



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

CENTRE FOR
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Keeping tabs? Perceptions of relative deprivation and political trust in Africa

Thomas Isbell

CSSR Working Paper No. 461

December 2020



**institute for democracy,
citizenship and public policy in
Africa**

Published by the Centre for Social Science Research
University of Cape Town
2020

<http://www.cssr.uct.ac.za>

This Working Paper can be downloaded from:

<http://cssr.uct.ac.za/pub/wp/461>

ISBN: 978-1-77011-448-7

© Centre for Social Science Research, UCT, 2020

About the author:

Thomas Isbell is a PhD student at the University of Cape Town (UCT). He is a member of the Afrobarometer Data Management Team and works part-time as a UCT lecturer in the Departments of Political Studies and Sociology, teaching graduate-level classes on quantitative analysis, research design and international political economy.

This paper incorporates parts of the author's PhD thesis. In his thesis, Thomas asks whether, and – if so – how, perceived lived inequality shapes how ordinary Africans perceive and engage with democracy.

Feedback from readers is welcome at tisbell@afrobarometer.org

Keeping tabs? Perceptions of relative deprivation and political trust in Africa

Abstract

What are the implications of economic inequality for political trust (i.e. trust in government and state institutions)? Political trust forms an important function in representative political systems. On the one hand, political trust facilitates the efficient functioning of government by allowing governments to make day-to-day decisions without consulting the electorate or using coercion (Newton et al., 2018). On the other hand, political trust simplifies complex political processes and reduces monitoring costs for ordinary people. The existing literature has shown that macroeconomic performance (including levels of inequality) and evaluations shape political trust, but the literature has paid little attention, until recently, to the role of individual perceptions and subjective experiences of inequality. However, little research has focused on cases in Africa regarding inequality and political trust.

In this paper, I use Afrobarometer survey data collected from over 40000 respondents in 34 African countries between 2016 and 2018. I use multi-level modelling to demonstrate that perceptions of relative deprivation are significantly associated with less trust in representative government institutions and, more weakly, with less trust in state institutions. The effect for perceptions of relative deprivation remains significant when controlling for macroeconomic conditions and performance evaluations. For trust in representative government institutions, the effect size of relative deprivation is comparable or larger in size to frequently cited covariates of trust, such as location, level of education, and government economic performance, suggesting that perceived relative deprivation is indeed an important covariate of such trust. Feeling relatively advantaged is also significantly associated with more trust in representative government institutions. This may reflect strong neopatrimonial ties between citizens and political agents.

In demonstrating that individual level economic considerations affect political trust in Africa, this paper challenges the conventional wisdom that only macroeconomic factors affect trust.

1. Introduction

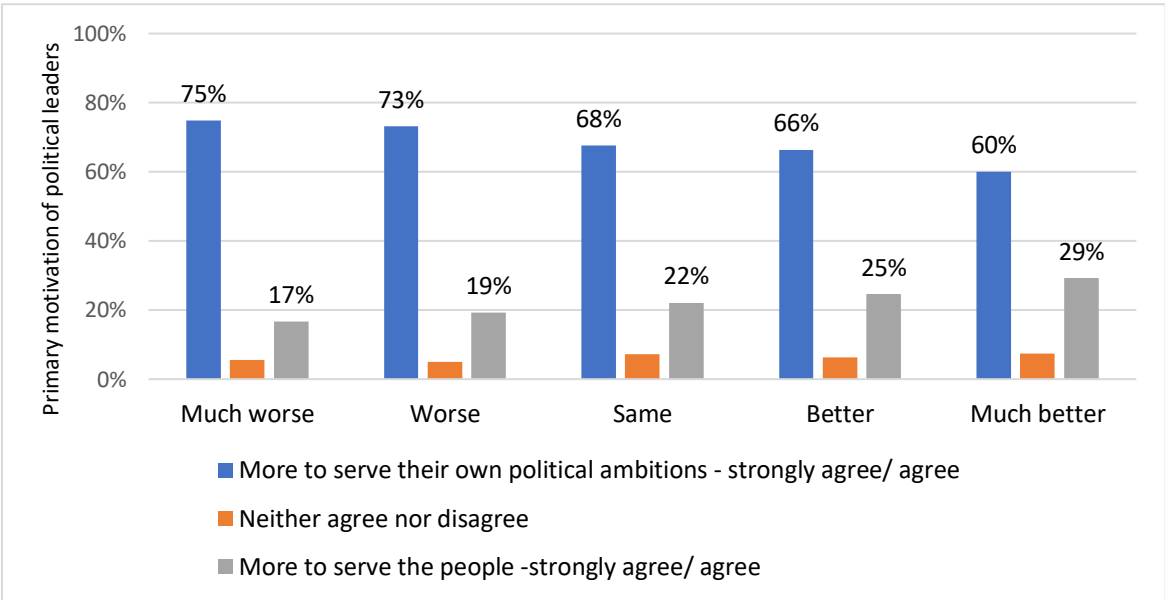
Political trust has been declining over the past decades in many established and new democracies, and many feared that such crisis of trust could weaken support or demand for democracy (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2002; Dalton, 2004, 2008; Catterberg & Moreno, 2006; Denmark & Niemi, 2012). In this context, Africa represents an interesting paradox. Africans report among the highest levels of institutional trust or confidence by world region (Mattes & Moreno, 2018). What is more, such trust is relatively consistent over time (Mattes & Moreno, 2018: 27-28). At the same time, Africa, as a region, records among the highest levels of economic inequality in the world (Beegle et al., 2016). However, little research – both in Africa and elsewhere – has been conducted on the linkage between inequality and political trust, especially at the individual-level (Van der Meer, 2018). To my knowledge, no previous research has examined the effects of perceptions of relative deprivation on trust in African contexts.

