

# Policing Politicians: Citizen Empowerment and Political Accountability in Uganda

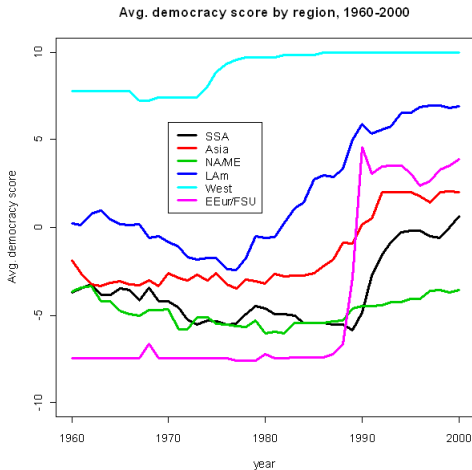
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# Outline

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# Democracy in Africa



# Motivation

- ▶ Africa's wave of democratization in the 1990s generated expectations of greater political accountability:
  - ▶ repeated elections (Lindberg 2006)
  - ▶ constraints of formal rules (Posner and Young 2007)
  - ▶ greater provision of public goods (Stasavage, 2005; Kudamatsu, 2006)
- ▶ Yet electoral democracy in Africa has not fulfilled its promise in many ways:
  - ▶ emergence of hybrid regimes (Levitsky and Way 2003)
  - ▶ persistence of patronage, rather than public goods-oriented politics (Wantchekon 2003)
  - ▶ little alternation in power (Posner and Young 2007)
  - ▶ fading popular support for democracy as it fails to deliver (Bratton 2004)

## Why Elections are Insufficient

- ▶ **The problem:** Elections are an insufficient tool for policing politicians if voters do not observe the actions of politicians and are uninformed about their behavior and their preferences (Besley and Burgess 2002).
- ▶ **The solution:** Greater transparency has been advanced as a key mechanism for improving political accountability (Sen 1999, Besley 2005).
- ▶ **Question:** Does greater transparency improve governmental performance and political accountability? How?
- ▶ **Reason for skepticism:** Is information a fix or a fundamental?

# How Transparency Might Matter

- ▶ Accountability
  - ▶ Bentham 1816, Barro 1973, Ferejohn 1986,
- ▶ Selection
  - ▶ Besley and Prat 2006
  - ▶ Fearon 1999,
  - ▶ Azam, Bates, Biais 2005
- ▶ Perverse Effects (Pandering)
  - ▶ Prat (2005)
  - ▶ Morris (2001) on *political correctness*
  - ▶ Maskin and Tirole *pandering*
  - ▶ Stasavage *posturing*
- ▶ These effects are likely to interact

# Model Outline I

- ▶ A simple model with:
  - ▶ I Uncertainty over what politicians do
  - ▶ II Uncertainty over whether what they do is good (given what they do)
  - ▶ III Uncertainty over what they want to do
- ▶ Two periods, final period trivial so focus on the action and re-election decisions
- ▶ Transparency can reduce any of these forms of uncertainty:
  - ▶ Some focus on III (Besley 2006),
  - ▶ Or a combination of I and II (Prat 2005);
  - ▶ Maskin and Tirole examine II given that I is known
  - ▶ Our “treatment” of interest is introducing variation in I

# Model Outline I

- ▶ MP chooses one of two possible actions. Only one of these benefits her constituents.
- ▶ With high probability the mapping from actions to benefits is “normal” in which case the “orthodox action” produces “good outcomes”; otherwise it is unusual and the unorthodox action is better
- ▶ With high probability voters correctly observe the action of politicians, otherwise they misinterpret the action
- ▶ With some probability the incumbent has the voters’ interests at heart (they are a ‘High’ type); otherwise their interests diverge from those of the voters.
- ▶ The voter’s decision is simply whether or not to return the incumbent, a choice taken after observing a signal of the incumbent’s Period 1 policy choice.

