

# Non-discretionary resource allocation as political investment: evidence from Ghana

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Distributive Politics, 2018

# Puzzle

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- Yet more governments used programmatic policies (120 implemented in sub-Saharan Africa between 2000 and 2009)

# Question

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- Why would politicians adopt resource allocation rules and procedures that limit their own power and influence on distribution?
- Propose and test a theory about the sources of non-discretionary distributive politics in Africa's new democracies using Ghana as a case study.





- Voters may be classified into three broad groups: strongly attached voters, weakly attached voters and unattached voters

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- Unattached and weakly attached voters should be more likely to switch their votes between different parties or politicians over time than strongly attached voters

## Expectations

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## Signalling effect

Allow incumbent politicians to credibly signal to voters that they are committed to unbiased and efficient use of public resources

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# Hypothesis and methods

- The likelihood of rule-based or non-discretionary distribution of benefits to voters by politicians would be higher in places with large numbers of unattached or weakly attached voters
- Survey data on allocations of the Members of Parliament development funds in 22 electoral districts in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana
- Support for the hypothesis: Allocations of the MPs development funds are largely governed by broad-based, impersonal rules in districts where voters demonstrate weak attachment to political parties

# Empirical data

- **Dependent variable:** MPs discretion in MPDACF allocations

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- **Control variables:** Portfolio, Margin of victory, Distance, Female, Ethnicity, District Wealth

$$MPDACFallocation_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SplitTicket_i + \beta_2 Avgmargin_i + \beta_3 MPportfolio_i + \beta_4 Distance_i + \beta_5 MPfemale_i + \beta_6 MPEthnicity_i + \beta_7 Wealth_i + \epsilon$$

TABLE III.

Effect of party attachment on MPs' resource allocation strategy  
*Dependent variable: MPDADF Allocation Criteria*

VARIABLES	(1) Method: Ordered Logistic	(2) Model 2: Ordered Logistic
Per cent split ticket voters	0.163*** (0.062)	0.451*** (0.148)
Average margin of victory (inverse)		0.183 (0.112)
Ministerial portfolio		4.042** (1.579)
Female MP		6.304* (3.299)
Distance to district (km)		0.057** (0.022)
MP from dominant group		-5.291** (2.199)
Per cent over high school		0.240* (0.137)
Constant cut1	1.913** (0.961)	7.968** (3.288)
Constant cut2	4.932*** (1.456)	17.025*** (6.517)
Observations	22	22
Pseudo R-squared	0.34	0.68

# Results

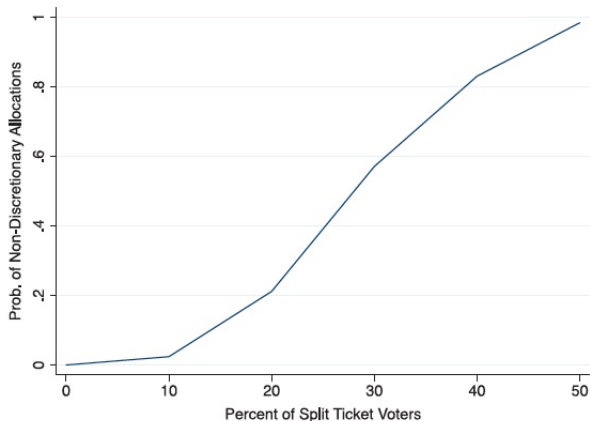


Figure 1. Probability of non-discretionary allocations of MPDADF by percent of unattached/weakly attached voters



*Thank you!*