In this paper, I explore the relationship between perceptions of relative deprivation and political trust using representative survey data collected between 2016 and 2018 in 34 African countries. Importantly, I explore whether perceptions of relative deprivation are associated with variance in political trust within African countries and between African countries, not variance in political trust between different world regions. A rich literature exists suggesting that economic inequality is associated with a range of negative phenomena including increased mortality, mental illness, poor educational performance, homicide and imprisonment rates, low social capital and solidarity, low social mobility and racism (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2007; Anderson, 2010; Elgar & Aitken, 2010; Anderson & Curtis, 2012). Particular interest has been given to the linkage of inequality and political trust (Anderson & Singer, 2008; Jordahl, 2009; Newton & Zmerli, 2011; Uslaner, 2011, 2018; Paskov & Dewilde, 2012; van de Werfhorst & Salverda, 2012). Research suggests that economic and social inequality is linked to a deterioration of trust that ordinary people have in each other and the political and state institutions (Uslaner, 2011, 2017; Zmerli & Castillo 2015; Gustavsson & Jordahl 2008; Alesina & La Ferrara 2002).¹ Economic inequality

¹ Seeing political trust as being in crisis is by no means a new phenomenon (Offe, 1972; Citrin, 1974; Miller, 1974; Crozier et al. 1975; Dalton, 2004). Evidence is not strong that the ‘crisis’ is actually a global one, but is possibly strongly shaped by a few highly scrutinized cases (United States & Western Europe) (see: Dalton, 2004; Van der Meer & Zmerli, 2017). Others – see Citrin (1974) and Norris (2011) – argue that the crisis of political trust is widely overstated and caused by focusing only on a narrow definition and view of what constitutes and causes political trust. As Listhaug & Jakobsen (2018) note, the perspective of crisis is strongly associated with the social capital literature, of which political trust is a core component. In political behaviour research, the notion of political trust being ‘in crisis’ is not widely shared. Rather, Norris (2011) finds “trendless fluctuation” of political trust using a broadened and revised set of Eastonian political support indicators (Norris 2011: 24-31)

has been linked to political trust by suggesting that economic inequality is linked to feelings of a lack of responsiveness and accountability of government as well as to perceptions of government failing to meet expectations among a large number of citizens (Citrin, 1974; Miller, 1974; Miller & Listhaug, 1990; Hetherington, 1998, 2005; Uslaner, 2002, 2011). For example, the bivariate tests displayed in figure 1 and 2 – using round 6 data of the Afrobarometer survey (2014-2015) – suggests that respondents who feel relatively deprived are more likely to feel that political leaders are motivated to serve their own political ambitions and that members of parliament ‘never’ listen to ordinary people, compared with respondents who feel relatively better off than others. This suggests that perceptions of relative deprivation are associated with lower perceptions of accountability and responsiveness among politicians, which could be an explanation of lower levels of trust.

Figure 1: Perceived primary motivation of political leaders. By perceived relative living situation. Afrobarometer Round 6 (n=53935)²

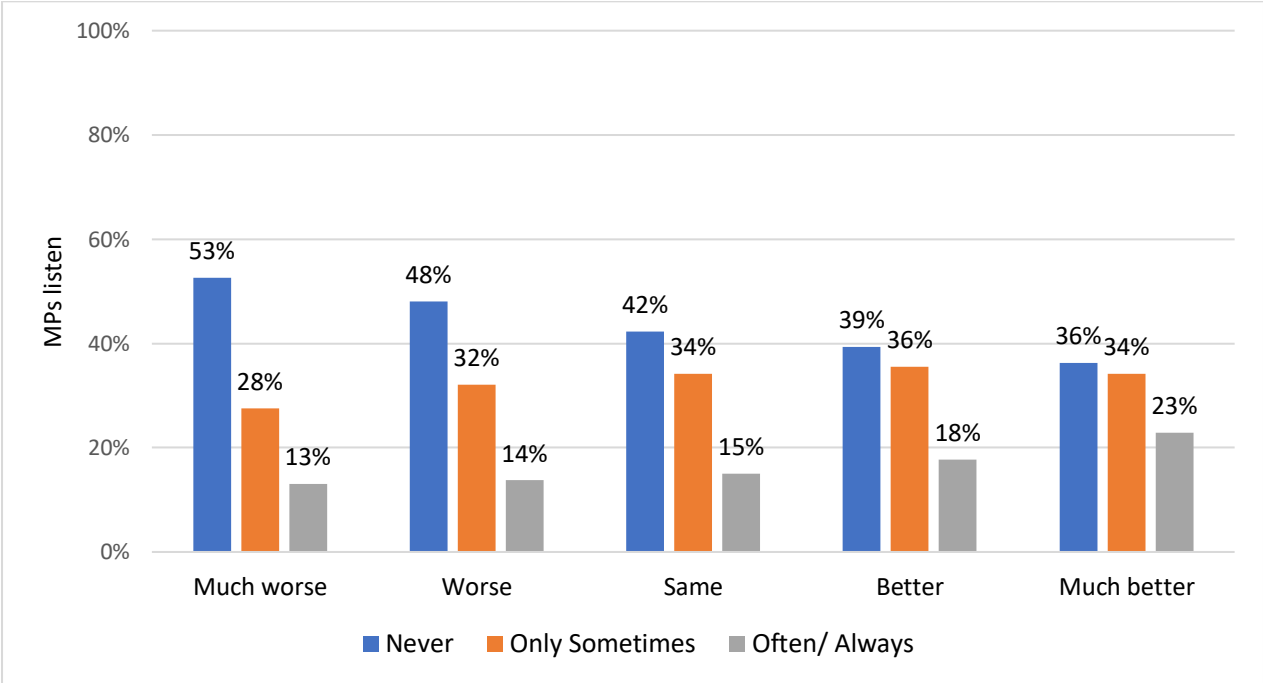


Political trust is important in several ways. It allows incumbents to make decisions and govern (within their democratic mandate) without having to seek constant confirmation or approval from the people or use coercion to enforce their own decisions (Newton et al., 2018). Political trust also reduces complexity and monitoring costs for people as they are not required to make difficult and technical day-to-day decisions but can decide between broader, less complex entities, such as political parties or candidates, during elections or party preliminaries. As Van der Meer & Zmerli (2017: 1) note “[p]olitical trust thus functions as the glue that

² Respondents were asked: Do you think that leaders of political parties in this country are more concerned with serving the interests of the people, or more concerned with advancing their own political ambitions, or haven’t you heard enough to say? For further details see appendix 5.

keeps the system together and as the oil that lubricates the policy machine”. Past research moreover suggests that political trust is associated with participation and political interest, external efficacy perceptions of corruption, compliance with laws, and tax compliance among citizens (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Scholz & Lubell, 1998; Catterberg & Moreno, 2006). Research in Africa has also suggested that more trusted institutions are important to provide developmental outcomes (Bratton & Gyimah-Boadi, 2016). Given the importance of political trust in political systems, any deterioration of public trust in government and state institutions can have considerable consequences for the ability of governments to make policy, and for political stability more generally (Anderson & Singer, 2008; Hetherington & Rudolph, 2008; Newton & Zmerli, 2011; Uslaner, 2011).³

