

Information and Accountability for Public Services in Ghana

A Field Experiment

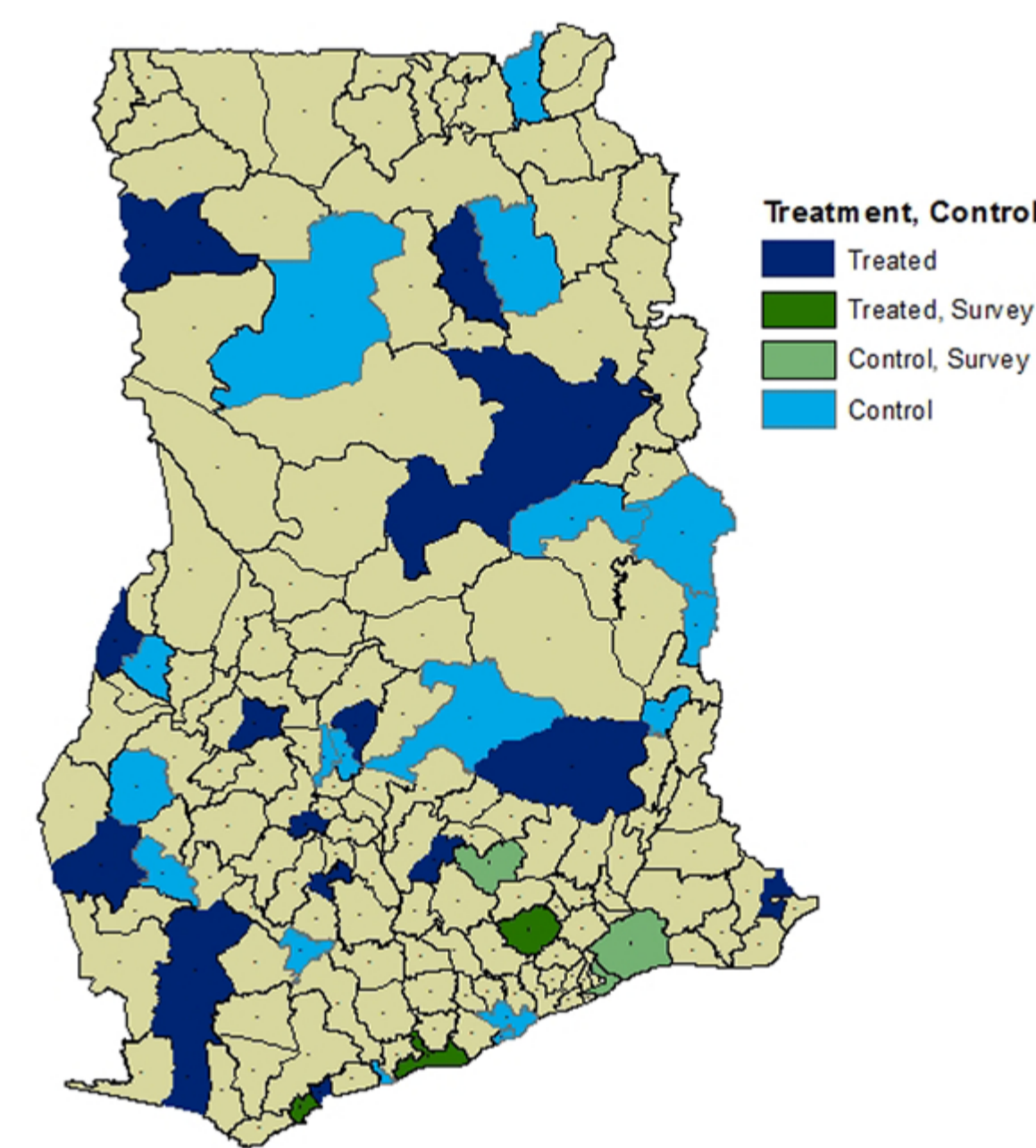
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Methodology

- **Objective:** Test the 'accountability model' - Does improved information affect voting?
- **Treatment:** Information on the quality of local public services
 - From government data
 - Delivered through "iamaware" radio debates with MPs
- **Assignment:** 40 districts randomly selected from a stratified sample using matched pair randomization and coarsened exact matching on district covariates
- **Compliance:** 7.8% of respondents in treatment districts confirm exposure (i.e. heard the broadcast)
- **Spillover to control:** Rebroadcasting of information through

