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The Political Participation of Africa's Youth

Turnout, Partisanship, and Protest

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Abstract

The youth have long represented an important constituency for electoral mobilization in Africa. Today, as the region faces a growing 'youth bulge' that is disproportionately burdened by un- and underemployment, capturing the votes of this demographic is becoming more important than ever before. Yet, despite their numerical importance and the historical relevance of generational identities within the region, very little is really known about the political participation of Africa's youth. In order to address this issue, we combine country-level variables for 19 of Africa's most democratic countries with individual-level public opinion data from Afrobarometer survey data. A series of binomial and multinomial logit models are estimated on three key outcome variables: voter turnout in last elections, closeness to political party; and participation in protests. In comparison with older citizens, we find that Africa's youth tend to vote less and express a lower level of partisanship, which is consistent with findings for the youth in other regions of the world. However, Africa's youth are not more likely to protest than older citizens. Collectively, these findings cast doubt that the youth are more likely to turn to the street when they are disgruntled but question the legitimacy of the electoral process as a meaningful conduit for conveying the preferences of Africa's youth.

Keywords: Africa, democracy, elections, protests, voting, youth
JEL classification: D72, J13, N47

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1 Introduction

The impact of generational identities on political behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) receives relatively little scholarly attention compared with other social cleavages, especially ethnicity.[1] This is surprising given that the youth have long represented an important constituency for mobilization by African politicians. Indeed, nationalist leaders often engaged disaffected youth in their struggle for independence and relied on the youth to provide legitimacy to post-colonial regimes (see Clapham 2006). Appeals to, or co-optation of, the youth also characterized many of the democratic transitions that occurred within the region. From Abdoulaye Wade's blue marches aimed at Senegal's urban youth to Daniel Arap Moi's employment of youth vigilantes in Kenya, this constituency clearly played a role in the political calculus of many African leaders (see Foucher 2007; Kagwanja 2005). In fact, many countries reduced the voting age from 21 to 18 during periods of democratic transition, including Senegal in 1992, Malawi in 1993, and Botswana in 1997 (Brown 2003; Molomo 2000).

Today, Africa's youth represent an increasingly important constituency as demographic patterns skew their numerical weight, especially in urban areas. High fertility rates combined with low levels of life expectancy jointly contribute to Africa's 'youth bulge'. Consequently, the median age of Africans is 19 years compared with 42 years for Europeans (UN-DESA 2010), and the youth currently comprise 70 per cent of the region's population.[2] Outside of North Africa and the Middle East, youth unemployment remains highest in Africa, and the World Bank (2009) estimates that approximately 72 per cent of Africa's youth live on less than two dollars a day.[3]

Most discussions of the youth bulge revolve around pessimistic and extreme scenarios. For instance, Kaplan (1996: 16) paints a dire picture of Africa's youth, especially in urban areas, noting that they are 'out of school, unemployed, loose molecules in an unstable social fluid that threatened to ignite'. Fuller (1995: 151–54) argues that a surfeit of young people, particularly men, increases the likelihood of social unrest. Goldstone (2001, 2010) likewise argues that with fewer responsibilities and susceptible to radical ideas, young males are more likely to be instigators of violence while Collier (2007) claims they may potentially be mobilized as soldiers in civil conflict. The role played by disillusioned and unemployed youth in establishing the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone (see Richards 1996) and the genocidal *Interahamwe* in Rwanda (see Roessler 2005) offer some support for that speculation. Such extreme outcomes, however, may be more associated with autocratic regimes where the youth may resort to violence as a consequence of exclusion from certain pathways to social mobility and engagement in the political process (see Goldstone 2001; Lia 2005).

This paper focuses on less extreme forms of political engagement by those youth living in African democracies. We specifically address the following questions: What are the

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1 Hereafter, 'Africa' refers to sub-Saharan Africa.

2 This is based on defining the youth as 0-29 and calculated from the UN's World Population Prospects, 2010 Revision (http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm). The equivalent figure is 53 per cent for Latin American and the Caribbean and 34 per cent for Europe.

3 For the World Bank, the youth are defined as those between the ages of 15-24.

political preferences of Africa's youth? And what are their favoured modes of political participation?

Political participation typically refers to activities by citizens that are aimed at influencing the selection and decisions of government personnel (see Verba et al. 1978), such as voting in elections, as well as more informal modes of engagement, such as meeting with community members, contacting political representatives, or involvement in collective action. We focus on three key elements of political participation in this study: voter turnout in national elections, partisan attachments, and protest activities. Voter turnout captures whether an individual views elections as a meaningful way of expressing preferences with respect to how his/her country is managed. Partisan attachments, or how closely someone feels to a particular party, indicate whether parties express concerns meaningful to voters and often provide predictable indicators of future voting behaviour. Protest activities tend to occur when people want policy makers to address pressing social, economic, or political concerns in a more timely fashion than other modes of participation might allow.

Following other recent research on political participation (e.g. Kittilson and Dalton 2011; Norris 2004), we employ a series of multi-level models for each outcome variable. Based on country-level data as well as individual data from the 2008/09 Afrobarometer surveys, we estimate a series of binominal and multinomial logit models to examine the impact of age and other key explanatory variables on these outcomes. Each of our models is further disaggregated for a youth group, classified as those respondents who are aged 18-30, and a non-youth group, consisting of those aged 31 and older.

Our findings suggest that Africa's youth, particularly those in urban areas, operate in broadly similar ways to their counterparts in other regions of the world. In comparison with their older compatriots, the youth vote less and are more likely to demonstrate no partisanship or an attachment to opposition parties rather than any affinity to incumbent parties. Yet, the likelihood of their involvement in protests is not significantly different from that of their older counterparts. This suggests that while they are less engaged in elections and party politics, they are not necessarily channeling their discontent into extra-institutional modes of participation in large proportions.

Moreover, we find that the youth, unlike older voters, tend to be more affected by the number of years that the incumbent party has been in power when deciding whether to vote. In addition, incumbent performance on job creation, compared with other socioeconomic issues, demonstrates a sizeable influence on the youth's partisan attachments. Among those who do engage in protests, higher levels of economic deprivation, as well as high levels of education, tend to be significant predictors for the youth but not for the non-youth.

In order to further motivate the research, the following section of the study examines the existing theoretical literature on youth and political participation, which is predominantly derived from industrialized democracies. Africa-specific experiences relevant to youth political participation are highlighted where relevant. Subsequently, other key influences on political participation besides age are discussed. We then describe our data sources and introduce the three empirical models, followed by a

presentation of the results and an interpretation of our key findings. The final section concludes and offers suggestions for future research.

2 Political participation, youth, and the African context

As noted earlier, participation in politics manifests in various ways, ranging from engagement in formal political processes, such as voting in elections, to extra-institutional behaviours, such as street protests or community meetings. Voter turnout is the topic to which scholars have devoted most attention when explaining the behaviour of the youth. In fact, age consistently is identified as an important influence on voter turnout in industrialized countries, with the evidence uniformly demonstrating that younger people vote less than their older counterparts and that countries where the voting age has been lowered demonstrate a greater decline in turnout (Blais 2000; Blais and Dobrynska 1998; Franklin 2004; Wattenberg 2003; Nie et al. 1974; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). According to Norris (2002), age is one of the most important demographic influences on turnout with the youngest eligible voters usually demonstrating the lowest inclination to vote.

In the African case, empirical analyses of turnout, such as Kuenzi and Lambright (2007), do not consider the role of the youth because age-disaggregated turnout data is not available. Using survey data for Zambia, however, Bratton (1999) also finds that younger people vote less.[4] Specific case studies of Botswana and Senegal further note that voter turnout was lower in national elections that followed the reduction in voting age (see Molomo 2000; Villalón 2004).

