What do African voters want from their legislators? Evidence from a choice experiment in Ghana

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Abstract

Legislators are multitasking agents of citizens but operate with limited time and resources. First, they must decide how to divide their time between capital for parliamentary work and constituency-related work in their electoral district. Second, how much effort to dedicate to political representation, constituency services, and social gatherings in their constituency. The extent to which these nested decisions match constituents' preferences indicates democratic responsiveness. Yet we know little regarding African voters' views of these decisions. I use a conjoint survey experiment to investigate which legislator activities citizens value. Citizens prefer that politicians dedicate as much time to the electoral district as the capital. At home, they value higher efforts in political representation *and* constituency services that focus on building public infrastructure. In contrast, pledged support for personal transfers, casework, and social events are relatively less critical. The findings have important implications for political representation and democratic accountability in the developing world.

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1 Introduction

Legislators engage in four principal tasks on citizens' behalf: parliamentary work, *political* representation, constituency service, and *symbolic* representation. They must decide how to allocate their limited time and resources to these activities. First, representatives must decide how to divide their time between the capital for parliamentary work and their electoral districts for constituency-related activities. Second, legislators must decide how to allocate their efforts to their three constituency-focused activities. Finally, where the state provides discretionary funds for constituency services, politicians must decide how to distribute them between public works and private benefits.

The extent to which legislator decisions match constituents' wishes indicates political responsiveness (Eulau and Karps 1977; Hyden 2010; Powell 2005). Yet, we know little about voters' views on these decisions and the potential trade-offs politicians must make, especially in developing countries. To evaluate political responsiveness and assess electoral accountability, understanding what voters want is an essential first step (Golden and Min 2013; Grant and Rudolph 2004; Griffin and Flavin 2011). Importantly, misperceptions about what voters want can lead to the misallocation of state resources to undesired policies (Barkan and Mattes 2014) as well as voter dissatisfaction with representatives or the political system more broadly (Bowler and Karp 2004).

Existing literature considers which roles legislators deem important (Barkan et al. 2010), and sometimes interpret this as the activities that citizens prioritize (Lindberg 2010). Other literature considers whether legislators distribute discretionary benefits in a nonpartisan (Bussell 2019) or partisan (Butler and Broockman 2011; McClendon 2016) manner, but, again, say little about *what voters want*.

Studies that focus on voters typically also only consider how voters rank legislators' roles in terms of importance or their most preferred legislator task but say little about the *balance* (i.e., trade-offs) they want their representatives to strike among functions that are in tension (Vivyan

and Wagner 2016). Related to constituency-centered activities, scholars have yet to consider whether citizens are satisfied if representatives substitute representation with constituency service or whether they expect both. Concerning constituency services, we do not know whether citizens prefer politicians who will use statutory funds to provide public over private goods or vice versa. Finally, researchers are yet to examine whether voters consider symbolic representation in choosing legislators.

In this article, I contribute new insights on voter preferences over politician decisions. Specifically, I use a conjoint survey experiment to investigate the weights citizens put on the various legislator tasks. I asked respondents to choose between hypothetical candidates who varied on several attributes including *promised* time allocations between the capital (doing parliamentary work) and home (conducting constituency-related activities) as well as pledged efforts to political representation, constituency services, and symbolic representation.[1]

I consider two key constituency services: effort at spending state funds to improve constituents' welfare and casework. When spending state funds, I also examine how citizens would like politicians to divide them between public works and private benefits.

The survey design allows me to assess the impact of these pledged activities on voters' decisions. Also, by comparing the relative effects (weights) of the different attributes on vote choice, the conjoint survey offers insights into citizens' views on the trade-offs legislators must make in office (Bansak et al. 2021). For example, a voter who wants spending to focus on public goods but opposes political representation may face a dilemma if an election pits an aspirant dedicated to public works and political representation versus one committed to spending on private benefits and offering no representation. Thus, in making choices, voters must identify their preferences on each legislator activity and make *trade-offs* across the various activities.

Survey respondents (n=2020) were randomly selected from a stratified sample of twelve con-

[1]My design is similar to Horiuchi, Smith, and Yamamoto (2016) and Vivyan and Wagner (2015) who employ conjoint survey experiments to estimate the impact of candidates' characteristic and MPs' constituency service on voter preference in Japan and the UK, respectively.

stituencies in Ghana. I stratified districts by electoral competition and urbanization, which allows me to assess whether voter preferences vary across district types. I also assess variation according to individual characteristics that may be relevant to preferences (see Griffin and Flavin 2011).

I find that Ghanaians care about how their representatives allocate their time, effort and resources across their multiple tasks. First, citizens want legislators to at least equally divide their time between work in Parliament and activities at home (rather than focusing mainly on parliamentary work). Second, at home, citizens equally value political representation and public works oriented constituency services. In particular, they prefer politicians who pledged to hold regular community meetings to listen to constituents' concerns and debrief them about parliamentary debates, *and* candidates who will exert more effort use state funds to address their community infrastructure needs. Third, legislators' efforts at private financial transfer from state funds, casework, and support for social gatherings (i.e., symbolic representation) positively affect citizens' vote choice. However, these activities' impacts are less critical than political representation and solving community infrastructure needs, which implies citizens may prioritize the latter legislator tasks.

The study is set in Ghana, where citizens elect their representatives using a plurality rule in single-member districts. Accordingly, the findings are more likely to apply to such settings in Sub-Saharan Africa, about a third of African countries (IDEA).[2] Yet, Ghanaians are not entirely different regarding what African voters expect from their legislators compared to much of the continent. In an important first comprehensive study of African voters' views of what legislators (should) do in 17 countries in 2008/9, Ghanaians sit close to the average (Mattes and Mozaffar 2016).[3] Accordingly, I believe these findings will apply more broadly.

This study makes three significant contributions to the literature on legislator-citizen relation-

[2]https://www.idea.int/data-tools/question-view/130355, accessed, March 22, 2023.

[3]For example, about 45% of respondents in the sample (n=20,339) said the most important responsibility of their representative is representation. 31% said constituency service. Those who believed it was lawmaking and oversight were 15% and 6%, respectively. The corresponding figures for Ghana in the sample were: 45% (representation), 40% (constituency service), 8% (lawmaking), and 2% (oversight).

ship. First, it advances the literature on what spheres of representative's duties citizens prioritize by investigating voters' views on the trade-offs legislators must make (Barkan et al. 2010; Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1987; Grant and Rudolph 2004; Kimball and Patterson 1997; Krasno 1997; Lindberg 2013; Lindberg and Morrison 2008). My findings suggest citizens want their representatives to strike a fine balance between being at home and in the legislature. Furthermore, at home, African voters want legislators to not only provide (or facilitate) community development projects but also listen to their views. Thus, the study complements emerging research that citizens desire opportunities to deliberate with officeholders (Barkan and Mattes 2014; Paller 2019), and to serve as an link between constituents and the central government (Barkan 1979; Barkan and Okumu 1974; Krönke 2023). However, the findings suggest citizens do not want representation at the expense of constituency service.

Second, this article contributes to research on voting behavior in Sub-Saharan Africa's legislative elections. The results align with emerging scholarship that suggests citizens care more about public than private benefits from legislators (Bratton, Bhavnani, and Chen 2012; Harding 2015; Mattes and Mozaffar 2016; Oduro and Amanfo-Tetteh 2016).

Finally, it extends work that investigates how demographic factors shape voters' demands for constituency services (Carman 2007; Davidson 1970; Griffin and Flavin 2011). Consistent with existing work, I show in section 5 that some district and individual-level factors shape citizens' demand and constituency service priorities in developing countries, providing complementary and contrasting results to those in established democracies.

2 What do voters want from their representatives?

Figure 1 displays the multiple decisions legislators must make on constituents' behalf during their terms in office. First, they must decide how much time to spend in the capital versus the electoral district. I assume that time spent in the capital focuses on parliamentary works of policy-

making and executive oversight. Legislators undertake three significant activities in the district: political representation, constituency services, and symbolic representation. Political representation involves organizing meetings to listen to constituents' views and debrief them about parliamentary business (Barkan and Mattes 2014). Constituency service entails addressing constituents' non-policy concerns, which includes exerting effort to distribute state funds to address community or individual needs and helping citizens navigate the government's bureaucracy (Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1984; Fenno 1978; Keefer and Khemani 2009). Symbolic representation concerns attending or supporting social gatherings with constituents, including funerals, weddings, religious services, festivals, and sporting events (Dixit and Londregan 1996; Eulau and Karps 1977). Politicians must decide how much effort to dedicate to each of these activities when they visit their district. Also, when distributing funds, they must decide how to split them between public works and private benefits (Ofosu 2019). Below, I consider what citizens might prefer.

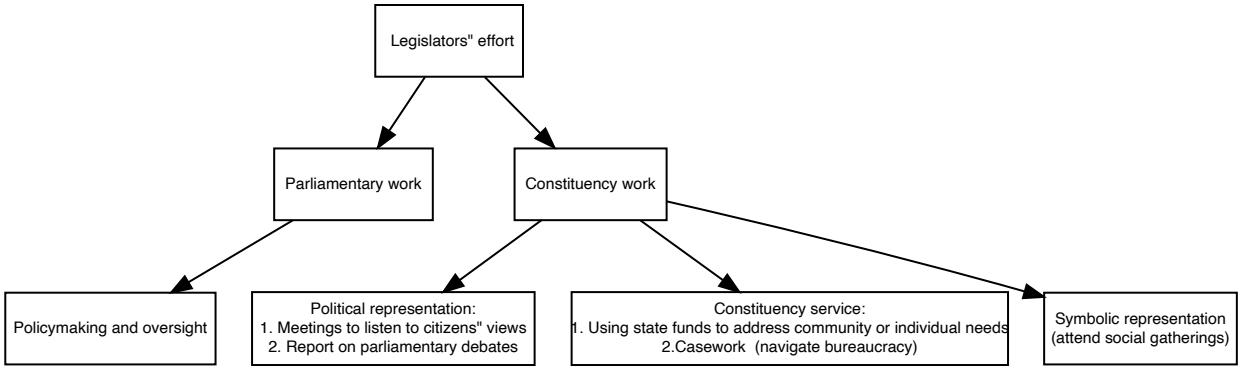

Figure 1: Tasks legislators perform on citizens' behalf

2.1 Being in parliament versus in the constituency

Scholarship on citizen-legislator linkages in much of the developing world including Sub-Saharan Africa suggests that citizens prefer legislators who dedicate more of their time to addressing local issues over the national concerns of lawmaking and executive oversight (Barkan 1979; Bussell 2019; Hyden 2010; Lindberg 2010). Researchers infer from surveys of legislators

and citizens in which they rank these activities that voters want representatives to spend more time at home than in the legislature. Accordingly, the frequency of legislator visits indicates political responsiveness (Bratton 2013; Young 2009).

However, there is also some evidence to suggest that citizens may want legislators to spend more time on parliamentary work. For example, Lindberg (2013) finds that although Ghanaian voters expect MPs to address local concerns (provide local development projects), their vote choice in the legislative election is influenced by their evaluation of the state of the national economy and of the government's policies.

Although existing work does not provide direct evidence on voters preferred *balance* (i.e., trade-off) of time between parliamentary work and constituency work, the bulk of research suggests voters may prefer politicians who spend more time at home than in the legislature.