Figure 2: MPs listen. By perceived relative living situation. Afrobarometer Round 6 (n=53935)⁴



³ Lack of trust may not necessarily be a sign of a lack of democracy, and declining trust in government is a healthy symptom of postmodern democracies. As Warren notes “Citizens should be distrustful of state powers and the political elites who wield the power. Yet citizens who generalize distrust – of political elites, of political institutions, and of one another – will find themselves collectively disempowered.” (2018: 91-92). In fact, Mishler & Rose (1997: 419) note that democracy requires active and ‘vigilant’ citizens that keep a “healthy scepticism of government and [if necessary are willing] [...] to suspend trust and assert control over government”.

⁴ Respondents were asked: How much of the time do you think the following try their best to listen to what people like you have to say? Members of Parliament

1.1 Perceptions of relative deprivation as a source of political (mis)trust

Past research – both in Africa and beyond – has pointed to the importance of macroeconomic performance and subjective evaluations of such performance as a source of political trust. Less attention has been paid to individual-level sources of political trust, and, in particular, to the role of perceptions of individual-level conditions. In fact, Wroe (2016: 133) goes as far as stating that “the conventional wisdom is that personal economic experiences and evaluations do not play much of a role”. However, subjective individual-level evaluations may be important sources of political trust. Research has found that people are widely not aware of actual levels of inequality and are commonly not able to place themselves correctly within income or wealth distributions (Kaltenthaler et al., 2008; Norton & Ariely, 2011; Eriksson & Simpson, 2012, 2013; Cruces et al., 2013; Loveless, 2013, 2016; McCall & Chin, 2013; Chambers et al., 2014, 2015; Engelhardt & Wagener, 2014; Niehues, 2014; Bartels, 2018; Gimpelson & Treisman, 2018). Other scholars have pointed out that objective and subjective levels of inequality are associated with each other only loosely, if at all (Loveless & Whitefield, 2011; Loveless, 2013; Binelli & Loveless, 2016). In this regard, several authors suggest that levels of trust are better explained by perceptions of inequality, rather than by actual inequality levels (Gustavsson & Jordahl, 2008; Loveless, 2013; Medve-Bálint & Boda, 2014).

Individual-level economic conditions may be particularly important for political trust in the context of Africa. As noted by Newton (2007), political trust is linked to notions of legitimacy. Much of the empirical literature is focused on cases of the global north, and the nature of such legitimacy may look different in the African context, in particular regarding the relations between state and society in post-colonial Africa.⁵ In other words, these mechanisms of legitimacy may “work” (in reference to Chabal & Daloz, 1999) though different modes in Africa. The specific relationships of state and society in post-colonial Africa have been identified and summarized as “neopatrimonialism” (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1993).⁶ These neopatrimonial relations – or the “Africanised” political modernity as per Chabal & Daloz (1999) – are centrally built on patron-client relationships between those in power (patrons) and those who are not (clients). Importantly, these relationships are informed by a logic of reciprocity (Chabal & Daloz, 1999;

⁵ As Beresford (2014: 1) notes, neopatrimonialism is not an intrinsic or deeply rooted element of African politics, but rather emerged from the “colonial encounter” or a “peculiar Euro-African History”. See also: Cooper (2002)

⁶ The use of neopatrimonialism to describe the nature of legitimacy and more generally relations between state, political elites and citizens in post-colonial Africa is not without critics. For a discussion see for example: Pitcher et al. (2009) or Mkandawire (2015). Moreover, neopatrimonialism is not identical across different regions in Africa (Cheeseman 2015).

Erdman & Engel, 2007, Erdman, 2013) or an “economy of affection” as per Hyden (1983), by which the patrons are able to use their political power to distribute the resources of the state to personalized client networks which in turn wins them “affection” which can be translated into more (political) power. These personalized patron-client relations emphasize the particularized well-being of individuals (within patronage networks) and sharpen notions of competition for resources among both the patrons and the clients (Bayart, 2009). As Beresford (2014: 1) – in reference to Schatzberg (2001) – contests:

political authority rests, therefore, not necessarily on augmenting positive developmental outcomes for the nation as a whole, but on being capable of meeting the needs of his political family, because while the father/patron is expected to eat, he must also ensure his children/clients are able to eat as well.

Chabal and Daloz (1999: 161) in this regard note that:

The logic of neopatrimonialism is focused on the proximate: the local and the communal. Its legitimacy depends on the ability to deliver to those who are linked with political elites through the micro-networks of patronage and clientelism. There is no scope within such a perspective for deferring to a larger but less immediate macro-rationality, most significantly to the greater good of the country as a whole. Clients will not necessarily accept sacrifices for more ambitious national goals in a context where it is assumed that patrons only work for their clients. So that the claim by one Big Man that he must reduce expenditures on his clients because resources are needed for national development would not normally be credible or acceptable.