Partisan attachment, or the extent to which voters identify closely with one party over all existing alternatives, represents one factor that influences why younger people may not vote as much as others. In the industrialized context, the youth generally are viewed as possessing weaker ties to parties than older voters. Dalton (2000) found that in industrialized democracies, the share of the youth professing a partisan attachment has fallen much more than for older groups. Likewise, Anderson (2011) observed that older people are more likely to view parties as representing their interests than younger ones.[5]

The reasons for this pattern are at least twofold. According to the post-modernist thesis of Inglehart (1987, 1997) and Abramson and Inglehart (1995), older generations remain focused on goals such as economic well-being, law and order, and religious values while younger people are more concerned with post-material goals, such as quality of life, social equality, and personal freedom. Indeed, Henn et al. (2002) find that in the UK, young people were disillusioned by politicians because the latter did not focus on the issues deemed most important to the youth, such as the environment and civil liberties. For Converse (1969), more robust partisan attachments among older generations are due to the fact that openness to political learning declines over time. Focusing explicitly on the US, Stoker and Jennings (2008) build on this observation and

4 In the literature on Latin America, there are mixed findings regarding the impact of age on turnout. While Seligson et al. (1995) find higher rates of turnout among the young within this region, Schraufnagel and Sgouraki (2005) do not.

5 Based on an analysis of legislative elections in 28 high- and middle-income countries, Norris (2004) found that younger voters are more likely to be left-wing than their parents or grandparents. However, Dalton (2011) finds that age is not a significant predictor of such divides.

find that the party system interacts strongly with age, such that new divisions in the party system can postpone the age at which partisanship crystallizes.

In the African context, high levels of poverty and joblessness cast doubt that post-material values drive the partisan attachments of the youth. In addition, African parties rarely fall along the traditional left-right ideological spectrum common in industrialized countries (e.g. van de Walle 2003). Instead, the main distinction often is between incumbents and opposition parties.

Through youth leagues and other associations, incumbents traditionally have formed strong attachments with the youth and even encouraged them to engage in political violence. For instance, Hastings Banda transformed the Young Pioneers, who were the youth wing of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), into a paramilitary group that terrorized pro-democracy activists (Roessler 2005). Two decades later, they have been replaced with the Young Democrats, who are attached to President Bingu wa Mutharika's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Another example includes former President Moi's use of the Mungiki criminal group in Kenya, which predominantly attracted urban youth living in Nairobi's slums. With a combination of violence, extortion, and a discourse around generational divides, the Mungiki encouraged voters to support Moi's chosen, young successor, Uhuru Kenyatta, for the 2002 presidential elections (Kagwanja 2005). More recently, former President Laurent Gbagbo relied on his Young Patriots to espouse a vitriolic discourse around citizenship and national belonging in Côte d'Ivoire (see Marshall-Fratani 2006). Likewise, the vocal and controversial leader of the African National Congress' Youth League, Julius Malema, promised to kill if necessary in order to get Jacob Zuma elected in 2009.

At the same time, however, the changing nature of party systems in many African countries would lead us to expect that attachments to incumbents may have waned for younger generations.[6] Indeed, many of today's youth were most likely too young to have engaged in the pro-democracy movements of the 1990s and therefore are possibly less enamoured with the political parties at the forefront of those movements which, in many cases, are now dominant in their respective countries.[7] In addition, once-popular, ideologically-oriented political parties are no longer as viable. For instance, while Kwame Nkrumah's 'verandah boys' helped mobilize support around his Convention People's Party (CPP) at the time of independence (Clapham 2006), the party's message was no longer relevant to the youth of the 1990s (see Nugent 1999). Many political parties that rose to prominence during the multi-party transition era are facing new competitors in the form of opposition parties with populist leaders who actively court the youth vote. Michael Sata and the Patriotic Front (PF) in Zambia, as well as Raila Odinga and the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) in Kenya, provide two such examples.

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6 There is a stream of scholarship that suggests partisan preferences are passed down across generations (see Miller and Shanks 1996). Yet, precisely because party systems in Africa are in flux and experience high levels of electoral volatility, this hypothesis is questionable in such a context.

7 At an even broader level, Mattes (2011) discusses how a new generation in today's South Africa has no memory of the country's experience with apartheid, causing them to actually be less committed to democracy.

Beyond voting and partisan attachments, there are other modes of political participation that may be viewed as more effective by the youth, especially when there are sizeable institutional barriers that can discourage the youth from voting. In the UK, Parry et al. (1992) found that low levels of voting and party campaigning were accompanied by high levels of collective action and protest behaviour. Drawing on Barnes et al. (1979), they speculate that some reasons for this include that the youth have more time for such activities due to a lack of career and familial responsibilities. Based on research in Western Europe, Klingemann and Fuchs (1995) also note that while turnout rates are declining amongst the youth, citizen participation in protests and public interest groups continues to expand (see also Jennings and van Deth 1990).

During pro-democracy movements in Africa, the youth were highly involved in protest activities against one-party rule. In Senegal, the youth rioted in the wake of disputed elections in 1988, which prompted then-President Abdou Diouf to announce he was dedicating his new five-year term to improving conditions for the youth (Diouf 1996). Many youth and urban dwellers abstained in subsequent elections in order to deprive Diouf's regime of legitimacy (Villalón 1999). Student protests in Zambia during 1989 over the rising cost of maize meal contributed to Kenneth Kaunda's decision to hold multi-party elections in 1991 (see Bratton 1994). In Malawi, university students initiated country-wide protests in 1992 that were directly in support of ending one-party rule under Hastings Banda (see Brown 2004). Similar university protests occurred in the early 1990s in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya (see Bratton and van de Walle 1992).[8]

Based on this existing literature, we therefore hypothesize that Africa's youth will follow their counterparts in developed regions of the world and turn out less to vote. Moreover, we expect that Africa's youth will possess different attitudes towards existing political parties than older generations. While one mechanism might be de-alignment from traditional party messages, we would also expect African youth to be less supportive of long-standing incumbents who rose to prominence during pro-democracy movements. Where there are not viable opposition parties, this might result in a complete lack of partisanship. Finally, the democracy movement era encouraged previous generations of university students to protest or engage in other forms of collective action. *Ex-ante,* we posit that today, a number of economic factors, including discontent over jobs, poverty, service delivery, and food prices, could equally serve as a catalyst to protest among this group.

3 Beyond age: other determinants of political participation

A myriad of other factors influence political participation and may interact with age in unique ways. In much of the recent literature on political behaviour, a key emphasis is that both micro and macro factors play an important role in understanding political behaviour (e.g. Blais 2006; Kittilson and Anderson 2011; Norris 2004). As Norris (2007) observes, research relying exclusively on individual-level variables accords too

8 Other forms of collective action were also prominent during this period. For instance, the Set Setal movement in Senegal was essentially driven by urban youth disgruntled with the status of garbage collection in Dakar (Diouf 1996, 2003). The Bakassi Boys of Nigeria and male youth organizations in northern Benin attempted to provide citizens with security in instances when the state no longer proved effective in this domain (see Harnischfeger 2003; Magnusson 2001).

much weight to demographic and socioeconomic factors without considering how institutions, or the 'rules of the game', adopted by different countries are equally critical. At the same time, Franklin (2004) convincingly argues that institutional variables often interact in different ways for individuals, including disparate age cohorts. We therefore elaborate here on the theoretical drivers of political participation, at both the individual and country levels, most applicable to our subsequent empirical analysis, and we highlight Africa-specific differences where relevant.

3.1 Social and economic cleavages

Major social and economic differences among voters can account for both their decision to participate in elections as well as the parties that they choose to support. The well-known socioeconomic status (SES) model emphasizes the role of income and education as important predictors of voter participation (Verba and Nie 1972). According to Verba et al. (1995), the causal mechanisms driving this relationship are the resources, such as time, money, and civic skills, that are both associated with a higher socioeconomic status and which simultaneously reduce the costs of participation.