# Equilibrium

	$\tau < -\theta_L$ L not sensitive	$\tau > -\theta_L$ L sensitive
$\tau \leq \theta_H$ H not sensitive	Environment A H chooses good policies L chooses bad policies Incumbent returned iff $\tilde{s} = 1$	Environment B H chooses good policies L mixes (Incumbent returned with probability $\frac{-\theta_L}{\tau}$ if $\tilde{s} = 1$ and with probability 0 if $\tilde{s} = 0$ )
$\tau > \theta_H$ H sensitive	Environment C H conforms L chooses bad policies Incumbent returned iff $\tilde{s} = 1$	Environment D All conform Incumbent returned iff $\tilde{s} = 1$

Table: Environments and Equilibria

# Hypotheses

(First order) hypotheses examined:

- $H_1$  (Voters' attitudes) Voters exposed to information that politicians are performing poorly ( $s = 0$ ) should express greater dissatisfaction with the incumbent and a decreased willingness to support his or her reelection.
- $H_2$  (Politicians' Behavior) On average, greater transparency will be associated with less shirking by politicians in advance of the next election (with "shirking" defined on the basis of public information).
- $H_3$  (Adverse Effects) Greater transparency will result in a substitution of effort by politicians from less observable actions to more observable actions, *even at a cost to the welfare of voters*.
- $H_4$  (Electoral outcomes) Greater transparency will decrease the reelection rate, vote share, and margin of victory of poorly performing incumbent politicians.

Model yields many more subtle hypotheses conditional on first order effects.

# A Field Experiment on Transparency

- ▶ Assess the impact of **Uganda's Parliamentary Scorecard** on the behavior of MPs, voters, and electoral outcomes
  - ▶ With AFLI we produced a detailed scorecard reporting on the initiatives undertaken and positions advocated by MPs
  - ▶ Production and dissemination took place over four years
- ▶ Multilevel randomization:
  - ▶ Randomized dissemination of scorecard to individual voters via survey experiment
  - ▶ Randomly selected a set of MPs for whom we preannounced that there would be major dissemination efforts in their constituencies
  - ▶ (Ipso facto) Randomly selected a set of constituencies for "11 political dissemination", via stakeholder workshops
  - ▶ Prior to election, randomly selected a set of polling station areas for cluster *leaflet based* dissemination

# Uganda's Parliament

- ▶ Critical linchpin of democracy in Uganda, yet a mixed record
  - ▶ 220-53 vote in favor of a third term even though more than 50% of Ugandans opposed it
  - ▶ backed deployment to Somalia in exchange for vehicles
- ▶ Ugandan citizens express mixed opinions about Parliament and their MPs
  - ▶ 79% expect monthly visits, but 69% report that MPs visit once a year
  - ▶ 77% complain that MPs never or only sometimes listen to their concerns
  - ▶ 70% believe MPs are involved in corruption

# Uganda's Parliament

	NRM	Opposition	Independent	N/A	Total
Universal Adult Suffrage	139	47	20	0	215
Women's Rep.s	57	10	12	0	79
UPDF Rep.s	0	0	0	10	10
Persons with Disabilities	5	0	0	0	5
Workers' Rep.s	5	0	0	0	5
Youth Rep.s	4	0	1	0	5
Ex officio	3	0	0	10	13
Total	213	57	42	20	332

**Table:** Members of the 8th Parliament by Party and Ascendancy

## Sources of Information

- ▶ Transcripts of plenary sessions of Parliament (more than 100,000 lines spoken in first year)
- ▶ Transcripts of committee sessions (not previously recorded)
- ▶ Attendance logbooks
- ▶ LC-V meeting notes for more than 80 districts
- ▶ Telephone survey of 1000 local government officials
- ▶ Audits of MP infrastructure
- ▶ Behavioral Measure of Accessibility
- ▶ MP Peer assessments
- ▶ MP self-reporting on CDFs
- ▶ Word Count analysis