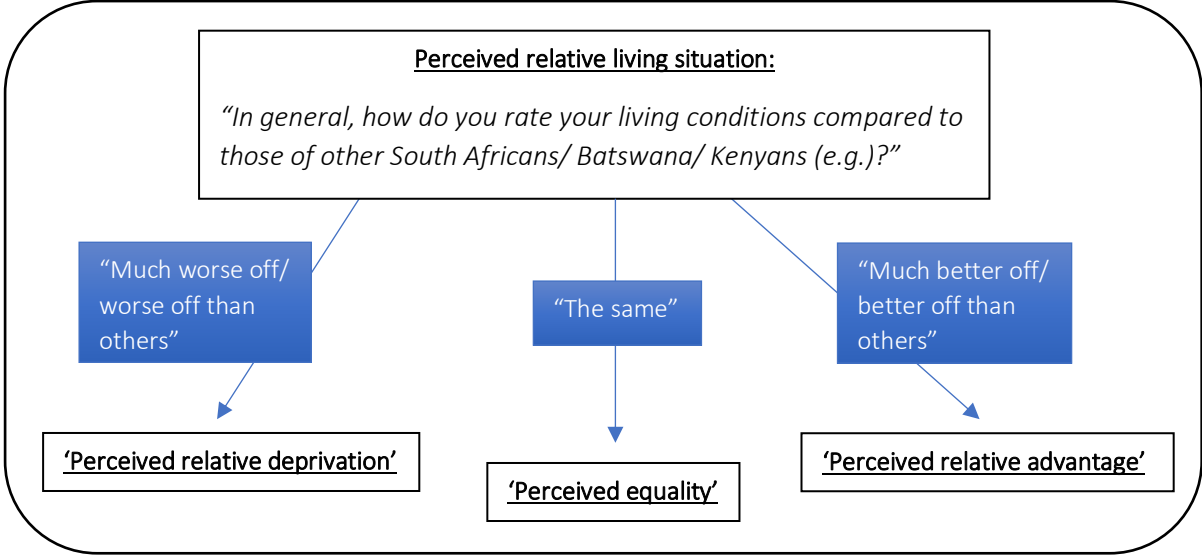
The reciprocal back and forth commences. These informal, personalized patron-client networks stand in contrast to ‘modern’ Western statehood – the context in which most empirical research on political trust has been conducted – which is defined by “formal, impersonalized channels of the Weberian legal-rational state” (Beresford, 2014: 1). In this context, how much individuals perceive themselves to be ‘getting out of’ a patron-client relation is therefore of heightened importance, which in turn suggests that subjective experiences of inequality have an important linkage with trust in political leaders.

1.2 Measurement

To gauge an individual’s subjective experience of inequality, I use a survey question which asks respondents how they feel their living situation compares to other people in their country (see figure 3 below for an overview). I refer to this item as ‘perceived relative living situation’ throughout this paper. From this item,

I am able to gauge ‘perceived relative deprivation’ – respondents who say they are ‘much worse off’ or ‘worse off’ than others – and ‘perceived relative advantage’ – respondents who say that they are ‘much better off’ or ‘better off’ than others. No further information was given to respondents as to what ‘living situation’ specifically implies, and no further data was collected as to what respondents understood by this. I discuss this variable in greater detail in section 2.2.

Figure 3: Conceptualizing perceived relative deprivation and advantage



The literature on the causes and consequences of political trust (or lack thereof) is rich, but not uniform, in both theoretical and measurement issues regarding what political trust is, what it means and how it should be measured (I return to this issue in section 3.1). In this paper, I follow Mattes & Moreno (2018) – who represent the most recent scrutiny of causes of political trust in Africa – and construct two additive indices. The first index, ‘trust in representative government institutions’, is comprised of trust in the president/prime minister, trust in the parliament/national assembly, trust in the local government council and trust in the ruling party/parties. This broadly echoes what has been referred to as “political institutions” in the past (Newton et al., 2018; Rothstein & Stolle, 2008). The second index, ‘trust in state institutions’, is comprised of trust in the police, the army and courts of law. These have in the past been referred to as “neutral and impartial institutions of the state” (Newton et al., 2018), although in African contexts they are often not neutral nor impartial. To construct these indices, I use Afrobarometer survey data collected between 2016 and 2018 for 34 African countries. I discuss both in greater detail in section 3.1.

1.3 Research question

Following the operationalization of subjective experience of inequality as the respondent's perceived relative living situation and distinguishing two forms of political trust (following previous research using earlier survey rounds of Afrobarometer surveys), this paper addresses the following research question:

Does the perceived relative living situation shape how much ordinary Africans trust representative government institutions and state institutions?

This paper contributes to literature in several ways. First, I provide evidence about the previously underexamined case of Africa. Much of the empirical literature has focused on North America and Europe (Van der Meer, 2017) and to date it is unclear to what extent findings and causal mechanisms suggested from said findings are universal or case specific. Second, I employ the most recent round of Afrobarometer survey data, which has previously not been employed in estimating sources of political trust in Africa. This data – collected between 2016 and 2018 – provides the most recent cross-country data available for the given cases. Third, I employ multi-level modelling, which has been underutilized in the past study of political trust in Africa. This estimation method allows for individual- and country-level variables to be estimated simultaneously, and thus provides a more nuanced picture of the sources of political trust, compared to past research in this topic for these cases. Fourth, I introduce a novel indicator for perceptions of individual – level inequality. As is discussed in sections 2.2 and 2.3, past research has predominantly focused on macroeconomic conditions and assessment as sources of political trust. Little attention was paid to individual-level conditions and evaluations. Increasingly however – again discussed in sections 2.2 and 2.3 – research suggests that such individual-level factors, in particular perceptual indicators of inequality, are important. I introduce a measure based on the respondent's perceived relative living situation, which has previously not been employed in such models. Fifth, I contribute to the existing literature by suggesting that perceptions of individual-level inequality are significantly associated with political trust – in particular with trust in government institutions, such as the president, parliament, local councillors and the ruling party.

1.4 Structure

This paper is organized as follows. In the following section I review the existing literature exploring the linkages between inequality and political trust (section 2). From this review I draw a set of hypotheses to be tested in the analysis section. In section 3 I introduce the data and statistical model chosen to test the hypothesis. I further discuss the variables employed in the models, paying particular attention to the operationalization of political trust. I then turn to modelling political trust

through multi-level modelling (section 4). The results suggest that perceptions of relative deprivation are significantly linked to less trust in government institutions and state institutions. The results also underline the importance of how political trust is conceptualized. The significant effect of perceptions of relative deprivation for government institutions remains significant even when controlling for individual-level experiences of poverty, subjective economic performance evaluations, perceptions of corruption and partisanship. Conversely, the effect of perceptions of relative deprivation becomes non-significant once macroeconomic evaluations are included in the regression model.

2. Literature review

In this section I introduce the definition of political trust and highlight the conceptualization of political trust by grounding it within a broader framework of political support. I then overview the sources of political trust found in the literature, placing particular emphasis on past research detailing how economic and social inequality – both at the country- and individual-level – are linked to political trust. Finally, I introduce a set of expectations which will be tested in section 4 of this paper.