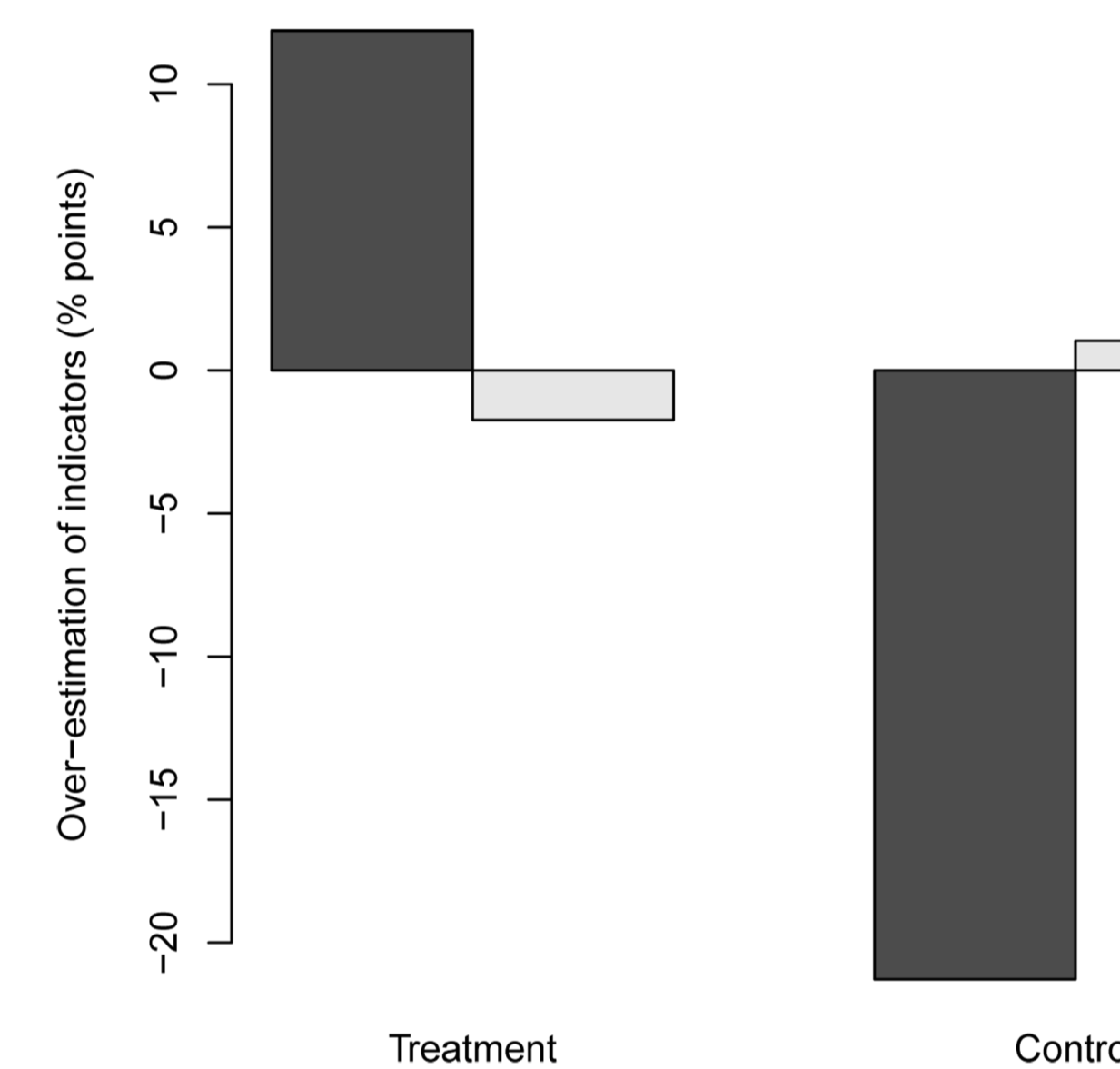
Accra meant 6.4% of respondents in control districts also confirm exposure

- *But* Content of information exposure is still distinct between treatment and control



