Has Change Begun Already?

Latent Demand for Democratic Reform Among Nigerian Citizens

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Abstract: Many sub-Saharan African countries pursued democratic reforms in the 1990s. Progress soon stalled, however. According to some, informal aspects of African civil society could not support the formal institutional changes. Indeed, citizens' demands make it appear like they might *prefer* personal and particularistic politics. Or perhaps they cannot envision the alternative well enough to demand specific reforms. If so, the path to deepening democracy remains narrow. We suspect the demand for democratic reform runs deeper than it appears but remains latent as people focus on managing what they see as the thin available choices. If so, citizens may respond in a big way to small signals that something better is possible. We analyze a field experiment testing the power of indicating the plausibility of reform on the political attitudes and preferences of Nigerian citizens. Surprisingly, treatment and control subjects both moved toward pro-democratic stances. We present extensive qualitative evidence that our hypothesized mechanisms drove the changes among those receiving the treatment but can only provide suggestive evidence to account (post hoc) for the unexpected change among controls. We conclude that latent demand for democratic reform may run much deeper and wider than previously thought.

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"Representatives act not as agents of the people but simply instead of them… Constituents, accordingly, feel powerless and resentful...ignorant and incapable…[T]hey are cynical and sulky, deeply alienated from what is done in their name and from those who do it."

– Pitkin (2004)

"Change has begun already. Since the onset of [Nigerian democracy], no one has ever called a meeting like this. So, with this meeting, change has already started."

– Respondent 299, Bende

People worldwide celebrated the 1990s surge of multi-party democracy in sub-Saharan Africa. Their optimism, however, has faded over the last twenty-five years as many African democracies seem to have stalled in a poorly functioning and highly corrupt stasis that only mimics their citizens' democratic aspirations.

The past twenty-five years of Nigerian political history are paradigmatic of the continent's faltering relationship with democracy. With the elections of 1999 ushering in the "Fourth Republic," Nigeria's democratic transition seemed to powerfully anchor Africa's democratic renewal, signaling change after decades of mostly military rule. Today, few hold on to such lofty hopes, and many observers consider Nigerian democracy unconsolidated, seeing few prospects for improvements. Indeed, Nigerians themselves harbor such concerns. In the latest Afrobarometer survey, 77% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their democracy; 89% thought the country was going in the wrong direction; and 64% saw Nigeria as a non- or "deeply flawed" democracy. In August 2024, this disillusion led the streets of cities nationwide to fill with protestors dismayed at the perceived neglect of elected politicians for the needs of common folk. That the protests were dubbed the *#EndBadGovernance* protests, is emblematic of the public mood.

And yet, that of February 2023 was the seventh consecutive multi-party election. Power was (mostly) peacefully handed from one president to the next: the public's voice was heard and its will

enacted.[1] In this minimalist light, the democratic transition has hardly been unsuccessful. Given Nigeria's history of civil war and military autocracy, establishing a reliable election cycle is hardly inconsequential.

So, why are Nigerians so dissatisfied? Choosing rulers is only the first benefit of democratic cooperation enjoyed by other citizens around the globe. In its deeper forms, democracy helps citizens prioritize where they want to allocate the gains from social cooperation, creates efficiencies in doing so, promotes more just allocation, and more citizen buy-in enhances the state's capacity to accomplish all of that. Citizens who feel secure in their dignity, efficacy, and recognition *as* citizens invest legitimacy, potentially turning the downward spiral into an opportunity for ascent. We suspect Nigerian citizens know all of this, at least intuitively. They see governance, despite its ostensible democratic credentials, as very far removed from those deeper, mutually reinforcing goods. Frustration and disillusionment pervade the political system, reinforcing political opportunism, ethnic localism, and a sense of permanent scarcity that sabotages efficient cooperation.

Scholars studying African politics have long sought to understand why Nigeria, among other African countries, remains unable to develop its democracy. Some argue that traditional African culture maladapts civil society for democratic governance. Others emphasize the long shadow of colonizers drawing boundaries without regard to tribal, linguistic, and cultural differences among the people they threw together, subverting the common identities necessary to pursue national objectives. Another group of scholars argues that democratic norms and values cannot develop amid extreme economic deprivation. Talk of public-spiritedness and self-determination sounds idle (if not cruel) to people who must often worry about their most immediate needs.

More recently, scholars have suggested that African citizens are trapped in suboptimal equilibria to account for the tension between their stated aspirations and political choices that often appear

[1] This is not intended to minimize the claims of fraud voiced during the process. While acknowledging some irregularities, however, most observers, as well as the Nigerian courts, stop short of questioning the final outcome, for ex: https://www.theafricareport.com/294834/was-the-nigerian-election-rigged/

ill-suited to realizing them. Most citizens (and many elites) want something better but cannot coordinate to get there. No one expects institutions to function as intended, so they seek to "work the system to their minimum disadvantage" (Hobsbawm 1973). Citizens believe they must capture private and local benefits whenever they can rather than hold out for hopelessly remote ideals (Smith 2007). So, they reward politicians who provide them goods without regard to where those goods come from, how they are delivered, or lost opportunities for national gains from cooperation (Fujiwara and Wantchekon 2013). For their part, even well-intentioned politicians cannot unilaterally behave differently without losing re-election. Both groups believe they have no choice but to meet expectations about patronage and corruption (Lindberg 2010).[2]

The problem is so pervasive that a recent review of Nigerian anti-corruption initiatives concludes that merely "priming citizens to think about the extent of corruption…make[s] individuals feel that the problem is too great to be solved…induc[ing] apathy…and in some cases…more willing[ness] to engage in bribery" (Cheeseman and Peiffer 2020, 3). Yet sub-optimal equilibria can be surprisingly fragile to small disruptions to the dynamics that sustain them (Mackie 1996). If people *want* to move to a better equilibrium and know others do as well, they may only need nudges or reassurances to trigger a cascade. We conjecture that Nigerians could adapt democratic innovations proliferating elsewhere to reassure and nudge each other. If collective expectations of democratic failure perpetuate the problem, then collective experiences signaling plausible improvement may be the solution.

Recently, many democracies in the Global North have experimented with innovations that reliably boost citizens' senses of political efficacy and national identity, their trust in government (Minozzi et al. 2015; 2023), openness to opposing views (Luskin et al. 2006), and willingness to participate in civic activities (Strandberg and Gronlund 2018). We adapted one such innovation – "Deliberative Town Halls" (DTHs) (Neblo et al. 2018) – to assess whether they could produce similar gains in the Global South. If so, those modest benefits could ramify dramatically by providing the

[2] Numerous interviews by the authors with Nigerian legislators buttress this point.

motivation, reassurance, and hope necessary to disrupt the bad equilibria stifling African democracy. If publicly shared cynicism and low expectations cause Nigerians to reward parochial politics, then it seems plausible that even small proofs of concept disrupting those public expectations could trigger a cascade toward the civic culture people already want.

We understand that many readers may be skeptical. Naive "solutions" imported to African settings have a poor track record. Yet recent scholarship suggests that Africans value democratic community more than previously thought (Nyenhuis and Mattes 2021). Observers have wrongly assumed that Africans care solely about material policy benefits. They also value the dignity of being functionally (not just formally) democratic citizens (Klaus et al. 2023), intuiting that those values reinforce each other. Such attitudes vary widely across and within countries (Mattes 2019), suggesting context sensitivity and malleability (Kingzette and Neblo 2021). We must guard against genuine cases of African exceptionalism obscuring the general human desire for respect and autonomy.

To test our conjecture, we first map status quo attitudes about politics and politicians in Nigeria, confirming the dejection and distrust that corrupt and ineffective government engenders. We then test whether Deliberative Town Halls change citizens' perceptions about the possibilities of Nigerian democracy. We cooperated with two National Assembly members on a field experiment inviting a random subset of constituents to participate in a Deliberative Town Hall. Contrary to our expectations, we did *not* find that participants moved more toward demanding deeper democracy than control subjects. We found something much more surprising and much more intriguing. Both treated *and* control subjects significantly alter their post-test responses, often (though not always) in the hypothesized, more democratic direction. We have never observed such a pattern in twenty years of similar research so we did not even consider the possibility when we pre-registered our difference-in-differences (DiD) analysis plan.

Below, we analyze qualitative evidence to show that participants in the DTHs embraced deeper democracy in ways congruent with our larger theory. Upon discovering the surprising pattern for the

controls, we returned to the field to gather further data. Even with that additional evidence, we do not claim to have established a single, clear explanation. Doing so will require further research. Nevertheless, we did find that participants in the DTHs posted on social media and spoke extensively to family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors about their positive experiences. We also find some indication that merely hearing about the innovation encouraged controls to envision more participatory and programmatic politics and perhaps to inquire more about such possibilities. These explanations remain partial, post-hoc, and need further verification. If verified, however, they suggest that *even smaller signals* of hope than we imagined may affect how citizens think about the future of Nigeria's democracy.

Theory and Hypotheses

African Citizens' Political Preferences: Most accounts of democratic representation in Africa describe predominantly transactional relations dominated by "quid pro quo[s], in which particularistic benefits from political patrons are reciprocated by voters" with electoral support (Hicken and Nathan 2020, 279). Scholars have documented seemingly endless anecdotes, examples, and systematic evidence for such interactions across the continent, particularly in Nigeria (Kramon 2018; van de Walle 2007). For example, after the 2015 elections, 31% of Nigerian adults reported being offered a gift or favor in exchange for their votes (Zovighian 2018). Similar dynamics extend beyond elections into how government officials distribute material resources and services throughout daily life to the point that citizens have come to expect and demand them (Gallego and Wantchekon 2019; Smith 2007; 2023).

This depiction of African citizens as predominantly oriented towards narrowly local material priorities emerges from early post-independence literature.[3] As Nyenhuis and Mattes (2021) summarize, the literature has thus tended to portray ordinary African citizens as (a) driven by affective

[3] Ekeh (1975) famously describes Nigerians as amoral in the public political sphere - an account that might summarize the general approach in the literature.

relations (Hyden 2012; Schaffer 2000; Schatzberg 2001), (b) subordinate to political 'big men' (Chabal & Daloz 1999; Chazan 1992; Mamdani 1996); (c) opportunistic (Barkan 1976; Bayart 1989; Lindberg 2003; 2010; Weghorst and Lindberg 2013) and (d) ethnically parochial (Horowitz 2000; Chabal & Daloz 1999; Lemarchand & Legg 1972). Despite recent work introducing some complications, the picture of African voters as parochial and materialistic still represents baseline expectations.

If so, such a posture at least perpetuates democratic governance remaining stuck in shallow electoral institutions (Lindberg 2010; Vicente 2014). Indeed, many perceive a vicious cycle: democratic deficits cause citizens to expect their persistence and thus withdraw legitimacy from democratic institutions, aggravating the conditions that triggered the initial declines.

Nigerian politics would seem to epitomize this dynamic. For instance, Smith (2007) argues that "*because* ordinary Nigerians generally have access to their leaders only through patron-client structures, and *because* they have learned to have little faith that their leaders will represent their interests while in office, they will often vote for the candidate who looks like the best patron – that is, the person who gives them the most money or might be able to deliver the most government resources, even if the mechanism of delivery is corruption rather than transparent public policies and programs" (Smith 2007, 122. *Emphasis added*).

This diagnosis, though dire, also points to a route toward change: if voters abet and even promote poor governance because they do not think better governance is attainable, merely signaling the plausibility for change may alter what citizens demand. Even though clientelist and parochial dynamics remain widespread in Nigeria, seemingly entrenching the vicious cycle Smith depicts, we follow Paller (2019), among others, to question the determinacy implied in many accounts of African voters and their normative commitments to democratic values. Would signaling the plausibility of change shift the dimensions along which voters define their political preferences without requiring wholesale changes to the entire political economy of African nations?

Contrary to received wisdom, recent work suggests many Africans today are more multidimensional democratic citizens than previously thought, and may adopt different political stances depending on their circumstance (Cheeseman et al. 2020; Nyenhuis and Mattes 2021).

Gottlieb (2021), for instance, argues voters condition their evaluations of political candidates based on their understanding of state capacity. Where state capacity is perceived to be low, citizens do not expect politicians to be able to deliver programmatically and therefore elect clientelist candidates. Oppositely, if their expectations about state capacity are raised, they shift to more programmatic evaluations of incumbents.[4] Citizens, then, may fail to coordinate on programmatic demands based on their understanding of what they and others around them can expect from the state. Predominant expectations about politics can thus induce citizens to "participate in and reproduce" (Smith 2007, 137) the very distortionary system they disfavor.

Wantchekon and Guardado (2024) suggest a similar effect is at play in shaping how Beninese voters make their electoral choices. When engaged in political campaigns that promote programmatic platforms rather than conventional clientelist vote-buying, voters alter their perceptions of vote-buying candidates in the negative direction. They argue this finding is consistent with the claims that exposing citizens to novel forms of politics raises "expectations of political behavior such that voters [punish] the incongruity between [the campaign's] interest in policy and community input, with [their] vote-buying attempts" (Wantchekon and Guardado 2024, 1262). This contingency in public attitudes supports our conjecture that relatively rapid progress may be possible.

To underscore the importance of non-material citizen evaluations, Klaus et al. (2023) highlight an underappreciated element of African citizens' political preferences: the demand for social recognition as citizens in a democratic community. Rather than seeing the state primarily through an economic prism and valuing it for its redistributive capacity alone, citizens in African democracies

[4] Gottlieb (2016) makes a similar point. There, however, her argument is presented more in terms of voter education, than expectations emerging from observed phenomena.

place symbolic importance on being heard by their political representatives, above and beyond any demand for clientelist material exchange (Roelofs 2023). Indeed, Klaus and coauthors echo survey findings on the factors that shape preferences for democracy to suggest that "when citizens do not feel recognized, individuals may experience a deep sense of political betrayal, disillusionment with democracy, and anger – feelings that do not always correspond to a citizen's material well-being or receipt of goods." (Klaus et al. 2023, 187). A perceived lack of recognition, may thus provoke counter-normative adaptive strategies, like entering in patronage relations, different from the ideal behaviors citizens themselves would choose if they felt valued as individual political agents in the broader system.