Education, for example, has been shown to demonstrate an important and positive influence on youth voter turnout (Howe 2006; Miller and Shanks 1996; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993) as well as protest activities (McVeigh and Smith 1999). More educated people may be better able to process complex political information (Dalton 2008), and possess a greater sense of citizen responsibility (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Some empirical research though suggests that education's impact is clearer in some countries than in others (see Norris 2002). For example, Bratton (1999) observes that in Zambia, education demonstrated no impact on overall political participation.

Identities related to socioeconomic status and cultural background can also encourage partisan attachments. Although the pattern is changing, lower-class voters in developed countries typically supported leftist and welfare-oriented parties while upper-class voters were more conservative-leaning (see Alt 1985; Hibbs 1977). Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) seminal work on Western Europe also focused on class inequalities, regional cleavages, and divisions between Catholics and Protestants. Together, these cleavages molded ideological differences between left- and right-leaning political parties and influenced voters' degree of attachment to them.

Given the rarity of parties formed along the left-right ideological continuum in Africa, parties remain associated with the personality of their leader. The ethnicity of the party leader can be an important determinant of partisan choice because ethnicity serves as a type of 'cognitive shortcut' in contexts where there are few other means to differentiate parties (Norris and Mattes 2003). Individuals may therefore resort to ethnic voting in the expectation that they are more likely to receive certain goods and services from a co-ethnic than from a politician of a different background (van de Walle 2007). Recent research reveals though that while ethnicity continues to play a role, it is not the sole determinant of voting preferences (see Lindberg and Morrison 2008; Posner 2005).

3.2 Political awareness and civic engagement

Beyond socioeconomic status, an individual's awareness of social, economic, and political issues pertinent to his/her country should ideally stimulate a greater involvement in various modes of political participation. Indeed, access to information through the media, for example, can be a powerful weapon for combating corruption and keeping governments accountable (see Adserà et al. 2003; Besley and Burgess 2002). Information gleaned from the mass media can also reduce voters' reliance on traditional social identities and increase their ability to choose freely which parties to support (see Norris 2004).

However, access to the media does not reveal what type of information actually is absorbed. Some scholars have noted that in developed countries, people who watch television as opposed to read the newspaper demonstrate lower levels of political engagement (e.g. Milner 2002; Putnam 1995). Norris (1996) observes though that television's impact on political participation can be beneficial if news programmes are the main form of media engagement. According to Wattenberg (2008), this may be partially responsible for generational differences in political participation since younger citizens in the US and Europe read the newspaper and watch news on television much less than their older counterparts.

In Africa, however, newspaper circulation remains lower than access to the radio, often due to low literacy rates and the expense of newspapers (see Bratton and van de Walle 1997). Moreover, government ownership of the media continues to be relatively high in some countries, and this may cause citizens to receive biased information that favours incumbents. For instance, Moehler and Singh (2011) find that Africans trust the government media more than independent broadcasters. At the same time though, Africans now have access to many more forms of independent and international information, especially through mobile phones and the internet.[9]

Like media access, participation in civic associations, such as religious and community groups, can also generate information sharing. More importantly, civic associations may foster trust and cooperation and thereby encourage citizens to become more engaged in their political communities (Putnam 1993). Research shows that those with significant involvement in religious groups are more likely to vote (Howe 2006; Van Egmond et al. 1998; Verba et al.1995). McFarland and Thomas (2006) also observe that in the US, young people who become involved in voluntary associations are more likely to engage in future political participation. In Zambia, Bratton (1999) likewise finds that associational membership demonstrated a significant influence on various forms of political participation, including voting. In addition, some social movement scholars have argued that those who are involved in various community and religious groups are more likely to protest (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Klandermans 1997).

9 In fact, based on the World Development Indicators database, during 2000-09, the number of internet users in the region increased from 3.4 to 73.5 million.

3.3 Incumbent performance

How well voters perceive that an incumbent performed in office is a powerful determinant of both the decision to vote and whom to support. The vast literature in this area encompasses both hypotheses specific to performance of the macroeconomy as well as a broader range of issues. Retrospective, sociotropic economic voting assumes that voters punish an incumbent in subsequent elections if the macroeconomy performed poorly. Based on indicators such as GDP growth and inflation, some studies in both the developed and developing world have found that this is a robust relationship (e.g. Lewis-Beck 1988; Remmer 1991; Roberts and Wibbels 1999; Tufte 1978; Wilkin et al. 1997).Then again, voters may still support incumbents in adverse economic circumstances because they do not believe the opposition can do any better (Radcliff 1994). Alternatively, negative retrospective assessments of the macroeconomy could result in abstention rather than choosing an opposition party (Posner and Simon 2002).[10]

Krosnick (1990) instead argues that individuals evaluate incumbents, and policy makers more broadly, based on their position and performance on more specific issues that are of greatest importance to them. Fournier et al. (2003) uncover this pattern in the case of Canada's 1997 elections. Pacek and Radcliff (1995) also suggest that it is not aggregate growth *per se* but inclusion in the growth process that determines whether constituents vote against the incumbent. Indeed, voters may judge a government more on its failure to abide by promises regarding service delivery, job creation, affordable education, and better healthcare.

3.4 Institutions and the party system

At the macro-level, how political institutions function and the structure of the political system impact decisions regarding participation in myriad ways. In the broadest sense, citizens need to believe that electoral institutions function properly and that political parties represent genuine competitors in order for them to turn out to vote. This is commonly referred to as external efficacy, or 'a sense of the system's responsiveness' (Norris 2007: 642). With respect to protest activities, some social movement scholars have emphasized the importance of 'political opportunity structures' in explaining when protests occur (see McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1998). In other words, opportunities for protests and other types of extra-institutional activities often are greater in more open and liberalized environments where the costs to collective action are lower.

At least three additional country-level characteristics that are relevant to the African context can influence political participation.[11] First, proportional representation (PR) systems are believed to increase voter turnout because such systems traditionally encourage a higher number of political parties to compete. Consequently, a voter is

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10 The economic voting literature now also recognizes the importance of political institutions, along with a variety of other factors, which may shape voters' assessments of incumbent responsibility for economic performance (see Anderson 2007).

11 There are certainly other variables than those described here. Jackman (1987), for instance, points to the role of compulsory voting. However, only two African countries (Central African Republic and Gabon) have compulsory voting and neither one can be considered an electoral democracy.

more likely to find a party that meets his/her preferences and therefore more likely to believe that his/her vote has an influence on party outcomes (Brockington 2009; Norris 2002; Powell 1986). A second and related factor is the effective number of political parties, which captures the number of competitive parties within a multi-party system. On the one hand, a higher number of parties theoretically increases turnout because there are both more options and more parties involved in electoral mobilization. Similarly, a higher number of parties offer voters the opportunity to express a higher level of partisanship. On the other hand, the existence of more parties can impose higher information costs on voters to determine what each party represents, and this might be especially true in party systems that are in flux (see Blais 2006). In addition, a higher number of parties may be meaningless if they do not represent distinct alternatives (Kittilson and Anderson 2011). Third, rational choice theory predicts that the greater the degree of competition around an election, the more likely voters will participate because the outcome is less predictable (see Blais 2000).

4 Data and models

In order to analyze these various theories of political participation with respect to Africa's youth, we employ a series of multi-level models that incorporate both individual- and country-level data. Our individual-level data come from Round 4 of Afrobarometer, which is an independent research project that collects demographic and public opinion data on political, economic, and social conditions within the region's major electoral democracies.[12] The Round 4 survey data we employ covers 19 African countries, namely Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.[13] Data for these countries were collected between March 2008 and June 2009 through nationally representative samples drawn according to a multistage, stratified, clustering procedure.[14] Collectively, our sample provides us with data on approximately 26,500 individuals aged 18 years and older across the 19 countries. A number of external data sources were used for our country-level data, and these are described in detail in Appendix Table A1.