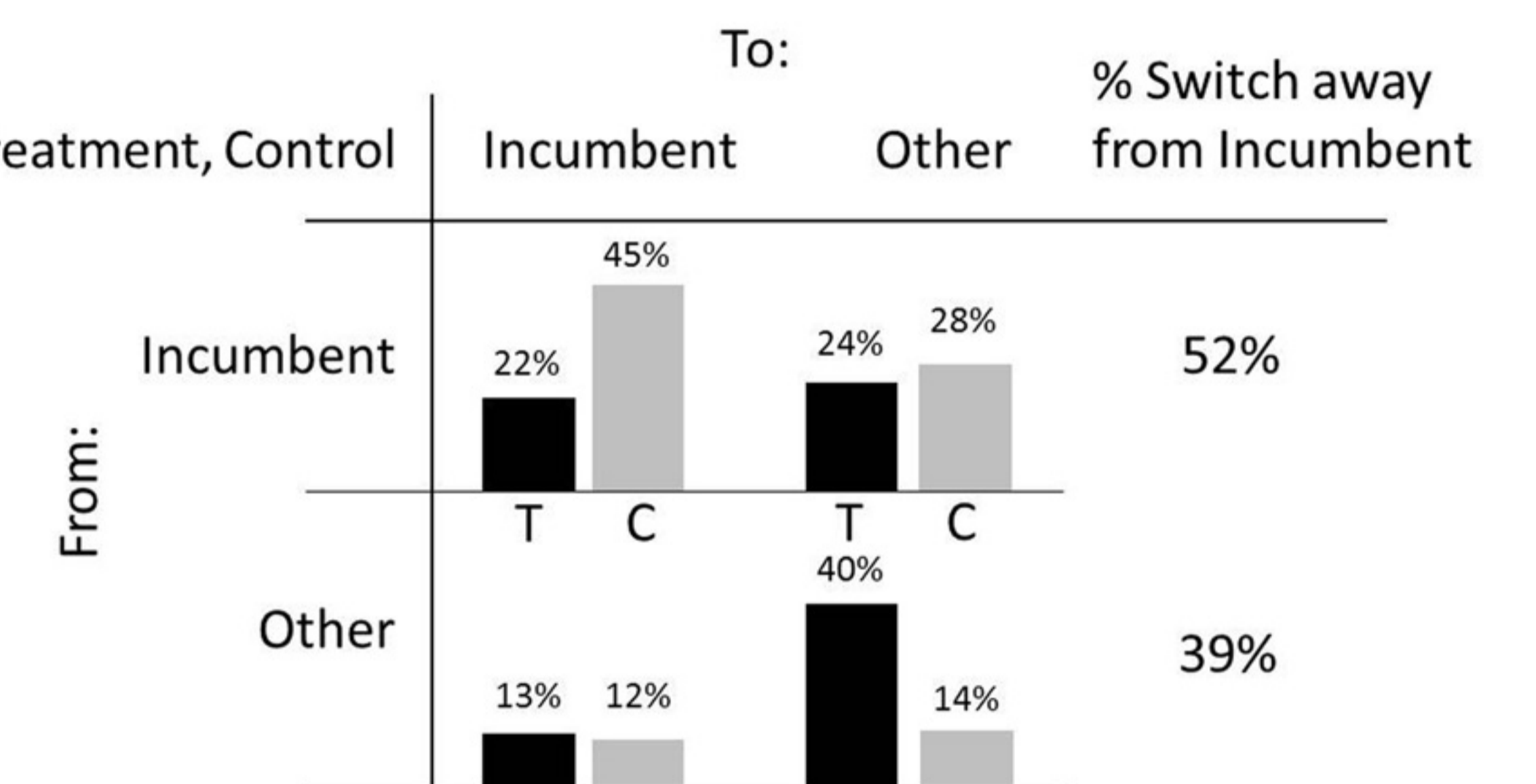
Voters' Information

- **Estimating actual service indicators:** Few, inaccurate responses
- **Convergence:** Impressive convergence to the true indicators. Convergence is faster in the treatment group
- **Balance:** Despite matching on district covariates, lack of balance in pre-treatment information between treatment and control groups at individual level