2.2 Constituency work

2.2.1 Constituency services and political representation

At home, it is unclear from the literature what voters want politicians to prioritize: constituency service versus political representation (Barkan and Mattes 2014). Scholars argue that in contexts with limited access to public infrastructure and services, and acute inefficiencies in government bureaucracy, citizens prefer legislators to focus on constituency services. Specifically, voters want legislators, their only "political broker" with legal status in central government, to help provide or improve public services in their communities (Barkan 1979; Bussell 2019). Accordingly, citizens will prefer politicians who [promise to] provide more constituency services than less, and voters will not consider effort at representation in their vote choice.

However, voters may want their legislators to focus on political *representation* – listening and "re-presenting" constituents' concerns in the legislature. For example, Barkan and Mattes (2014) note that while the introduction of Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) has placed MPs in

a position to provide valued local public goods (constituency services), these have not boosted incumbent reelection. Together with findings from Afrobaromter surveys that suggest almost a majority of citizens want representatives to organize meetings to listen to their concerns, they argue voters may care more about legislators expressing their concerns at the heart of government than directly solving them. Mattes and Mozaffar (2016) provide a brilliant summary of Barkan's observation as follows: "Citizens want MPs to listen, while MPs think they have to deliver welfare. Working through this data, Barkan was delighted by the crude, but apt, analogy between the MP and the amorous male suitor who showers the object of his affection with jewels and expensive clothes, while the woman (i.e., the citizen) secretly confides to her friends that 'I just want someone to listen to me' "[pg.210].[4]

Thus, voters will be influenced by legislator effort at *representation – organizing meetings to listen to constituents' demands and briefing them of parliamentary meetings*, and constituency services, which includes exerting effort to spend state funds or conducting casework (see section 2.2.1.1), will have no impact on vote choice.

However, voters may equally value representation and constituency services (Barkan et al. 2010). Therefore, it is possible that both have similar impact on voter choice in legislative elections. I provide initial insights into each of these possibilities.

2.2.1.1 Constituency services: community projects versus personal benefits

Constituency service involves three main activities: (i) helping citizens navigate bureaucratic bottlenecks (casework); (ii) providing financial support; and (iii) lobbying for or commissioning infrastructure. In developing countries, legislators are often provided with funds to commission community projects and provide individual financial support in the form on Constituency Development Funds (or their equivalent)(Barkan and Mattes 2014; Mezey 2014; Opalo 2022). When it comes to allocating these funds, legislators can support: (1) local public goods to communities; or

[4]However, note that Bowles and Marx (2021) find a positive relationship between per capita allocation of CDF (i.e., available CDF per constituent) and legislators seeking and getting reelected.

(2) individual financial needs.

In line with existing literature, I classify constituency services into *public* and *private*. I consider as *public* those targeting entire communities or constituents. These include the provision of public infrastructure such as roads, clinics, schools, market places, electricity, and toilets for constituents (Eulau and Karps 1977). I consider those focusing on individuals as *private* and includes: 1) providing personal financial support from statutory funds; and 2) casework.

Individuals are likely to assess the possibility of benefiting from a particular service when prioritizing. Public goods are non-excludable and non-rivalrous (Olson 1971). By contrast, private benefits are susceptible to favoritism or the ability to access the politicians (Grossman, Humphreys, and Sacramone-Lutz 2014). A growing number of studies show that access to personal support or casework from politicians often depends on shared partisanship or ethnicity or race with the legislator (Butler and Broockman 2011; Dinesen, Dahl, and Schiøler 2021; McClendon 2016) or ability to participate in local elections (Gaikwad and Nellis 2021). Thus, citizens will prefer public than private constituency services because they are more likely to benefit from a legislator's public than private services.

2.2.2 Symbolic representation

The last constituency-related activity that I consider is symbolic representation. Eulau and Karps (1977) defines *symbolic* representation as "public gestures of a sort that create a sense of trust and support in the relationship between representative and represented" (pg. 241). It involves attending social events such as funerals, weddings, naming ceremonies, traditional festivals, and religious services to share in constituents' joys and griefs or supporting disaster-stricken constituents (Dixit and Londregan 1995).

Although hardly examined in the literature, Ghanaian MPs say that attending social events was one of the top three things they do when they visit their constituency. Specifically, almost 8 in 10 say that attending social events such as funerals, traditional festivals, church service etc. is part of

the top three things they do when they visit home (Ofosu 2017). Hyden (2010) argues that such participation in these social events indicate how Ghanaian legislators are 'socially embedded.' Politicians believe that being absent from such community events can be electorally suicidal. I infer from these beliefs that *citizens prefer politicians who will attend more social events.*

3 Research design

To examine how citizens want from their legislators to juggle their various tasks, I conducted a conjoint survey experiment in Ghana. Ghanaian MPs are elected for four-year terms using plurality rule in single-member districts. Survey participants were given descriptions of three pairs of hypothetical candidates competing for the position of Member of Parliament (MP) in their constituency. These hypothetical candidates were characterized by a total of nine (9) attributes (or features) (see Table 1).

The first five attributes concerned a set of pledged time allocations to activities in the capital and at home, and the levels of efforts they will commit to political representation, constituency services, and symbolic representation: a) allocation of *Time between the constituency versus the capital (Accra)* (3 levels); b) *Organizing constituency meetings* to listen to constituents concerns; c) *Use of MP's Common Fund (CDF)* (4 levels) to provide *public goods* or *private benefits*; d) *Personal assistance (casework)* (3 levels) to constituents to navigate the state bureaucracy; and e) attending *Social events* (3 levels).

The remaining attributes were personal characteristics of the hypothetical candidate: f) *Party affiliation* (3 levels); g) *Hometown/residency* status (3 levels); h) *Profession* (6 levels); and i) *Gender* (2 levels).[5] I randomized the values of each attribute, which helps to simultaneously

[5] I used data of profiles of all candidates who contested in the country's 2016 general election from the website of the country's Electoral Commission to determine realistic attribute levels regarding a candidate's party, gender, profession, and place of birth, which increases the external validity of the survey design. I also piloted the survey in three constituencies (Awutu Senya West, Sege, and Krowor) to ensure that participant would understand the questionnaire in August 2018.

estimate the causal effects (average marginal component effects (AMCE)) of each attribute relative to a chosen baseline on candidate choice (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2013).

3.1 Measurements

I examine how citizens would like their representatives to divide their time (T) between the constituency (C) and the capital, Accra (A), $T_{(C,A)}$ (*Time in constituency versus capital (Accra)*). To simplify, citizens may prefer a legislator who spends most of their time in the constituency and only a little in the capital, $T_{(75\%,25\%)}$. Alternatively, they may prefer an MP who dedicate most of their time to legislative business in the capital, $T_{(25\%,75\%)}$. However, citizens may rather want their legislators to divide their time equally between the constituency and the capital, $T_{(50\%,50\%)}$. These alternatives help to examine citizens' view on such a trade-off.

Several scholars use the frequency of visit (and thus time spent) by legislators to their constituency as an indication of their attentiveness to or knowledge of constituents' concerns (e.g., Fenno (1978), Ingall and Crisp (2001), Bratton (2013), Barkan and Mattes (2014)). Accordingly, how citizens want their legislators to divide their time between the constituency and the capital may also indicate how they prioritize constituency service versus legislative work.

However, simply focusing on the frequency or the amount of time citizens want their MPs to spend in the constituency says little about what they would like them to do when they visit.[6] They may want them to focus political representational activities (i.e., listening and debriefing constituents) or constituency services. They may also simply want them to engage in symbolic representation. My design allows me to examine the *weights* citizens place on specific activities when their representative visits.

Concerning *political representation*, the survey asked respondents to consider how frequently a hypothetical candidate promises to organize community meetings to listen to constituents' con-

[6]Regular visits to one's constituency may be used for other purposes — visit love ones or family, work on their businesses sited in the constituency, raise campaign funds or give policy-speeches on behalf of the president; all of which are constituency service (Crisp and Simoneau 2018).

Table 1: Values of candidates' promises and characteristics in the conjoint survey

Candidate Attribute	**Attribute levels**	**Probabilities**
Parliament vs. constituency		
a) Time in constituency versus capital (Accra)	Constituency (C): [**25**, **50**, **75**] percent; Accra (A):[**25**, **50**, **75**] percent [**Use levels** ($T_{C,A}$):	
	$T_{25,75}$[1]	1/3
	$T_{50,50}$[2]	1/3
	$T_{75,25}$ [3]	1/3
Political representation		
b) Community meetings	Never [1]	1/5
	Monthly [2]	1/5
	Every three months [3]	1/5
	Every six months [4]	1/5
	Yearly [5]	1/5
Constituency services		
c) Use of MP's Common Fund (CDF)	[**Levels: 1) Ten (10) percent; 2) 50 percent; 3) 90 perecent**] of MPCF to support the construction or renovation of community school and clinics, repairs of roads and bridges, and other community self-help projects. [**Levels: 1) Ten (10) percent; 2) 50 percent; 3) 90 perecent**] of MPCF to pay school fees, medical bills, and apprenticeship fee for some individual members of this constituency. [**Use levels:**	
	$P_{10,10}$ [1]	1/4
	$P_{50,50}$ [2]	1/4
	$P_{10,90}$ [3]	1/4
	$P_{90,10}$ [4]	1/4
d) Personal assistance (casework)	[**Levels:** Hardly (1/10)[1], Sometimes (5/10)[2], Always (10/10)[3]] support constituents who need help to obtain government services such as business license, passport, birth certificate, facilitate loans or get government jobs	
	Hardly (1/10)[1]	1/3
	Sometimes (5/10)[2]	1/3
	Always (10/10)[3]	1/3
Symbolic representation		
e) Social events	[**Levels:** Hardly (1/10)[1], Sometimes (5/10)[2], Always (10/10)[3]]: attend or contribute to social events such as funerals, church/mosque activities, and traditional festivals.	
	Hardly (1/10)[1]	1/3
	Sometimes (5/10)[2]	1/3
	Always (10/10)[3]	1/3
Personal attributes		
f) Political Party	Independent (IND)[1]	1/3
	New Patriotic Party (NPP)[2]	1/3
	National Democratic Congress (NDC)[3]	1/3
g) Hometown/residency status	Hails from and resident in constituency [1]	1/3
	Does not hail but resident in constituency [2]	1/3
	Hails from but not resident [3]	1/3
h) Profession	Farmer/Agriculturalist (1)	1/6
	Lawyer (2)	1/6
	Educationist/teacher (3)	1/6
	Business person (4)	1/6
	Accountant (5)	1/6
	Architect (6)	1/6
i) Gender	Female [0]	1/5
	Male [1]	4/5

cerns and brief them about government policies discussed in parliament (*Community meetings*). Hypothetical candidates promised *never* to organize such meetings or to do so *monthly*, *every three months*, *every six months*, or *yearly*. A demand for frequent meetings indicates how citizens value representation.

I use two key features in the conjoint survey to examine how citizens prioritize constituency services. First, Ghana provides MPs with equal amounts in CDFs, which they have discretion over their use. Using these funds takes time and effort to deal with the local bureaucracy (Ofosu 2019). Accordingly, voters may want their representatives to focus on their other constituency-related roles. Accordingly, an impact of any form of spending on vote choice indicates voters value this type of constituency service (*Use of MP's Common Fund (CDF)*).