2.1 Definitions and grounding of political trust

Numerous definitions of trust and even more related concepts exist today, often used interchangeably (Seligman, 2000; Hooghe, 2011; Schneider, 2017). Widely accepted definitions of trust are provided by Luhmann (1979) and Warren (1999). As Luhmann (1979) wrote, trust “as a modality of action [...] is essentially concerned with coping with uncertainty over time” (1979: 30) – providing certainty that actions by others can be depended on and they won’t choose to maliciously harm us (Offe, 1999).⁷ Similarly, according to Warren (1999: 14), trust describes “the way groups of individuals presume the good will of others with respect to shared interests as well as the divisions of knowledge necessary to make use of explicit rules for collective action”.⁸

The theoretical and empirical literature distinguishes between social and political trust. While social trust refers to relations with other people, whether family, neighbours or strangers, political trust involves government and state institutions (although some use the latter to describe evaluations of political output, i.e. services and policies). Social trust is often referred to as inter-personal trust or horizontal trust, while political trust is often referred to as institutional trust or

⁷ The importance of malicious actions and intentions is in particular emphasized in the definitory work by Gambetta (1988) and Warren (1999).

⁸ Warren’s (1999) definition draws heavily from Annette Baier’s (1986) notion of trust as reciprocal good will.

vertical trust. Some even suggest using social, or inter-personal trust and political trust, or institutional trust, interchangeably in modern, large-scale societies (Seligman, 2000). Research, however, remains divided about whether, and if so how, the two types of trust are correlated. On the one hand, Newton (2001a) concluded that social and political trust do not have a common origin, as “they are different things with different causes”. Similarly, Kaase (1999) and Newton (2001b) found no significant relation between the two. Conversely, Rothstein & Stolle (2003) and Freitag & Bühlmann (2009) noted that people may project institutional untrustworthiness onto other people.

As Catterberg & Moreno (2006: 33) noted, much of the research on political trust has been based on ambiguous concepts of political trust (see also: Hooghe, 2011). The differences between trust in political institutions – detached from performance – and trust in government performance – trust in the fact that government will deliver certain services of policies – are especially weakly defined. Hence the term ‘political trust’ is often used quite ambiguously. To better conceptualize the term and differentiate political trust from related concepts, it is useful to ground political trust within the broader concept of ‘political support’.⁹

2.1.1 Political trust as a measure of political support

In the past, political trust has been used to represent evaluations about regime institutions (or, if queried specifically, about incumbent office holders).¹⁰ Such evaluations represent one of several different levels or categories of what is summarily described as ‘political support’. The concept of political support originates from the question why and when people accept a government and under what circumstances they should and should not (Hardin, 1999; Warren, 2018). The argument is that a government or system will only persevere, in the long term, if it can win sufficient support among the citizenry, which lends legitimacy to the government (Lipset, 1959; Klingemann, 1999).

Political support can describe both attitudes and actions towards political objects (Easton, 1965, 1975). Following Easton’s suggestion that “support is not all of a piece”, the theoretical literature generally conceptualizes political support as a continuous construct ranging from diffuse types of support to specific types of support. Diffuse support refers to evaluations “of what an object is or represents – to the general meaning it has for a person – not for what it does” (Easton, 1975: 444). Specific support, on the other hand, is linked to perceived performance or outputs of political actors, such as the successful economic policy of a president or the lowering of crime rates by security forces. Thinking of support as a

⁹ See section 3.1, below, for a discussion of the different measurements of political trust in the literature.

¹⁰ I use the term ‘evaluation’ here in reference to the framework provided in table 1, below (adapted from Norris, 1999; Dalton, 2004)

continuum, Easton proposed that different objects of support could be located along this continuum. Easton noted three objects ranging from the most diffuse to the most specific: the political community, the regime and the incumbent authorities. “Political community” entails the cultural entity which “transcends particularities of formal governing structures and inscribes the elemental identity of the collectivity constituting the polity” (Klingemann, 1999). “Regime” entails principles, processes and formal institutions which transcend incumbents. And lastly, “incumbent authorities” are leaders and officials who hold power within offices and institutions at a given time.

Easton’s conceptualization of three objects of support has since been refined by Norris (1999; 2011), who proposed a five-fold distinction (displayed in table 1, below).¹¹ As in Easton’s original model, Norris’s most diffuse objects of support are the “political community” and “regime principles” (Norris, 2011). The third, fourth and fifth objects in Norris conceptualization of support broadly reflect Easton’s original “incumbent authority” category. In Norris’s categorization, the third level, “regime performance”, concerns the actual performance of a regime in practice, as opposed to the ideal form which is queried in the (more diffuse) regime principles level.¹² The regime performance taps the “lived experience” and “constitutional reality” of a regime. The fourth level in Norris’s model focuses on regime institutions. Specifically, this level of analysis focuses on “trust and confidence in the core institutions of state” (Norris 2011: 29), such as the legislature, executive and judiciary, and security forces, as well as various levels of government (national, regional, local) (Norris, 2011: 23- 31). Following Easton’s original concept of support, support for regime institutions is more specific than regime performance, as it is limited to institutions, rather than the incumbent. However, Norris herself noted that this distinction, especially when survey data is used, is often “fuzzy” (Norris, 2011: 29). Lastly, support for political actors involves support for the incumbent or holder of an office such as the President or legislators.

¹¹ Norris argues the five-fold distinction is more valid as “factor analysis strongly suggests that the public makes these distinctions, and there are divergent trends over time in support for different levels” (Norris, 1999: 13). As seen in table 1, a second distinction is found in the literature. This distinction concerns two types of political beliefs – affective orientations and instrumental evaluations. Affective orientations – similar to Easton’s notion of diffuse support – represent adherence to core values or deeper feelings towards the unit or level of analysis. Instrumental evaluations are more similar to Easton’s concept of specific support and include judgments or assessments about political phenomena (see Dalton, in Norris 1999: 58-59).

¹² Norris herself points out that this “middle level” is fraught with ambiguity and conceptual unclarity.