Taken together, these findings indicate that how African citizens think and act in democratic politics can vary widely based on daily political experiences and their expectations of how others around them are likely to behave. Further, their subjective political evaluations appear to be shaped by factors other than strictly material concerns. If that is so, the seemingly parochial attitudes that appear top of mind among African citizens may be more context-dependent than previously thought, and might be altered through interventions that do not require (immediate) improvements of material conditions. Understanding citizens' outwardly narrow demands as adaptive reactions to poor evaluations of their opportunities in the political status quo directly suggests the possibility of strengthening democratic norms through interventions that restore hope in the political process without necessitating immediate overhauls of national political economies. With this in mind, we adapt an institutional innovation designed in the deliberative democratic tradition – the Deliberative Town Hall – that has shown great promise in changing political mindsets in various advanced democracies.

The Promise of Deliberative Democracy: Over the last few decades, reforms associated with theories of "deliberative democracy" have sparked particular interest in augmenting or improving legacy representative institutions. For example, Citizens' Assemblies (Reuchamps et al. 2023; Vrydagh

2023), Deliberative Opinion Polls (Fishkin 2018), and Deliberative Town Halls (Neblo et al. 2018) induce a range of positive outcomes such as aiding conflict resolution (Gutmann and Thompson 2009; Habermas 2015; Macedo 2010) and producing a more informed and motivated electorate with deeper commitments to democratic values (Austen-Smith and Feddersen 2006; Esterling et al. 2011). Such findings support normative accounts that make deliberative practices central to a "well-ordered constitutional democracy" (Rawls 1999, 39).

While the empirical literature has thus far focused on largely procedural questions (Fishkin et al. 2021) – seeking to highlight when and how deliberation can meet its procedural ideals (*inter alia*: Chirawurah et al. 2019; Fishkin 2018; Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014; Luskin et al. 2014; Niemeyer et al. 2024; Rao and Sanyal 2009; Sass 2018; Steiner et al. 2017; Ugarriza and Caluwaerts 2014) – recent research has shifted the focus onto a more systemic approach (Parkinson and Mansbridge 2012; Neblo 2007; 2015). This work deemphasizes ideal deliberation in isolated forums to highlight the broader institutions necessary for a well-functioning democracy. This re-calibration draws our attention back to broad issues of governance that get lost in the study of small-scale deliberative dynamics.

Here, we adapt one such empirical application – the "Deliberative Town Hall" – that has shown remarkable promise in advanced democracies. The DTH creates online opportunities for "vertical" deliberation between citizens and their elected officials (Neblo et al. 2018). DTHs bring together a statistically representative random sample of constituents with their elected members of Congress[5] for online deliberation on a salient policy issue. Despite the relatively small time investment,[6] DTHs induce remarkable pro-democratic effects on treated participants' downstream perceptions of, and engagement with politics. Among other things, participants become more informed about politics, more likely to vote, express increased political trust, a greater sense of political efficacy, and, perhaps most

[5] The majority of empirical applications thus far, have occurred in the US, although extensions to other advanced democracies like the United Kingdom, Australia, and N. Ireland have had similarly positive outcomes.
[6] These are, after all, short (usually approx. 60-90 minutes), remote (all participants connect online), and collective (the number of participating citizens typically ranges between 100-7000) interactions.

germanely here, increased optimism towards politics (Alnemr et al. 2023; Minozzi et al. 2015, 2024; Neblo et al. 2018).

Despite the promise shown by deliberative innovations, they have yet to prove themselves in developing democracies.[7] There is reason to think that some mechanisms translating participation in DTHs into the broad pro-democratic effects observed in the Global North – perceived respect, accountability, trustworthiness, etc. – may also apply in developing democracies like Nigeria. That said, the absence of empirical applications in the Global South means all our evidence thus far emerges from contexts in which DTHs were embedded in broadly "programmatic" political environments. In contrast, much of African (and Nigerian, specifically) politics remains dominated by clientelistic practices – a context that poses significant novel challenges from those faced elsewhere (Demarest 2022; Nathan 2019; Van de Walle 2007; Wantchekon 2003; Zovighian 2018).

Hypotheses: Citizen political values, normative preferences, and their underlying causes are central to our theoretical motivation for deliberative experimentation in the Nigerian context. Accordingly, we begin by characterizing the baseline political attitudes that highlight the presence of the preconditions of the suboptimal equilibrium we posit.

Beyond merely characterizing ex-ante attitudes, we further argue that common depictions of Nigerian citizens as narrowly particularistic are, at least in part, contingent on their evaluations of the political status quo. In turn, this locks the political system into a low expectations equilibrium (Gottlieb 2021) whereby citizens' higher normative values are unmet, possibly inducing an adaptive counter-normative political culture inimical to a more cooperative democratic system. We thus posit that deliberative institutional innovations like the DTH have the potential to instantiate and credibly

[7]Although see Fujiwara and Wantchekon (2013), and Wantchekon and Guardado (2024) for an innovative experiment with vertical deliberation in Benin. While certainly exciting, their experiment differs from ours on a number of crucial dimensions including recruitment of participants - we randomize, they do not; conception of deliberation - they employ a loose understanding of deliberative practices, quite distinct from our Habermasian interpretation; and variables of interest - they focus on macro-level district turnout, while our emphasis is on individual level psychological effects. On a less optimistic note, Humphreys et al. (2006) find large elite manipulation effects in a deliberative experiment in Sao Tome and Principe.

signal broader prospects for reform, generating optimism, awakening latent normative political preferences, and engendering demand-driven change in broader political practices.

Here, we focus on the first step of our logical causal chain to test whether DTHs can alter citizens' perceptions enough to affect their attitudes and preferences. We implement a randomized control trial, treating a subset of respondents with attendance in a DTH (details of treatment in the following section). Deliberative Town Halls have induced several vital shifts in participants' internal and systemic outlooks toward politics. Among other things, DTH participation makes citizens more trusting of their representatives (Esterling et al. 2023; Minozzi et al. 2015) and increases internal efficacy (Neblo et al. 2018). It follows that if, as we suggest, making plausible changes in the perceived state of politics can induce shifts in reported political values, participation in an event like the DTH might alter treated respondents' preferences. We thus test the following hypothesis:

> Respondents invited to a DTH will express normative preferences for representatives' behavior emphasizing less parochial and more public-spirited priorities.

Our goal is to test the power of simple deliberative interventions in clientelist settings like Nigeria. Although quite different in design from the DTH, Andrade et al. (2023) show deliberative forums can create surprisingly significant shifts in reports about deeply held values, and Wantchekon and Guardado (2024) highlight that narrow materialistic political attitudes can be overcome by changing citizens' expectations of the content of political engagement. It is not unthinkable, then, to imagine positive democratic experiences could fundamentally alter normative preferences about representation and drive changes in the political demands of Nigerian citizens.

Data

In early 2024, we held Deliberative Town Halls (DTHs) in two Nigerian constituencies: Bende (January 27) and Baruten/Kaiama (February 3). DTHs are a variety of "mini-publics," a talk-based

reform designed to connect legislators with their constituents for a focused discussion on a single topic. In this case, the topic was infrastructure spending priorities. We have conducted most previous DTHs in the Anglosphere (the US, UK, and Australia), with everyone participating online via platforms like Zoom. For the events in Nigeria, constituents convened at one of six sites (per constituency), while legislators participated from the capital (Abuja) via online streaming. This hybrid format allowed us to overcome gaps in access to technology among citizens while maintaining the online, low-cost, and easily scalable format of conventional DTHs.

Respondents randomly selected to attend the DTHs were informed of their assigned venue in the days prior to the event. Upon arriving at their assigned site, our staff recorded attendance, ensured all those attending were indeed among the individuals randomized into receiving an invitation, and gathered consent from participants to be included in our study.

Prior to the start of the video call with the elected official, participants were shown a short video concerning infrastructural development in their constituency. The video also included a short summary of the duties and responsibilities of federal legislators aimed at fixing expectations prior to their engagement with their elected member of the National Assembly.

The video call began with a short introductory speech by our moderator delivered both in English and in the relevant local language (Igbo in Bende and Hausa in Baruten/Kaiama).[8] Then, the MP delivered short introductory remarks before the interactive session began.

We designed our question protocol to minimize disruption while simultaneously making sure to include all six venues in the live discussion. As such, research staff in each of the six sites collected questions from the participants and typed them into a chat box operated centrally by the research team. Participants were encouraged to ask questions in any local language they felt most comfortable with, and we ensured all local languages were adequately represented in the research staff. As it turns out,

[8] Here we note all interactions between constituents and the research team were carried out by Nigerian staff. Foreign research team members were not seen or heard by participants so as to limit possible response biases.

most participants chose to use Pidgin English which was also the language both legislators used in their own remarks.

Upon receiving the questions coming in from all six venues, members of the research team screened the questions based on topical relevance, avoiding repetition. They were then fed via text to the MP one at a time. The MP was asked to read the question aloud to make sure all participants were aware of the question being answered, before proceeding to deliver his response. This continued for approximately 75 minutes before the elected official was invited to deliver some closing remarks and sign off.

Participants were then engaged in horizontal focus group discussions moderated by our research staff at the venue level where they were asked to reflect on what they had just witnessed and about Nigerian politics more broadly.

Before departing, participants completed a survey administered to them on a tablet by the research team and received a small stipend (approximately USD 5) to cover their travel expenses.

We embedded each event within a randomized controlled trial with baseline and endline questionnaires. To field the experiments, we engaged a survey firm to dial samples of telephone numbers within each region. In Bende, we reached 604 respondents; in Baruten/Kaiama, we reached 611. Descriptive statistics appear in Appendix Table A1. Beyond basic demographic and political attitudes, the baseline survey included an extensive set of bespoke survey items designed to measure evaluations, preferences for, and beliefs about the democratic status quo in Nigeria. These items tap into the normative spectrum of activities legislators might engage in, from focusing on supporters to fighting for their broader constituency to finding cooperative ways to work with other legislators on laws to benefit all Nigerians.

Attitudes Toward the Nigerian Democratic Status Quo

Nigerian political pessimism runs so deep, Smith (2007; 2023) claims that complaining about government corruption is the defining element of national political discourse. Our own qualitative data buttresses this assertion. When asked what they thought was good in modern Nigerian democracy, one participant ironically remarked the only thing "working well in Nigeria is corruption. [Other than that] nothing is working well."[9] Aside from corruption, among Nigerians' most recurring complaints is that representatives do not even aim at improving their lives. They appear distant and opportunistic such that, once elected, "most of them disappear, only to reappear when they need to come for [their] second term … that is when they discover our needs, [...] though we [citizens] don't buy that idea."[10]

The dominant cynicism among Nigerians about their politics bears out in their evaluations of democracy in our baseline survey. While overwhelming majorities continue to believe that democracy is preferable to the alternative (Figure 1), large majorities also see major problems with the state of Nigerian democracy today (Figure 2).

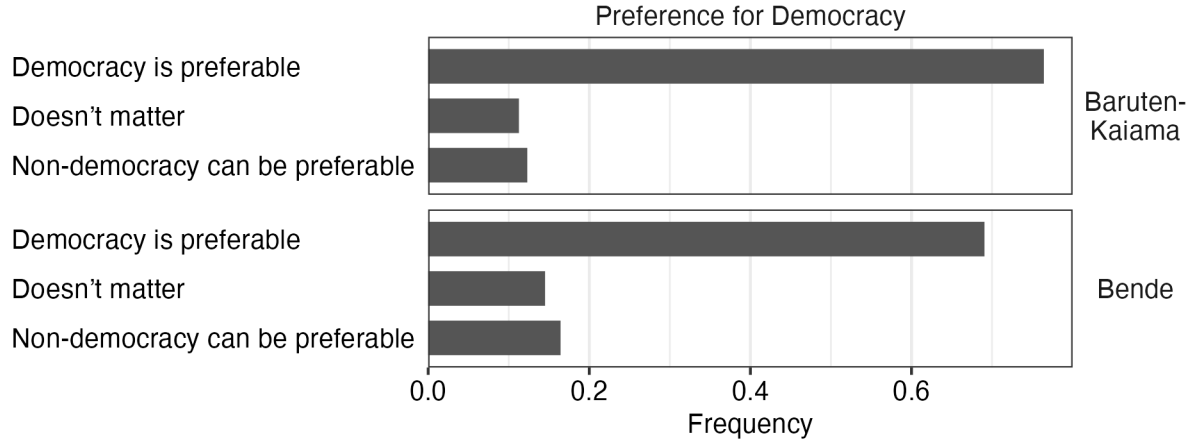

Figure 1. The figure shows distributions of baseline responses to questions measuring preference for democracy.

[9] Respondent 350, Bende.
[10]Respondent 8, Baruten/Kaiama - lightly edited for readability.