However, I also examine citizens' preferences over four possible CDF spending (trade-offs): $P_{(\text{public(\% CDF)},\text{private(\% CDF)})}$. At the extreme ends, a voter may prefer that politicians use almost all their funds to provide public infrastructure ($P_{(90\%,10\%)}$) or to focus mainly on providing individual benefits ($P_{(10\%,90\%)}$). However, voters may prefer that legislators divide the CDF equally between each ($P_{(50\%,50\%)}$). I use minimal spending on each type, $P_{(10\%,10\%)}$ as the baseline category (indicating that the MP hardly spend their allocated funds).[7]

Second, I asked respondents to weigh how a hypothetical candidate promises to provide personal support to individuals who need help with obtaining government services such as business license, passport, birth certificate, facilitate loans or get government jobs (*Personal assistance (casework)*). To aid comprehension, such assistance were also stated in terms of proportion of individuals the candidate would support their request. Specifically, the research assistants read to the respondents that the hypothetical candidate promises that during her term in office, for, say, each 10 residents who come to request for casework, she would: *Hardly (1/10)*, *Sometimes (5/10)*, or *Always (10/10)* help with their requests.

[7] Ideally, one would use no spending as the baseline. However, because voters may not consider CDF spending in their choice of MPs in the first place, choosing a 0% use of CDF could simply prime respondents rather than elicit a genuine response.

To systematically test the impact of *symbolic representation* on vote choice, I asked respondents to consider the extent (also expressed out of ten) to which a hypothetical candidate promises to participate (or donate) to social events in their community: *hardly* (1/10), *sometimes* (5/10), *always* (10/10). I included donation in the description because my scoping suggested many expect MPs to donate funds at such events even if they are unable to attend (e.g., donate to bereaved families and religious festivals, or buy food and drinks for a traditional festival). Accordingly, I am unable to distinguish the effect of merely attending versus donating to social gatherings. However, the study provide initial insights into whether symbolic representation is important to African voters.

3.2 Personal attributes of hypothetical candidates

In addition to promised efforts, I also consider some of the factors that my field interviews (and the literature) indicates may be more important for the selection of MPs in Ghana. Specifically, I consider party affiliation, hometown and residence status, profession, and gender of candidates. Voters may not consider candidate promises about effort or decisions they will make in office in their vote, focusing instead on these aspirants' traits. These characteristics may serve as heuristics regarding which politician will better serve them. However, they may not.

Two major parties, the the New Patriotic Party (*NPP*) and National Democratic Congress (*NDC*), have dominated Ghana's parliamentary (and presidential) elections since the country's return to multiparty elections in 1992 (Fridy 2007; Gyimah-Boadi 2009). Accordingly, I use these two parties and *independent* as the possible values of party affiliation. To facilitate substantive interpretation of the effect of party affiliation, I re-coded each profile as copartisan, non-copartisan, or independent pair conditional on the match between the partisanship of the respondent and the hypothetical candidate (see section 3.3).

Regarding hometown/residential status, I consider all the possibilities allowed by the country's law to qualify to contest for MP in a constituency. First, the law permits those who *hails from but not resident* in the constituency to compete. It also allows those who *do not hail but resident in the*

constituency to contest in the election.[8] As a last value on the hometown attribute, I ask respondents to consider a hypothetical candidate who *hails from and resident in constituency*. These options allows me to tease out whether simply hailing or being resident is more important to voters (or both). Also, whether a candidate hails from a constituency may signal whether he or she belongs to any of the possible ethnic groups that comprise the constituency. However, holding a residential status can signal shared preferences for similar local public infrastructure or common challenges with local government bureaucracies.

For values of the profession attributed, I gleaned data from the profiles of candidates who competed in the country's 2016 parliamentary elections. The gender of candidates was either *female* or *male*.

3.3 Sampling respondents

Respondents were sampled from a stratified sample of twelve constituencies. I stratified the country's then 275 constituencies by levels of electoral competition, grouping those won with a margin of 10% or less in the 2012 and 2016 parliamentary elections as competitive. Accordingly, half of the sampled constituencies are competitive, which allows for enough respondents to test my hypotheses about how electoral competition shapes citizens' priorities. Five of these constituencies are urban.[9]

Within each constituency I randomly selected ten polling stations. Enumerators then followed a random walk sampling procedure to select approximately 17 respondents living within the catchment of each voting center.[10] Thus, we interviewed about 170 constituents in each constituency.

[8]The law require candidates to be permanent resident or to have lived in their constituency for which they want to contest as MP for five of the ten years preceding the election (Public Election Regulations, 1996 (CI 15)).

[9]The mean of the proportions of sampled communities in a constituency with access was used to classify constituencies into urban and rural places: electricity, pipe water, sewage, mobile phone services, post office, schools, police station, clinic, market, bank and daily transport. The measure correlates with the proportion of rural residents according to Ghana's 2010 census.

[10]Appendix Tables A.1 and A.2 show the summary statistics of the characteristics of the sampled respondents and polling station (recorded by enumerators), respectively.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of respondents

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Demographics		
Age	38.937	14.730
Female	0.496	0.500
No education	0.299	0.458
Poverty index (0-6)	1.928	1.538
Political participation		
Voted in prior election (2016)	0.863	0.344
Feel close to a party	0.740	0.439
Party close to: incumbent party (NPP)	0.555	0.497
Political knowledge =		
Claim to know MP name	0.750	0.433
Of those who claim to know MP name, correctly names	0.957	0.203

Table 2 shows the summary statistics of the participants ($n = 2022$). Respondents were about 39 years old, on average, and half were female. About 30% have no education.

To measure the level of wealth of respondents, I sum six indicators of lived poverty generating a 0-6 poverty index: going several time or more without food, water, medicine, fuel for cooking, and cash, and living in a hut or shack housing. Those scoring between 0 and 3 are classified high (rich) income, and while those between 4 and 6 as low (poor).[11] Respondent scored, on average, 1.928 on the poverty index, where higher values indicate higher levels of lived poverty. 86% said they voted in the last elections in 2016 and 74% that they were close to a political party. Of those close to a party, 56% said it was the incumbent, NPP, party. An impressive 75 said they knew the name of their MP of which 96% could correctly name the representative.

To code partisanship of respondents, I use the questions about whether they feel close to a party and which one it was. Regarding education, survey participants were categorize into two: none versus primary education or more.[12]

[11] When considering heterogeneity of the results by wealth, dividing participants into three income groups: 0 or 1 as high (rich), 2 or 3 as medium (middle), and as 4 to 6 as low (poor) does not change the substantive results. High and middle income participants were similar in their demand and preferences.

[12] This was to simplify the presentation; participants with primary and secondary education were similar in their

3.4 Interviewing respondents, balance statistics, and profile order effect

Appendix C shows the interview procedure and the narrative presented to respondents. Appendix Figure C.1 shows an example of one conjoint choice presented to a respondent.[13] The profiles were presented side by side, each pair on a separate screen. Respondents choose which candidate in a pair they would vote for in a hypothetical election.

Appendix Table D.2 shows that the order in which the profile appeared did not affect the results. The attributes were presented in a randomized order that was fixed across the three pairings for each respondent to ease the cognitive burden for respondents and minimize primacy and recency effects. Appendix Table D.1 shows that the randomization was successful. Controlling for a few variables that were not balanced across treatments, as expected by chance, does not change the results.

3.5 Estimation strategy

To assess the relative importance of the different legislator allocations to citizens, I estimate the causal effects of its values on vote choice relative to a chosen baseline using ordinary least squares method (OLS). In all cases, I chose as baseline the minimal provision of a service and estimate how promised increases change the probability of choosing a candidate's profile. The unit of analysis is a rated *profile*, and the dependent variable is coded 1 for the candidate profiles respondents preferred within a pair, and 0 for those they did not. The independent variables are all dummy variables for each attribute level in the conjoint survey. Because respondents took three voting tasks and entered the dataset multiple times, I cluster standard errors at the respondent level to account for the non-independence of responses. Also, to ensure that I am comparing individuals within the same electoral district, I include constituency fixed effects. Moreover, respondents are likely to filter the profiles of hypothetical candidates they consider based on experiences within

demand relative to those with none.

[13] I used SurveyCTO software installed on smartphones to conduct the interviews to ease data entry, minimize enumerator errors, and facilitate the randomization of treatments in the conjoint survey.

their constituency. For example, if a profile indicates that candidate A does not hail from the constituency but is a resident, they might think about their own MP who is also not from the area, which may color the way they focus on the other attributes that are provided for that hypothetical candidate. Including constituency fixed effect helps to account for such idiosyncrasies.

Importantly, because respondents were forced to choose between a candidate pair in a hypothetical contest, the approach helps to observe which legislator tasks they prioritize (trade-offs)(Bansak et al. 2021). Moreover, estimating the causal effect of different legislator activities on the same outcome, vote choice, allows for a comparison of causal effects.

To evaluate subgroup differences in preference over legislator tasks, I compare (subgroup) marginal means of picking profiles with different levels of promised legislator activity as suggested by Leeper, Hobolt, and Tilley (2019). I then assess whether a regression model accounting for these subgroup differences is statistically significantly different from those assuming no such distinctions. Finally, if different, I consider which preference over legislator activities differ across these subgroups.

4 Results

4.1 What do citizens want from their legislators?

Figure 2 shows the main results of the causal effects of time allocation between capital and constituency, political representation, and the various constituency services, and candidates' attributes on vote choice. The figure displays the AMCEs (points) and 95% confidence intervals (bars).[14] The findings suggest citizens want legislators to at least divide their time equally between legislative work and constituency-related activities. Regarding constituency services, these results indicate that, on average, citizens prefer politicians who will exert more rather than less effort to address their non-policy concerns. However, when forced to make trade-offs, it becomes apparent

[14] Appendix E Table E.1 shows the full regression results.

that voters privilege some forms of services over others. Also, contrary to existing belief, citizens do not substitute representation for constituency services.

4.1.1 Time in constituency ("home") versus legislature ("capital")

To begin with, respondents were 3pp (significant at $p \leq 0.01$) more like to pick a candidate who promised to split her time equally between the constituency and the capital compared to those who pledged to spend about three-quarters of their time in the capital. They were also slightly more likely (1.9pp) to prefer candidates who pledged to spend three-quarters of their time in the constituency than those who committed to staying more in the capital. However, the effect is only significant at $p \leq 0.114$. These results imply citizens may want their legislators to at least divide their time equally between national issues in the capital and constituency-focused activities at home. Nonetheless, relative to political representation and constituency services, how a candidate promises to divide their time appears to have minimal impact on vote choice. Next, I consider how respondents weigh political representation and constituency service activities in their vote choice.

4.1.2 Consituency services: public works versus private benefits

First, considering how citizens want legislators to divide their CDF between public infrastructure and individual financial support, the results suggest that citizens would prefer a politician who will dedicate at least half of their funds to public works. Specifically, citizens were 12.2pp and 13.3 pp more likely to prefer a candidate who promised to spend half ($P_{[\text{pub}(50\%),\text{priv}(50\%)]}$) or almost all ($P_{[\text{pub}(90\%),\text{priv}(10\%)]}$) of their CDF to provide public infrastructure, respectively, compared to those who promised to use only a small amount on private and public goods ($P_{[\text{pub}(10\%),\text{priv}(10\%)]}$). These estimates are statistically significant at $p \leq 0.01$. In comparison, the promise to use almost all the funds ($P_{[\text{pub}(10\%),\text{priv}(90\%)]}$) to provide private benefits to constituents increases the probability of choosing a candidate by only 7.1pp ($p \leq 0.01$) relative to the baseline ($P_{[\text{pub}(10\%),\text{priv}(10\%)]}$).

