

## Interrogating Accountability

### STAFFAN LINDBERG

As the principal investigator (PI) for the research project “MPs, Citizens, Accountability, and Collective Goods”, I spent a good portion of the summer working with Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Goran Hyden, and a team of junior professionals under the leadership Professor Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi at the Center for Democratic Development, (CDD) Ghana. The project is concerned with investigating the various accountability pressures Members of Parliament (MPs) face, and how these pressures shape politicians’ behavior.

Much of the literature on African politics, as well as ‘common wisdom’ hold that politicians engage in clientelistic relationships mainly with various constituencies to attain and hold onto power. This current project builds off my earlier research interrogating, and putting question marks to some of these claims. The present project is designed to provide more definitive answers based on rigorous data collection and analysis.

This summer Dr. Hyden and I jointly conducted over 35 elite interviews with MPs and Ministers of State in Ghana (one of whom Ms. Samia Nkrumah, the daughter of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana’s first post-independence leader). Ghana held general elections in December 2008 that resulted in both an alternation in the presidency as well as a large turnover in the legislature. The interviews were used both to measure the types of accountability pressures during and after the elections, as well as to understand how MPs handled and/or coped with such pressures. While my previous series of interviews in Ghana have uncovered a high prevalence of informal pressures compelling legislators to expend lots of energy and resources on providing private goods through clientelistic relationships, this recent round of interviews seems to indicate that a new crop of MPs is emerging who view the provision of collective and public goods for the larger good as more important.

I followed these interviews up with a self-



administered elite survey with all the MPs on pre- and post-election finance, strategies, and accountability pressures. In order to enable analysis of congruence between citizens and their representatives, I also carried out a survey with citizens in collaboration with CDD. Thirteen strategically selected constituencies were sampled (N=1,720) through a two-staged randomization procedure based on standard household survey methodology. Thirty-five research assistants were recruited, trained and deployed in June through July. The results from the surveys and

the integrated, nested analysis are forthcoming.

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