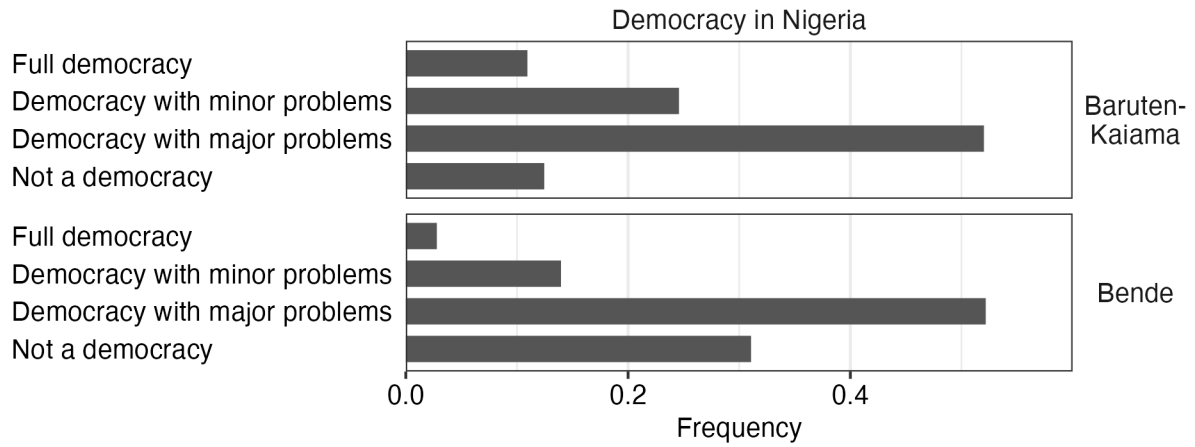

Figure 2. The figure shows distributions of baseline responses to questions measuring beliefs about the actual state of democracy in Nigeria.

We first assess the extent to which citizens consider clientelistic politics normatively acceptable. Figure 3 shows our survey respondents considered many distortionary activities acceptable. Large majorities (ranging from 53% to 71% depending on region or activity) considered it acceptable to prioritize their own ethnic group (Figure 3). Most drew a line at supporting directly giving money to "poor voters" during election campaigns, which garnered 25% support.

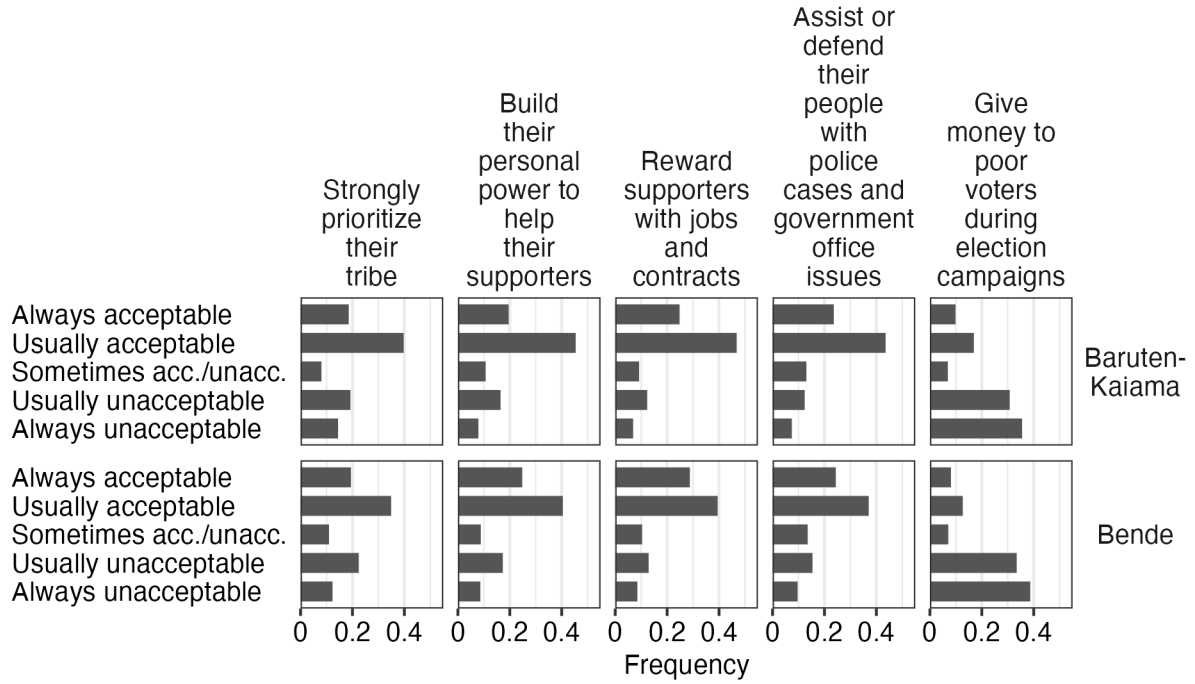

Figure 3. Distributions of baseline responses on how ***acceptability*** of political activities.

We also asked whether and how respondents wanted legislators to pursue the goals of different constituencies by working for i) their political supporters, ii) all of their local constituents, or iii) all Nigerians. Unsurprisingly, most respondents want all three (Figure 4). But again, unlike most consolidated democracies, narrow priorities such as rewarding supporters appear at least as salient as broader, more inclusive targets.

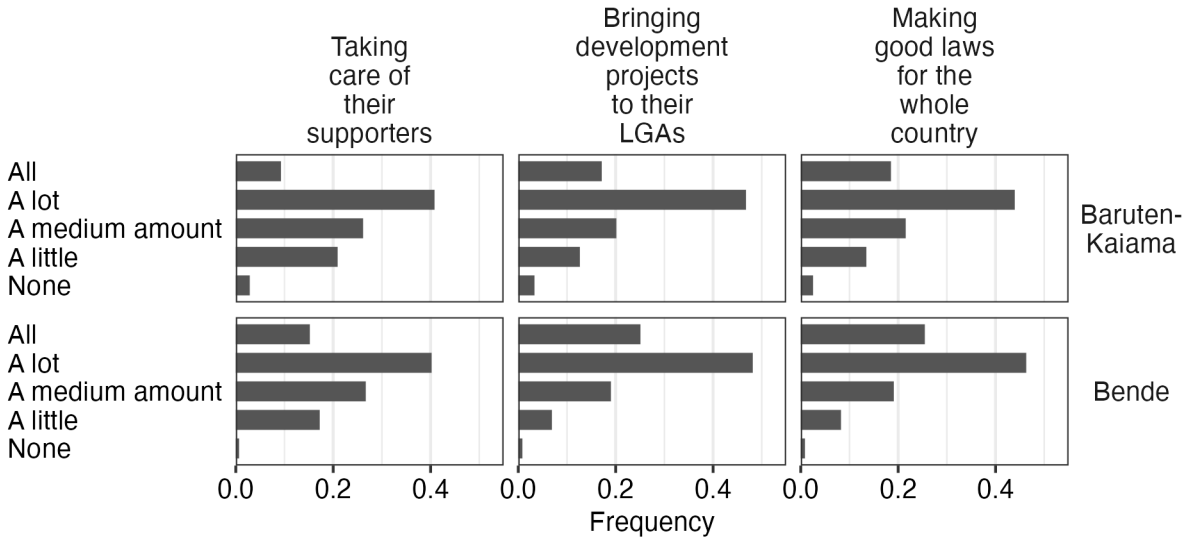

Figure 4. Baseline *preferences* over their representative's goals.

Finally, we also measured citizens' preferences for cooperative politics more directly by asking whether their representative should prioritize fighting for the region or cooperating with other legislators for the good of all Nigerians. To some surprise, citizens in both constituencies prioritized the nation, though large minorities supported a more combative attitude (Figure 5).

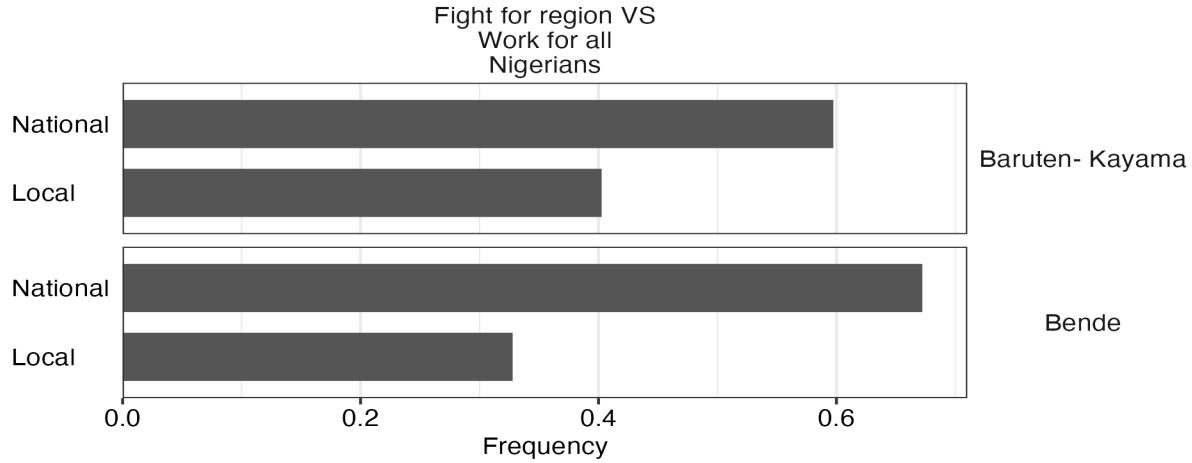

Figure 5. The distributions of baseline responses to questions measuring preferences over whether their representative should focus on their region or work with other legislators for the good of all Nigerians.

Deliberative Town Halls in Nigeria

In addition to answering scientific questions, we sought to conduct demographically representative events to inform legislators about their constituents' considered views on infrastructure priorities. On the baseline survey, we asked about demographics, political attitudes, and the respondent's willingness and availability to attend a DTH. We randomized only among willing and available respondents but recontacted everyone for the endline survey. For randomization, we blocked on gender and created randomized lists of respondents by gender. We then asked the survey firm to call back numbers in order, recording whether they reached each respondent until we had commitments to attend from approximately equal numbers of women and men. Fewer men answered their phones than women in both constituencies, but attendance rates by gender varied across districts: Women in Bende attended at higher rates (72%) than men (55%), but in Baruten/Kaiama, men attended at higher rates (62%) than women (41%).

We conducted tests of the null hypothesis of a positive difference in each covariate by treatment group, using the "strict" cutoff of differences larger than 0.36σ, which corresponds to a difference of about 10% in a dichotomous variable with a base rate of 50% (Hartman and Hidalgo 2018). We test these hypotheses for each covariate, correcting the *p* values for false discovery rates (with values higher

than .05 indicating imbalance). We evaluated balance by region and for the entire sample. For all Bende respondents, this approach indicates slight imbalances for two occupations (White Collar = 0.37σ; Blue Collar/Housewife = 0.39σ) and baseline approval of the legislator (0.42σ); among only the willing/available, Bende also exhibited gender imbalance (0.39σ). For all Baruten/Kaiama respondents, we observed imbalances for 18-35's (0.39σ) and respondents who shared the legislator's ethnicity (0.42σ), though ethnicity achieved balance among the willing/available. All balance tests appear in Appendix A2.

To address these imbalances, we estimated a generalized random forest model of invitation as a function of all covariates, willingness, and availability (Athey et al. 2019). The model only predicts invitation with moderate accuracy (the out-of-sample area under the ROC=0.68). However, when we use the resulting weights, no imbalances remain (except for the willing/available from Bende on baseline approval of the legislator, 0.37σ). We report all analyses below with and without these weights.

To estimate intent-to-treat (ITT) effects, we fit (both weighted and unweighted) linear regression models, now of the following form:

$$\boldsymbol{Response}_{ijk} = \boldsymbol{Endline}_j \times \boldsymbol{Invited}_i \times \boldsymbol{Item}_k \times \boldsymbol{Region}_i + \boldsymbol{Invited}_i \times \boldsymbol{Item}_k \times \boldsymbol{Region}_i +$$

$$\boldsymbol{Endline}_j \times \boldsymbol{Item}_k \times \boldsymbol{Region}_i + \boldsymbol{Item}_k \times \boldsymbol{Region}_i + \varepsilon_{ijk},$$

Again, i refers to the respondent, j designates either the endline or baseline survey, k refers to the survey item, ε is the residual, and we cluster the standard errors by respondent. We include an indicator variable for willingness/availability in the models on the complete data set. To estimate complier average causal effects (CACEs), we instrument for attendance using invitation. As above, we recoded all responses to fall between 0 and 1 and adjusted the (two-tailed) p values for false discovery rates.[11] We report ITT (Tables A4-A6) and CACE (A7-A9) estimates in the appendix.

[11] We preregistered these experiments and analytic methods at: https://osf.io/bm5h4 ; https://osf.io/ws2hv ; https://osf.io/vpky7 ; https://osf.io/uwaqr .

Results

In contrast to the effects we observed for our counterfactuals, we generally observed no significant effects of treatment. We focus on complier average causal effects for simplicity of presentation, but the signs and significance are identical for intent-to-treat. Figures 9-11 mirror Figures 6-8, now showing the effects of attendance on those who actually attend. Correcting for false discovery, the minimum *p* value we observed was 0.07 (for assisting people with government issues in Bende). But even the uncorrected *p* values suggest imprecision in treatment effect estimation, as that item/region pair is also the only estimate with an uncorrected *p* less than 0.05.