Accordingly, consistent with with my expectation, citizens prefer candidates who will use more

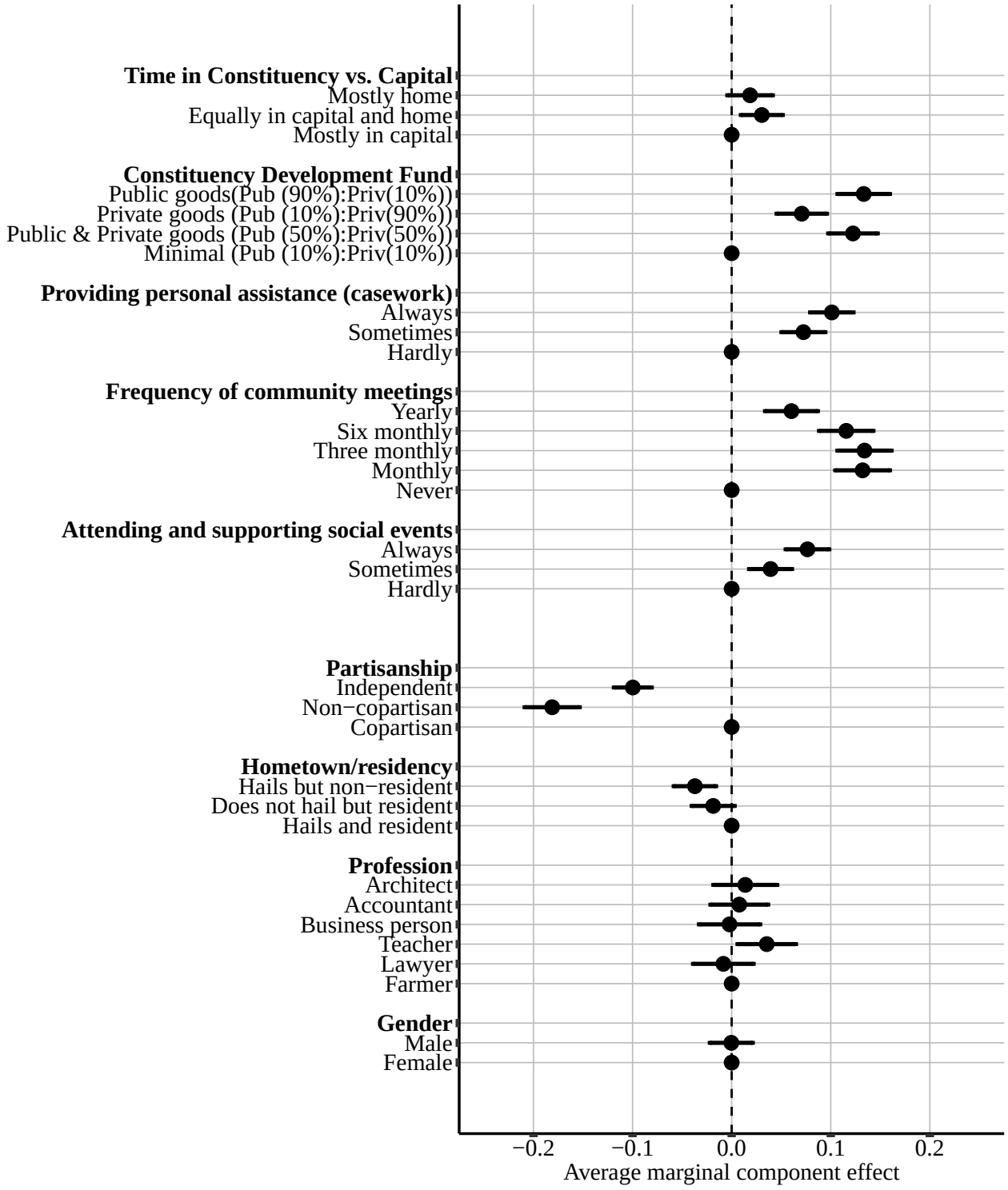

Figure 2: Average marginal component effect of candidate attributes on being preferred as an MP.

of their CDFs to provide more, rather than less, of private and public goods. Nonetheless, conditional on spending, these results indicate that respondents prefer politicians who will allocate more of these funds to local public goods than individual transfers.

I argued this is because citizens are likely to benefit from public than private services. However, this may be because respondents could not be sure that the personal benefits would go to them considering a hypothetical candidate. In the real world, the candidate would be a real person whose likelihood of channeling resources to them personally would be far better known. This could lead to a bias against being swayed by promises to invest in providing personal benefits in the sample. To check this possibility, I examine whether these patterns change when I account for partisanship. For example, we should expect that comparing copartisan candidates, citizens will select those promising more private benefits. Beyond the copartisan advantages enjoyed by hypothetical aspirants discussed in section 4.2, Appendix Figures E.1 and E.2 show that respondents' partisanship does not change their preference for more public benefit than private from the MP's CDF.

Second, I find that the provision of personal assistance (casework) to constituents in dealing with the government bureaucracy or finding state employment, another form of private benefit, is salient to voters when selecting parliamentarians. Candidates who promise to sometimes (half of the time) or always help constituents in these regards are 7.2 and 10.1pp more likely to be preferred compared to those who will hardly do so, on average, respectively. Both estimates are significant at $p \leq 0.01$.

4.1.3 Political representation matters to citizens

Considering political representation, I find that respondents valued the promise to regularly organize community meetings to listen to their concerns and brief them about parliamentary debates. Compared to a candidate who will not organize community meetings, citizens are 13.2 (monthly), 13.4 (every three months), and 11.6 (every six months) pp more like to prefer MPs who will orga-

nize community meetings regularly. These estimates are significant at $p \leq 0.01$. The probability that citizens select a candidate as MP decreases to about 6 pp ($p \leq 0.01$) when the aspirant promises only yearly meetings.

Together with the findings on constituency services, these results indicate that citizens consider both political representation and constituency services in their vote choice, even when we account for candidates' attributes. Moreover, my findings suggest that voters prioritize some tasks over others. In particular, it is a dedication to services that are targeted to entire communities or constituencies (public infrastructure and community meetings) rather than individuals (financial transfers and casework) that help politicians the most to win the hearts and minds of most voters.

4.1.4 Symbolic representation

Finally, in line with popular beliefs among Ghanaian parliamentarians, I find that promising to attend or financially support constituents with social events such as funerals, religious services, traditional festivals and naming ceremonies increases their preference for a politician as MP. Specifically, I find that compared to candidates who pledged to hardly attend these social events, those who offered to participate half of the time or always were 3.9 pp and 7.6 pp more likely to be preferred as MP, respectively. These estimates are significant at $p \leq 0.01$. This finding is novel and suggests African citizens care about symbolic representation from their representatives. However, because the measure captures attending or contributing financially to these events, it remains unclear whether voters care more about their representative's presence or donations, or both. Future studies can check these possibilities.

4.2 Effects of candidates' personal attributes

I now turn to the effects of the personal attributes of candidates. First, relative to copartisan politicians, participants were significantly less likely to select a non-copartisan (18.1 pp) or an independent (10 pp) aspirant. The results suggest a strong partisan bias in the selection of legislative

aspirants. Second, I find evidence to suggest that residency in the constituency is important to voters, which complements my finding that citizens want more political representation. Compared to candidates who hail and live in the constituency (my baseline category), indigenous politicians who do not reside in the constituency were the least favored (about 3.7 pp less likely, $p \leq 0.01$). An aspirant who does not hail but resides in the constituency were also about 1.9 pp less likely to be preferred as an MP (but only significant at the 10 percent level). Third, I find that citizens place less emphasis on the profession (although educationists or teachers are 3.5 pp more favored than farmers, significant at $p \leq 0.05$) and gender of the candidates in choosing MPs. These results suggest that citizens also consider the partisanship and residence status of aspirants when selecting legislators.

5 Do effects vary by constituency and respondents' traits?

I consider whether voters' constituency and personal characteristic shape what legislator tasks they prioritize. Following existing literature on what drives the supply and demand of constituency services and political representation, I focus on two constituency (urbanization and electoral competition) and four personal (partisanship, gender, wealth, and education) characteristics.

5.1 Constituency type: urbanization and electoral competition

5.1.1 Urbanization

Prior studies suggest rural and urban constituents may vary in the weights they put of different legislator tasks. For example, urban dwellers may prefer legislators who spend more time in the district than rural resident, especially if are far from the capital (Fenno 1978).

Concerning constituency-related activities, the need for local public infrastructure and services

may be higher in rural and poorer areas than urban-rich centers (Barkan 1979). Research shows that citizens in rural communities are more likely to prioritize local public goods compared to their urban counterparts (Nathan 2019). Similarly, rural voters may find it harder to access the government bureaucracy relative to their urban counterparts. In the United States, Griffin and Flavin (2011) find that places with high household incomes demand less constituency service. André, Depauw, and Sandri (2013) also show that a district's prosperity is negatively associated with the provision of constituency services. Accordingly, *rural dwellers are more likely to focus on constituency service provision than urban residents*.

Beyond constituency services, it is unclear theoretically whether urbanization will shape the extent to which citizens focus on political and symbolic representation in their voting.

Figure 3 shows the marginal means of candidate features by urbanization (Panel A) and their differences (Panel B).

In contrast to the above expectation, rural and urban voters do not differ significantly in their constituency service priorities (i.e., public infrastructure, private financial support, and casework). Thus, the main causal effects reported in section 4.1 apply to urban and rural settings equally.[15] Indeed, research has shown that citizens in urban areas may also need help with navigating the bureaucracy to get government assistance (Norris 1997; Resnick 2012). Similarly, in developing countries, public infrastructure needs may cut across the rural-urban divide.

However, urban voters expect more legislator presence in the constituency than rural voters. Citizens in the urban areas were were 2.4pp ($p \leq 0.107$) more likely to pick a profile of a candidate promising to spend more time at "home" and 2.5pp ($p \leq 0.065$) less likely to pick those proposing more in the capital. Urban and rural respondents were equally likely to select candidates pledging equal time between the capital and the constituency.

Furthermore, urban voters were 3.7pp ($p \leq 0.044$) and 6.3pp ($p \leq 0$) less likely to pick a

[15] An anova test indicates urbanization is an important interaction factor for some of these candidate attributes (F-stat=2.105 , $p \leq 0.002$).

candidate who promises only yearly or no meetings to listen to constituents' concerns and brief them about parliamentary meetings. Urban voters picked profiles of candidate promising monthly meetings 4.5pp ($p \leq 0.017$) more than rural voters.

The level of urbanization does not shape the demand for symbolic representation.

Together, these results suggest that while urban and rural voters want similar levels of constituency services and symbolic representation, urban voters prefer more political representation activities than rural voters.[16]

[16]Regarding the personal attributes of candidates, I find that partisanship is more important to rural than urban voters. Rural voters were 4.7pp ($p \leq 0.005$) more likely to pick a copartisan candidate than urban voters. The equal preference for independent candidates, the baseline category for my main results, suggests that the partisanship results is driven more by the strong preference for copartisans in rural areas. Rural voters were also 2.1pp more inclined to pick a candidate who hails but non-resident in the constituency. Although this is only significant at $p \leq 0.113$, it is consistent with the finding that urban voters demand much more legislator presence at home than rural voters.