Table 1: Categorization of political support following Easton (1965, 1975) and Norris (2011)

	<i>Level of Analysis</i>	<i>Affective Orientations</i>	<i>Evaluations</i>
Diffuse Support 	Political Community	National pride Sense of national identity	Best nation to live in
	Regime: Principles	Democratic values	Democracy best form of government
	Regime: Performance	Participatory norms Political rights	Evaluations of rights Satisfaction with democratic process
	Regime: Institutions	Institutional expectations Support party government Output expectations	Performance judgments Trust in institutions Trust party system Trust bureaucracy
	Authorities	Identify with party	Candidate evaluations Party support
Specific Support			

2.2 Inequality as a source of political (mis) trust – understanding the mechanisms

The literature provides diverse explanations of trust.¹³ Some, such as the psychological propensity model, argue that long-term optimism and psychological predisposition to framing life in general, acquired during socialization, as well as social causes such as education, social class and happiness, shape whether someone is trusting or not (Uslaner 2002; Glanville & Paxton, 2007; Newton et al., 2018). In this approach people are – more or less – either trusting or not, regardless of context or object of trust. However, others – and this paper follows this latter approach – point to political trust largely being a function of performance evaluations. This approach is commonly summarized as the ‘top-down’ theory (Zmerli & Castillo, 2015; Newton et al., 2018). Conversely, psychological or genetic explanations of trust reflect an alternative, ‘bottom-up’ approach to locating the sources of political trust more centrally in explanations of social capital (see Mondak et al., 2017; Cawvey et al., 2018). Top-down theories argue that political trust is not once acquired and kept for life (as a psychological or genetical predisposition) but that performance evaluations, and therefore trust, can change over time (prompted by a new government, global recession, high-profile corruption case, etc.). The role of inequality has been

¹³ For an overview see Mishler & Rose, 2001; Newton et al. 2018.

studied in both the top-down approach as well as the bottom-up approach of studying trust.

There are multiple ways of linking inequality to political trust. Here I discuss three common explanations found in the literature. The first two explanations reflect top-down approaches that closely echo Hetherington's (2005: 9) definition of political trust as "the degree to which people perceive that government is producing outcomes consistent with their expectations". The third explanation reflects the bottom-up approach to trust, emphasizing the effect that inequality has on the very fabric of society and on its core institutions of fairness and mutual considerations.

2.2.1 Inequality as (a lack of) performance

Despite ambiguity in the conceptualization and operationalization, three core sources of political trust repeatedly and consistently emerge in both cross-national and cross-time empirical analyses. Among these – corruption and partisanship being the other two – economic performance has been repeatedly linked to political trust (Van der Meer, 2018).¹⁴ In highly unequal systems, inequality is seen as a system output and evaluated as a system performance. Because more people are relatively worse off in highly unequal systems, a large number of people are likely to report negative performance evaluations. This – it is argued – results in less political trust in more unequal systems. As Goubin (2018b: 5) noted:

Income inequality is associated with less qualitative performance of government services and negative perceptions of economic policies in particular, tendencies towards corruption and disproportionate political power for the rich.

2.2.2 Inequality as (a lack of) accountability

Goubin's latter point (see quotation above) touches upon a second explanation of how inequality is linked to trust. In systems with high levels of inequality, individuals are likely to report lower levels of accountability or perceptions thereof, and to experience larger discrepancies in their economic lived reality with a large number experiencing economic hardship (Goubin, 2018a). As Goubin (2018a) noted, high economic inequality suggests that the system is not responsive to the needs of all citizens, creating a distance between citizen expectations of system responsiveness and what they feel they are getting. A similar argument is found in Uslaner (2017: 302), who argued that inequality "leads people to believe that leaders listen to the rich far more than others in

¹⁴ Note that the three factors mentioned here largely emanate from the 'top-down' approach to political trust. An alternative 'bottom-up' approach locates the sources of political trust more centrally in explanations of social capital (see: Stolle, 2003; Zmerli & Castillo, 2015; Newton et al. 2018).

society”. And indeed, consistently high and rising levels of economic inequality in most developed economies in the past decades (Milanovic, 2011; 2016; Stiglitz, 2012; Piketty, 2014 suggest that the influence of the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ on government policy has not been equally distributed, but have been skewed in favour of the former (Gilens 2005; 2012, Uslaner, 2011).¹⁵

2.2.3 Interrelations with social trust

Related to the notion of accountability and responsiveness, a third explanation in literature of the linkage between economic inequality and political trust considers the effect of economic inequality on the ‘fabric’ of a society, in particular on people’s sense of system fairness and sociotropic consideration for others (Zmerli & Castillo, 2015; Uslaner, 2011; Rothstein, 2011). Essentially, these approaches focus on the role of social trust, but they note implications for political trust, too. For example, Uslaner’s “inequality trap” describes economic inequality leading to less social trust which in turn leads to more corruption which further reduces social trust, again leading to more corruption (Uslaner, 2005, 2008, 2011). A negative downward spiral results, “trapping” societies. Uslaner noted that this trap moreover weakens political trust (Uslaner, 2008; see also Zmerli & Castillo, 2015). Likewise, Rothstein (2011) wrote of a “social trap” in which economic inequality reduces social trust which in turn would be required to address economic inequality through policy (such as universalistic social welfare). Hereby economic inequality again reduces social trust, entrapping society in a status in which society is unable to address inequality. As Rothstein (2011: 154) concluded: “the prevalence of distrust results in more distrust”. In these explanations, inequality affects the core basis of trust, reflected in diminishing social and political trust over time.

2.3. Inequality as a source of political (mis) trust – evidence in the literature

Despite (or possibly precisely because of) much attention in the literature awarded to inequality and political trust, the empirical landscape in terms of consistent results is not easily navigated or summarized. In particular, this is due to two reasons. First, political trust as a concept is weakly defined and empirical research in the literature frequently employs different conceptualizations and measurements (see section 3.1, below). Empirical findings are thus difficult to compare (Uslaner, 2017). Second, the term ‘economic inequality’ is also ambiguously used in the literature. This too, makes comparisons of empirical findings difficult. To make sense of the existing literature and empirical findings, I use a simple two-dimensional distinction to conceptualize ‘economic inequality’

¹⁵ For historical evidence that high levels of inequality do in fact allow the rich to subvert legal, political and regulatory systems and institutions, see: Glaeser et al., 2003; Sonin, 2003; Jong-Sung & Khagram, 2005.

(displayed in table 2, below). Using the two dimensions – level of analysis and type of measurement – creates a four-field grid, allowing for a clearer structuring of the relevant literature in terms of how ‘economic inequality’ is conceptualized and what (if any) consistent findings emerge.¹⁶ For each grid-cell I have also included the key finding that emerges from the literature.

Table 2: Navigating measurements of ‘economic inequality’ in the empirical literature

<i>Type of measurement</i>	<i>Level of analysis</i>	
	Country	Individual
Objective	People in more unequal countries are less trusting.	People who are lower in the economic distribution are less trusting.
Subjective	People who think their country is unequal are less trusting.	People who think they are at the bottom of the distribution/worse off than others are less trusting.