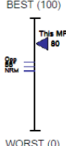
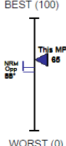
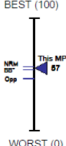
# The Parliamentary Scorecard

- ▶ Performance: Plenary Sessions
  - ▶ attendance
  - ▶ participation
  - ▶ initiative
- ▶ Performance: Committee Work
  - ▶ attendance
  - ▶ participation
- ▶ Performance: Constituencies
  - ▶ LC-V activity
  - ▶ political infrastructure
  - ▶ accessibility

# The Parliamentary Scorecard

- ▶ Pro- or anti-government
  - ▶ MP statements on the floor of Parliament are coded as pro- or anti-government (note: double coded, checked by a third enumerator)
- ▶ Sectors of activity
  - ▶ MP contributions are categorized according to the issues they address
- ▶ Scope of activity
  - ▶ MP statements are coded in terms of whether they address national, sectoral, or constituent interests
- ▶ Other qualitative measures (peer reviews etc)

## Mukose Moses Mutabaali

	Constituency: Busiki County	<b>Plenary</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
	District: Namutumba	<b>Grade: B</b>	<b>Grade: C</b>	<b>Grade: C</b>
	Status: Backbencher	BEST (100)	BEST (100)	BEST (100)
	Party: NRM			
	Portfolio: None			
	Committees: Gov't Assurances, Defence			
	Office Location: N/A			
	Pol. Assistant: Tyaba Patrick 0772879268			
	Period Covered: 6/5/2008 — 5/20/2009			
		*BB: Backbencher		

### Performance

PLENARY	Score	Percentile	COMMITTEE	Score	Percentile	CONSTITUENCY	Score	Percentile
Participation	1265 / 165709	80	Participation	47	45	LC-V Attendance	5 / 6	97
Debate Influence	1729 / 165709	59				Accessibility	4 / 8	5
Attendance		81	Attendance		76	Constituency Service 1	1 / 8	23
Attended	67		Attended	27		Constituency Service 2	8 / 8	69
Excused	0		Excused	0		CDF Accounting	Yes	
Absent	29		Absent	17		Local Office	Not verifiable	
Total Sitings	96		Total Meetings	44		Local Assistant	Yes	

Figure: Sample Scorecard (Top)

We did not have enough information to determine this MP's position relative to Government in plenary sittings. This should not be viewed as a comment on the MP's position, but rather on the fact that AFLI is conservative in its position scoring, only presenting a score where we are confident of the accuracy of the results.

Issue	Parliament	This MP
Foreign Affairs	~30	0
Governance	~310	0
Human Dev.	~180	~500
Infrastructure	~50	0
Internal Security	~50	0
Natural Resources	~40	0
Social Issues	~70	~500
The Economy	~160	0

Quality	Analysis	Teamwork	Oversight	Intra-Party Influence	Public Conduct
18	22	23	24	30	43

## MP's Report

For more on this MP's constituency activities, see <http://www.aflia.org>.

Figure: Sample Scorecard (bottom)

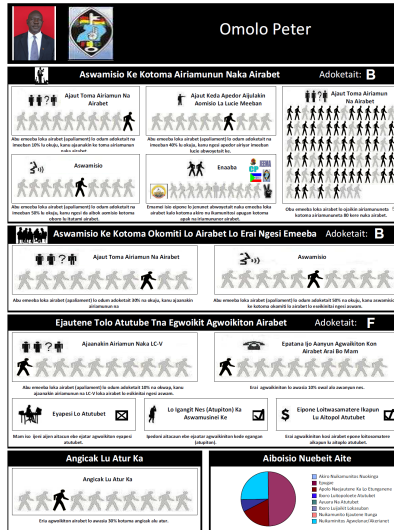


Figure: Sample Scorecard (dissemination)

## First responses I: Resistance from Parliament



Figure: James Kakooza: “I have arrested the Box”

