

# HOW DO ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AFFECT THE WAYS IN WHICH CITIZENS HOLD THEIR GOVERNMENTS ACCOUNTABLE?

## EVIDENCE FROM AFRICA.

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### Motivation

Previously, testing the impact of electoral systems on democratic accountability (political participation) has been limited to voting.

But do electoral systems also shape how citizens engage in other forms of political participation?

Can directly elected constituency representatives (Majoritarian systems) act as safety valves for dissatisfied citizens?

Do electoral systems that do not feature directly elected representatives increase the likelihood of citizen protest?

### Methodology and Data

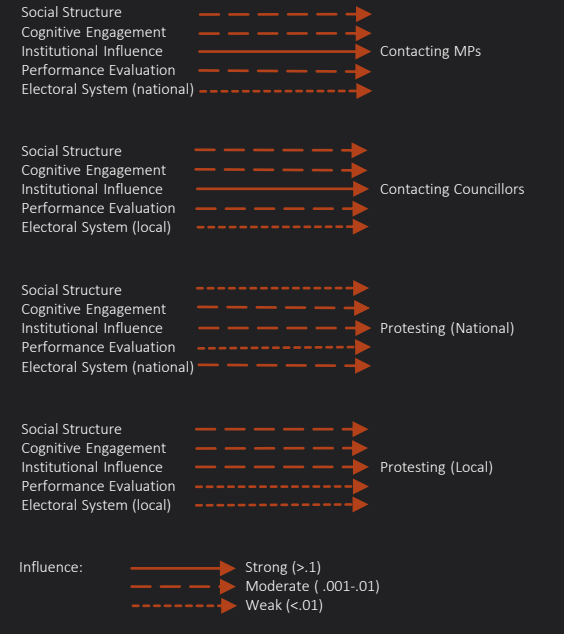
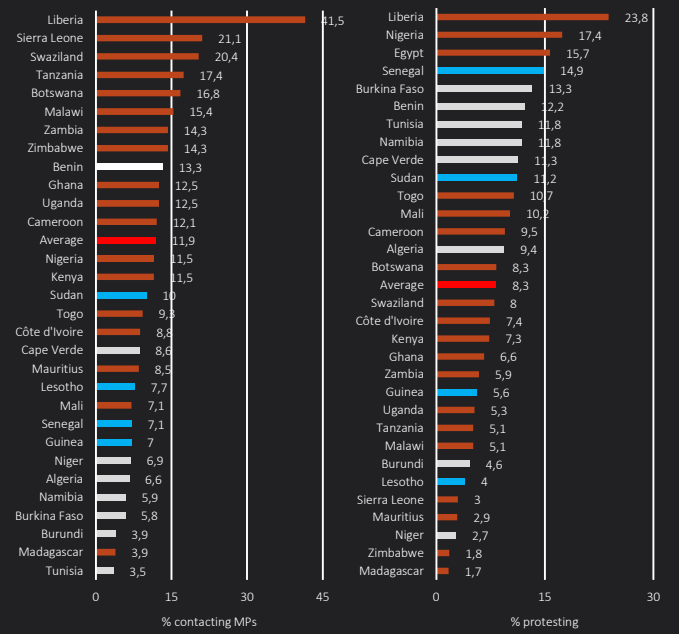
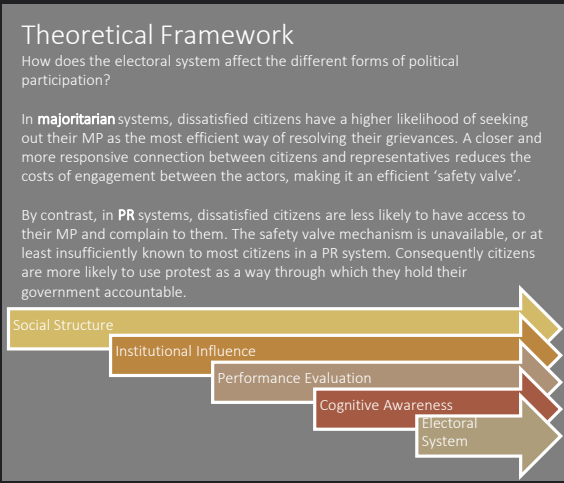
Public opinion survey data from 35 African countries is analysed using binary logistic and multivariate regression

Public Opinion Survey

- Afrobarometer Surveys Round 6 (2014/2015)

Electoral system categorisation

- IDEA categorisation of electoral families on national level
- Newly created dataset and V-Dem data for electoral families on local level