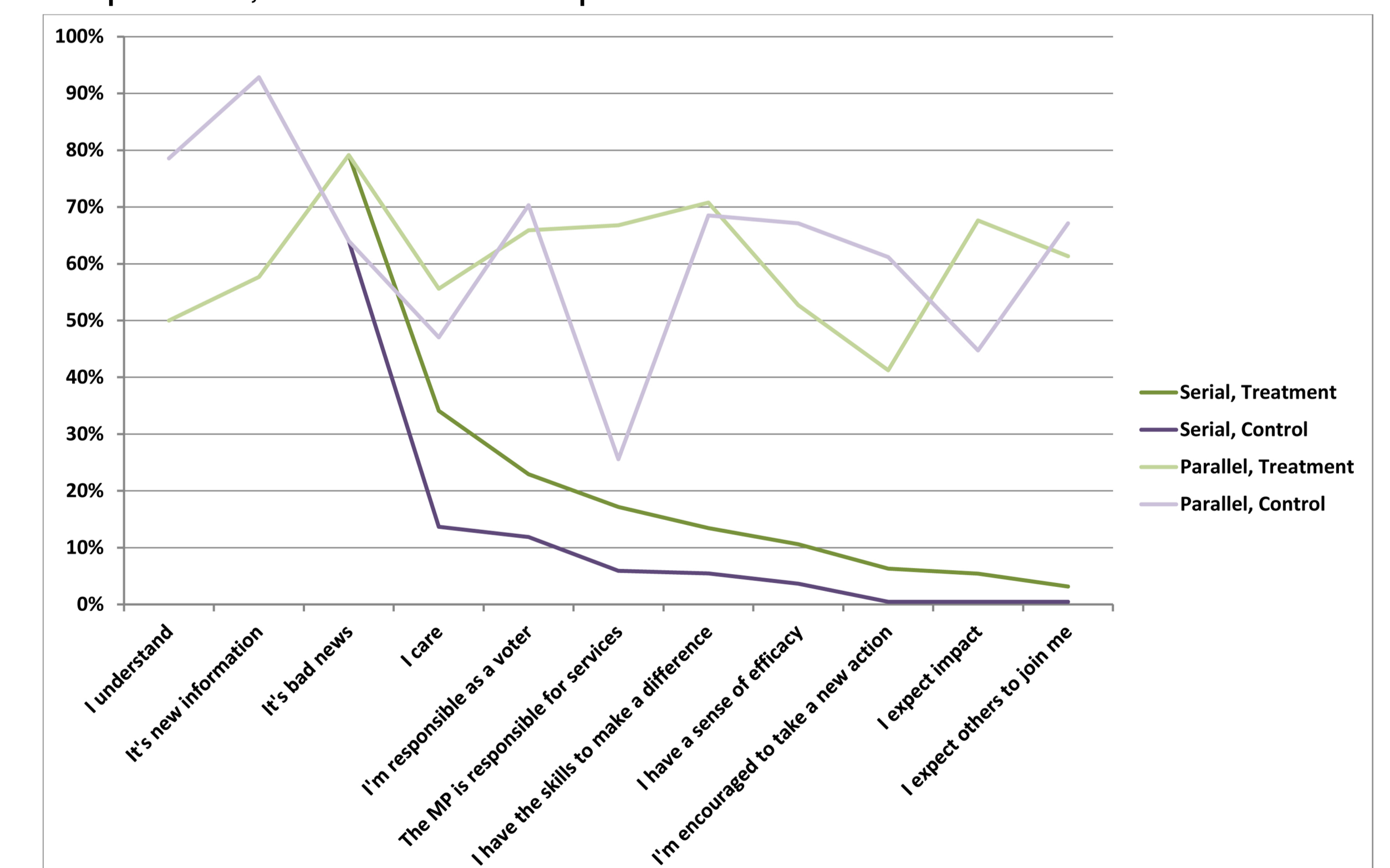
Accountability Effects

- **Hypotheses:** Mix of absolute and relative updating has ambiguous implications for voting responses
- **Winner-Bias:** Strong evidence of winner-bias in voting recall
- **Treatment Effect:** Of those who originally intended to vote for the incumbent:
 - 52% of treated switched to a challenger
 - 39% of control switched to a challenger

