Walle (2002) cites Freedom House data that defines thirty out of thirty nine electoral democracies as "partially free" or "not free."
3   See Carothers 2001.
4   In his speech to the Ghanaian parliament, President Obama contrasted the conflict in Kenya with praise for the 'good governance' of Ghana: "The people of Ghana have worked to put democracy on a firmer footing, with repeated peaceful transfers of power even in the wake of closely contested elections." See http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-to-the-Ghanaian-Parliament/.
5   Gyimah-Boadi 1999.
6   See the growing literature on party politics in Africa (Reidl 2014; Pitcher 2012; Le Bas 2011; Carbone 2007; Kuenzi and Lambright 2005) and voting behavior (Bratton et al. 2012; Lindbergh and Morrison 2008; Wantchekon 2003).
7   See MacLean 2010.
8   I am grateful for the valuable comments of colleagues such as Hillel Soiffer, Françoise Montambeault, and Melani Cammett as well as participants at the Midwest Political Science Association meeting, Indiana University's Center for Constitutional Democracy, and the Colloquium on Comparative Research at the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University. Any errors or faults are my own.
9   Here the paper draws on work on citizenship by scholars as diverse as Keller 2014; Fung 2007; Bosniak 2006; Mansbridge 2003; Archibuigi and Held 1995; Smith 1999; Mamdani 1996; Young 1989; Benhabib 1996; Kymlicka and Norman 1994; Turner 1993; Rawls 1993; Ekeh 1975; and Marshall 1950.
10 See Marshall 1950. See also Smith 1999 and Yashar 2005.
11 Rawls 1993.
12 See also Williams 1994 and Mansbridge 2003.
13 Marshall 1950.
14 For more recent work from various regions of the world, see Brun and Diamond 2014,

Hilger 2012, Pitcher 2009, Moran and Johnston 2009, Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Kawata 2006; Hyden 2006; Piattoni 2001, 1996, and Auyero 2000. For earlier works, see Clapham 1982; Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984; and Schmidt et al. 1977. Also see a relevant literature on corruption, for example, Holmes 2006; Blundo and Olivier de Sardan 2006), Kotkin and Sajo 2002; and Della Porta and Vannucci 1999.

15 Lemarchand 1977, p. 106.

16 See Hyden 1983, p. 19, where he first articulated his theory of "the economy of affection," which he also incorporates and develops in Hyden 2006.

17 Hyden 2006, p. 56.

18 Sara Berry's 1992 work on pervasive patterns of investments in social relations could be viewed as a critical reinterpretation of what other scholars included as clientelism. See also Bayart 1989 and Van de Walle 2007.

19 In her introduction to the edited volume on clientelism in the Europe, Piattoni (2001: 6-7) distinguishes clientelism as "more penetrating and all-encompassing" than patronage but still focuses much more exclusively on benefits tied to access to state power and public decision-making.

20 Bratton and Van de Walle 1994, 1997; Callaghy 1984; Jackson and Rosberg 1982. Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007, p. 4), however, argue that the face-to-face nature of clientelist systems evolves into a more broker-mediated system in the context of more highly institutionalized, democratic settings.

21 Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984.

22 Earlier work by Eisenstadt and Roniger (1984, pp. 47, 220) emphasized variation but tended to draw cross-national distinctions. In contrast, more recent scholarship by Piattoni (1996) compared two southern Italian regions and found that clientelism was organized in different ways with divergent consequences for economic development.

23 Hyden 2006; Joseph 1987; Medard 1982.

24 Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984, p. 48.

25 Van de Walle 2007, p. 52.

26 Landé (1977, p. xx) highlights how patrons and clients are unequal in 'status, power or resources' and that even the favors exchanged are different in kind. See also the discussion by Scott 1977, p. 125.

27 Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984, p. 49.

28 Piattoni 2001, p. 12.

29 Regarding political stability, see Reno (1995, 1998) on warlordism in West Africa. Landé (1977, pp. xxxii-xxxiii) talks about factionalism and feuding. In his early statement on clientelism, Lemarchand (1977, p. 100) offered a more positive viewpoint that it might be something you want to build upon or extend upward. "…nation-building…becomes, rather, a matter of how best to extend to the national level the discrete vertical solidarities in existence at the local or regional levels." In terms of economic development, Englebert (2000) argues that leaders face legitimacy deficit and use patrimonial strategies to secure loyalty which derails economic development. One exception is earlier work by

Lemarchand (1977, pp. 102-03) that acknowledged clientelism's inherent "divisive tendencies" but also suggested its "integrative potentialities."