As noted earlier, we are primarily interested in the youth's involvement in three main forms of political participation: voter turnout, partisan attachments, and protest behaviour. To explore the behaviour of the youth vis-à-vis that of their older counterparts, we therefore estimate three multivariate regression models. For all three components of the empirical work, we first estimate the model using the full sample of respondents and include age as an explanatory variable to identify whether younger individuals are more or less likely to engage in that form of participation. We then estimate the same model separately for a youth group, aged 18-30 years inclusive, and a non-youth group, who are 31 or more years of age. This allows us to examine whether

12 More information about Afrobarometer can be found at http://www.afrobarometer.org.

13 Even though Zimbabwe is part of the Round 4 data collection, we excluded it from our sample since current political conditions in the country prevent an accurate analysis of the youth's political participation.

14 All of the surveys were conducted over the course of 2008, except for Zambia, where the survey was conducted in 2009.

the relationship between our explanatory variables and the outcome variables vary across these two age cohorts.

Given our interest in both individual- and country-level determinants of political participation, our regressions are estimated using Generalized Linear Latent and Mixed Models.[15] This modeling approach allows us to introduce a random intercept term for the countries, controlling for the likelihood that individual observations within countries are not independent of each other. Failure to control for this intra-class correlation can lead to standard errors which are underestimated, resulting in a higher propensity to reject the null hypothesis that a variable demonstrates no impact on our various measures of political participation. We also ensure that all of our models incorporate both individual and country survey weights to account for the survey design used by Afrobarometer.

4.1 Voter turnout

For the first model on voter turnout, we estimate a logit regression in which our dependent variable, V_i, takes on the value of one if the respondent reported voting in the last national elections, and zero if they did not. Our sample is restricted to eligible voters, which we define as those who were 18 years old in the year prior to the last elections.[16] The estimation is specified as follows:

$$\Pr (V_i = 1 \mid X_i ; Y_j)$$

where $X_{i,}$ represents a vector of individual-level variables that vary by individual i and Y_j represents a vector of country-level variables that vary by country j.

Insofar as our data allowed, the choice of independent variables was informed by the extensive literature that exists on voter turnout. We include the standard set of demographic variables, i.e. age, gender, urban or rural residence, and education.[17] To identify the impact of civic engagement, or social capital, on voter turnout, we include a dummy variable equal to one if the individual reported being an active member of a religious group or other voluntary association or community group. Access to information is captured in a variable on media access, which is coded as one if the individual reported accessing the news via radio, television, or newspapers or using the internet at least a few times a month. As a measure of external political efficacy, we include a variable on whether the individual reported feeling satisfied with the way democracy functions in his/her country.

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15 This is the *gllamm* command in Stata.

16 On the voter turnout question in Afrobarometer, respondents who did not vote have the option of choosing 'You were not registered or you were too young to vote'. By tying these two categories together in one response option, it is difficult to disaggregate which respondents were, indeed, too young to vote in the last election. Since Afrobarometer does not collect data on birth dates, we therefore use the approach detailed here. This approach will exclude some eligible individuals who could have turned 18 in the months prior to the election of that year, but we believe that this is more appropriate than including individuals who were not eligible.

17 Education is captured as a nine-level index ranging from no formal schooling to postgraduate education.

Due to the nature of the survey data, a number of other individual-level indicators used in much of the literature are excluded here. Specifically, socioeconomic and employment data are only available at the time of the survey, precluding us from using them to predict earlier voting behaviour. Likewise, self-expressed closeness to a political party often is identified as a determinant of voter turnout. Given the distance between survey and election time in many countries, and given that opposition parties and independent candidates emerge and disappear quite frequently in the African context, a respondent may be close to a party today that did not exist at the time of the last elections.[18] By contrast, many of the individual-level variables we retain typically vary little over time. Unlike household income and an individual's employment status, for instance, which would both be affected by broader economic conditions in the country, an individual's decision to join a religious or voluntary group more likely reflects underlying behavioural characteristics that would not be expected to change very much over time.[19]

Our voter turnout model also contains a set of country-level variables representing the economic and institutional environment within which the individual operates. We include real GDP growth per capita prior to the election to identify whether turnout is affected by retrospective evaluations of the macroeconomy.[20] To capture the impact of political institutions, a dummy variable is included if a country's last national election at the time of the survey depended on majoritarian/plurality, rather than proportional representation, electoral rules.[21] The effective number of parties that competed in the last national elections is calculated according to the well-known index introduced by Laakso and Taagepera (1979). To proxy for the degree of competitiveness, we use the number of years that the incumbent party was in office at the time of the last election. A country's political rights rating measured by Freedom House at the time of the last national elections provides a second measure of external efficacy. We would expect that when elections are deemed free and fair, and involve genuinely competitive parties, individuals possess greater faith that the electoral system functions properly.

Lastly, we include a variable identifying, at the time of the survey, the number of months that had passed since the last elections in that country. In our sample of countries, this variable ranges from just under four months in the case of Madagascar to over four and a half years for South Africa.[22] We include this variable as a way of

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18 For instance, President Bingu wa Mutharika of Malawi formed a new party after he was re-elected.

19 We were also unable to explore whether experiences in adolescence, family background or parental voting behaviour, for example, affect turnout amongst the youth, as has been done in some developed countries where panel or retrospective data are often available (e.g. McFarland and Thomas 2006; Pacheco 2008).

20 Pacek and Radcliff (1995) note that this measure is the most appropriate for inter-temporal and cross-country comparisons because it takes into account both differences in inflation and population size.

21 In much of the literature, concurrency is used as well to capture the impact of electoral institutions. However, we found that majority/plurality systems were highly correlated with concurrency in our sample and therefore chose to retain the former variable in our regression analysis.

22 The last elections that Afrobarometer captured were held in 2008 for Madagascar; 2007 for Benin, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal; 2006 for Cape Verde, Uganda and Zambia; 2005 for Liberia and Tanzania 2005; and 2004 in Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa.

accounting for possible differences across countries in individual reporting of voter behaviour as a result of recall bias.[23]

4.2 Partisan attachments

In our second model of political participation, we investigate current partisan attachment among our sample of adults, using a multinomial logit regression model that is specified as follows:

Pr ($PA_i = 1 \mid R_i ; S_j$)
Pr ($PA_i = 2 \mid R_i ; S_j$)
Pr ($PA_i = 0 \mid R_i ; S_j$) base category

where PA_i represents the polychotomous dependent variable, partisan attachment, equal to one if the individual was not close to any party, equal to two if the individual felt close to an opposition party, with the base category set to those who felt close to the incumbent party.

As in model one above, R_i includes age, gender, education, location, group membership and media access. Since we are estimating current feelings of partisanship, we are also able to examine the impact of the individual's labour market status and their household's socioeconomic status. The former is coded as equal to one if the individual reported being either unemployed or employed but still looking for work. This allows us to capture the impact of dissatisfaction with an individual's current status better than a simple dichotomy of employed/not employed would allow. Following Bratton (2006), the latter is measured by using the Lived Poverty Index (LPI), which captures whether anyone in the individual's household had gone without enough food, clean water, medicines or medical treatment, fuel for cooking, or a cash income, over the previous year. Higher scores on the index imply greater deprivation. Since, as noted earlier, ethnicity has been identified as an important determinant of partisanship in Africa, we also include a variable measuring whether the individual belongs to the same ethnic group as the leader of the incumbent party at the time of the survey.

We further explore how incumbent performance affects partisanship by using individuals' perceptions of how the government is performing on a range of specific issues, such as job creation, educational needs, basic health services, keeping prices down, and corruption. These variables are coded equal to one if the respondent felt that the present government had not handled the issue well. In addition, we retain our measure of retrospective evaluations of broader macro-economic performance.[24] Effective number of parties and the length of party incumbency at the time of the survey also are retained in this model.

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23 More detailed descriptions of how each of the variables was coded, as well as the questions or sources the data were drawn from, are available in Appendix Table A1. The means and standard errors of the individual- and country-level variables are presented in Appendix Tables A2 and A3 respectively.