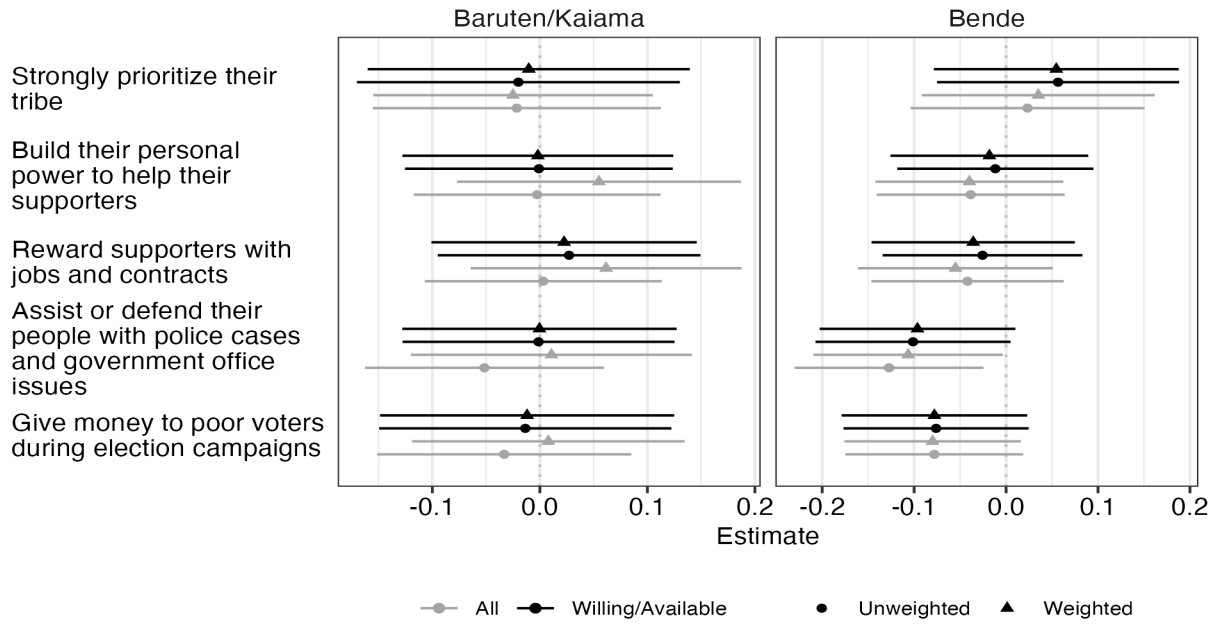

Figure 9. CACE estimates (with 95% interval bars) of DTH attendance on ***acceptability*** (from linear models of responses scaled 0 to 1, using respondent-clustered standard errors; See Table A7 for details).

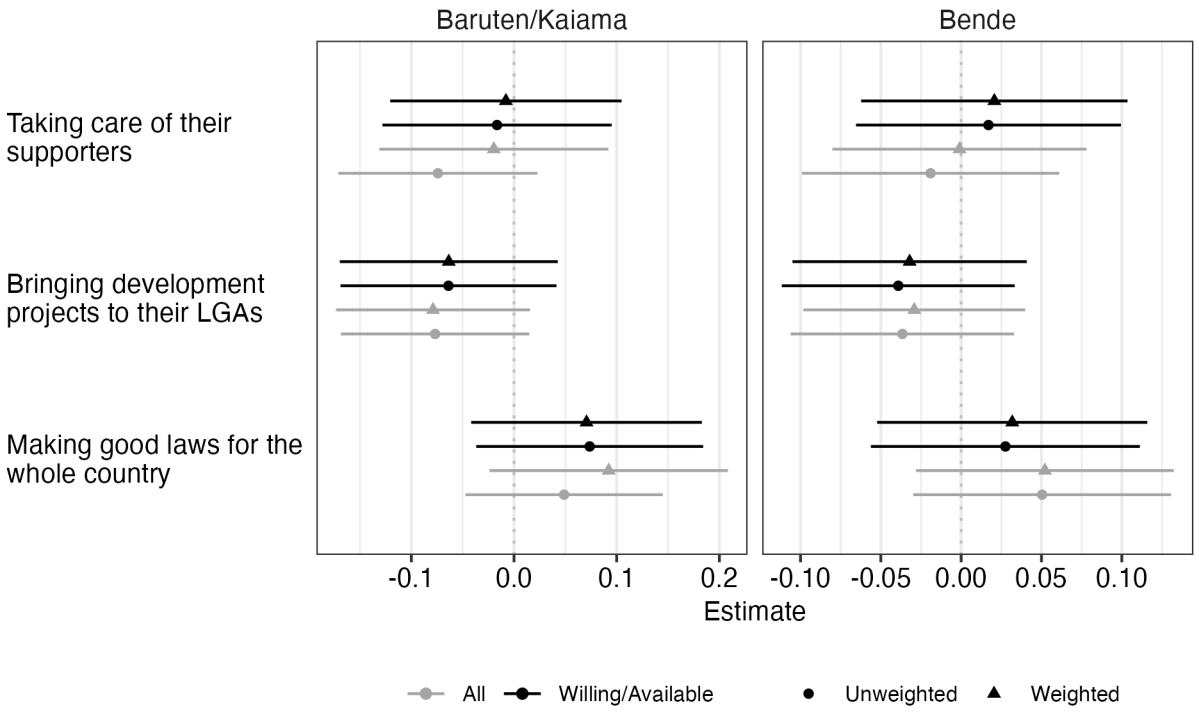

Figure 10. CACE estimates (95% intervals) of DTH attendance on judgments about legislators' priorities (from linear models of responses scaled 0 to 1, using respondent clustered standard errors; Table A8).

Substantively, we observe some tentative evidence of differences by region and item. For example, Figure 9 depicts small positive treatment effects on acceptability for Baruten/Kaiama and similarly small declines in Bende. Figure 10 depicts declines in regional and increases in national priorities across both constituencies. Finally, Figure 11 depicts minimal changes in preferences for both regions for local vs. national legislative efforts. DTH attendance appears not to have had substantial, coherent effects on respondents' attitudes.

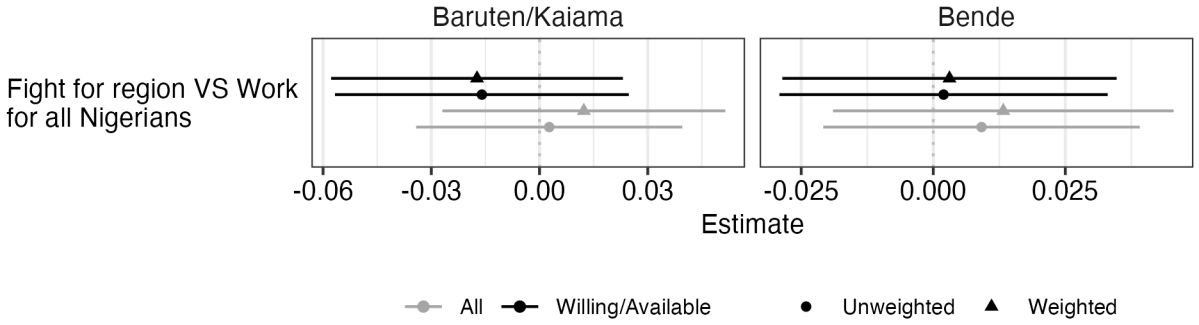

Figure 11. CACE estimates (with 95% interval bars) of DTH attendance on preferences over legislators focusing on local goods versus cooperating nationally, with 95% interval bars (from linear models of responses scaled 0 to 1, using respondent clustered standard errors; See Table A9 for details.).

For completeness, we conducted joint tests of the coefficients of the endline survey-treatment assignment interaction terms for each model, pooling regions, and each set of items. These tests confirm the individual treatment effect analyses. Here, the only *F* tests observed with *p* values below 0.05 were for analyses of the priority items (Figure 10), where *p* ranged from 0.027 to 0.033, uncorrected. Returning to visual inspection of Figure 10 confirms this faint evidence of an effect, as this analysis was the most suggestive of a coherent pattern across items and regions. But the broader takeaway from these tests is to confirm the lack of significant treatment effects.

Discussion

At first blush, the pattern of treatment effects from the DTHs suggests they may not be beneficial for generating demand-driven changes in Nigerian democracy as we hypothesized. Yet evidence from our attendee survey suggests high levels of participant satisfaction and a widespread tendency for participants to see these events as signals of possible change. Overall then the DTH was judged a resounding success by participants. For instance, when asked about their emotions during and after the interaction with their elected officials, the vast majority of participants expressed high levels of hopefulness, enthusiasm, and satisfaction. Negative emotions like anger and confusion were almost absent (see Table A13 for summary statistics). Similarly, the majority of our participants thought the opportunity to hear from, and be heard by, their representative made them feel respected, and expressed very low agreement with the statement "DTHs will **not** change democracy."

We acknowledge the potential for demand effects to bias these survey results, so we probe our qualitative evidence to further interrogate our DiD findings. Doing so puts the weak DiD effects in a different light. Following the interactive session with the elected representatives, we prompted participants to deliberate among themselves in a guided focus group discussion.[12] Almost without fail,

[12] Transcripts of these conversations are available upon request.

participants expressed enormous enthusiasm for the event, highlighting its novelty and promise.[13] One participant in Bende, for instance, suggested that "this meeting is a meeting that shows unity. [...] this meeting shows us unity; we need unity in our community, state, and in Nigeria"[14] to which fellow participants followed up with "this is true democratic representation"[15] and "I feel that this meeting will make political changes to the country."[16] Such enthusiasm was not limited to Bende and thus is seemingly independent of the individual qualities of the representatives. In Baruten/Kaiama, for example, one participant claimed, "We've never done this type of program before, this one that they did today; I pray God will make them do more, and I believe it's because they want us to understand politics,"[17] while another suggested that the DTH signaled his representative's keenness to "carry everybody along, because democracy is not government of one person, rather, government of the people. So, he wants to carry everybody along."[18] The discrepancy between the highly emotive comments we received, and the small, inconsistent DiD estimates presented a puzzle that prompted us to investigate our survey data further.

We, therefore, estimate baseline to endline differences with coefficients on endline, item, and region interactions. While these estimates identify causal changes based on the no trends assumption (Imai and Kim, 2019), we consider this analysis exploratory and report uncorrected *p* values. Details on regression models appear in Appendix Tables A10, A11, and A12. Upon closer inspection, we failed to observe treatment effects because *both* the treated and control subjects moved over time. In both Bende and Baruten/Kaiama, Figure 12 shows significant declines in respondents' attitudes toward the acceptability of legislators strongly prioritizing their tribes and giving money to poor voters during

[13] For clarity, no foreign member of the research team was on site during the events. To the extent that might have altered how participants expressed themselves, the fact only Nigerian team members staffed our venues gives us some comfort that reactions are genuine.
[14] Respondent 299, Bende.
[15] Respondent 379, Bende.
[16] Respondent 25, Bende.
[17] Respondent 92, Baruten/Kaiama.
[18] Respondent 98, Baruten/Kaiama.

campaigns. Here, the uncorrected p values are all less than 0.05, except for Baruten/Kaiama, weighted, all respondents, where $p = 0.14$.

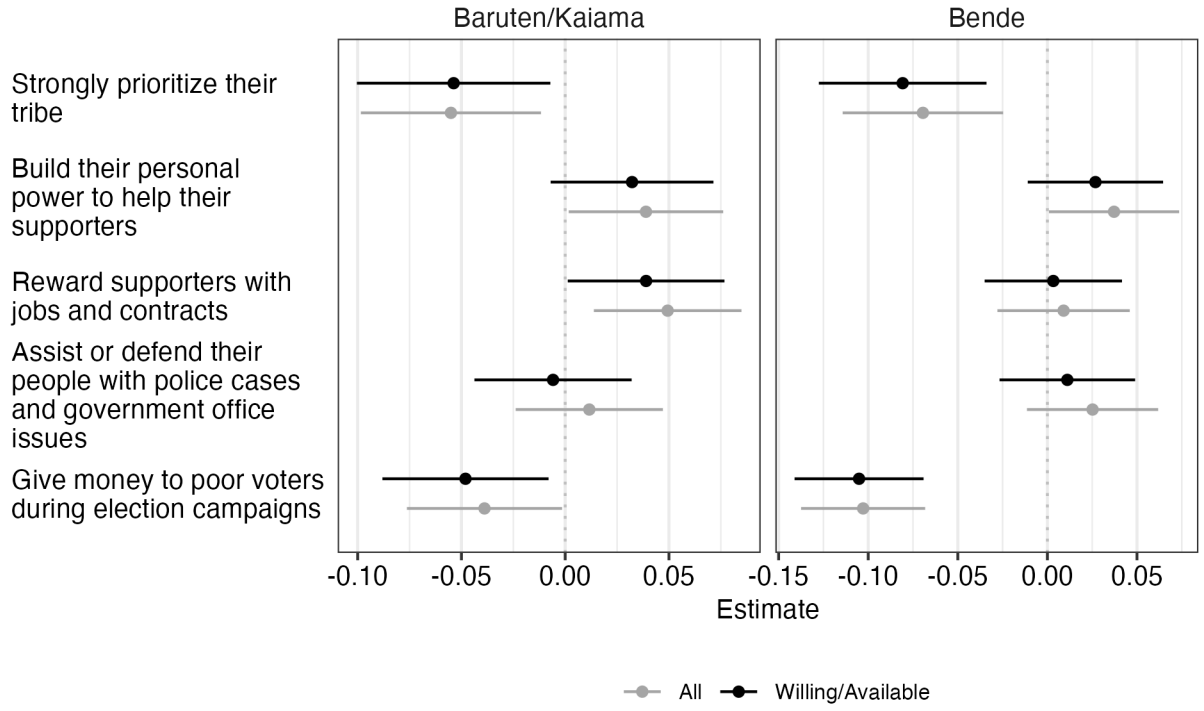

Figure 12. Estimated pre-post changes on ***acceptability*** with 95% intervals (See Table A10 for details).

Similarly, Figure 13 shows significant increases in respondents prioritizing making good laws for the whole country (both regions) along with contrasting changes in the priorities for more clientelistic actions—a decline in priority for taking care of supporters in Bende and an increase in priority for regional development for Baruten/Kaiama. Because Baruten/Kaiama is far more ethnically diverse than Bende, this latter finding is less particularistic than may appear. The general trend, however, remains a plenary shift towards less emphasis on narrow constituencies.