## The First Response: Criticism

“Members of parliament yesterday questioned the credibility of a report by the African Leadership Institute which attempted to assess their performance. . . . The furious MPs say the methods used by the NGO to collect data from parliament were inefficient.”  
[The Monitor \(13 December 2007\)](#)

# The Next Day: Investigate Reporting



- ▶ Anthony Mukasa (NRM), who reportedly attended one sitting, declined to comment. “I don’t know where you got that information. But as a good Catholic I have forgiven you. But if your research is substantiated and based on facts, I have no grudge against it.”
- ▶ Pius Mujuzi, who did not attend any sitting according to the report, said “ I don’t know how they came to find out, but I have been missing mainly because I am doing a diploma course.”
- ▶ Rhoda Acen (Amuriat Woman NRM), who reportedly attended four sittings, said she had been sick. “I am at a clinic at the moment. My health has not been good. I need time to recover.”

## Some support from leadership



- ▶ The Government welcomed the report at its launch in Kampala yesterday. Prime Minister Prof. Apolo Nsibambi in a message delivered by minister Omara Atubo stated: "I support this exercise. I am happy about it."
- ▶ Atubo said: "Our MPs should humbly accept to be assessed. No politician should be shy about this assessment." ...
- ▶ The leader of the opposition, Prof. Ogenga Latigo, said the angry reaction from the MPs was not surprising.
- ▶ "I will not be surprised if they only read the headline in the The New Vision and reacted. If there is any stamp of approval for what you are doing, it was the reaction of Parliament," Ogenga stated.

## But also severe criticism

- ▶ We reject this scorecard because its intention is clear, said Prof. Morris Ogenga Latigo, the leader of opposition in Parliament. He said the scorecard was becoming a propaganda tool of those against performing opposition MPs.

Source: [New Vision: Latigo disputes legislators' ranking. Wednesday, 28 July, 2010](#)

- ▶ The NRM supports the idea of accountability of institutions and its members to the public. Nevertheless we are of the view that this report [the scorecard] violates the core foundations of objectivity, transparency and accuracy on which AFLI as a Non-Governmental Organisation was formed and should be founded

Source: [The Observer. Pulkol's scorecard used wrong parameters Sunday, 14 June 2009 16:16 \(NRM chief whip in parliament, Daudi Migereko\)](#)

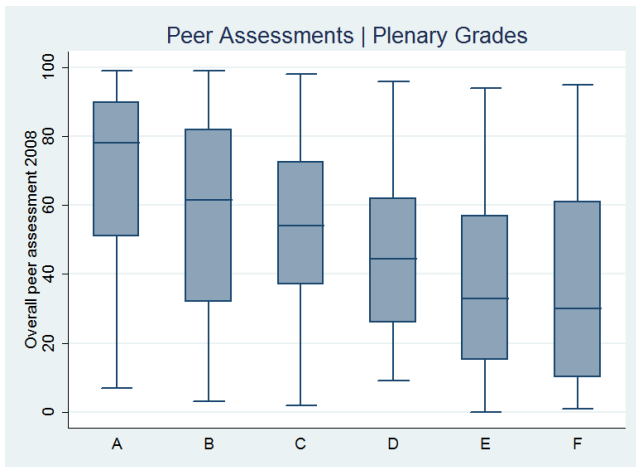
## Prat's Concerns are Shared

- ▶ *I mean you come from your constituency you realize there is maybe a village where water is not running, a place where there are all sorts of problems and you decide to book an appointment to go to talk to people who would not be in their offices when parliament closes. And you are torn between going there doing that work or going to just sit in parliament and then please the scoreboard. And I am saying that if that is what the judgment is then a lot of people will not really do what they are supposed to do for their constituents.*
- ▶ BBC World Service special feature on the scorecard; Interview with Joseph BAIDOE-ANSAH, Ghana's Minister of Trade, Industry, & Private Sector Development

# Validation

Does the scorecard capture relevant features of political behavior?