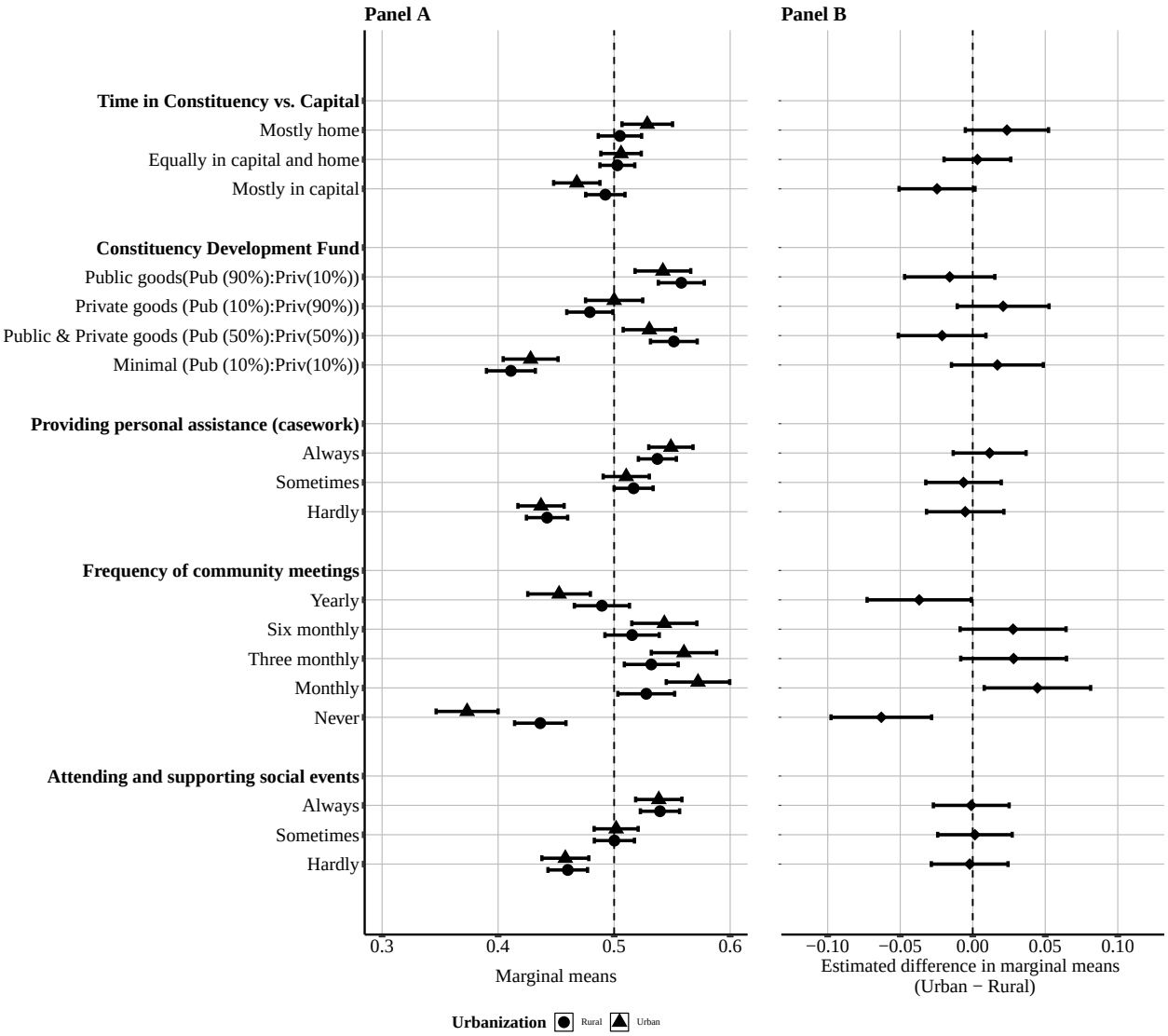

Figure 3: Differences in conditional marginal means by urbanization

5.1.2 Electoral competition

Existing research indicates that politicians in highly competitive districts exert more effort on constituency-related activities, especially constituency services (Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita 2006; Grossman and Michelitch 2018; Keefer and Khemani 2009). This is because these activities are readily observable by voters and can help cultivate a personal vote (Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita 2006). However, the evidence that voters reward, for example, constituency service, is mixed (Crisp and Simoneau 2018). Moreover, it is unclear whether voters in competitive settings values these activities more than those in noncompetitive constituencies.

I test whether respondents in competitive and noncompetitive districts differ in their preferences over legislator tasks. Figure 4 shows results the results. My findings are twofold. First, electoral competition does not shape citizens' preferred legislator time trade-offs between the capital and the electoral district. Second, regarding constituency-related activities, citizens in competitive and noncompetitive constituencies differ only concerning how candidates promise to spend their CDFs.[17]

Specifically, constituents residing in competitive electoral constituencies were 7.6 pp ($p \leq 0.001$) and 3.5pp ($p \leq 0.022$) more likely to pick an aspirant promising to spend most of their funds on local public infrastructure and to split the funds equally between public and private benefits, respectively. In contrast, respondents in competitive constituencies were 9.2pp ($p \leq 0$) less likely to pick a candidate pledging minimal spending from their funds. I find no difference in the propensity to select an aspirant promising to spend most of their funds on personal benefits. However, the individual marginal means (Panel A of Figure 4) shows that respondents in non-competitive constituencies were fairly indifferent regarding efforts at CDF spending. The findings is consistent with existing work suggesting that politicians elected in competitive or fairer elections were likely to spend their CDFs, which indicates democratic responsiveness (Grossman and

[17]That is, the model incorporating electoral competition indicates it is an important interacting variable (F-stat = 3.379, $p \leq 0.001$).

Michelitch 2018; Keefer and Khemani 2009; Ofosu 2019).

However, residents in competitive and noncompetitive areas equally value casework as well as political and symbolic representations.

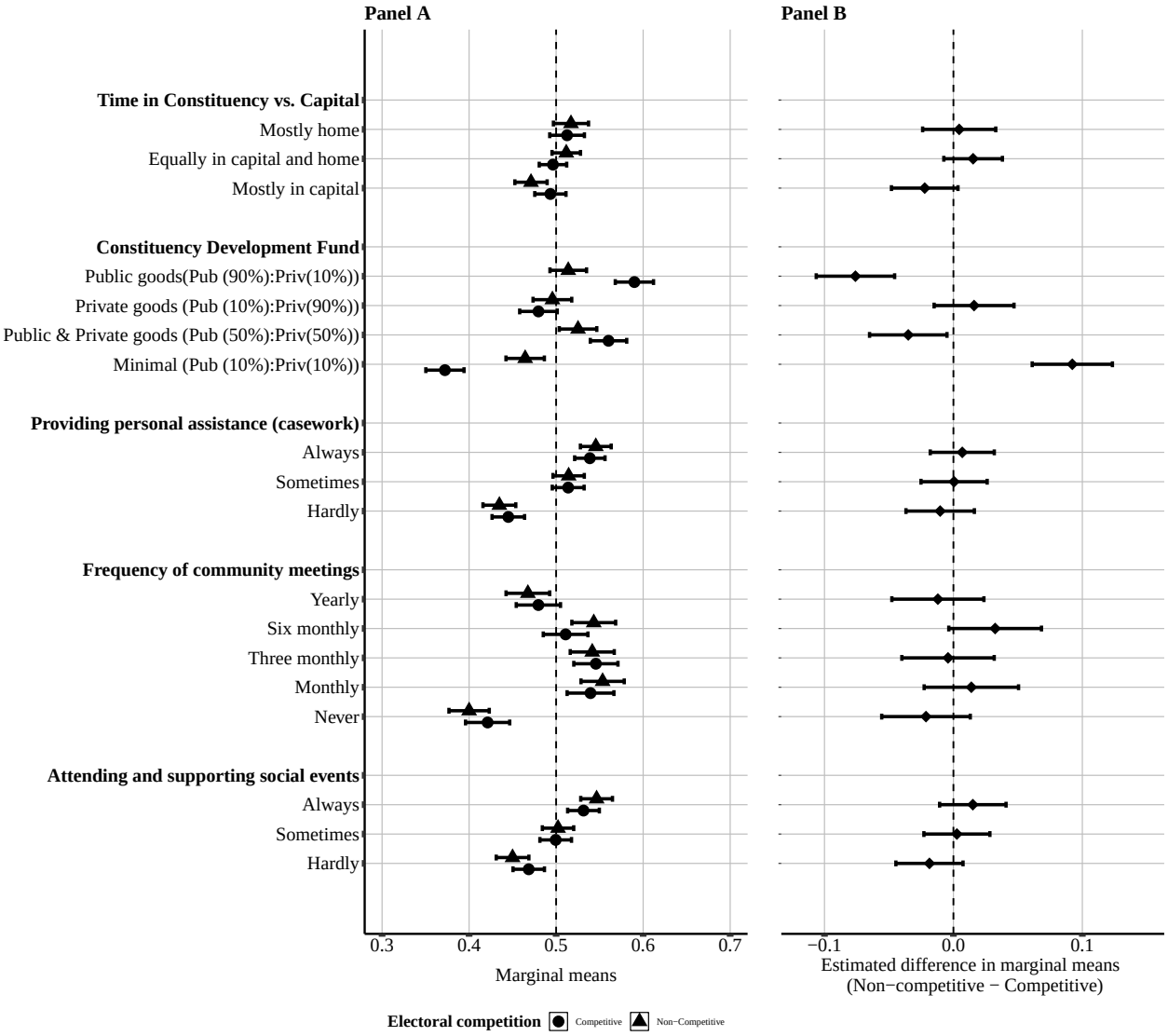

Figure 4: Difference in marginal means by electoral competition

5.2 Individual level characteristics: partisanship, wealth, education, and gender

Finally, I examine whether individual level factors shape citizens' priorities about legislator tasks. Individuals vary in their needs or what they expect to get from officeholders, which can shape their preferences (Griffin and Flavin 2011). Following existing literature, I focus on four main factors that can shape individual preferences: partisanship, gender, wealth, and education.

Much of the literature consider strong partisans as not "persuadable" by opposition promises or performance (Dropp and Peskowitz 2012; Weghorst and Lindberg 2013).[18] Accordingly, *how a legislator allocate their time or resources is unlikely to influence the vote choice of partisans*.

Poorer voters are more dependent on government services than the rich (Griffin and Flavin 2011; Nathan 2019; Norris 1997; Weitz-Shapiro 2012). Accordingly, *poorer voters will prioritize constituency service than wealthy voters*. Similarly, *more educated voters are likely to focus less on constituency service*. Scholars suggest that the educated and more political informed voters prioritize policy responsiveness over constituency service (e.g., Arnold 2013; Carpini and Keeter 1996; Hutchings 2001, 2005; Wolpert and Gimpel 1997). Moreover, educated voters may see the primary job of legislators as policy-making and executive oversight and not constituency service (in the form of providing local public infrastructure) (Mezey 2014).

Finally, multiple studies suggest that male and female voters may prioritize different policies (see Clayton et al. (2019), Gottlieb, Grossman, and Robinson (2018)). In terms of constituency service, it is possible that female voters prioritize public goods over private benefits. They are more likely to benefit from such public goods than private benefit that is susceptible to clientelism (Wantchekon 2003).

My data puts me in a position to test these possibilities. I find no subgroup differences in what citizens want from legislators along the lines of partisanship (F-stat= 0.648 , $p \leq 0.892$) and gender

[18] Although, see Brierley, Kramon, and Ofosu (2020) and Conroy-Krutz and Moehler (2015).

(F-stat= 0.909, $p \leq 0.59$) lines. However, my analyses suggest differences in constituents' wealth as measured by lived poverty (F-stat = 1.461, $p \leq 0.068$) and education (F-stat = 2.522, $p \leq 0.001$).

Appendix Figure F.1 shows the differences in marginal means by respondents' wealth. More affluent voters focused more on using CDFs to provide local public infrastructure than poorer voters. Specifically, wealthier voters were 4.9 pp ($p \leq 0.017$) more likely to pick profiles of candidates pledging to spend almost all their CDFs on providing local public infrastructure, and 5.5 pp ($p \leq 0.009$) less likely to pick those committing to minimal spending. Accordingly, these results suggest that wealthy constituents prefer a CDF allocation that prioritizes the provision of public infrastructure than poor voters.