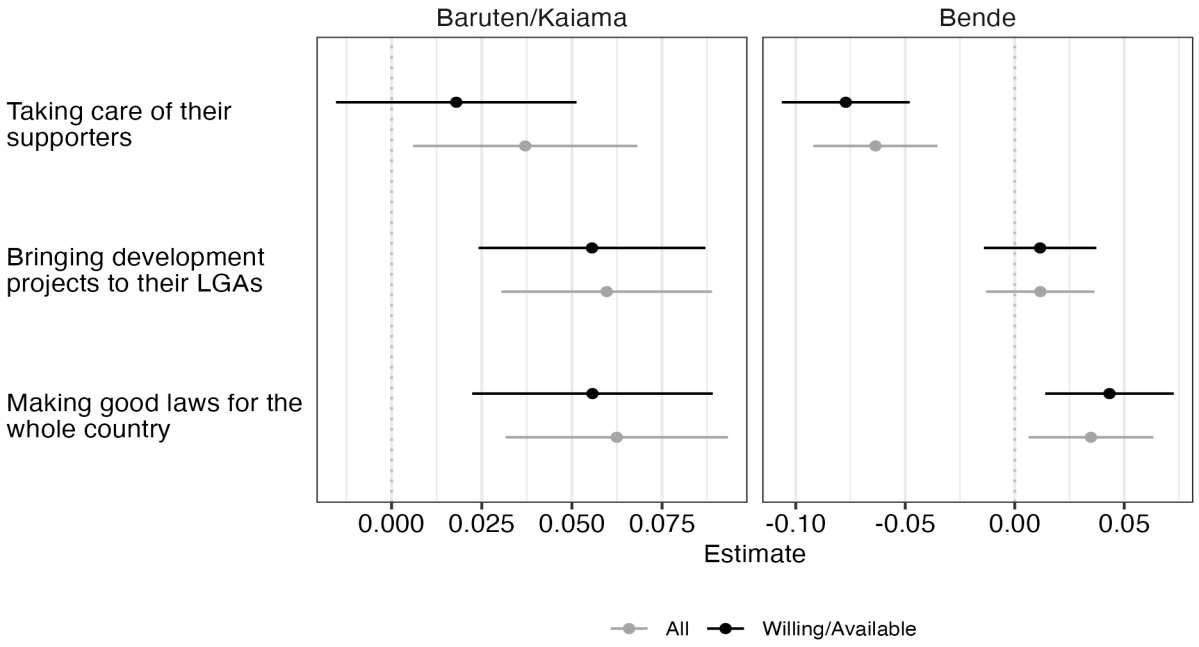

Figure 13. Estimated effects of baseline to endline on normative judgments about legislators' priorities, with 95% interval bars (from linear models of responses scaled 0 to 1, using respondent clustered standard errors; See Table A11 for details).

Finally, Figure 14 shows movement in Baruten/Kaiama toward fighting for the region instead of working for the whole country; there is no significant plenary change in Bende on this outcome. This effect in Baruten/Kaiama contradicts our original hypothesis as stated in the pre-analysis plan (PAP) for a DiD estimator. However, we failed to integrate our plans for analyzing our qualitative evidence into our PAP.

In retrospect, that was a mistake. Several participants in Baruten/Kaiama articulated that a more nationalized politics would actually benefit their region because, on objective grounds, it is even poorer and less developed than other regions. If debate in the legislature revolves around directing a larger proportion of gains to national cooperation toward areas with greater need, they believe they will emerge as beneficiaries in that discussion. This framework renders the close-ended survey results ambiguous: when residents of Baruten/Kaiama say that want their officials to fight for the region that could indicate (a) maintaining or deepening localism or (b) it could mean they support more nationalized politics, *but when that discussion happens*, they want their representatives to push

aggressively for their region's *legitimate* claim on a larger share. Crucially, several residents of Bende (which is somewhat less poor) indicated that they were open to prioritizing poorer regions. These findings suggest that we should not leap to a narrow interpretation of Baruten/Kaiama's rationale – it is *not* the case that everyone thinks they have the best claim and wants their representatives to disregard others. Juxtaposing the two constituencies intimates potentially more cooperative postures than might have first appeared, though we will need further research to disambiguate the quantitative results.

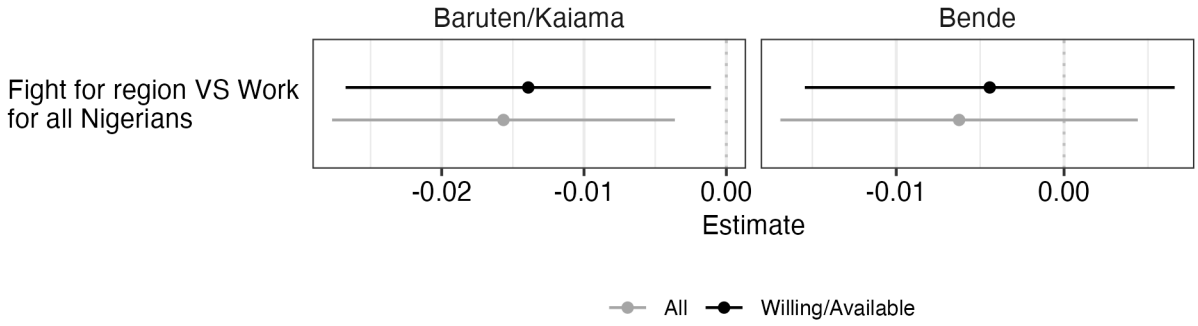

Figure 14. Estimated effects from baseline to endline on preferences over legislators focusing on local goods versus cooperating nationally, with 95% interval bars (from linear models of responses scaled 0 to 1, using respondent clustered standard errors; See Table A12 for details).

The results represent a DTH's first known plenary effects in nearly two decades of applications. For this reason, we did not even consider the possibility before registering the experiment, which informed our standard DiD analytical approach. Although we cannot outline a single clear account of the causes of these plenary effects, we stress the importance of investigating their possible causes: the null DiD results would seem not to tell the whole story. To shed some light on these puzzling findings, we engage in some admittedly post-hoc interrogation of the possible causes of the pre-post effects we see among the control units. Next, we look further at the experiences of our treated sample and suggest our experimental results may be more meaningful than might appear.

Interrogating Plenary Effects: The most obvious interpretation of our plenary effects would be that, in the time intervening between our baseline and endline surveys (approximately fifteen days for most respondents), some exogenous factor induced attitude changes independently of our DTHs. Given

the absence of significant national political news in the relevant window and the evidence of plenary effects in *both* constituencies – thus greatly reducing the chances of local exogenous shocks – we deem this explanation highly unlikely. Similarly, the short timeframe between the two waves would seem to dispel worries related to prior trends: it is unlikely attitudes towards specific representative priorities were in the process of changing so rapidly in *both* our constituencies prior to our intervention.

We conclude our intervention was likely responsible in some way. One such way might involve treatment spillover. Spillover of treatment to control participants might have occurred via several non-mutually exclusive channels. One possible avenue for spillover involves the mere knowledge the DTHs were taking place. Here, we note that, as part of the recruitment protocol, *all* respondents were made aware that the DTH would be taking place to determine potential availability. Both treated, and control samples knew the DTHs would occur irrespective of treatment assignment. The core theoretical element of our treatment is a signal of possible change. It could be that merely being made aware of the DTHs can lead respondents to enter a mindset of political reform in a manner sufficient to induce the psychological effect we argue can create changes in citizens' political demands. In this sense, being made aware of the DTH is a very thin version of our treatment, but a treatment nonetheless.

A further explanation involves word-of-mouth diffusion between treated constituents and their local communities, which are especially likely in small, tight-knit social contexts like our research sites (Bhattacharya et al. 2013; Miguel and Kremer 2004).[19] To gain a sense of the effect of these possible

[19] The word-of-mouth explanation seemed rather plausible to locals very knowledgeable of the context. We posed the puzzle of the plenary effects to the legislative staff and our survey vendor. The survey house, NOIPolls, suggested that "the communities seem tightly knit as many respondents know each other. So, they may have discussed and influenced each other's decisions during the post-survey." Similarly, an aide to one of the participating representatives expressed that "the digital aspect of the Town Hall likely added an element of novelty and significance, making it a focal point of discussion and interest. In such contexts, the spread of information and the shaping of collective opinions do not rely solely on direct experiences but are significantly mediated by communal narratives and shared discussions." Legislative aides also provided an interesting anecdote to emphasize the social tightness of the community. In both constituencies, within a few hours of fielding our baseline survey, staff members of the two representatives were receiving "dozens" of calls from constituents inquiring about the nature of the study. Since we *randomly* administered our survey and thus reached average citizens who are unlikely to be closely tied to political parties, the fact that word reached Abuja so quickly testifies to the dense communication networks.

spillovers, we recontact all baseline respondents (treated and control) for a follow up. A random subset were engaged in semi-structured interviews, while the rest completed a close-ended survey.

Our semi-structured interviews with treated individuals confirm the great enthusiasm participants felt at their attendance, and suggest high word-of-mouth dissemination following the events. Almost all individuals report talking to friends, family, neighbors and fellow market-goers about their experiences. Some even reported convening group meetings in the village center[20] or in the local church[21] the evening of the DTH to discuss with others what they had witnessed. That word of the events spread quite rapidly, therefore, seems well supported.

It is not immediately clear, however, that this widespread general diffusion extends broadly to our control sample. After recontacting all units assigned to be control, we find that only 15% (Baruten/Kaiama) and 14% (Bende) report having heard of the DTH from others. Though not an insignificant share, the proportion of control respondents declaring having learned of the DTHs from daily social interactions would not seem to be enough, alone, to explain the entirety of our plenary effects.

Finally, Zwane and co-authors show that merely being surveyed can, in certain contexts, alter respondents' perceptions and behaviors (Zwane et al. 2011). Though this remains speculative – we have no clear evidence to corroborate this hypothesis – it is not impossible to imagine that merely being (repeatedly) surveyed could motivate participants to change their perceptions of politics in the Nigerian status quo. Among populations so unfamiliar with being listened to, simply having someone show interest can conceivably induce a change in perspective.[22]

The Experiences of Treated Units: Momentarily setting aside the congruent pre-post shifts among control units, it is important to note that our treated units *did* alter their responses after attending

[20] Follow up interview: Respondent 26, Baruten/Kaiama.
[21] Follow up interview: Respondent 566, Bende
[22] Despite we clearly stated the project was organized independently of the participating members of the National Assembly, many of our respondents seemed to erroneously associate our surveys with their elected officials.

DTHs on a number of our survey items. In most cases, the pre-post shift was in the hypothesized direction. It is useful, therefore, to assess whether these shifts could indeed be caused by our theorized mechanism. To summarize, we suggest attendance at a DTH can represent a deeply meaningful novelty for Nigerian citizens. Being radically different from "politics as usual," we suspect a DTH renders plausible the idea of political change by conveying the potential for more programmatic, non-clientelistic, citizen-representative relations, giving participants a sense of self-worth in the political process. We argue such a signal may alter citizen mindsets when engaging with politics, even without an immediate material improvement to their living conditions. The mere feeling of respect and civic dignity that participating in a DTH can engender – and that Nigerian citizens are so unfamiliar with – alone can make change plausible and induce citizens to seek more cooperative, less clientelistic forms of representation.

To provide suggestive evidence these underlying mechanisms may partially explain the changing attitudes among our treated sample, we use the qualitative data from focus group discussions held in each venue upon completing the deliberative session with the elected officials. These were conversations lightly moderated by Nigerian research team members, where participants were asked for their opinions on several issues relating both to their experience on the day and their broader thoughts about Nigerian democracy. We share a representative sample of contributions to highlight the plausibility of our account.[23]

Most obviously, the DTH represented an important change in how Nigerians relate to their politicians. "From 1999 till date," one participant remarked, "we never even knew that somebody elected to go and represent us as a lawmaker could even hold this type of this town hall meeting,"[24] highlighting the uniqueness of this institutional design.

[23] Some quotes are lightly edited for readability. All original transcripts available upon request.
[24] Respondent 481, Bende.

However, the novelty of the DTH clearly extends beyond the specific institution to the more general experience of being valued as *citizens*, not as members of interest groups or political parties. For instance, one participant thought the DTH was "unique because we were not asked for our party membership… we came as individuals, and we felt free to speak our minds."[25] Others, too, remarked on the unfamiliar experience of being valued independently of status or group affiliation: "[what was surprising] is that we are mixed up: some are businessmen, some are teachers, government workers, and some are self-reliant, [...], he didn't just pick political members."[26] In contrast to conventional politics, where politicians "only attend to the emirs,"[27] participants felt the DTH opened the door for "two-way traffic with the grassroots so [they] could hear from the government, and the government from [them]."[28]

This feeling of being able to express themselves and trusting they were being listened to powerfully impacted many participants and marked a clear disjuncture with their previous political experiences. Most Nigerians are familiar with conventional campaign rallies where people go to "eat and drink, not to deliberate with [their representative]." In these rallies, voters "never have that [deliberating] time" while "with this town hall meeting, [they] could feel free to say whatever [they] wanted."[29]

Here, we wish to stress the constant reference our participants made across our venues to non-material political desires the DTH fulfilled. Above and beyond expressing demands to see democracy yield material improvements in their lives – to be sure, many such feelings were expressed – attendees repeatedly referred to the pleasure of being valued and being listened to, irrespective of, and at times even contrasting with, short-term material benefits politicians may sometimes grant. Their

[25] Respondent 564, Bende.
[26] Unnumbered Respondent, Bende.
[27] Respondent 516, Baruten/Kaiama - In certain parts of Nigeria, the term emir refers to local social and cultural elites considered valuable gatekeepers to their communities and their votes. The literature often treats them as "brokers," able to deliver bloc votes for political candidates. Our qualitative data suggests at least some sections of Nigerian society seek more direct, meaningful participation in the political process.
[28] Respondent 237, Bende.
[29] Respondent 282, Baruten/Kaiama.

representatives choosing to participate in an event like the DTH "showed the masses have their own rights,"[30] that "they [the politicians] remember us."[31] Rather than, as before, "seeing us as farmers [that] don't know what they are doing, [coming to the DTH] shows this man [Hon. Bio] is elected into the office and still has time to listen."[32] What participants most valued, it seems, was that their elected representative was not "making the mistake to take the opportunity for individual gifts [which] in fact, create no more benefits,"[33] and that the DTH was not a place where "[they] were coming to share rice or whatever, but [rather,] shopping for ideas on how to move the constituency forward,"[34] and "treat us [citizens] like they are supposed to: like human beings."[35]

It would seem clear that the minimum threshold required in our theoretical mechanism – for the experience to be valued and meaningful for participants – was abundantly crossed.