24 While we would have liked to include a measure of egotropic perceptions of living conditions, this variable was highly correlated with our LPI. Since the LPI provides us with a multi-dimensional, objective measure of socioeconomic status, we preferred this variable instead.

4.3 Protest activities

Our third and final model examines extra-institutional political participation, captured here as attendance at demonstrations or protest marches. Our logit regression model is specified as follows:

$$\Pr (P_i = 1 \mid L_i ; M_j)$$

where P_i is equal to one if the individual had participated in a protest march or demonstration at least once in the preceding year, and zero otherwise. $L_{i,}$ contains our standard set of individual-level variables, that is, age, gender, education, urban/rural residence, group membership, media access, employment status, and the household deprivation index. We also include the variable on whether or not the individual reported being dissatisfied with the way democracy works in his/her country, as we would expect that those who feel the political system is not functioning in a way that represents their needs would be more likely to express their disappointment through channels other than voting.

Our vector of country-level variables, *Mj*, incorporates real GDP growth per capita in the year prior to the survey. We would expect that poor economic performance would have broader impacts on individuals' well-being and thereby increase the likelihood of protest. Given that we are now focusing on protest activity rather than elections, we employ Freedom House's civil liberties index in order to determine how the political opportunity structure affects the likelihood of protest action.

5 Results

Tables 1 to 3 present the results of the regression analysis for the three sets of models explained above. For ease of exposition, the tables display the odds ratios in the case of the logit models and the relative risk ratios in the case of the multinomial logit models rather than the coefficient values. These ratios can be interpreted as the odds (or relative risk) of obtaining the relevant outcome for a one unit change in the explanatory variable. An odds or relative risk ratio greater than one corresponds to a positive coefficient, a ratio less than one corresponds to a negative coefficient, while a ratio equal to or close to one signals that there is no appreciable impact of that variable on the odds of obtaining the outcome. The first column of each of the results tables shows the regression for the full sample while the remaining two columns focus on the youth and non-youth groups, respectively.

5.1 Voter turnout

In model one, we find that the individual-level variables are the strongest predictors of voter turnout. Notably, age demonstrates a positive effect in the voter turnout model, indicating that older individuals are more likely to vote. The ratio of 1.039 implies that with each additional year, the odds of voting compared to not voting are increased by about 4 per cent.[25] In addition, members of a religious or community group are more

[25] We also included a quadratic term for age in the voter turnout model since, after a certain age, the elderly may face physical and other challenges that preclude participation at the polls (see Nie et al.

likely to vote. Those who express dissatisfaction with the way democracy works in their country are more likely to abstain, as are those who live in urban areas. Gender is only weakly significant for the full sample and thus, for the youth and non-youth sub-samples, its influence completely disappears. The variable representing the number of months since the elections in that country has no significant effect in the regressions. While not conclusive, this provides some evidence that recall bias has not produced higher (or lower) turnout among individuals depending on how long ago elections were held in their country.

When comparing the youth to the non-youth samples, we uncover some interesting differences. In particular, media access increases the likelihood of voting among the youth, compared with the non-youth. This might be because frequent access to the news media provides important information for first-time voters on where and how to vote whereas the non-youth group are less reliant on the media for logistical information regarding voting. It is also possible, however, that the type and quality of news media accessed varies across the youth and non-youth groups. In addition, we find that the longer the incumbent party has been in office, the less likely the youth are to vote. The fact that this variable demonstrates no impact on the older cohort signifies that the youth see incumbent dominance as a disincentive to vote because the outcome is expected to be a foregone conclusion. Older Africans who experienced pro-democracy movements may still value the act of voting regardless of the expected outcome. Instead, the non-youth group's dissatisfaction with the quality of democracy in their respective country, rather than incumbent dominance, plays a more significant role in their decision not to vote when compared with the youth.

One important note about these results is that survey assessments of voter turnout traditionally are over-reported because respondents may feel that there is a social value to voting and therefore may be embarrassed to admit that they did not vote. In other contexts, the problem has been found to be most related to age and education such that younger and more educated people are the most likely to over-report turnout (Karp and Brockington 2005). However, we have confidence that even if this over-reporting is present, it is not biasing our results in the wrong direction. If fewer young people actually voted than they reported here, then the age variable would continue to be negatively correlated with turnout while the odds ratio would be substantively larger. Likewise, instead of finding that education is significantly and positively associated with turnout, we found no significance.

5.2 Partisan attachment

In our second model on partisan attachment, we find the results largely consistent with the picture that emerges from the voter turnout model. Younger individuals and those living in urban areas are more likely to express no attachment to a party, or closeness to the opposition party, rather than closeness to the incumbent. Being a member of a religious or voluntary group and media access both reduce the chances of not reporting a party attachment, although only in the case of media access does this also translate into support for the opposition party over the incumbent. A robust finding is that an

1974). The expected negative effect on this variable was obtained, and our other results were robust to the inclusion of the quadratic term.

individual who belongs to the same ethnic group as the incumbent party leader is more likely to have an attachment to the incumbent party over no party attachment or an attachment to the opposition.

With respect to other indicators of socioeconomic status, we find that dissatisfaction with one's current labour market status and higher levels of household deprivation have no effects on partisan attachment. By contrast, individuals' perceptions of how the current government is handling certain socioeconomic issues in the country as a whole have very strong and significant effects. Dissatisfaction with the way the incumbent government is managing a variety of issues, from job creation to corruption, all significantly reduce the chances of the individual reporting an attachment to the incumbent and increase the likelihood of either no party attachment or an attachment to the opposition, with the latter effect being larger. Assessments of performance, therefore, play an important role. This is reinforced by the fact that positive real GDP growth per capita prior to the survey is more likely to increase an individual's attachment to the incumbent party.

The other country-level variables we include also have significant effects. For instance, the greater the effective number of parties, the more likely the individual is to report no partisan attachment. This suggests that for some individuals, the existence of more parties does not necessarily imply that these parties represent a genuine alternative from the incumbent. In addition, more parties could impose high information costs on individuals and therefore increase detachment from the party system. By contrast, the longer the incumbent party has been in power, the more likely individuals are to report an attachment to the incumbent.

A few differences emerge when we analyse the two age cohorts separately. While media access increases the likelihood of reporting an attachment to the incumbent rather than to no party for both the youth and non-youth groups, only the non-youth group is also more likely to report being close to the opposition rather than to the incumbent if they accessed news through the media frequently. There seems to be no obvious reason for this cohort difference, which again draws attention to the fact that we do not know anything about the type of news that individuals are accessing. We might be able to shed more light on the issue if we were able to capture, for example, whether individuals are accessing the news through channels that act as a government mouthpiece or through more independent sources, and which types of news items (i.e. local, national, and international) they follow most.

There are some noteworthy differences between the youth and the non-youth groups in the impact of the government's handling of various socioeconomic issues on partisan attachment. Along with corruption, dissatisfaction with job creation appears to be the issue that is most significant for determining the youth's partisan affinities. Those who are dissatisfied with job creation are significantly more likely to express either no partisanship or an attachment to the opposition. Notably, when comparing the size of the odds ratios across the various issues, dissatisfaction with government's handling of job creation also has the largest substantive impact for the youth group with respect to their support for the opposition. This is perhaps not surprising given the poor employment prospects among the youth in many African countries. For the non-youth group, dissatisfaction with a broader range of issues is associated with partisanship. Surprisingly, however, those over the age of 30 are more affected by the government's

handling of the education system compared to the youth group. This might reflect that during many of Africa's democratic transitions, leaders removed primary school fees as an election tactic (see Stasavage 2005). As such, today's youth most likely possess greater access to at least some education than their older counterparts. Moreover, those over the age of 30 will have children of school-going age and possibly be more attuned to the challenges of their country's education system.