30 Piattoni 2001, p. 205.

31 Van de Walle 2007, pp. 66-67. In an experimental study of electoral appeals and voting behavior in Benin, Wantchekon (2003) also validates the importance of clientelism and how it reinforces ethnic voting.

32 Budd (2004) argues that higher levels of patrimonialism are correlated with lower GNP and Freedom House rankings in a quantitative study of 30 developing countries. Oelbaum (2002) describes African clientelism as a "disease." Pitcher et al. (2009) argue against this dominant perspective contending that patrimonialism is compatible with both legitimate government and economic development using a case study of Botswana. Anthropologists Blundo and Olivier de Sardan (2014) draw on ethnographic fieldwork to show that many Africans view corruption as a legitimate part of the "everyday" routine.

33 Pitcher et al. (2009) make a related point in their discussion of patrimonialism. They argue that patrimonialism is juxtaposed with its antithesis, formal, democratic regimes.

34 See Smith (2013) for a historical and ethnographic approach to the study of how citizenship is exercised in Ethiopia.

35 I conducted fieldwork in Tano District, Brong-Ahafo region, Ghana, from October 1998-March 1999 with support from Fulbright-Hays, the Social Science Research Council, etc.

36 The countries included in Round 1 of the Afrobarometer project in 1999 were: Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. In Round 4 in 2008, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Senegal were added to the survey. The data is weighted to approximate the inclusion of 1,200 cases from each country.
See www.afrobarometer.org.

37 Round 5 of the Afrobarometer project was conducted in thirty five countries from 2001 to September 2013 but has not been released publicly as of this writing.

38 The multi-stage stratified sampling technique ensured proportional sampling of women and minority, non-Akan ethnic groups.

39 See Bump (2014) for analysis of the lack of awareness of elected political representatives by Americans.

40 A new response category of "know but can't remember" was added to this question in Afrobarometer Round 4. The remaining responses were: incorrect, correct, and don't know.

41 The question wording in 1999 was: "Here is a list of things that people sometimes do as citizens. Please tell me how often you, personally, have done these things during the last five years: Attended a community meeting?" This question was followed by: got together with others to raise an issue; attended an election rally; worked for a political candidate or party; wrote a letter to a newspaper; and, attended a demonstration. In 2008, these questions were divided among two different political participation batteries of questions but all of the same questions were included except attendance at an election rally.

42 In 1999, over 63 percent of Ghanaians reported attending at least one community meeting,

and 24 percent of them reported doing so "often." These numbers declined slightly but remained the highest of any types of political participation in 2008 with 57.7 percent of respondents attending a community meeting and 13.4 doing so often.

43 In 1999, nearly 70 percent of respondents from Brong-Ahafo reported attending at least one community meeting, and 31 percent of them reported doing so "often." In 2008, nearly 68percent of respondents answered that they attended a community meeting compared to 65percent in Northern Region and only 41.3 percent in Greater Accra.

44 The two questions follow the list of participation acts above. The first of the pair reads: "During the last five years, how often have you contacted any of the following people for help to solve a problem: An official of a government ministry?" Then, the same preface is repeated and followed with: "some other influential person?"

45 In 2008, 49 percent of those from Greater Accra, 36 percent from Northern Region and nearly 36 percent from Brong-Ahafo Region contacted religious leaders; nearly 32 percent from Northern, 26 percent from Brong-Ahafo, and only 13 percent from Greater Accra contacted traditional rulers; and, over 24 percent from Greater Accra, over 15 percent from Brong-Ahafo and nearly 12 percent from Northern Region contacted some other influential person.

46 In 1999, nearly 89 percent of Ghanaian respondents replied that they had voted in the last election. This is significantly higher than even the 73 percent for Africans overall. This high rate of voter participation in the last election was relatively consistent across all of the regions, with 88 percent of respondents in Brong-Ahafo having voted. By 2008, these rates had declined slightly with nearly 81 percent of Ghanaians reporting that they had voted in the last election with Northern Region surpassing the national average with 85 percent and Brong-Ahafo right behind with 81 percent voting.