A more onerous requirement in our causal chain was for the experience to signal the possibility of larger systemic change to our participants. Here, the novelty of the DTH could easily have crashed against the profound cynicism that characterizes most Nigerians' attitudes toward their political class. Instead, our focus group discussions are replete with expressions of hope and optimism brought about by participation in the event. Many believed such a "meeting is the way forward"[36] – "a political renovation others should emulate"[37] – through which Nigeria "can achieve the dividends of democracy."[38]

Interestingly, many participants expressed their hopes others around Nigeria too would be able to have the opportunity to participate in such events. For instance, one participant suggested that for others to be granted the "opportunity would give us a new orientation based on town hall meetings. [Hon. Kalu] cannot finish it but [let's] start from somewhere [...] to make sure other people, that are not

[30] Unnumbered Respondent, Baruten/Kaiama.
[31] Respondents 63 and 513, Baruten/Kaiama.
[32] Unnumbered Respondent, Baruten/Kaiama.
[33] Respondent 440, Baruten/Kaiama.
[34] Respondent 208, Bende.
[35] Unnumbered Respondent, Baruten/Kaiama.
[36] Respondent 4, Bende.
[37] Unnumbered Respondent, Bende.
[38] Respondent 321, Baruten/Kaiama.

from my village or from my ward, also reap the benefits."[39] Another participant colorfully remarked that "[the meeting] made [him] rekindle [his] hope in a thing called Nigeria" and that it reminded him that the government "is not just there for its own sake, or carrying the interest of just Bende, [but also] Nigeria at large."[40] Similarly, the DTH made another "feel it's not only all about the constituency, but the nation at large. [...] There may be hope for our democracy in Nigeria. There is hope for us from this pattern of leadership."[41]

If our hypothesis required the DTH to signal the potential for change, therefore, it would seem from our participants' reactions that the message was widely received. Does perceiving change as plausible induce individuals to alter their own demands and behaviors in the political realm?

While we can only speculate on how the expressions of our participants in the focus group settings might translate (a) into their responses to our survey and, more importantly, (b) to their approach to politics long term, our transcripts are full of citizen articulations of their own altered mindset from the DTH experience. In Bende, one teacher suggested the discussions that day "motivated" her to engage more with "all three tiers"[42] of the government going forward to improve education outcomes in her constituency. Similarly, another participant felt the DTH "showed democracy shouldn't be [just] theory [but also] practice [...] and that everybody has to get involved."[43]

A renewed sense of collective responsibility was shared by many participants. One, for instance, expressed that she previously "was losing hope in politicians [...] but what [she] saw today was a beginning, [...] and made [her] realize the fact that all hands must be on deck for things to be done. They [the political class] cannot do it all alone; we [citizens] also have to make some contributions [...]."[44]

[39] Respondent 38, Baruten/Kaiama.
[40] Respondent 208, Bende.
[41] Respondent 489, Bende.
[42] Respondent 21, Bende.
[43] Respondent 785, Baruten/Kaiama.
[44] Respondent 183, Baruten/Kaiama.

At a point in our focus group discussions, our moderators were asked to pose a scenario to participants, directly asking them to express how they would wish their representative would act in negotiations over the allocation of a (hypothetical) government road project with fellow parliamentarians. To underscore the impact of DTH participation on citizens' attitudes, one respondent clearly expressed how participating in the DTH, hearing directly from the elected official, made him realize that members of the National Assembly "are not for Bende alone, but rather for the whole of Nigeria, which means he should consider [all constituencies] to maintain the fairness, equity, and justice that we want."[45]

If citizens' demands drive elected officials' choices about representation, cooperation, and resource distribution, it would seem that events like the DTH do indeed have the potential to drive change from the bottom up.

Conclusion

Most scholars and observers portray African voters as transactional, parochial, and unwilling to claim more nationally oriented and collaborative visions of democracy as their own (Logan and Bratton 2013). As a result, the story goes, they fail to demand effective legislative representation, choosing instead to judge their elected representatives on the delivery of "local development" or even personalistic rewards (Lindberg 2010).

We show that, at the very least, the picture is more complex than often conveyed. First, we demonstrate that baseline preferences and norms for politician behaviors are considerably more varied and often more "publicly minded" than expected in communities with tangible local needs. Though local service delivery remains an important criterion (as it is everywhere, we add), citizens in our two constituencies do not wholly eschew the normative democratic goals of national collaboration and norm-guided resource distribution.

[45] Respondent 452, Bende.

We then report on the potential for Deliberative Town Halls – an institutional innovation that has shown itself to be highly influential in shaping participant political attitudes in advanced democracies – to provide an optimistic signal for change in the political system in a manner to induce shifts in normative attitudes. Here, we find mixed results. Though our experimental results would suggest the DTHs are largely inconsequential, our initial difference-in-differences analytic strategy seems not to capture the entirety of the story, as many of our hypothesized treatment effects are null *not* because treated participants did not change their attitudes, but because control units altered their responses congruently. Though we do not develop a full account to justify these outcomes, we suggest this surprising pattern may be caused by unexpected treatment spillovers caused by the mere knowledge of the DTHs, word of mouth diffusion, and the consequent signs of possible political reform.

That control units also altered their endline survey responses should not, we claim, entirely detract from the fact participation in the DTH had profound effects on those who did attend. Using qualitative findings from focus group discussions, we show the plausibility of our theorized causal chain. Engaging in substantive discussions with politicians and fellow constituents was clearly a meaningful experience that induced participants to believe in the potential for a better Nigerian democracy. In turn, many expressed a renewed willingness to actively engage in the political process, and do so in a way that fosters equal and fair representation for all Nigerians, irrespective of ethnicity, political party, or class.

Our findings suggest the presence of a strong, readily mobilizable latent demand for forms of democratic representation that, while still focused on local representation, emphasize national collaboration and norm-guided distribution. Citizens in Nigeria do not, by default, abandon civic attitudes in favor of reflexive localism (Ekeh 1975). Our results warrant cautious optimism that citizens will support political reform in Nigeria and other similarly young democracies on the continent. Demand for democracy remains high among most citizens, and this extends beyond narrow

materialistic interpretations of democracy focused merely on local prioritization. We argue our findings highlight a latent potential to generate positively reinforcing cycles of democratic consolidation and effective, norm-guided representation.

Future research should continue to interrogate effective ways to bring out latent citizen demands and build upon our encouraging but inconclusive results to study the potential of deliberative reform to engender bottom-up demand for change. African publics want a democratic system that recognizes them as valuable citizens, and our qualitative evidence shows deliberative innovations have the potential to engender such social recognition. Understanding when and how such institutions can augment the current structures of representative democracy on the continent strikes us as a valuable endeavor to bring democratic practice closer to citizen expectations.

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Supplementary Materials for

Has Change Begun Already?

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March 2024

A1. Descriptive Statistics

Table A1: Descriptive Statistics (Baruten/Kaiama)

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	# Missing
Age 18-35	0.41	0.49	0.0	1.0	0
Age 36-60	0.54	0.50	0.0	1.0	0
Age 60+	0.05	0.22	0.0	1.0	0
Woman	0.44	0.50	0.0	1.0	0
Less than Secondary Education	0.08	0.28	0.0	1.0	0
Secondary Education Grad	0.19	0.40	0.0	1.0	0
Some College or Post-secondary	0.37	0.48	0.0	1.0	0
College Grad	0.34	0.47	0.0	1.0	0
White Collar	0.37	0.48	0.0	1.0	0
Blue Collar/Housewife	0.34	0.48	0.0	1.0	0
Subsistence	0.14	0.34	0.0	1.0	0
Does Not Work	0.15	0.35	0.0	1.0	0
Village	0.45	0.50	0.0	1.0	0
City/Town	0.54	0.50	0.0	1.0	0
Muslim	0.84	0.37	0.0	1.0	0
Christian	0.15	0.36	0.0	1.0	0
APC	0.49	0.50	0.0	1.0	0
PDP	0.05	0.23	0.0	1.0	0
LP	0.00	0.00	0.0	0.0	0
No party	0.40	0.49	0.0	1.0	0
Political Interest	3.12	1.14	0.0	4.0	41
Baseline Legislator Approval	3.20	1.19	0.0	4.0	17
Political Knowledge	0.61	0.49	0.0	1.0	0

Table A2: Descriptive Statistics (Bende)

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	# Missing
Age 18-35	0.22	0.41	0.0	1.0	0
Age 36-60	0.67	0.47	0.0	1.0	0
Age 60+	0.11	0.32	0.0	1.0	0
Woman	0.42	0.49	0.0	1.0	0
Less than Secondary Education	0.08	0.27	0.0	1.0	0
Secondary Education Grad	0.30	0.46	0.0	1.0	0
Some College or Post-secondary	0.16	0.36	0.0	1.0	0
College Grad	0.45	0.50	0.0	1.0	0
White Collar	0.41	0.49	0.0	1.0	0
Blue Collar/Housewife	0.40	0.49	0.0	1.0	0
Subsistence	0.09	0.29	0.0	1.0	0
Does Not Work	0.09	0.29	0.0	1.0	0
Village	0.64	0.48	0.0	1.0	0
City/Town	0.35	0.48	0.0	1.0	0
Muslim	0.00	0.04	0.0	1.0	0
Christian	0.99	0.11	0.0	1.0	0
APC	0.17	0.38	0.0	1.0	0
PDP	0.05	0.23	0.0	1.0	0
LP	0.15	0.35	0.0	1.0	0
No party	0.54	0.50	0.0	1.0	0
Political Interest	3.11	1.15	0.0	4.0	46
Baseline Legislator Approval	3.66	0.80	0.0	4.0	12
Political Knowledge	0.62	0.49	0.0	1.0	0

A2. Balance

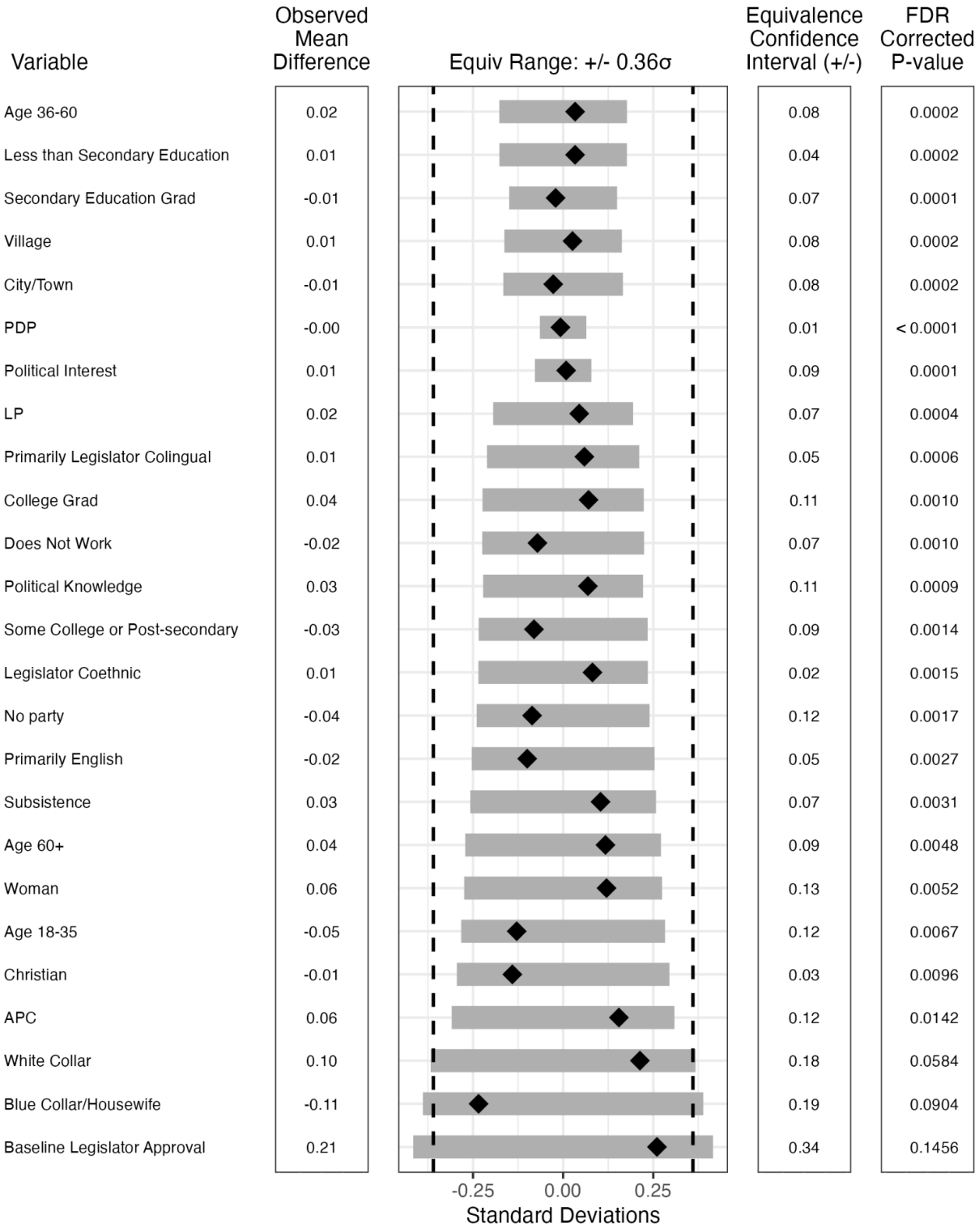

Figure A1. The figure shows equivalence tests of balance for Bende based on all respondents.