## Does the scorecard capture quality as seen by politicians?



**Figure:** Distribution of 2008 peer assessment scores for MPs broken down by 2008 scorecard grades.

# Empirical Strategies

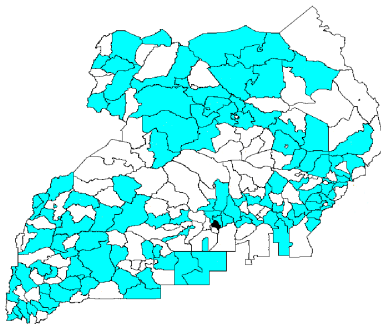
Multiple Empirical strategies.

- ▶ Voter side sources of variation:
  - ▶ **Individual level:** exposure via survey in 2008 (Panel being implemented)
  - ▶ **Polling station level:** exposure via January 2011 dissemination campaigns (Polling level data coming in)
  - ▶ **Constituency level:** exposure via workshops conducted mostly in 2010 (Survey assessing penetration of workshops underway).
  - ▶ **National level:** regression discontinuity around grade cutoffs.
- ▶ MP side variation:
  - ▶ **Constituency level** exposure via workshops conducted mostly in 2010.

# I Dissemination Campaigns

- ▶ Although the scorecard is produced for all MPs, it was intensively disseminated to constituents in randomly selected constituencies
- ▶ Approximately 130 constituencies (district + constituency combined) were exposed to the card via workshops before the 2011 election
- ▶ MPs were made aware of these via regular communications since 2007
- ▶ Dissemination workshops include:
  - ▶ county-wide meeting with local officials, traditional leaders
  - ▶ distribution of scorecard materials in local dialects
  - ▶ discussion with the local MP

# I Dissemination Campaigns



**Figure:** Map of selected constituencies for the dissemination campaign.  
Treated and control

# I Outcome Measures

- ▶ Research strategy will allow us to parse hypotheses about the impact of the dissemination campaigns on:
  - ▶ the behavior of MPs using data drawn from the scorecard;
  - ▶ the attitudes and welfare of voters drawing on household surveys;
  - ▶ electoral outcomes at the 2011 parliamentary elections

# Do voters claim to be influenced by the information?

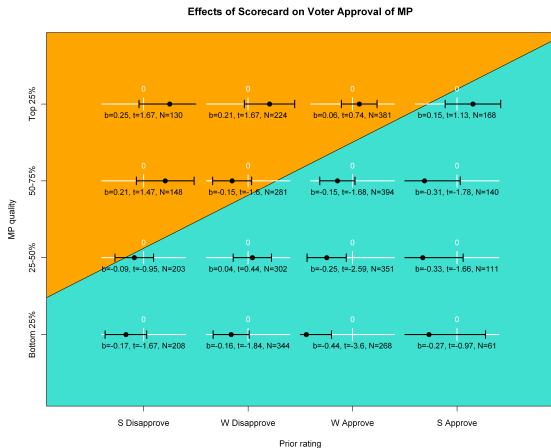
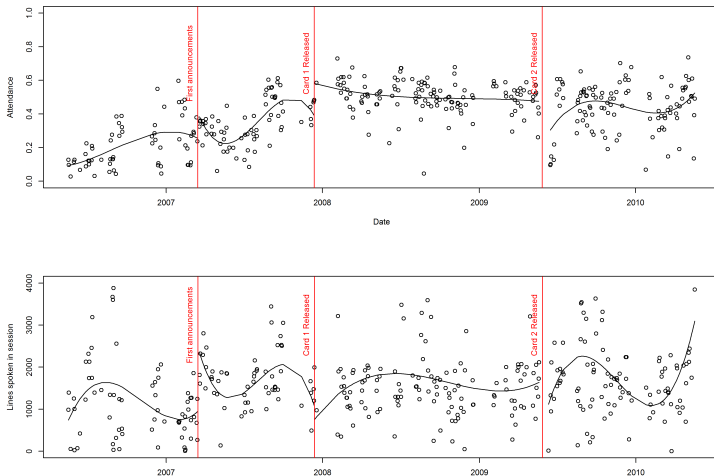


Figure: Treatment Effects by prior approval rates and past voting behavior.