47 In 1999, over 95 percent of Ghanaians reported that they "never" wrote to a newspaper whereas only 74 percent of Africans overall reported "never." Similarly, over 91 percent of Ghanaians reported that they "never" attended a demonstration whereas only 74 percent of Africans overall replied "never" to the same question. In 2008, fewer Ghanaians reported writing to a newspaper or attending a demonstration than Africans overall, but the number who replied that they "never" would declined because a significant percentage were given a new option of "no, but would do if had the chance."

48 Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi 2005.

49 The percentage of Ghanaians who report having an interest in public affairs is only slightly lower in 2008 (68.3 percent).

50 The question was: "Some people say that we would be better off if the country was governed differently. What do you think about the following options? We should have one political party?" Follow-up questions asked about military rule or decisions being made by traditional elders.

51 Where the Afrobarometer dataset facilitates this subnational analysis, most of the well-known datasets on regime type and the level of democracy from Polity to Freedom House summarize the indicators into an aggregate score for the nation.

52   The Afrobarometer data for these regions also contrasts with trends in "objective" trends in poverty rates for Ghana over this period.

53   See MacLean (2004) for a comparative analysis of the divergent farmer response to environmental and price changes.

54   Quote from survey interviews, #123, #175, #215, #164, #140, Makwan, Ghana.

55   Quotes from men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

56   These statistics are cumulative amounts that combine results for the first, second and third mentioned responses.

57   Quotes from men's and women's focus groups, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

58   Men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

59   Survey interviews and men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

60   Quote from men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

61   This difference was statistically significant with a t-test significance of .005.

62   Quote from survey interviews, #190, 139, Makwan, Ghana.

63   Quote from survey interviews, #38, B, Ghana.

64   Survey interviews, B, Ghana.

65   Women's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

66   Men's focus group, B, Ghana, March 1999.

67   Men's focus group, B, Ghana, March 1999.

68   Men's and women's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

69   Men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

70   Men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

71   Quote from survey interview, #149, Makwan, Ghana. See also for example survey interviews #162, 147, 134, 118, 144, 133, 144, Makwan, Ghana. Quotes from survey interviews, #97, B, Ghana.

72   Quote from survey interview, #135, M, Ghana. Men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999. Survey interviews, #22, #2, #89, B, Ghana.

73   Quotes from survey interviews, #134, 150, Makwan, Ghana.

74   Men focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999. Men's focus group, B, Ghana, March 1999.

75   Quotes from men's and women's focus groups, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

76   Men and women's focus group, Barima, Ghana, March 1999, and Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

77   Men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

78   Men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

79   For a more in-depth discussion of the distinctions between formal and informal institutions, see MacLean 2010.

80   Quote from men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

81   Quote from men's focus group, Barima, Ghana, March 1999.

82   Men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

83   Women's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

84   Men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

85   Men's focus group, B, Ghana, March 1999.

86   Men's and women's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

87   Men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

88   Women's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

89   Quote from survey interview #197, Makwan, Ghana. Quotes from men's focus group, B, Ghana.

90   Women's focus group, Barima, Ghana, March 1999.

91   Quote from survey interview, #142, Makwan, Ghana.

92   Survey interviews, Makwan, Ghana.

93   Quote from survey interview, #206, Makwan, Ghana.

94   Survey interview #59, Barima, Ghana.

95   Quote from men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

96   Quotes from survey interviews and men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

97   Men's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

98   Women's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999.

99   Women's focus group, Makwan, Ghana, April 1999. See also women's focus group, Barima, Ghana, March 1999.

100 MacLean (2010).

101 See Boone (2006) on the cross-national and sub-national differences in state formation in Africa.

102 Schaeffer's (1999) pioneering study explores how Wolof speakers in rural Senegal conceptualize democracy in their own way but does not seek to make causal claims. Bleck's (n.d.) research on public and Islamic education and citizenship in Mali attempts this sort of multi-level causal analysis.

103 See Schatz et al. (2009) on political ethnography.

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