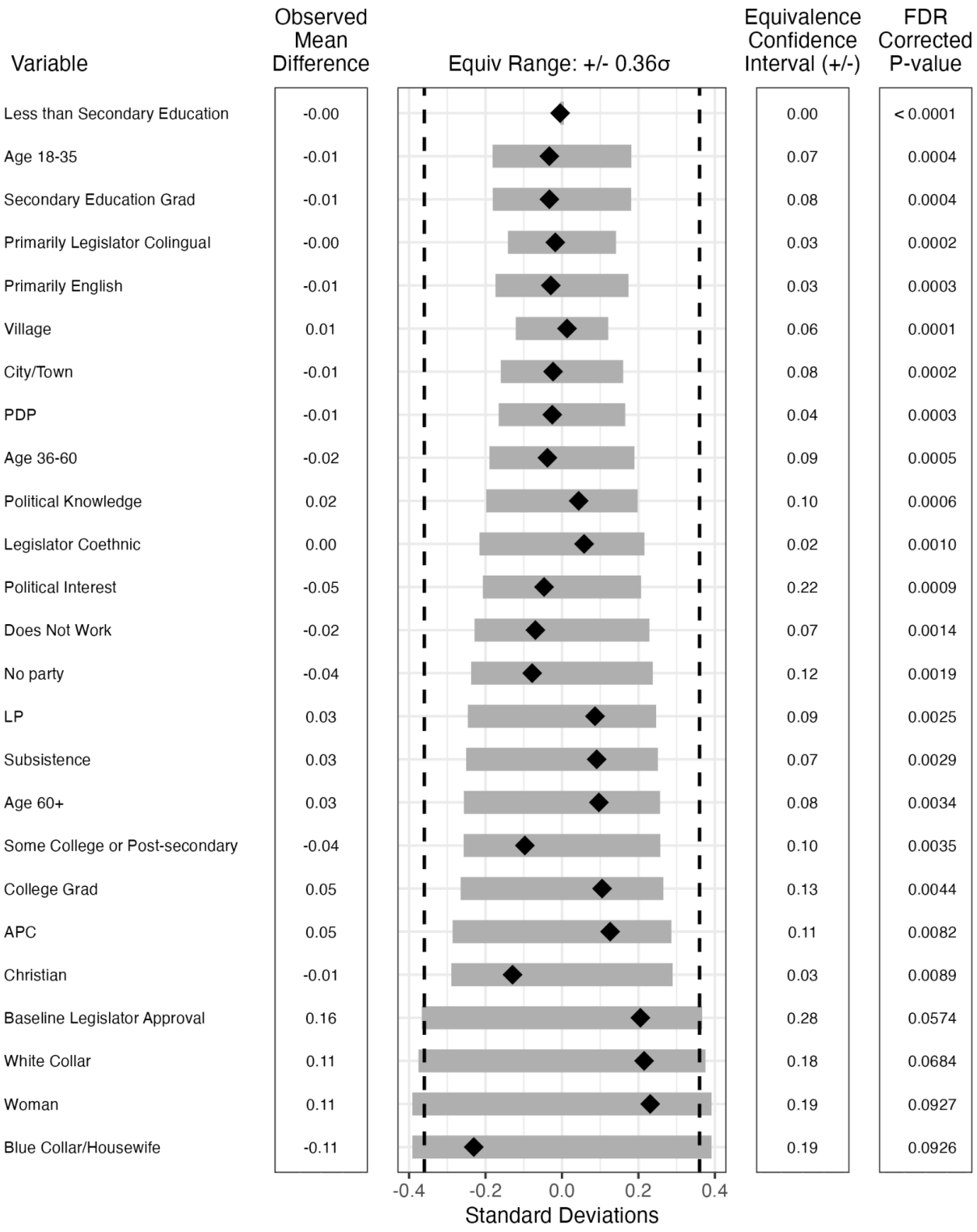

Figure A2. The figure shows equivalence balance tests for Bende based on willing/available respondents.

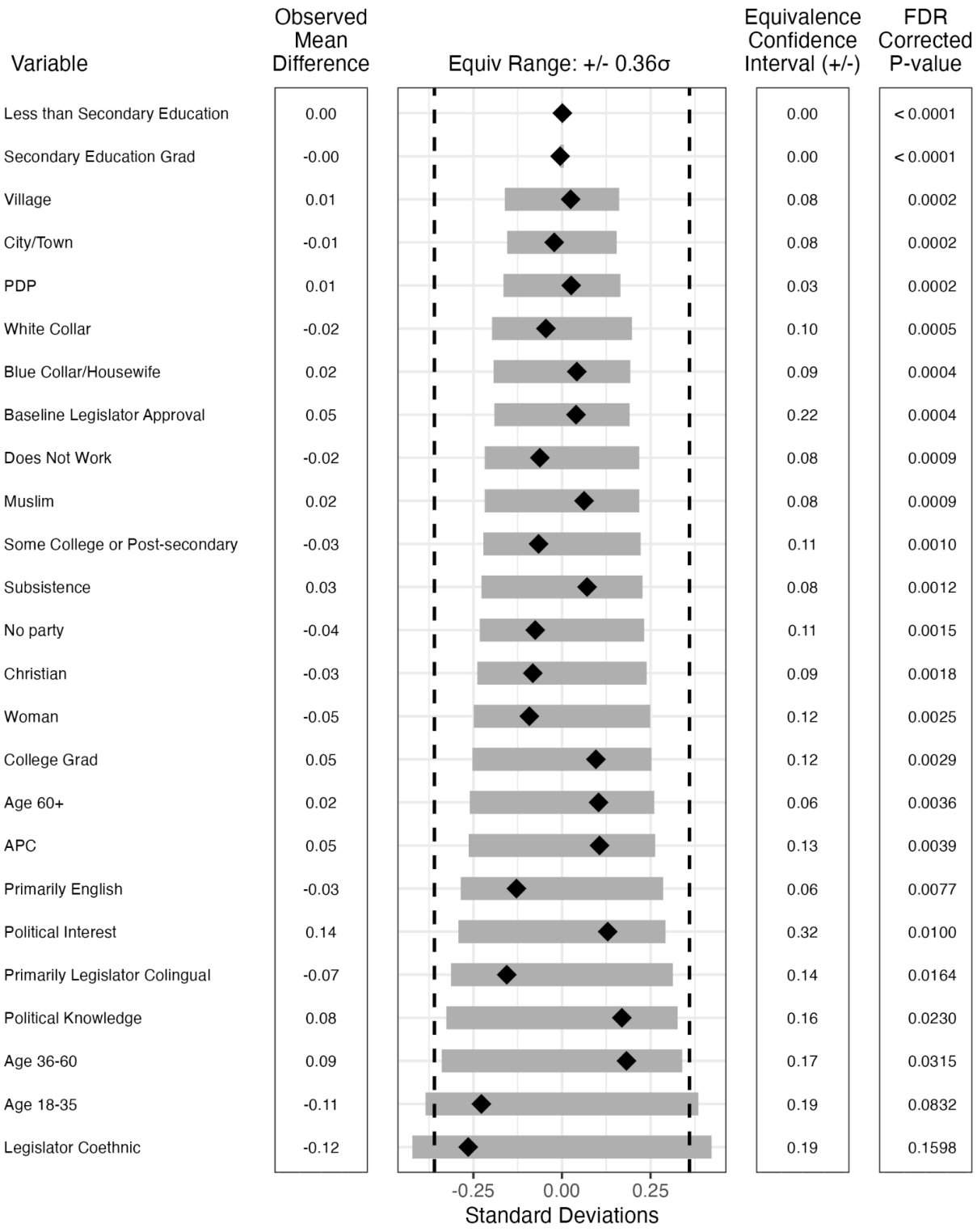

Figure A3. The figure shows equivalence tests of balance for Baruten/Kaiama based on all respondents.

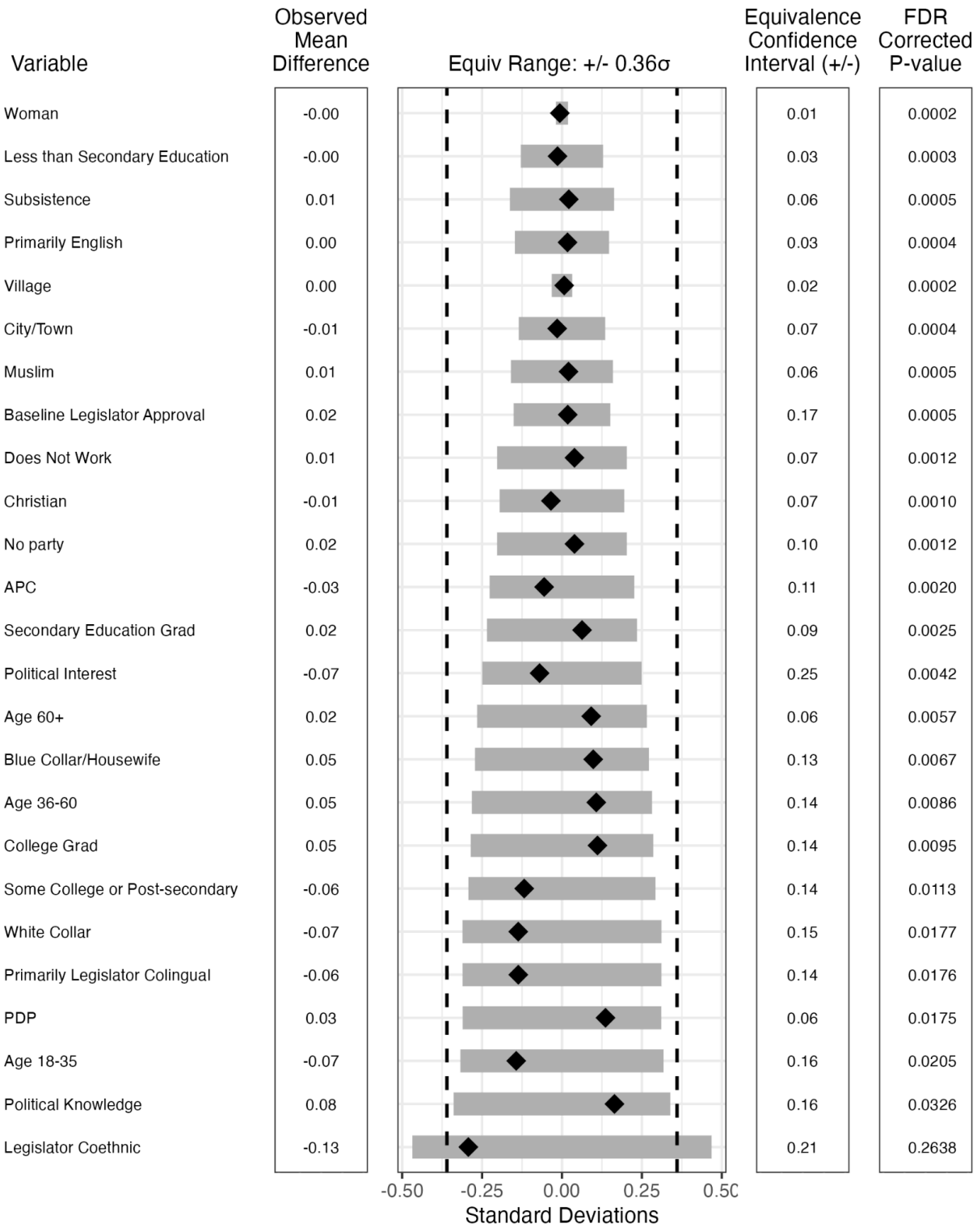

Figure A4. The figure shows equivalence tests of balance for Baruten/Kaiama based on willing/available respondents.

A3. Regression Tables

Table A3: Counterfactual Prompt Models

	Acceptability	Priorities	Local/National
Counterfactual × Item 1 × B/K	−0.09***	0.02	0.07**
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Counterfactual × Item 2 × B/K	−0.03*	0.04***	
	(0.01)	(0.01)	
Counterfactual × Item 3 × B/K	−0.04**	0.05***	
	(0.01)	(0.01)	
Counterfactual × Item 4 × B/K	−0.06***		
	(0.01)		
Counterfactual × Item 5 × B/K	−0.03*		
	(0.01)		
Counterfactual × Item 1 × Bende	−0.06***	0.01	0.08***
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Counterfactual × Item 2 × Bende	−0.03	0.01	
	(0.02)	(0.01)	
Counterfactual × Item 3 × Bende	−0.03	0.06***	
	(0.02)	(0.01)	
Counterfactual × Item 4 × Bende	−0.01		
	(0.02)		
Counterfactual × Item 5 × Bende	−0.01		
	(0.01)		
Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.57***	0.58***	0.60***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.63***	0.65***	
	(0.01)	(0.01)	
Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.68***	0.66***	
	(0.01)	(0.01)	
Item 4 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.66***		
	(0.01)		
Item 5 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.34***		
	(0.01)		
Item 1 × Bende	0.57***	0.63***	0.67***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Item 2 × Bende	0.64***	0.72***	
	(0.01)	(0.01)	
Item 3 × Bende	0.67***	0.72***	
	(0.01)	(0.01)	
Item 4 × Bende	0.63***		
	(0.01)		
Item 5 × Bende	0.30***		
	(0.01)		
N	12013	7158	2430

***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$

Table A4: Acceptability ITT Models (page 1 of 2)

	Wtd./Sub	Wtd./All	Unwtd./Sub	Unwtd./All
Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.58***	0.53***	0.58***	0.54***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.64***	0.59***	0.64***	0.59***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.68***	0.63***	0.68***	0.64***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Item 4 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.67***	0.62***	0.67***	0.61***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 5 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.36***	0.31***	0.36***	0.31***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Item 1 × Bende	0.57***	0.52***	0.57***	0.53***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Item 2 × Bende	0.64***	0.59***	0.64***	0.59***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 3 × Bende	0.66***	0.61***	0.66***	0.62***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Item 4 × Bende	0.61***	0.56***	0.61***	0.57***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 5 × Bende	0.29***	0.24***	0.29***	0.25***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Invited × Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.03
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Invited × Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.01	−0.01	0.01	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Invited × Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.02	−0.01	0.01	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Invited × Item 4 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Invited × Item 5 × Baruten/Kaiama	−0.01	−0.00	−0.02	−0.01
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Invited × Item 1 × Bende	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.03
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Invited × Item 2 × Bende	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Invited × Item 3 × Bende	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Invited × Item 4 × Bende	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.06*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Invited × Item 5 × Bende	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	−0.05	−0.05	−0.05	−0.05
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)