2.3.1 Objective measures/arithmetical measures

In the study of the consequences of economic inequality on political trust, the most common measurement of the independent variables is at the country level, using arithmetic indicators of inequality, such as the Gini coefficient or various ratio-indicators describing the respective relative sizes of top and bottom income groups.

2.3.1.1 Country level

At country level, the empirical evidence on the linkage between economic inequality and political trust is not consistent. For example, Anderson & Singer (2008) – using 2002-2003 European Social Survey data (20 countries) – found that higher country-level income inequality (Gini) and more poverty is significantly related to lower levels of political trust (as trust in parliament, legal systems, police and politicians). Likewise, Zmerli and Castillo (2015) – in a study of 18 Latin American countries (using Latinobarometer data for 2011) – found that higher levels of income inequality (as per Gini coefficient) are significantly

¹⁶ Of course, this matrix could be expanded by incorporating different types of inequality (social, economic, opportunity) and by incorporating meso-levels and levels above the national level (which is widely used as the country level).

associated with less political trust.¹⁷ Meanwhile, for a sample of African and Latin American cases using the Afrobarometer and Latinobarometer, Mattes and Moreno (2018) found that national level inequality (measured by the income Gini coefficient) has only a weak effect on political trust¹⁸ (see section 3.1 for details on operationalization).

Others have suggested that inequality and political trust are not linked directly. For example, Goubin (2018a) – using the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) Citizenship rounds of 2004 and 2014 for 37 European and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries – found that inequality (as Gini coefficient of net income and the country poverty rate) has no direct significant effect on political trust (as confidence that government will do the right thing most of the time), but that both forms of country-level inequality moderate the effect of political responsiveness on political trust.

2.3.1.2 Individual level

Within top-down approaches to the study of trust, it is accepted that macroeconomic performance forms a central source of political trust. This is the case for both objective performance (as per Gross domestic product (GDP) for example) as well as for subjective evaluations of performance (typically captured in representative surveys). Widely, empirical studies suggest that more positive macroeconomic performance and evaluations thereof produce greater political trust (Citrin et al., 1975; McAllister, 1999; Dalton, 2004; Keele, 2007).

Somewhat surprisingly, comparatively little evidence is available in regard to evaluations at the individual-level. Wroe (2016) noted that while the literature widely agrees that country-level economic performance evaluations matter in determining political trust, little emphasis has been placed on individual-level conditions – whether relative or not. Wroe (2016: 133) wrote, “the conventional wisdom is that personal economic experiences and evaluations do not play much of a role” in regard to understanding political trust. A number of studies in the literature suggest that individual-level experiences and evaluations are important in understanding political trust, nonetheless.

Frequently, researchers have used the household income decile as a measure of individual deprivation. Catterberg and Moreno (2006) – using World Value Survey data (1995-2001) – found that household income deciles are significantly

¹⁷ Zmerli & Castillo compute an index of political trust which includes reported trust in government, national congress/parliament, judiciary and political parties. The authors report a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.80 but no factor analysis results.

¹⁸ However, the authors do find a significant, moderate-size, negative effect for country level inequality and social trust.

associated with less political trust, although the effect is inconsistent across “world regions”. Political trust is operationalized as confidence in the civil service and confidence in parliament. Catterberg & Moreno found that people in higher income deciles are less trusting in a sample of six established democracies, but more trusting in eight new democracies in Eastern Europe and four Latin American nations. See Catterberg & Moreno for a list of countries in each “world region”. Conversely, Kaasa and Parts (2008) found no significant effect of relative income (household income decile) on institutional trust using the fourth round of World Value Survey (1999-2002).¹⁹ Boda and Medve-Balint (2014) – in a study of 14 West European and nine East-Central European countries using the fifth wave of the European Social Survey (ESS) – found that that household income deciles increase institutional trust in Western European countries, but reduce trust in Eastern European countries.

Others have used different approaches yet found results consistent with the relation described in Catterberg and Moreno (2006) and Boda and Medve-Balint (2014). For example, Shoon and Cheng (2011) – using two nationally representative cohort studies (1958 & 1970) for Great Britain²⁰ – found that experiences of economic disadvantage (as per family social status at birth (parental occupational status + parental education) and occupational attainment) – are significantly associated with lower levels of political trust.²¹

2.3.2 Perceptual measures

Despite much theoretical attention, the empirical evidence in regard to political trust and economic inequality is far from consistent (Zmerli & Castillo, 2015) and some authors question the empirical linkage altogether (Boda and Medve-Balint, 2014; Fairbrother & Martin, 2013; Olivera, 2015). Some of the inconsistencies probably follow from choices in conceptualization and measurement of political trust (see discussion in section 3.1), and some are probably due to actual differences in how the linkage between economic inequality and political trust works in different contextual settings. By contrast, a growing body of evidence suggests that perceptions of inequality, rather than objective levels of inequality, shape levels of political trust (Goubin, 2018b). Inconsistent findings may be due

¹⁹ Institutionalized trust is operationalized as confidence in parliament, the police and the press.

²⁰ Shoon and Cheng (2011) employed the 1958 National Child Development Study (NCDS) and the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70).

²¹ Shoon and Cheng used a seven-item attitude scale recording respondents’ attitudes and views about government and institutions as indicators of political trust. For example, some of the attitudes that are probed in the survey read: “There is one law for the rich and one law for the poor”; “Politicians are in politics for their own benefit”; “No political party would benefit me”. I would argue these attitudes are more indicative of perceived fairness and responsiveness of the political system or politicians rather than political trust itself.

to how people perceive and evaluate²² inequality at both the country- and individual-level (Loveless & Whitefield, 2011; Loveless, 2013; Boda and Medve-Balint, 2014; Zmerli & Castillo, 2015; Goubin, 2018b).