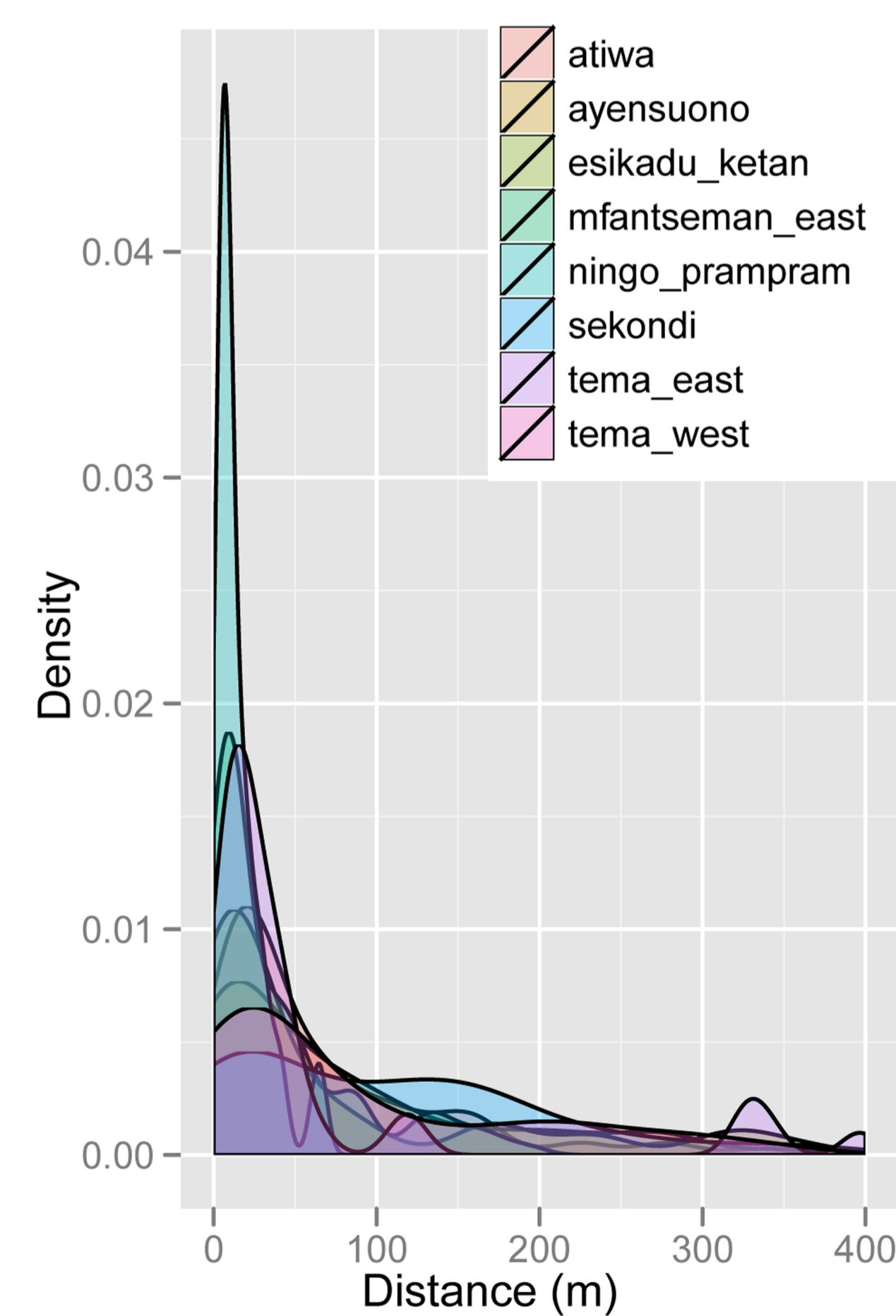


Parallel vs. Serial Motivations

- **Existing Theory:** Tsai et al (2013) suggest there are many barriers to translating information into political behavioural
- **But:** voting is simple and cheap - may require only *partial* motivation
- For the sequential information-processing steps in Tsai et al (2013):
 - In serial, 3.2% of the sample meet all conditions
 - In parallel, 32% of the sample meet at least 6 of 9 conditions



The First Panel Survey of African Voters(?)



- Conducted either side of the December 2012 General Election
- In 4 treatment and 4 control districts
- **Attrition rate:** 34%, of which:
 - 74% due to migration or travel
 - 11% could not be located
 - 11% refused participation
 - 3.4% sick or passed away
- **Validating the Panel:** 70% of respondents re-surveyed within 100m of the original survey location
- **Response Consistency:** Greater stability in sociodemographic responses than in political opinions

Absolute vs. Relative Updating

- **Complex treatment:** Treatment provides information on both absolute performance, and performance relative to other districts
- **Interference:** Plausible that politicians also mobilized data during the election
- **Unmeasured variable:** Updating will also depend on respondents' assessment of similarity between districts

Average change across Indicators	Control	Treatment
Absolute Indicators	-9.99%	+1.96%
Relative Indicators	+10.96%	-6.61%

- **Attribution:** Treated respondents do hold and their MP and the President more responsible

	Treatment	Control
MP	+1.10%	-3.50%
President	+3.40%	-2.90%
District Assembly	-1.50%	+3.50%
District Chief Executive	-2.00%	+3.70%