Table A4: Acceptability ITT Models (page 2 of 2)

	Wtd./Sub	Wtd./All	Unwtd./Sub	Unwtd./All
Endline × Item 4 × Baruten/Kaiama	−0.01	0.02	−0.01	0.03
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 5 × Baruten/Kaiama	−0.05	−0.04	−0.04	−0.03
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 1 × Bende	−0.10**	−0.08**	−0.10**	−0.08**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 2 × Bende	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 3 × Bende	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 4 × Bende	0.04	0.06*	0.05	0.07**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 5 × Bende	−0.08**	−0.08**	−0.08**	−0.08**
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Endline × Invited × Item 1 × B/K	−0.01	−0.02	−0.01	−0.01
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Endline × Invited × Item 2 × B/K	−0.00	0.04	−0.00	−0.00
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Endline × Invited × Item 3 × B/K	0.01	0.04	0.02	0.00
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Endline × Invited × Item 4 × B/K	−0.00	0.01	−0.00	−0.03
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Endline × Invited × Item 5 × B/K	−0.01	0.01	−0.01	−0.02
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Endline × Invited × Item 1 × Bende	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.02
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Endline × Invited × Item 2 × Bende	−0.01	−0.03	−0.01	−0.03
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Endline × Invited × Item 3 × Bende	−0.03	−0.04	−0.02	−0.03
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Endline × Invited × Item 4 × Bende	−0.07	−0.08*	−0.07	−0.09*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Endline × Invited × Item 5 × Bende	−0.06	−0.06	−0.05	−0.06
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Willing and Available		0.05*		0.04*
		(0.02)		(0.02)
Num. obs.	8052	9003	8052	9003

***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$

Table A5: Priorities ITT Models (page 1 of 2)

	Wtd./Sub	Wtd./All	Unwtd./Sub	Unwtd./All
Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.60***	0.57***	0.60***	0.57***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.65***	0.63***	0.65***	0.64***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.68***	0.66***	0.68***	0.67***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 1 × Bende	0.62***	0.60***	0.62***	0.60***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 2 × Bende	0.71***	0.69***	0.70***	0.71***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 3 × Bende	0.72***	0.71***	0.72***	0.72***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
invited × Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.00	−0.00	0.00	0.03
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
invited × Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.03
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
invited × Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	−0.02	−0.03	−0.02	−0.01
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.02)
invited × Item 1 × Bende	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.05*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
invited × Item 2 × Bende	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
invited × Item 3 × Bende	0.00	−0.01	0.00	−0.00
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.06*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.08**	0.08**	0.08**	0.09***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 1 × Bende	−0.09***	−0.07***	−0.08***	−0.06**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 2 × Bende	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 3 × Bende	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Invited × Item 1 × B/K	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01	−0.05
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Endline × Invited × Item 2 × B/K	−0.04	−0.05	−0.04	−0.05
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Invited × Item 3 × B/K	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.03
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Endline × Invited × Item 1 × Bende	0.01	−0.00	0.01	−0.01
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Invited × Item 2 × Bende	−0.02	−0.02	−0.03	−0.03
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)

Table A5: Priorities ITT Models (page 2 of 2)

	Wtd./Sub	Wtd./All	Unwtd./Sub	Unwtd./All
Endline × Invited × Item 3 × Bende	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Willing and Available		0.02		0.00
		(0.02)		(0.01)
Num. obs.	4787	5361	4787	5361

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

Table A6: Local/National ITT Models

	Wtd./Sub	Wtd./All	Unwtd./Sub	Unwtd./All
Baruten/Kaiama	0.11***	0.12***	0.11***	0.12***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Bende	0.13***	0.14***	0.13***	0.13***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
invited × Baruten/Kaiama	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
invited × Bende	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Endline × Baruten/Kaiama	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01	−0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Endline × Bende	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Endline × Invited × B/K	−0.01	0.01	−0.01	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Endline × Invited × Bende	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Willing and Available		−0.01		0.00
		(0.01)		(0.01)
Num. obs.	1619	1811	1619	1811

***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$

Table A7: Acceptability CACE Models (page 1 of 2)

	Wtd./Sub	Wtd./All	Unwtd./Sub	Unwtd./All
Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.58***	0.53***	0.58***	0.54***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.64***	0.59***	0.64***	0.59***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.68***	0.63***	0.68***	0.63***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Item 4 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.67***	0.61***	0.67***	0.61***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 5 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.36***	0.31***	0.36***	0.31***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Item 1 × Bende	0.57***	0.52***	0.57***	0.53***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 2 × Bende	0.64***	0.59***	0.64***	0.59***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 3 × Bende	0.66***	0.61***	0.66***	0.62***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Item 4 × Bende	0.61***	0.56***	0.61***	0.57***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 5 × Bende	0.29***	0.24***	0.29***	0.25***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Attended × Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.04
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Attended × Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.02	−0.01	0.02	0.03
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Attended × Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.03	−0.01	0.02	0.02
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Attended × Item 4 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.08
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Attended × Item 5 × Baruten/Kaiama	−0.02	−0.01	−0.03	−0.02
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Attended × Item 1 × Bende	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.04
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Attended × Item 2 × Bende	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.03
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Attended × Item 3 × Bende	0.06	0.07	0.06	0.06
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Attended × Item 4 × Bende	0.08	0.07	0.09	0.09*
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Attended × Item 5 × Bende	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Endline × Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	−0.05	−0.05	−0.05	−0.05
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)

Table A7: Acceptability CACE Models (page 2 of 2)

	Wtd./Sub	Wtd./All	Unwtd./Sub	Unwtd./All
Endline × Item 4 × Baruten/Kaiama	−0.01	0.02	−0.01	0.03
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 5 × Baruten/Kaiama	−0.05	−0.04	−0.04	−0.03
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 1 × Bende	−0.10**	−0.08**	−0.10**	−0.08**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 2 × Bende	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 3 × Bende	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 4 × Bende	0.04	0.06*	0.05	0.07**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 5 × Bende	−0.08**	−0.08**	−0.08**	−0.08**
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Endline × Attended × Item 1 × B/K	−0.01	−0.02	−0.02	−0.02
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.07)
Endline × Attended × Item 2 × B/K	−0.00	0.05	−0.00	−0.00
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Endline × Attended × Item 3 × B/K	0.02	0.06	0.03	0.00
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Endline × Attended × Item 4 × B/K	−0.00	0.01	−0.00	−0.05
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Endline × Attended × Item 5 × B/K	−0.01	0.01	−0.01	−0.03
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Endline × Attended × Item 1 × Bende	0.05	0.04	0.06	0.02
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Endline × Attended × Item 2 × Bende	−0.02	−0.04	−0.01	−0.04
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Endline × Attended × Item 3 × Bende	−0.04	−0.06	−0.03	−0.04
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Endline × Attended × Item 4 × Bende	−0.10	−0.11*	−0.10	−0.13*
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Endline × Attended × Item 5 × Bende	−0.08	−0.08	−0.08	−0.08
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Willing and Available		0.05*		0.04*
		(0.02)		(0.02)
Num. obs.	8052	9003	8052	9003

***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$

Table A8: Priorities CACE Models (page 1 of 2)

	Wtd./Sub	Wtd./All	Unwtd./Sub	Unwtd./All
Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.60***	0.57***	0.60***	0.57***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.65***	0.63***	0.65***	0.64***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.68***	0.66***	0.68***	0.67***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 1 × Bende	0.62***	0.60***	0.62***	0.60***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 2 × Bende	0.71***	0.69***	0.70***	0.71***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 3 × Bende	0.72***	0.70***	0.72***	0.72***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Attended × Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.00	−0.01	0.01	0.04
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Attended × Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.05
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Attended × Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	−0.03	−0.04	−0.03	−0.02
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Attended × Item 1 × Bende	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.07*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Attended × Item 2 × Bende	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Attended × Item 3 × Bende	0.00	−0.01	0.00	−0.00
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.06*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Endline × Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.08**	0.08**	0.08**	0.09***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 1 × Bende	−0.09***	−0.07***	−0.08***	−0.06**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 2 × Bende	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 3 × Bende	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Attended × Item 1 × B/K	−0.01	−0.02	−0.02	−0.07
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Endline × Attended × Item 2 × B/K	−0.06	−0.08	−0.06	−0.08
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Endline × Attended × Item 3 × B/K	0.07	0.09	0.07	0.05
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Endline × Attended × Item 1 × Bende	0.02	−0.00	0.02	−0.02
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Endline × Attended × Item 2 × Bende	−0.03	−0.03	−0.04	−0.04
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)

Table A8: Priorities CACE Models (page 2 of 2)

	Wtd./Sub	Wtd./All	Unwtd./Sub	Unwtd./All
Endline × Attended × Item 3 × Bende	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.05
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Willing and Available		0.02		0.00
		(0.02)		(0.01)
Num. obs.	4787	5361	4787	5361

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

Table A9: Local/National CACE Models

	Wtd./Sub	Wtd./All	Unwtd./Sub	Unwtd./All
Baruten/Kaiama	0.11***	0.12***	0.11***	0.12***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Bende	0.13***	0.14***	0.13***	0.13***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Attended × Baruten/Kaiama	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.00
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Attended × Bende	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Endline × Baruten/Kaiama	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01	−0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Endline × Bende	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Endline × Attended × B/K	−0.02	0.01	−0.02	0.00
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Attended × Bende	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Willing and Available		−0.01		0.00
		(0.01)		(0.01)
Num. obs.	1619	1811	1619	1811

***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$

Table A10: Acceptability Endline/Baseline Models

Willing/Available Subsample	All Respondents	
Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.59***	0.55***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.65***	0.60***
	(0.01)	(0.02)
Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.69***	0.64***
	(0.01)	(0.02)
Item 4 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.69***	0.63***
	(0.01)	(0.02)
Item 5 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.35***	0.30***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 1 × Bende	0.58***	0.54***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 2 × Bende	0.64***	0.60***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 3 × Bende	0.68***	0.64***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 4 × Bende	0.64***	0.59***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item 5 × Bende	0.30***	0.25***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 1 × B/K	−0.05*	−0.06*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 2 × B/K	0.03	0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 3 × B/K	0.04*	0.05**
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 4 × B/K	−0.01	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 5 × B/K	−0.05*	−0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 1 × Bende	−0.08***	−0.07**
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 2 × Bende	0.03	0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 3 × Bende	0.00	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 4 × Bende	0.01	0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 5 × Bende	−0.11***	−0.10***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Willing and Available		0.04**
		(0.02)
Num. obs.	8052	9003

***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$

Table A11: Priorities Endline/Baseline Models

Willing/Available Subsample	All Respondents	
Item 1 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.60***	0.58***
	(0.01)	(0.02)
Item 2 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.67***	0.65***
	(0.01)	(0.02)
Item 3 × Baruten/Kaiama	0.67***	0.66***
	(0.01)	(0.02)
Item 1 × Bende	0.63***	0.62***
	(0.01)	(0.02)
Item 2 × Bende	0.72***	0.72***
	(0.01)	(0.02)
Item 3 × Bende	0.72***	0.71***
	(0.01)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 1 × B/K	0.02	0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 2 × B/K	0.06***	0.06***
	(0.02)	(0.01)
Endline × Item 3 × B/K	0.06**	0.06***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Endline × Item 1 × Bende	−0.08***	−0.06***
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Endline × Item 2 × Bende	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Endline × Item 3 × Bende	0.04**	0.03*
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Willing and Available		0.01
		(0.01)
Num. obs.	4787	5361

***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$

Table A12: Local/National Endline/Baseline Models

	Willing/Available Subsample	All Respondents
Baruten/Kaiama	0.12***	0.12***
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Bende	0.14***	0.13***
	(0.00)	(0.01)
Endline × Baruten/Kaiama	−0.01*	−0.02*
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Endline × Bende	−0.00	−0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Willing and Available		0.00
		(0.01)
Num. obs.	1619	1811

***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$

Table A13: All variables coded such that higher values represent greater agreement with the statement. All statements beginning with "Felt" and "Would attend another DTH" are coded on a 0-3 scale. All other statements are on a 0-4 scale. n=349.

Statement	Min.	Median	Mean	Max.	NA
Rep. was interested	0	4.00	3.60	4	5
I reconsidered my views	0	4.00	3.59	4	4
Rep. has good plans	0	4.00	3.60	4	5
Rep. answered questions directly	0	3.00	3.19	4	4
DTH made me respect opposing opinions more	0	3.00	2.86	4	6
Felt enthusiastic	0	3.00	2.26	3	7
Felt hopeful	0	3.00	2.63	3	6
Felt worried	0	0.00	0.52	3	5
Felt afraid	0	0.00	0.48	3	5
Felt disgusted	0	0.00	0.50	3	5
Felt angry	0	0.00	0.46	3	4
Felt confused	0	0.00	0.49	3	5
Reps should do DTHs more often	0	4.00	3.69	4	6
DTHs will **not** change democracy	0	1.00	1.86	4	4
Interested in attending more DTHs	0	4.00	3.73	4	4
Hearing from Rep. made me feel respected	0	4.00	3.70	4	6
Expressing myself made me feel respected	0	4.00	3.72	4	4
I learned valuable information	0	4.00	3.72	4	4
I was satisfied with the DTH	0	4.00	3.62	4	4
Would attend another DTH	0	3.00	2.83	3	4