	Variable	Hypotheses	Contact (Nat   Loc)	Protest (Nat   Loc)
Social Structure	Age	Older = more likely to contact = less likely to protest	.027*** .066***	-.034*** -.040***
	Gender (male)	Men = more likely to contact / protest	.032*** .113***	.024*** .023***
	Urban/Rural	Urban = more likely to contact / protest	.018* <b>-.047***</b>	<b>Not sig</b> <b>Not sig</b>
	Poverty	Poorer = more likely to contact / protest	.012*** .027***	.027*** .023***
Cognitive Awareness	News from mass media	High = more likely to contact / protest	.006*** .008***	.007*** .008***
	Cognitive engagement**	High = more likely to contact / protest	.019*** .040***	.014*** .012***
Institutional Influence	Education	High = more likely to contact / protest	.019*** .027***	.019*** .020***
	Party ID	Yes = more likely to contact / protest	.051*** x.051***	.039*** .030***
	Social Capital	High = more likely to contact / protest	.031*** .030***	.023*** .023***
	Voted in last election	Yes = more likely to contact / protest Not significant for protest	<b>Not sig</b> .068***	<b>-.027***</b> <b>-.024***</b>
	a) Joined a protest demonstration	Yes = more likely to contact	.143***	.225***
	b) Contacted elected representatives	Yes = more likely to protest	.142***	.107***
	Contacting influential person (religious / traditional leader)	Yes = more likely to contact / protest	.079***	.170***
	Free and fair elections (subjective)	Not significant	Not sig.	.019* <b>-.019***</b> <b>-.019***</b>
	Representatives listen	Yes = more likely to contact / protest	.087***	.120***
	Corruption	Not significant for contact High = more likely to protest	<b>.012***</b> Not sig	.015*** .019***
Performance Evaluation	Trust in institution (of elected representatives)	Not significant	Not sig	Not sig
	Service Delivery (satisfaction)	Low = not sig. for contact (nat) Low = more likely to contact (loc) Low = more likely to protest	Not sig	-.007*** <b>Not sig</b> .003*
	Service Delivery availability (Neighbourhood infrastructure)	High = less likely to contact / protest	-.01* .016*	<b>.017***</b> .003*
Electoral System	Electoral System (NL) (ref = Majoritarian)	PR = less likely to contact PR = more likely to protest [Mixed = between Majoritarian and PR]	-.079*** (PR) [-.079***]	.107*** (PR) [ <b>Not sig</b> ]
	Consecutive elections (NL)	High = more likely to contact High = less likely to protest	<b>Not sig</b> <b>Not sig</b>	-.001* -.002***
	Electoral System (LL) (ref = Majoritarian)	PR = less likely to contact PR = more likely to protest [Mixed = between Majoritarian and PR]	----- [ <b>.083***</b> ]	----- (PR) [ <b>.051***</b> ]
	N		32793	26493
	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.159	.244
			32793	26493
			.058	.052

### Discussion: Contacting

Nat: Top 4 variables (betas)

- > Contact influential person .258
- > Representative listen .121
- > Social Capital .080
- > Joined a protest .069

Loc: Top 4 variables (betas)

- > Contact influential person .362
- > Representatives listen .122
- > Cognitive engagement .087
- > Joined Protest .072

Preliminary interpretation: Two dimensions seem to be particularly important.

- > Citizens think about who to contact (e.g. influential person and representatives that are perceived to be responsive) -> external
- > Exposure and experience with democratic accountability other than voting matters (e.g. social capital, cognitive engagement and participation in protests) -> internal

The importance of the above dimensions fits well with the broader argument that directly elected constituency representatives (majoritarian systems) seem to act as safety valves for dissatisfied citizens.

### Discussion: Protesting

Nat: Top 4 variables (betas)

- > Electoral system (PR) .098 (but mixed system = not sig.)
- > Contacted elected representative .087
- > Social Capital .068
- > Cognitive Engagement .053

Loc: Top 4 variables (betas)

- > Contacted elected representative .091
- > Social Capital .070
- > Electoral system (PR) .057 (Mixed system = .046)
- > Service Delivery availability .054

Preliminary Interpretation: This model is not driven as strongly by a small set of variables.

- > The electoral system, while also significant for contacting, seems more influential here.
- > Formal avenues of participation matter (contacting elected representatives), as do levels of political engagement and social capital. This suggests protest is being used as an alternative method of accountability by citizens engaged in the political system (but frustrated by their experience with elected representatives), rather than those alienated from it.

Overall, it is about the experience with elected representatives, and how to interact with them (electoral system, social capital and cognitive engagement) and less about the institutions they represent or about citizens' material resources.

### Going forward

- > Robustness checks with alternative variables
- > Multiple imputation to try and address the large number of cases lost through listwise deletion
- > Electoral systems vs. District magnitude (National vs. Local level)