5.3 Protest action

In our final model, we explore which factors affect the likelihood of an individual having attended a demonstration or a protest march over the previous year. In contrast to the other two models and to our own initial expectations, we find that the youth are not significantly more likely to engage in protest action. Instead, key predictors of protest engagement include being male and having more education. In addition, individuals who belong to religious groups or other voluntary associations and those who more frequently access the media have a particularly greater chance of having protested or demonstrated, with odds ratios of 2.061 and 1.258, respectively. As predicted by Putnam (1993) and others, this signals that those who are more engaged in civic associations and are attuned to current events are more likely to employ other forms of political participation in addition to voting in order to express their preferences to policy makers. Individuals who report being dissatisfied with the way democracy functions in their country also report a greater likelihood of engaging in protest activity, perhaps reflecting a sense of disenchantment with the ability of more formal methods of participation to address their interests.

At the country-level, we find that the lower a country's civil liberties index, the less likely individuals in those countries are to protest since their ability to organize public gatherings and freely express their opinions would be more severely curtailed. Real GDP growth per capita prior to the survey year demonstrated no significant impact on protest behaviour, suggesting that the broad macroeconomic environment plays little role in determining an individual's decision to protest.

While our country-level variables demonstrate no variation across cohorts, a number of differences appear between the youth and the non-youth groups on the individual-level variables. The household deprivation index has a significant effect among the youth group, but not among the non-youth group. This implies that it is the youth in particular who are driven out onto the streets when their own, or their household's, living conditions are not satisfactory. Similarly, only the youth are more likely to engage in protest activity when they are dissatisfied with the way in which democracy functions in their country. In other words, when the youth possess a lower sense of external political efficacy, they are more likely than older citizens to feel the need to express their views through other more informal channels. Older cohorts who are likewise dissatisfied with democracy may, due to their longer experience, view alternative and less confrontational means of participation as more productive in such environments.[26] In addition, the impact of education on protest activities only manifests through the youth group, suggesting that young and well-educated Africans are more likely to express

[26] For instance, according to the Afrobarometer data, older individuals are significantly more likely to attend a community meeting than to protest, compared to their younger counterparts.

dissatisfaction with the status quo through protests because they are the ones who possess greater expectations about their futures. This is noteworthy given that education did not play a role in the youth's other modes of participation.

5.4 Summary of results

Overall, we find that compared to their older counterparts, the youth are less likely to vote and less likely to form a partisan attachment. In addition, when the youth do feel an affinity towards a particular party, they have a greater chance of reporting an attachment to the opposition compared to the non-youth. Contrary to expectations, however, they are not significantly more likely to engage in protest activities.

Importantly though, the differences between the youth and non-youth are greater with respect to some types of political participation than others. Table 4 presents the mean predicted probabilities for the three outcome variables for the youth and non-youth groups. These estimates provide a more nuanced picture of our findings, because they not only describe the age effect for each of the models, but also show the magnitude of the effect for the different outcomes. The largest age effect is evident in the voter turnout model, where youth predicted turnout is over thirteen percentage points lower than for the non-youth. While there are also sizable differences between the youth and the non-youth in reporting no partisan attachment or feeling close to the incumbent, there are only quite small generational differences with respect to opposition attachment and protest activity. This suggests that the youth's response to any feelings of disenchantment with the political system is mostly one of withdrawal from the party system, with only some weaker signs of a greater alignment with the opposition and participation in extra-institutional forms of political action compared to the non-youth.

In our more disaggregated analysis of political participation amongst the youth and non-youth, we find that most of the other correlates of participation affect the youth in similar ways to the non-youth, and generally in ways which were expected. Nonetheless, a few interesting generational differences emerged. With respect to voter turnout, the length of time that the incumbent party had been in office at the time of the last elections significantly influenced the decision of those in the youth group to vote while demonstrating no impact on the non-youth group. In the partisan attachment model, the youth were found to be particularly concerned with the issue of job creation. Dissatisfaction with the way the incumbent government was handling job creation meant that the youth were more likely not to form any partisan attachment or form an attachment with the opposition. A key result from the final model, which is that the youth who live in more deprived households are more likely to protest, similarly supports the idea that the youth are driven by their personal economic prospects to a greater degree than the non-youth. Lastly, the finding that a lower sense of external political efficacy raises the odds of protesting among the youth group in particular suggests a greater disenchantment with the formal political system as a channel through which needs are met.

6 Conclusions and implications

Despite Africa's youth bulge, a majority of the region's presidents are over 60 years-old. Some African scholars believe that this prevents the concerns of the youth from being brought into the political arena and therefore advocate lowering the voting age to

16 so that older politicians are more responsive to this sizeable constituency (see Juma 2011).[27] Our findings suggest however that such a decision would not necessarily result in higher participation of the youth in elections. The level of youth voter turnout is significantly lower than that of older Africans, and age consistently represented a robust predictor of voting behaviour. In addition, the youth were more likely to express a complete lack of partisanship than older citizens.

The fact that these patterns largely mirror those in developed countries suggests that Africa's youth are not acting in a manner that is characteristically different from those in other regions of the world. Moreover, based on looking at protest activities, pessimistic claims that disillusioned, African youth will foment instability do not yet appear warranted in many of the region's electoral democracies. In fact, the youth were not more likely to protest, and the predicted probabilities illustrated that their absolute level of protest was only 14 per cent, which is even lower than for European youth (EC 2007).[28]

However, in contrast to other regions of the world, Africa is urbanizing rapidly, and the youth bulge will continue to remain a prominent feature in the years to come. Residency in urban areas demonstrated the same pattern as the youth effect across two of our three outcome variables. This suggests that voter abstention and low partisanship might grow over time for Africa as its current demographic trajectory continues. In turn, this questions whether the electoral process remains a legitimate means of conveying the youth's concerns and whether political parties are accurately representing their younger citizens' interests. Furthermore, it is meaningful that we found performance on job creation a key determinant of partisanship for the youth and that socioeconomic deprivation influences protest behaviour among this cohort and not the older age cohort. Given existing high levels of unemployment and poverty among Africa's youth, these influences could remain highly relevant to political participation for the foreseeable future.

In order to determine whether there is cause for concern about the youth's political preferences and modes of participation, there are at least two areas that warrant further research. First, we need to explore other factors that might be simultaneously associated with both youth and voter turnout in particular. For instance, since the youth often need to register for the first time in order to vote, their lower turnout might reflect greater logistical barriers rather than higher disillusionment with party options and the electoral system.[29] In Zambia, the electoral commission effectively disenfranchised many young voters by refusing to re-open the electoral register in the 2008 elections for those who had turned 18 years-old since the prior election (see Cheeseman and Hinfelaar 2010). Almost forty years ago, Nie et al. (1974: 334) also observed that for younger age

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27 Within the 19 countries in our sample, only three presidents are younger than 60 at the time of writing: Benin's Yayi Boni (59), Botswana's Ian Khama (58), and Madagascar's Andry Rajoelina (37).

28 A 2007 Eurobarometer survey shows that 20 per cent of European Union youth protested in a public demonstration during the year prior to which the survey was conducted (see EC 2007).

29 Afrobarometer's response options for voter turnout are not worded very clearly and the categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, we cannot tell from the largest response option 'You were not registered or were too young to vote' whether individuals were not able to register due to institutional barriers or because of a sense of apathy.

groups, length of residency in a community is an important determinant of political participation. This is significant in Africa because of high rates of rural-to-urban migration, especially among the youth. Often, the youth may still be registered in faraway rural communities at the time of elections, which creates a disincentive to vote. Therefore, future survey data and analyses should consider how migration patterns impact the youth's political participation.

Second, the literature on youth political participation highlights an important distinction between generational and life-cycle effects. A generation effect means that even as the young become older, their generation possesses certain characteristics and historical experiences that determine their political behaviours and preferences (see Dalton 1988). A life-cycle effect implies that as people age, they adopt the political behaviours of their predecessors through greater socialization and experience with the political system (see Nie et al. 1974). Without panel data, it remains difficult to disentangle which effect has greater explanatory power in the African context.