Even so, more affluent voters are similar to poorer voters regarding how much they prioritize casework and support for social events (i.e., symbolic representation). Similarly, they are identical in the value they place on political representation.

Appendix Figure F.2 shows the results disaggregated by constituents' education level. Survey respondents with no education differ in their preferences over CDF allocation and political representation compared to those with primary education or more. Constituents with any education were 7.1 pp ($p \leq 0$) more likely to pick a profile with a candidate who dedicates almost all their CDF funds to public infrastructure provision compared to those without education. In contrast, those with no education were 8 pp ($p \leq 0$) more likely to pick a profile of a candidate promising mininmal effort in spending their CDF funds than those with primary education or more.

Those with education also demand more political representation than those with less. Constituents with primary education or more were 1.3 pp ($p \leq 0$) and 5.2 pp ($p \leq 0$) pp less likely to pick profiles of aspirants pledging yearly or no community meetings than those with no education. However, they were 1.3 pp ($p \leq 0.281$) and 5.2 pp ($p \leq 0.018$) more likely (than those without education) to pick those promising six monthly and monthly meetings, respectively.

Together, these results suggest that constituency services' effects on vote choice are not driven by constituent's attributes of partisanship and gender. Instead, wealth and education levels appear

to shape some of these effects. In particular, the high impacts of high CDF spending on public infrastructure and frequent community meeting on vote choice may reflect the preferences of the wealthy and more educated voters.

6 Conclusion

In this article, I examine what voters want from their Members of Parliament. Legislators are multitasking agents of citizens (Ashworth 2012; Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita 2006). With resource (time and money) constraints, they must make critical trade-offs. The more time they spend on national policymaking in the legislature, the less they have to meet and listen to constituents' views and conduct constituency services. When in their district, efforts at representation may detract from constituency services. Spending more of their discretionary funds on individual financial requests implies less support for public infrastructure.

To assess whether these nested trade-offs are responsive to citizens' preferences, we need a firm understanding of voters' views. Inference of citizens' preferences based on elite surveys is susceptible to multiple biases. In their effort to win elections, politicians may focus on tasks or spend on items that are most visible (Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita 2006) or they believe voters want (Lindberg 2010; Pereira 2020). Similarly, research asking citizens to rank the various legislator activities in terms of importance does not provide insights into voters' desired balance. Yet, a mismatch between what citizens want and what legislators undermines democratic quality (Powell 2005).

I investigated the multidimensional preferences of Ghanaian voters regarding legislators' pledged allocation of effort to their various tasks and politicians' attributes using a conjoint survey experiment. I find that how legislators allocate their effort matters to citizens even when provided with information about aspirants' partisanship, gender, hometown and residency status, and profession. In contrast to conventional wisdom, citizens want legislators to at least divide

their time between policymaking in the capital and constituency-related activities at home than focus mostly on parliamentary work. The finding indicates voters also value parliamentary work than we normally think. Second, citizens consider both political representation and constituency service in deciding who to select as their legislator. Specifically, citizens favor politicians who will regularly organize community meetings to listen to citizens' concerns and debrief them about parliamentary debates. They also value politicians who would dedicate higher effort than less to constituency services. Third, disaggregating constituency services into public and private, citizens prioritize those that target the entire communities (i.e., public) compared to those that focus on the individual. Specifically, politicians promising to spend more of available constituency funds on public infrastructure are more likely to be elected than those who would pay more for personal benefits or provide casework (i.e., help with bureaucratic bottlenecks and finding jobs).

My findings have important theoretical and methodological implications for assessing political accountability and democratic responsiveness in the developing world. Theoretically, consistent with emerging research on how elites' beliefs may diverge from that of citizens, the study suggests inferring African voters' preferences from representatives' opinions can be unreliable. Methodologically, the study indicates that when researchers only ask citizens to choose between or rank legislator roles, we may incorrectly infer they do not value others. For example, although tentative, the finding of the choice experiment employed in this study demonstrates voters are likely to value a fine balance between parliamentary work and local issues.

With the study set in Ghana, three necessary scope conditions apply. First, citizens elect their representatives using a plurality rule in SMDs. The electoral system incentivizes constituency service over parliamentary work and representation, which may explain why citizens want representatives to pay some attention to these. It remains to be seen if similar results pertain to countries using Proportional Representation Systems. Second, Ghana boasts of a mix of competitive and non-competitive electoral constituencies. Despite the domination of some constituencies by the two major parties (NPP and NDC), the competitiveness of the parliamentary races has increased

over time. After winning their party primaries, about a quarter of MPs seeking reelection lose (Ofosu 2019).[19] Accordingly, aspects of the findings shaped by electoral competition (i.e., how MPs allocated their funds to public and private goods) may not apply to countries with a dominant party system. Third, and related to the allocation of funds, I consider how citizens want their legislators to use their state-allocated funds in the form of CDFs. While multiple countries have adopted these measures, they are not universal. My results are pertinent to countries with CDFs with substantial legislator discretion on spending.

[19]Between 2000 and 2012, the overall turnover rate for the Ghanaian Parliament was 45.38% (i.e., either retiring or losing through party primaries or general elections), and the percentage of seats changing between parties averaged 22.45%.

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Appendix

A Descriptive statistics of sample

Table A.1: Summary statistics of respondents' characteristics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	2,016	38.937	14.730	18	95
Job with cash income	2,022	0.572	0.495	0	1
Gender(Female=1)	2,022	0.496	0.500	0	1
Employed (full time)	1,157	0.917	0.276	0	1
Own a mobile phone	2,022	0.752	0.432	0	1
Own a radio	2,022	0.469	0.499	0	1
Own a TV	2,022	0.456	0.498	0	1
Own a blender	2,022	0.065	0.246	0	1
Own a car	2,022	0.015	0.121	0	1
Total assets (out of 5)	2,022	1.758	1.131	0	5
Turnout (2016 election)	2,022	0.863	0.344	0	1
Feel close to a political party	2,022	0.740	0.439	0	1
Close to the incumbent party (NPP)	1,497	0.555	0.497	0	1
Closeness to the opposition party (NDC)[0-7]	1,969	3.415	2.838	0	7
Closeness to opposition party (NPP)[0-7]	1,973	3.878	2.840	0	7
Voted for the incumbent party's MP candidate in 2016	1,744	0.541	0.498	0	1
Will vote for incumbent party's MP candidate tomorrow	2,022	0.407	0.491	0	1
Report to know MP's name	2,022	0.750	0.433	0	1
Correctly names MP	1,517	0.957	0.203	0	1
Gone without food in past year	2,022	0.192	0.394	0	1
Gone without clean water in past year	2,022	0.258	0.438	0	1
Gone without medicine	2,022	0.245	0.430	0	1
Gone without cooking fuel	2,022	0.166	0.372	0	1
Gone without cash income	2,022	0.613	0.487	0	1
Lives in a hut/shack	2,015	0.454	0.498	0	1
Poverty index	2,015	1.928	1.538	0	6
Often get news from radio	2,022	0.577	0.494	0	1
Often get news from TV	2,022	0.458	0.498	0	1
Often get news from newspaper	2,022	0.011	0.106	0	1
Often gets news from internet	2,022	0.094	0.293	0	1
Often get news from social media	2,022	0.105	0.307	0	1

Table A.2: Summary statistics: polling stations

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Pctl. 25	Pctl. 75	Max
Electricity	118	0.88	0.32	0	1	1	1
Pipe water	115	0.46	0.5	0	0	1	1
Sewage	105	0.086	0.28	0	0	0	1
Mobile service	118	0.91	0.29	0	1	1	1
Post office	115	0.087	0.28	0	0	0	1
School	118	0.93	0.25	0	1	1	1
Police station	118	0.21	0.41	0	0	0	1
Clinic	117	0.57	0.5	0	0	1	1
Market stall	118	0.52	0.5	0	0	1	1
Bank	117	0.2	0.4	0	0	0	1
Daily transport	118	0.63	0.49	0	0	1	1
Paved road	118	0.13	0.33	0	0	0	1
Paved roads to 5km to village	118	0.18	0.38	0	0	0	1
Road condition in village good	118	0.35	0.48	0	0	1	1

B Coding urbanization, wealth, partisanship, education

B.1

I code the level of urbanization of constituencies in my sample using a measure of the stock of communities' access to thirteen public goods and services. Specifically, each sampled community within a constituency, enumerators coded with there was access to electricity, pipe water, sewage, mobile service, post office, schools, polling station, clinic, market, bank, daily transport, paved road, a paved road to the community, and the condition of the road. For each constituency, take the proportion of polling stations with access to these public infrastructure and services, and then sum across. Possible values of the variable range 0 (none of the villages have access to any of these resources) to 13 (all villages have access to all the resources). In the data, constituencies range between 2.4 to 6.7. Using the distribution of these values in the data, I classify constituency with these public goods stock less the 3.5 as rural and those at or above this value as urban. While a coarse, it is highly correlated with the proportion of rural residents of the district in which the constituency is situated according to the country's 2010 census data.

C Conjoint design: narrative

I trained twelve experienced research assistants to conduct in-person interviews in the sampled constituencies. After introducing the conjoint, enumerators read (narrated) the attributes and values of the conjoint features as "campaign promises' " of hypothetical candidates (i.e., what a particular

candidate will do if elected to office). Enumerators started the conjoint surveys as follows:

1. As you may know, during elections, candidates with different qualifications and characteristics compete to represent your constituency as a Member of Parliament (MP). These candidates also make promises as to what they would do to serve you and your constituency if you elect them as your MP. There could be only one MP. Let us say two people are standing for elections in your constituency for the 2020 parliamentary elections. I am going to tell you a little bit about these two people and then ask your opinion about them.

2. Should I repeat these instructions?

My RAs then narrated the attributes and their corresponding values of two hypothetical candidates in pairwise comparison. They then asked respondents whether they should repeat the attributes and its values. Respondents were then asked the following questions:
Questions:

1. Which of these two candidates would you vote for?

   [ ] Candidate A

   [ ] Candidate B

Figure C.1: An example of candidates' profiles respondents saw

D Balance statistics and profile order effect check

Table D.1: Randomization Check

	Dependent variable:									
	Age	Closeness incumbent party	Turnout (2016)	Education	Employed	Akan	Ewe	Kokomba	Correctly names MP	Total assets
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Constituency Development Fund:										
Public,50:Private,50	0.311	0.003	0.004	−0.026	−0.002	−0.007	0.005	−0.0004	−0.003	−0.0004
	(0.366)	(0.015)	(0.009)	(0.053)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.006)	(0.028)
Public,10:Private,90	0.309	−0.003	−0.001	−0.016	0.0003	−0.017	0.005	0.002	0.009*	−0.043
	(0.393)	(0.015)	(0.009)	(0.055)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.030)
Public,90:Private,10	0.167	0.020	0.006	−0.019	0.023*	0.003	−0.0002	0.013	−0.001	−0.050*
	(0.372)	(0.015)	(0.009)	(0.056)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.005)	(0.029)
Time in Constituency vs. Capital										
Const.:50-capital:50	0.091	−0.012	0.010	0.052	0.015	0.017*	0.006	−0.001	−0.005	0.021
	(0.338)	(0.013)	(0.007)	(0.045)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.024)
Const.:75-capital:25	0.365	−0.025*	0.003	0.052	−0.006	0.0003	0.004	−0.007	0.001	0.042
	(0.365)	(0.014)	(0.009)	(0.052)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.028)
Community meeting										
Monthly	0.303	−0.002	−0.007	−0.048	−0.021	0.011	−0.003	−0.010	−0.007	0.004
	(0.435)	(0.017)	(0.010)	(0.059)	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.033)
Every three months	0.204	−0.007	0.007	−0.079	−0.025*	−0.004	−0.006	−0.005	−0.0002	0.013
	(0.432)	(0.016)	(0.010)	(0.057)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.032)
Every six months	−0.471	0.008	−0.007	−0.057	−0.012	0.010	0.0003	−0.008	−0.008	−0.043
	(0.430)	(0.016)	(0.010)	(0.061)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.032)
Yearly	0.009	0.002	−0.005	−0.117*	−0.015	0.024*	−0.003	−0.0004	−0.006	−0.021
	(0.437)	(0.017)	(0.010)	(0.060)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.033)
Social event										
Sometimes	−0.373	0.018	−0.008	−0.005	0.006	0.032***	−0.006	−0.009	0.007	0.043*
	(0.333)	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.046)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.006)	(0.025)
Always	0.027	0.006	−0.003	−0.075	0.011	0.009	0.0004	−0.011	0.009**	0.002
	(0.326)	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.047)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.026)
Personal assistance (casework)										
Sometimes	−0.262	−0.005	0.008	0.012	−0.008	−0.012	−0.001	−0.003	0.002	0.014
	(0.327)	(0.013)	(0.007)	(0.045)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.004)	(0.025)
Always	−0.151	−0.010	−0.004	0.027	−0.005	−0.021**	−0.001	0.015**	−0.001	−0.010
	(0.325)	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.047)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.025)
Profession										
Lawyer	−0.426	0.034*	−0.011	0.026	−0.002	−0.011	−0.008	−0.0002	−0.011	−0.006
	(0.434)	(0.018)	(0.010)	(0.063)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.035)
Educationist/teacher	0.021	0.002	−0.025**	−0.004	−0.010	0.007	0.0001	0.008	−0.014**	−0.015
	(0.447)	(0.018)	(0.011)	(0.065)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.035)
Business person	−0.197	0.005	−0.005	−0.008	0.012	0.003	−0.001	−0.007	−0.003	0.022
	(0.457)	(0.018)	(0.010)	(0.066)	(0.016)	(0.014)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.035)
Accountant	0.076	0.012	−0.009	−0.065	−0.006	0.006	−0.001	−0.003	−0.006	0.042
	(0.465)	(0.018)	(0.010)	(0.063)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.035)
Architect	−0.295	0.022	−0.001	0.057	0.0003	0.011	−0.002	0.010	−0.005	0.018
	(0.485)	(0.019)	(0.011)	(0.067)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.007)	(0.036)
Gender										
Male	0.721**	0.005	−0.003	−0.147***	−0.013	−0.005	0.006	0.011	−0.005	−0.036
	(0.339)	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.049)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.025)
Political party										
New Patriotic Party	−0.310	0.004	−0.018**	−0.027	0.014	0.002	0.007	−0.012*	−0.002	−0.034
	(0.328)	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.045)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.026)
National Democratic Congress	−0.242	−0.037***	0.0002	−0.049	0.006	0.007	0.004	−0.003	0.005	−0.028
	(0.319)	(0.013)	(0.007)	(0.046)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.025)
Hometown										
Does not hail but resident in constituency	−0.104	0.012	−0.009	−0.013	−0.015	−0.017*	−0.006	0.009	0.003	0.023
	(0.326)	(0.013)	(0.007)	(0.047)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.025)
Hails from but not resident	−0.134	0.026**	0.008	−0.061	−0.011	−0.013	0.003	0.017**	0.003	0.029
	(0.328)	(0.013)	(0.007)	(0.047)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.024)
Constant	38.671***	0.541***	0.878***	3.629***	0.589***	0.283***	0.076***	0.117***	0.964***	1.776***
	(0.765)	(0.029)	(0.017)	(0.109)	(0.025)	(0.022)	(0.014)	(0.017)	(0.010)	(0.057)
Observations (rated profiles)	12,096	8,982	12,132	12,030	12,132	12,132	12,132	12,132	9,102	12,132
R^2	0.001	0.003	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.003	0.001	0.002	0.002	0.002
Adjusted R^2	−0.001	0.001	0.0005	0.0003	−0.0003	0.001	−0.001	0.0005	−0.0002	0.0001
Prob >F (23 attributes)	**0.841**	**0.121**	**0.199**	**0.275**	**0.672**	**0.049**	**0.991**	**0.193**	**0.561**	**0.381**

Notes: Standard errors are clustered at the individual level. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table D.2: The profile order of the three "voting task" has no effect of the effect of attributes

	Dependent variable	*Preferred candidate profile*	
	Variable coefficient	Interaction effect (*Second profile)	Interaction effect (*Third profile)
Second profile	−0.036		
	(0.056)		
Third profile	−0.056		
	(0.056)		
Constituency Development Fund			
Public (90%):Private (10%)	0.126***	0.027	−0.001
	(0.023)	(0.032)	(0.032)
Public (50%):Private (50%)	0.096***	0.054*	0.025
	(0.022)	(0.030)	(0.031)
Public (10%):Private (90%)	0.049**	0.031	0.031
	(0.022)	(0.031)	(0.030)
Time in Constituency vs. Capital			
Const.:50-capital:50	−0.002	0.038	−0.003
	(0.018)	(0.026)	(0.028)
Const.:75-capital:25	0.009	0.057**	0.021
	(0.020)	(0.026)	(0.028)
Community meeting			
Monthly	0.139***	−0.018	−0.001
	(0.024)	(0.033)	(0.034)
Every three months	0.149***	−0.051	0.007
	(0.025)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Every six months	0.095***	−0.0005	0.064*
	(0.024)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Yearly	0.035	0.027	0.046
	(0.024)	(0.035)	(0.033)
Social event			
Sometimes	0.033*	0.018	0.011
	(0.019)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Always	0.089***	−0.019	−0.013
	(0.019)	(0.027)	(0.026)
Personal assistance (casework)			
Sometimes	0.079***	0.011	−0.032
	(0.019)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Always	0.109***	0.001	−0.020
	(0.019)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Profession			
Lawyer	−0.031	0.031	0.035
	(0.026)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Educationist/teacher	0.032	−0.005	0.013
	(0.026)	(0.037)	(0.038)
Business person	−0.012	0.041	−0.013
	(0.027)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Accountant	0.019	−0.001	−0.033
	(0.027)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Architect	0.003	0.038	−0.007
	(0.028)	(0.040)	(0.039)
Gender			
Male	0.014	−0.040	0.004
	(0.019)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Political party			
New Patriotic Party	0.049***	−0.020	−0.030
	(0.019)	(0.026)	(0.026)
National Democratic Congress	0.029	−0.024	−0.024
	(0.019)	(0.026)	(0.027)
Hometown			
Does not hail but resident in constituency	−0.063***	0.060**	0.066**
	(0.019)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Hails from but not resident	−0.051***	0.025	0.016
	(0.019)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Constant	0.241***		
	(0.040)		
Observations (Rated Profiles)	12,132		

Notes: Standard errors are clustered at the individual level. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

E Average marginal component effect of conjoint experiment

Table E.1: Effects of candidate attributes on the probability of being selected as Member of Parliament

	Dependent variable:	
	Preferred candidate profile	
	(1)	(2)
Constituency Development Fund		
Public (50%):Private (50%)	0.123***	0.123***
	(0.013)	(0.013)
Public (10%):Private (90%)	0.070***	0.070***
	(0.013)	(0.013)
Public (90%):Private(10%)	0.135***	0.136***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Time in Constituency vs. Capital		
Constituency (50%) : Capital (50%)	0.030***	0.031***
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Constituency (75%) : Capital (25%)	0.015	0.016
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Community meeting		
Monthly	0.135***	0.134***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Every three months	0.134***	0.133***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Every six months	0.117***	0.117***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Yearly	0.062***	0.060***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Social event		
Sometimes	0.042***	0.043***
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Always	0.078***	0.079***
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Personal assistance (casework)		
Sometimes	0.072***	0.073***
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Always	0.102***	0.104***
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Profession		
Lawyer	−0.009	−0.008
	(0.016)	(0.016)
Educationist/teacher	0.035**	0.033**
	(0.015)	(0.015)
Business person	−0.003	−0.003
	(0.016)	(0.016)
Accountant	0.007	0.004
	(0.015)	(0.015)
Architect	0.014	0.013
	(0.017)	(0.017)
Gender		
Male	0.001	0.0003
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Political party		
New Patriotic Party (incumbent)	0.032***	0.031***
	(0.011)	(0.011)
National Democratic Congress (opposition)	0.011	0.010
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Hometown		
Does not hail but resident in constituency	−0.021*	−0.023**
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Hails from but not resident	−0.038***	−0.036***
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Controls	No	Yes
Constant	0.210***	0.210***
	(0.023)	(0.024)
Observations	12,132	11,994
R^2	0.037	0.037
Adjusted R^2	0.034	0.034

Notes: Table E.1 shows estimates of the effects of randomly assigned parliamentary candidate attribute values on the probability of being preferred as Member of Parliament in the next election. Estimates are based on an OLS model with standard errors clustered by repondent. The model also includes constituency fixed effects to ensure within constituency comparison. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

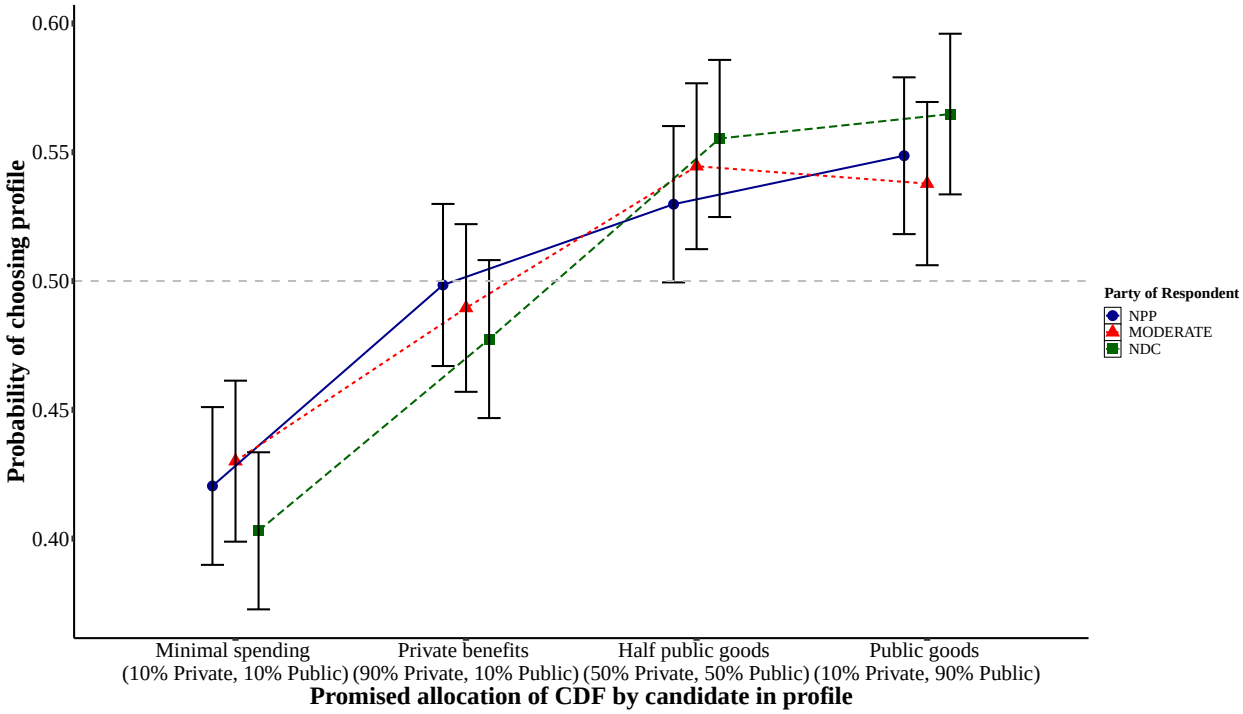

Figure E.1: Marginal means of picking profile promising different allocation of Constituency Development Funds by partisanship