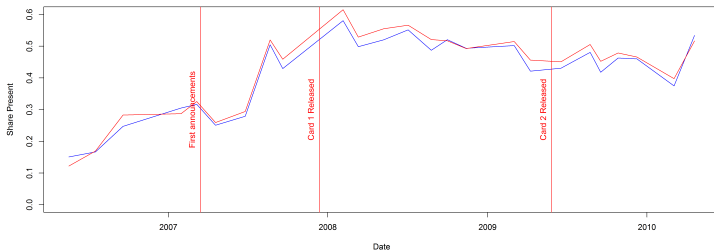
## Are they really influenced by it?

- ▶ During the endline survey in 2011 we returned to the same voters that were shown the scorecard in 2008 and asked how they actually voted.
- ▶ While actual voting was strongly correlated with previous reports of voting intentions, **we found no evidence that the strong treatment effect from the survey experiment persisted to 2011.**
- ▶ Possible reasons are:
  - ▶ the effect was never really there
  - ▶ the effect was short lived (decay)
  - ▶ the effect was countervailed

# Did MPs alter their behavior?



## Did MPs alter their behavior? (T and C)



**Figure:** Figures show the changes over time in the numbers attending and in the volume of discussion in parliament. Cutoffs mark key moments of publicity for the scorecard. Lines show two monthly averages.

# Did MPs alter their behavior? Scores

	Plenary	Committee	Constituency	Peer Assessment
Workshop Effect	-4.736 (1.42)	-2.255 (0.61)	1.096 (0.32)	-0.673 (0.19)
Control Average	53.640 (22.97)***	52.844 (20.35)***	49.116 (20.52)***	51.104 (20.53)***
N	296	239	292	265

**Table:** The estimated effect of dissemination workshops on parliamentary performance (dependent variables are percentile scores at the latest points of measurement). *t*-statistics in parentheses; \*  $p < 0.1$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

# Did MPs alter their behavior? Adverse Effects

	Piped Water	Primary Educa- tion	Education Facility	Teacher Presence	Health Facility	Doctor Present	Perceptions Index
Workshop	-0.077 (2.05)**	0.033 (1.25)	-0.008 (0.27)	0.001 (0.06)	0.024 (1.18)	-0.008 (0.41)	-0.113 (1.88)*
Constant	0.599 (22.51)	0.551 (30.46)	0.359 (20.19)	0.835 (62.04)	0.322 (22.85)	0.328 (22.48)	2.406 (53.83)
$R^2$	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01
$N$	5,168	4,788	2,721	2,269	5,261	5,310	5,104

Table 5: Adverse effects at the constituency level. \*  $p < 0.1$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . Standard errors clustered at the constituency level.

## Effects on electoral outcomes

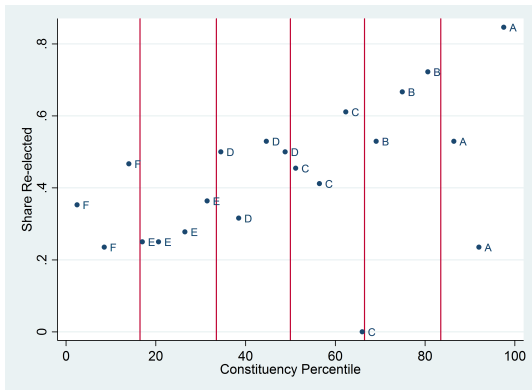
Constituency scores matter but no evidence for dissemination effect.