Nevertheless, this paper demonstrated that the role of age should not be overlooked in analyses of African politics and political behaviour. Due to demographic trends and shifts in the region's democratic trajectory, generational identities have not only been relevant to Africa's political history but also remain powerful determinants of political participation within the region. Hopefully, this paper will motivate additional research on Africa's youth and political participation that currently remain unexplored.

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Table 1: Voter turnout in last elections, odds ratios from multi-level random intercept logit model

	All	Youth (18-30)	Non-youth (31+)
Individual			
Age	1.039*** (0.006)	1.101*** (0.031)	1.015*** (0.004)
Male	1.162* (0.106)	1.219 (0.153)	1.127 (0.108)
Urban	0.797*** (0.063)	0.826* (0.086)	0.762*** (0.081)
Education	0.984 (0.023)	0.967 (0.034)	0.100 (0.023)
Member of religious/other group	1.511*** (0.068)	1.488*** (0.127)	1.591*** (0.108)
Media access	1.135 (0.092)	1.203* (0.119)	1.056 (0.161)
Not satisfied with democracy	0.775*** (0.055)	0.863 (0.094)	0.665*** (0.049)
Country			
Real GDP growth prior to election	1.021 (0.034)	1.007 (0.033)	1.052 (0.052)
Electoral rule	0.983 (0.251)	1.025 (0.252)	0.828 (0.260)
Effective no. of parties	1.019 (0.131)	1.007 (0.135)	1.031 (0.124)
Length of incumbency at election time	0.975 (0.017)	0.967** (0.017)	0.983 (0.017)
Political rights index	0.958 (0.076)	0.988 (0.073)	0.918 (0.080)
Months since last elections	1.003 (0.008)	1.002 (0.009)	1.000 (0.008)
No. of observations	21,084	7,971	13,113

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. The data are weighted using both the within-country and across-country weights provided. The sample includes only those who were eligible to vote in the last elections, which we identify as individuals who were at least 18 years old in the year prior to the election.

*** Significant at 1 per cent level; ** significant at 5 per cent level; * significant at 10 per cent level.

Source: See Appendix, Table A1.

Table 2: Partisan attachment, relative risk ratios from multi-level random intercept multinomial logit model

Explanatory variables	Outcome 1: Not close to party			Outcome 2: Close to opposition		
	All	*Youth (18-30)*	*Non-youth (31+)*	*All*	*Youth (18-30)*	*Non-youth (31+)*
Individual						
Age	0.991*** (0.003)	0.969*** (0.009)	0.998 (0.004)	0.993** (0.003)	0.991 (0.009)	0.992** (0.004)
Male	0.813*** (0.055)	0.780*** (0.060)	0.850** (0.069)	1.239*** (0.080)	1.265** (0.130)	1.233*** (0.062)
Urban	1.604*** (0.123)	1.620*** (0.123)	1.552*** (0.137)	1.249*** (0.070)	1.304*** (0.140)	1.183*** (0.067)
Education	1.016 (0.023)	1.026 (0.027)	1.016 (0.025)	1.032 (0.027)	1.037 (0.033)	1.035 (0.028)
Member of religious/other group	0.735*** (0.050)	0.707*** (0.060)	0.778*** (0.067)	0.962 (0.078)	0.948 (0.089)	0.981 (0.090)
Media access	0.827*** (0.055)	0.847** (0.063)	0.814*** (0.066)	1.139* (0.082)	1.087 (0.115)	1.166** (0.081)
Ethnicity of incumbent	0.688*** (0.098)	0.716*** (0.094)	0.667** (0.120)	0.529*** (0.136)	0.521** (0.147)	0.538*** (0.135)
Unemployed/employed and looking	0.943 (0.067)	0.979 (0.068)	0.940 (0.084)	0.993 (0 .070)	0.985 (0.086)	1.007 (0.086)
Household deprivation index	0.948 (0.033)	0.932 (0.049)	0.974 (0.042)	0.967 (0.029)	0.961 (0.045)	0.978 (0.040)
Dissatisfaction: job creation	1.178*** (0.062)	1.268*** (0.095)	1.109 (0.092)	1.482*** (0.115)	1.608*** (0.195)	1.391*** (0.102)
Dissatisfaction: education	1.059 (0.052)	0.978 (0.098)	1.131* (0.076)	1.151* (0.085)	1.037 (0.096)	1.246** (0.133)
Dissatisfaction: basic health	1.163** (0.079)	1.115 (0.097)	1.212* (0.127)	1.135*** (0.045)	1.169 (0.112)	1.114* (0.074)
Dissatisfaction: inflation	1.151** (0.070)	1.036 (0.089)	1.262*** (0.076)	1.248** (0.144)	1.165 (0.192)	1.309*** (0.141)
Dissatisfaction: corruption	1.256*** (0.070)	1.242*** (0.087)	1.273*** (0.091)	1.422*** (0.091)	1.443*** (0.115)	1.413*** (0.117)
Country						
GDP growth prior to survey	0.897** (0.044)	0.879*** (0.044)	0.907* (0.047)	0.856* (0.079)	0.840* (0.081)	0.865 (0.079)
Effective no. of parties	1.202*** (0.079)	1.171*** (0.171)	1.233*** (0.096)	1.075 (0.094)	1.103 (0.102)	1.054 (0.103)
Length of incumbency at time of survey	0.959*** (0.007)	0.964*** (0.007)	0.953*** (0.007)	0.968*** (0.012)	0.972*** (0.010)	0.965** (0.016)
No. of observations	22,622	10,087	12,535	22,622	10,087	12,535

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. The data are weighted using both the within-country and across-country weights provided. The reference category for the dependant variable is 'close to incumbent'.

*** Significant at 1 per cent level; ** significant at 5 per cent level; * significant at 10 per cent level.

Source: See Appendix, Table A1.

Table 3: Participated in a protest march or demonstration, odds ratios from multi-level random intercept logit model

	All	Youth (18-30)	Non-youth (31+)
Individual			
Age	0.996 (0.004)	0.995 (0.017)	0.994 (0.007)
Male	1.311*** (0.094)	1.274*** (0.094)	1.382*** (0.183)
Urban	1.088 (0.108)	1.118 (0.165)	1.1034 (0.100)
Education	1.083*** (0.031)	1.074** (0.034)	1.077 (0.049)
Member of religious/other group	2.061*** (0.276)	2.052*** (0.295)	2.138*** (0.390)
Media access	1.258** (0.135)	1.593*** (0.297)	1.056 (0.151)
Unemployed/employed and looking	1.108 (0.081)	1.083 (0.114)	1.164 (0.162)
Household deprivation index	1.061 (0.047)	1.112** (0.054)	1.034 (0.077)
Not satisfied with democracy	1.153* (0.092)	1.277** (0.133)	1.054 (0.107)
Country			
Real GDP growth prior to survey	0.956 (0.056)	0.945 (0.060)	0.964 (0.059)
Civil liberties index	0.733*** (0.070)	0.760*** (0.078)	0.704*** (0.095)
No. of observations	22,816	10,168	12,648

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. The data are weighted using both the within-country and across-country weights provided.

*** Significant at 1 per cent level; ** significant at 5 per cent level; * significant at 10 per cent level.

Source: See Appendix, Table A1.

Table 4: Predicted probabilities for the youth and non-youth groups

	Youth (18-30)	Non-youth (31+)
Voted in last election	0.690	0.827
Not close to any party	0.404	0.357
Close to the incumbent	0.358	0.417
Close to the opposition	0.238	0.226
Engaged in protest activity	0.144	0.136

Source: Authors' calculations based on model results.