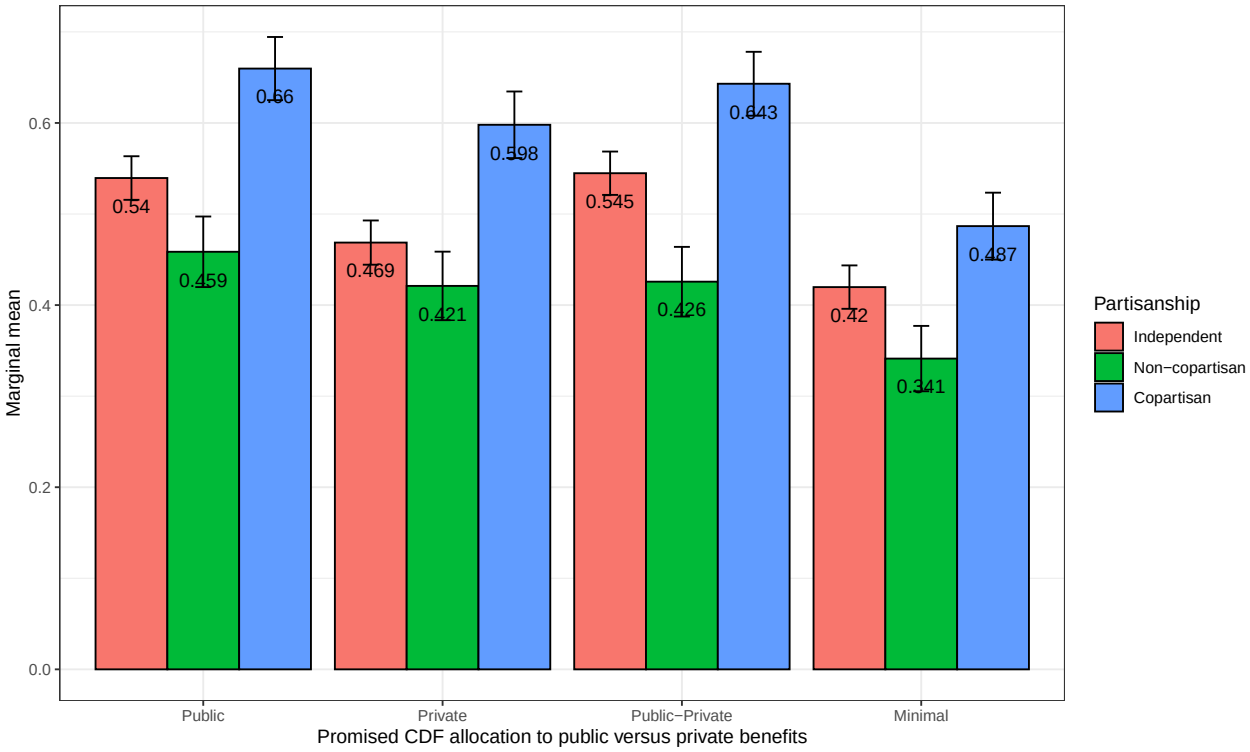

Figure E.2: Marginal means of picking profile promising different allocation of Constituency Development Funds by partisanship

F Heterogeneous effects

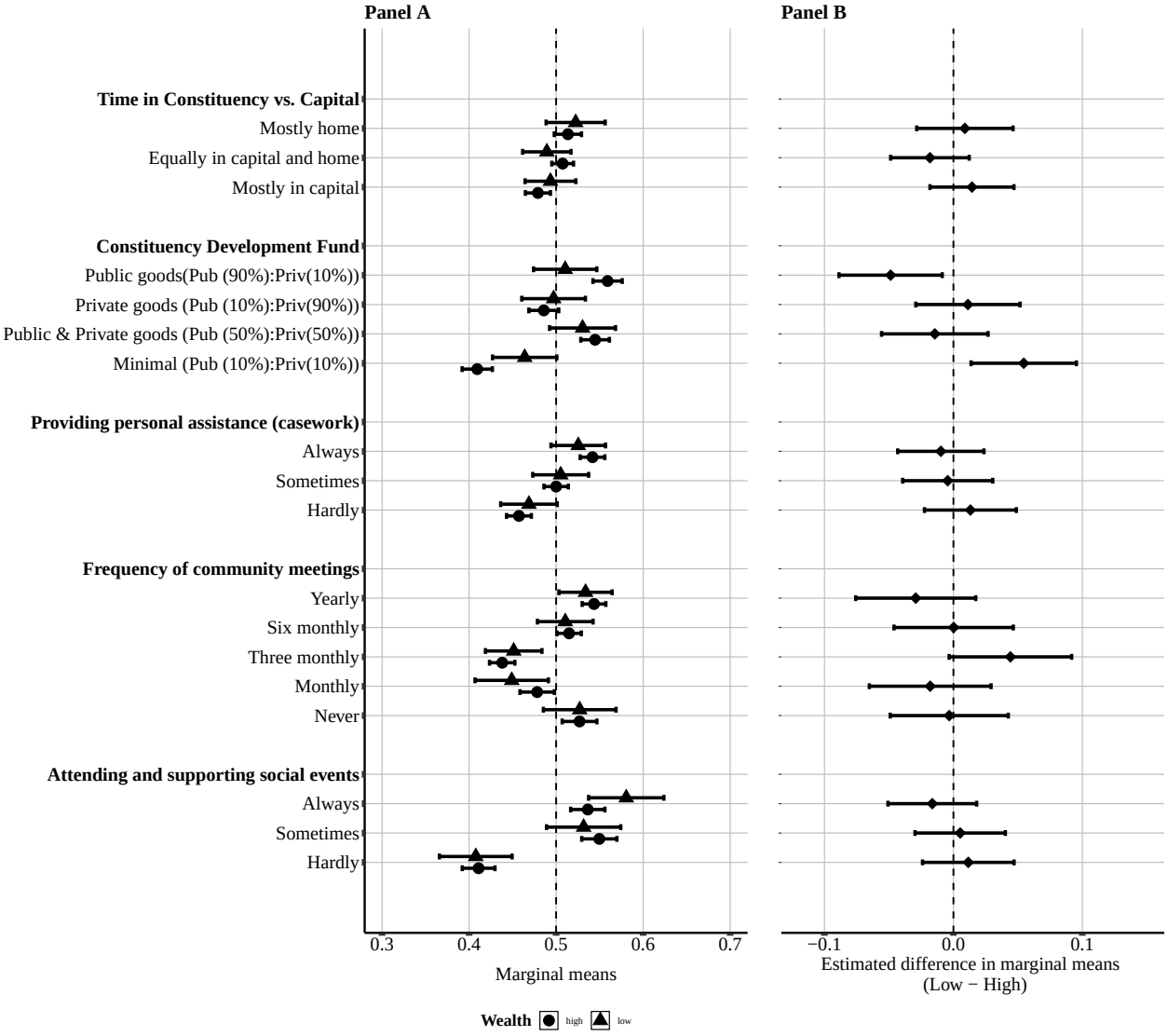

Figure F.1: Differences in marginal means by wealth

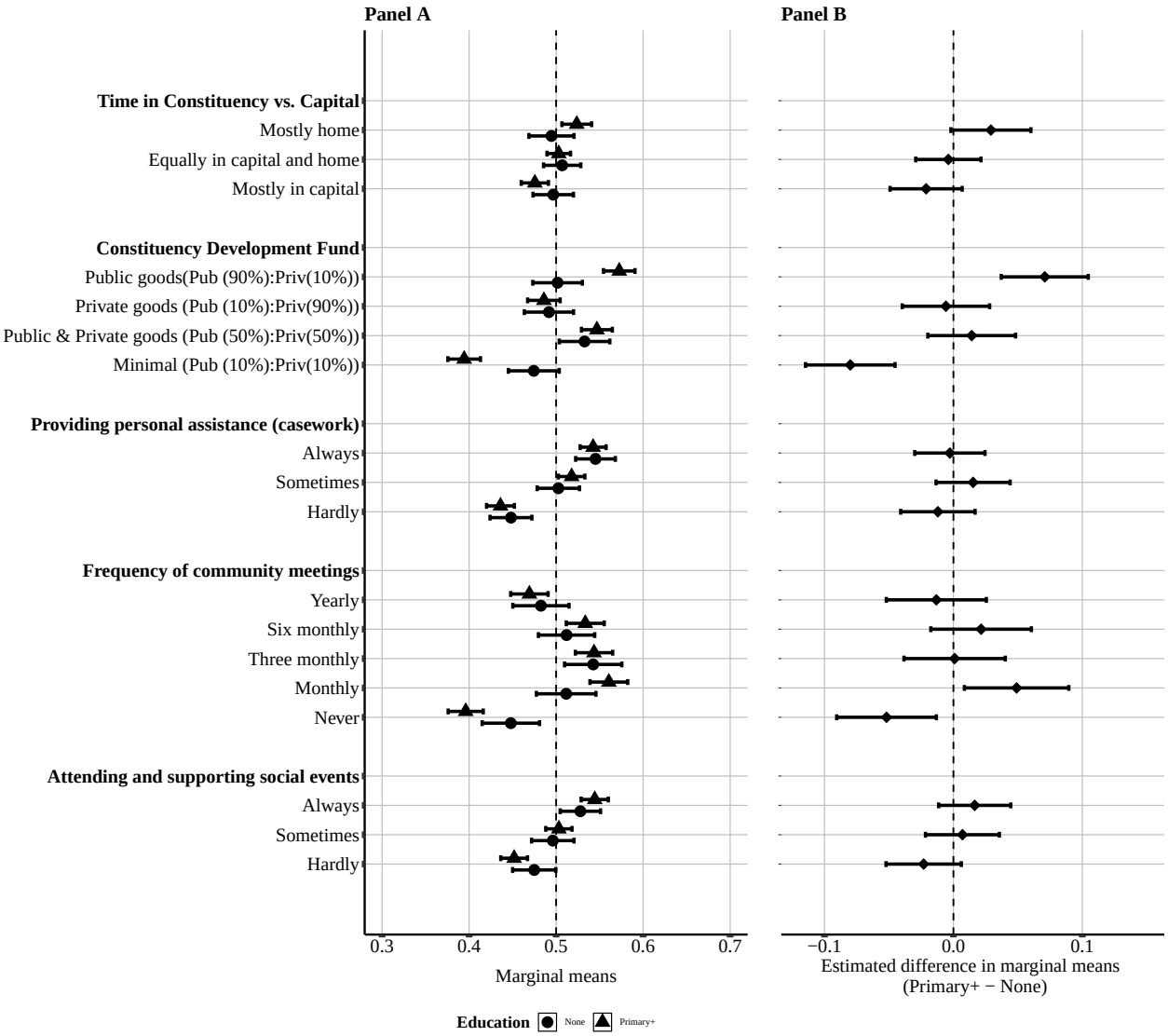

Figure F.2: Differences in marginal means by education level