	Elect	Elect	Elect	Ran	Ran	Ran	Share	Share	Share
Workshop	-0.023 (0.19)	-0.068 (0.51)	0.054 (0.48)	-0.068 (0.67)	-0.044 (0.39)	-0.006 (0.07)	0.027 (0.49)	-0.067 (1.06)	-0.016 (0.30)
Interaction	0.000 (0.05)	0.001 (0.38)	-0.002 (0.80)	0.001 (0.77)	0.001 (0.37)	-0.000 (0.03)	-0.001 (0.62)	0.001 (0.90)	0.000 (0.26)
Plenary pct	-0.000 (0.08)			0.000 (0.27)			-0.000 (0.61)		
Committee pct		-0.000 (0.24)			0.001 (0.45)			-0.001 (0.97)	
Constituency pct			0.004 (3.05)***			0.002 (1.35)			0.001 (2.24)**
Constant	0.462 (5.29)	0.464 (4.74)	0.242 (2.97)	0.758 (10.37)	0.746 (9.05)	0.700 (10.06)	0.478 (12.19)	0.486 (10.69)	0.385 (10.40)
N	293	239	292	293	239	292	227	185	227

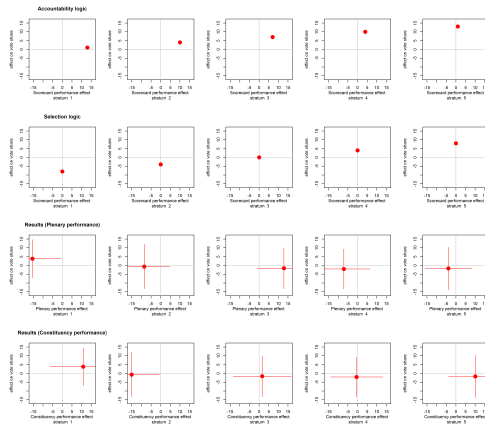
**Table:** Intention to treat estimates of dissemination workshops. In each model the 'interaction' variable is the interaction between the workshop treatment and the score in question. \*  $p < 0.1$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

# Attribution using regression discontinuity

- ▶ High performing MPs on constituency grades do better.
- ▶ But the regression discontinuity analysis does not attribute performance of high scoring constituency MPs to the scorecard.



# Joint determination of scores and electoral performance



**Figure:** Predicted and estimated effects of workshops on both final period scorecard and electoral performance given past performance.

# Explanations I

Is the information the wrong information?

1. Limited emphasis on pork. But:
  - 1.1 Information on pork may have limited marginal effects since already known to beneficiaries
  - 1.2 Although politicians say voters treat them like ATMs, many voters report seeing MP activities in parliament as critical
  - 1.3 Only c 25% emphasize local goods delivery as most important function
  - 1.4 When asked if they prefer a politician who is active in parliament to one who is active outside of parliament, they say the latter
2. Still, results from elsewhere suggest information on corruption affects outcomes.
3. Results rightly thought of as pertaining to particular type of transparency

## Explanations II

Is the problem a weak first stage?

### 1. Implementation version

- 1.1 Workshops accountable for about 4% increase in knowledge of scorecard
- 1.2 That corresponds to a lot of people but not directly to a large share of voters; especially here where winning politicians **have large margins**
- 1.3 In principle though a small set directly exposed in a constituency could change electoral fortunes via indirect links

### 2. Political version

- 2.1 Even in the presence of workshops, information could still be neutralized or spun
- 2.2 Even though they were more likely to know about the scorecard, voters in treatment areas had *less accurate* guesses about the scores of MPs

# Discussion

What are we looking at?

1. We may be looking at a situation in which no one cares but survey experiments give falsely positive effects
2. Or maybe voters respond to information but MPs do not depend on voters and do not care
3. Or maybe voters respond to information but MPs can counter the effects of this information

## Discussion

What are we looking at?

1. We may be looking at a situation in which no one cares but survey experiments give falsely positive effects
2. Or maybe voters respond to information but MPs do not depend on voters and do not care
3. Or maybe voters respond to information but MPs can counter the effects of this information: **subject of endorsement experiment**