Appendix

Table A1: Description of variables

Variable name	Question and coding	Source
Dependent variables		
Voted in last elections	'With regard to the most recent, (date, type) elections, which statement is true for you?' 0= 'You were not registered or you were too young to vote'; 'You decided not to vote'; 'You could not find the polling station'; 'You were prevented from voting'; 'You did not have time to vote'; 'Did not vote for some other reason'; 'You could not find your name in the voter's register' 1= 'You voted in the elections'	Afrobarometer 2008/09
Party attachment	'Do you feel close to any particular political party?' 'Which party is that?' 1=not close to any party 2=close to the incumbent party 3=close to an opposition party	Afrobarometer 2008/09
Engaged in protest/ demonstration	'Here is a list of actions people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year. Attended a demonstration or protest march'. 0='No, would never this'; 'No, but would do if I had the chance' 1='Yes, once or twice'; 'Yes, several times'; 'Yes, often'.	Afrobarometer 2008/09
Independent variables: individual		
Age	'How old are you?' Age in years	Afrobarometer 2008/09
Male	Gender of respondent 0=female 1=male	Afrobarometer 2008/09
Urban	Area of residence 0=rural 1=urban	Afrobarometer 2008/09
Education index	Highest level of education completed. 0=No formal; 1=Informal only; 2=Some primary; 3=Primary completed; 4=Some secondary; 5=Secondary completed; 6=Post-secondary, other than university; 7=Some university; 8=University completed; 9=Post-graduate	Afrobarometer 2008/09
Member of religious/other group	'Member of religious group'. 'Some other voluntary association or community group'. 0=Not a member of either or an inactive member of both 1=An active member or official leader of either or both	Afrobarometer 2008/09
Media access	'How often do you get your news from the following sources: Radio? Television? Newspapers?' 'How often do you use the internet?' 0=Accessed all of these sources 'never' or 'less than once a month'. 1=Accessed at least one of these sources 'a few times	Afrobarometer 2008/09

	a month', 'a few times a week' or 'every day'.	
Not satisfied with democracy	'Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in (country)?' 0='fairly satisfied'; 'very satisfied' 1='(country) is not a democracy'; 'not at all satisfied', 'not very satisfied'	Afrobarometer 2008/09
Ethnicity of incumbent	'What is your tribe? You know, your ethnic or cultural group'. 0=Not of the same ethnic group as incumbent president at time of survey. 1=Individual is of the same ethnicity as incumbent president at time of survey	Afrobarometer 2008/09
Unemployed/ employed and looking	'Do you have a job that pays a cash income? Is it full-time or part-time? Are you presently looking for a job (even if you are presently working)?' 0=No (not looking); Yes, part-time (not looking); Yes, full-time (not looking) 1=No (looking), Yes, part-time (looking); Yes, full-time (looking)	Afrobarometer 2008/09
Household deprivation index	'Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income?' Values ranging from 0 to 4 based on additive responses to the 5 components: 0=never; 1=just once or twice; 2=several times; 3=many times; 4=always	Afrobarometer 2008/09
Govt. handling of: -job creation -education -basic health -inflation -corruption	'Now let's speak about the present government of this country. How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Handling creating jobs? Addressing educational needs? Improving basic health services? Keeping prices down? Fighting corruption in government?' 0= 'Very well'; 'Fairly well'; 'Don't know/haven't heard enough' 1='Fairly badly'; 'Very badly'	Afrobarometer 2008/09
Independent variables: country		
GDP growth prior to election	Change in real GDP per capita growth in year preceding the last national election.	Calculated from World Development Indicators
GDP growth prior to survey	Change in real GDP per capita growth in year preceding the survey.	Calculated from World Development Indicators
Electoral rule	Electoral rule for the country's most recent elections (legislative, presidential, or both) at the time the Afrobarometer survey occurred. 0 = PR or mixed system, 1 = plurality/majoritarian system	IDEA Electoral Handbook and ACE Electoral Project
Effective no. of parties	Laakso-Taagepara index calculated on the vote shares obtained by each party during the most recent elections at the time the Afrobarometer survey occurred.	Calculated based on data from African elections database (http://africanelections.tripod.com/)

Length of incumbency at election time	Number of years that the incumbent party had been in power at the time of the last elections.	Calculated based on data from African elections database (http://africanelections.tripod.com/)
Length of incumbency at time of survey	Number of years that the incumbent party had been in power at the time the Afrobarometer survey occurred.	Calculated based on data from African elections database (http://africanelections.tripod.com/)
Political rights index	Index capturing aspects of the electoral system, including whether elections are free and fair, involve competitive parties, and ensure that minority groups have full political rights. The index ranges from 1-7, with 1 being 'most free'.	Freedom House
Civil liberties index	Index capturing the extent of freedom of expression and belief, ability to participate in organizations and public demonstrations, and an independent judiciary that protects the rights of citizens. The index ranges from 1-7, with 1 being 'most free'.	Freedom House
Months since last elections	No. of months between the election date and the survey date.	Calculated using the IFES Election Guide and EISA

Source: See column 3 of table.

Table A2: Means for individual-level dependent and independent variables

	All	Youth	Non-youth
Dependent variables			
Voted in last elections[a]	0.78 (0.003)	0.68 (0.006)	0.84 (0.004)
Not close to party	0.38 (0.004)	0.41 (0.006)	0.35 (0.005)
Close to opposition	0.23 (0.003)	0.23 (0.005)	0.23 (0.004)
Close to incumbent	0.39 (0.004)	0.36 (0.006)	0.42 (0.005)
Engaged in protest/demonstration	0.14 (0.002)	0.14 (0.004)	0.13 (0.003)
Independent: Individual			
Age	36.39 (0.111)	24.09 (0.043)	45.94 (0.126)
Male	0.51 (0.004)	0.47 (0.006)	0.55 (0.005)
Urban	0.38 (0.004)	0.42 (0.006)	0.35 (0.005)
Education	3.14 (0.015)	3.61 (0.021)	2.78 (0.021)
Member of religious/other group	0.54 (0.004)	0.49 (0.006)	0.57 (0.005)
Media access	0.84 (0.003)	0.85 (0.004)	0.82 (0.004)
Not satisfied with democracy	0.45 (0.004)	0.48 (0.006)	0.43 (0.005)
Ethnicity of incumbent	0.25 (0.003)	0.23 (0.005)	0.25 (0.005)
Unemployed/employed and looking	0.52 (0.004)	0.60 (0.006)	0.46 (0.005)
Household deprivation index	1.25 (0.007)	1.17 (0.010)	1.32 (0.009)
Govt. handling of job creation	0.69 (0.004)	0.69 (0.005)	0.70 (0.005)
Govt. handling of education	0.33 (0.004)	0.33 (0.005)	0.33 (0.005)
Govt. handling of basic health	0.37 (0.004)	0.37 (0.005)	0.38 (0.005)
Govt. handling of inflation	0.80 (0.003)	0.79(0.005)	0.80 (0.004)
Govt. handling of corruption	0.50 (0.004)	0.51 (0.006)	0.49 (0.005)
No. of observations	22,884	10,183	12,701

Notes: The data are weighted. Standard errors reported in parentheses.

[a] Voter turnout is based on the population eligible to vote (defined as those who were 18 in the year prior to the election). The rest of the estimates are for the full sample of adults, aged 18 years and older.

Source: Calculations based on data obtained from sources in Table A1.

Table A3: Means for country-level variables

Independent: Country	Mean
GDP growth prior to election	3.86(2.560)
GDP growth prior to survey	3.14 (1.828)
Electoral rule	0.68 (0.478)
Effective no. of parties	2.62(1.179)
Length of incumbency at election time	11.16 (9.269)
Length of incumbency at time of survey	12.63(10.404)
Political rights index	2.95(1.311)
Civil liberties index	2.90 (0.875)
Months since last elections	30.17 (16.28)
No. of observations	19

Notes: Standard deviations reported in parentheses.

Source: Calculations based on data obtained from sources listed in Table A1.