2.3.2.1 Country level

And indeed, some evidence exists suggesting that perceptions and evaluations of country-level inequality is associated with individual level political trust. For example, Zmerli and Castillo (2015) – using 2011 Latinobarometer data for 18 Latin American countries²³ – found that individual perceptions of distributive fairness within a country are strongly associated with less political trust at the individual level. Similar results were reported in a recent study by Lee et al. (2020). Using the fourth wave of the Asian Barometer (2014-2016; N=20,667) for 14 Asian countries²⁴, Lee et al. found that perceived fairness of the income distribution within a country is significantly correlated with more political trust (operationalized as trust in president/prime minister, courts, national government, political parties and parliament). Likewise, Uslaner (2017) used 2004 Afrobarometer data and computed political trust as trust in the president, parliament, ruling party, courts and the police. He found that – at individual level – political trust is shaped by individuals’ evaluations of government performance in handling the economy and of perceived corruption in the presidency, and by whether people agree with equal treatment in theory (i.e. whether they agree that it would be better if all people were treated equally).

2.3.2.2 Individual level

Lastly, economic inequality can be conceptualized and measured at the individual-level using a perceptual measure. Despite evidence suggesting that perception-based measures of inequality may yield more useful results in regard to political trust, most of the available research thus far focuses on social trust (see: Uslaner & Brown, 2005)²⁵. In regard to political trust, Zmerli & Castillo

²² Conceptually, evaluations of economic inequality are distinct from perceptions of economic inequality. For example, I may perceive economic inequity as being high, but evaluate that such levels are fair (or not). In practice, evidence suggests that in fact evaluations and perceptions are strongly associated. As Wegener (1987) and others suggest, perceptions of inequality (How unequal is a country?) appear to be strongly shaped by evaluations of inequality (Is inequality fair, good, bad, unjust, worth addressing?) – see Zmerli & Castillo, 2015.

²³ Zmerli & Castillo’s sample consists of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

²⁴ Lee et al.’s sample consists of Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, China, Mongolia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia and Myanmar.

²⁵ Much evidence in the literature supports the expectation that relative deprivation shapes social trust (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005; Wilkinson, 2005; Putnam, 2007; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2007; Bjørnskov, 2008). Medve-Bálint & Boda (2014) also claim that the rich literature on

(2015) found a positive significant effect for subjective social status. The authors' models suggest that when citizens' self-ratings on the poor-rich ladder are high, political trust (measured as trust in government, parliament, judiciary and political parties) is enhanced.

Most studies that use subjective individual-level measures use measures which are nominally about absolute subjective, individual economic well-being, rather than explicitly comparative well-being. For example, Boda and Medve-Balint (2014) – in a study of 14 West European and nine East-Central European countries using the fifth wave of the European Social Survey (ESS) – found that whether or not respondents report to be coping or struggling on their present household income significantly shapes trust in institutions.²⁶

In some cases, it is plausible that respondents compare themselves to others, even though the indicator refers to absolute evaluations. For example, Catterberg & Moreno (2006) found that the self-reported level of financial satisfaction is significantly associated with more political trust. Similarly, Wroe (2016) used subjective economic insecurity in a study of trust in government in the United States.²⁷ Wroe found that subjective, individual-level perceptions of economic insecurity have a significant and negative effect of political trust. Wroe (2016: 140) argued that “insecurity activates deep-seated psychological biases, rooted in human evolution and survival, to avert losses and preserve the status quo. Government and the political class are blamed for insecurity, because economic precariousness violates citizens' expectations about the role of the state.”

2.4 Hypotheses

From the discussion of past research employing individual-level, perceptual measures of either inequality or deprivation, the following expectations are articulated in regard to the research question set out in the introduction.

Hypothesis 1a: Feeling worse off than others is associated with less trust in government institutions

Hypothesis 1b: Feeling worse off than others is associated with less trust in state institutions

inequality and social trust should encourage the testing of the linkage between inequality and political trust.

²⁶ The authors use an 11-point indicator as a measure of institutional trust. The index is comprised of the mean values (of valid responses) to questions regarding the respondents' trust in the national parliament, the legal system, the police and political parties.

²⁷ Wroe (2016) uses a survey item which asks respondents how often government does what “most Americans” want it to do (always, most of the times, about half of the times, once in a while and never).

2.5 Section summary

In this section I have introduced the concept of political trust by both providing definitions of the term and grounding the concept within the broader concept of political support. Political trust is important for efficient governance and enables ordinary people to make evaluations of incumbents and government more readily. Economic inequality has been linked to political trust by arguing that it undermines the extent to which the government and institutions are deemed to be performing and how responsive they are to the needs and demands from ordinary people. Further, it has been suggested that economic inequality is linked to social trust which limits the ability of political actors and institutions to address inequality. Overlooking the empirical evidence in regard to sources of political trust is no easy feat, largely due to the limited homogeneity in the literature as to how political trust is measured. It appears that economic inequality at country level is associated with less political trust and that the relatively poor within income distributions are less trusting than the relatively well-off. However, some authors – in particular in regard to the relation at country level – find only weak effects. A growing literature considers the importance of perceptions of economic inequality. Here, past research suggests that perceiving levels of country-level inequality to be unfair or unjust is associated with less political trust, as is feeling economically insecure.

In the following section I provide an overview of the data and methodology of this paper. A fairly consistent set of sources of political trust have been identified in the empirical literature to date. These have not been explicitly discussed so far but are included as control variables in the explanatory models to compete with the predictor variable relative deprivation. I discuss previous findings for each of these commonly found sources in section 3.3.

3. Method and Data

For my analysis I use Afrobarometer survey data (Round 7), which was collected between September 2016 and September 2018 in 34 African countries.²⁸ The survey is conducted face-to-face, in the respondent's choice of language in a nationally representative sample. The dataset consists of 45811 cases, clustered in 34 countries. However, since the question on trust in the ruling party was not asked in eSwatini, the country was dropped from the analysis of trust in representative government institutions. Country samples range from 1193

²⁸ My data set includes the following countries: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, eSwatini, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

(Guinea) to 2400 (Tanzania, Ghana), yielding an error rate of 2% (n=2400) and 3% (n=1200), respectively.²⁹ Due to the clustering of data (within country units), I use multilevel modeling (MLM), as a single level analysis would not account for variation in the slopes and intercepts of the predictor variables across clusters (country units) within the data. These differences can be accounted for by including a second level in the analysis. My level 1 analysis is at the individual level, while my level 2 analysis is at the national level. One of the possible issues with my data is that I have a small number of countries (level 2, n=34), compared to the large number of individuals (level 1, n>40000). Ideally, data used in an MLM analysis is structured with a large n at level 2 and a small n at level 1. A possible problem arising from my data could be the overestimation of effect size due to the limited case number at level 2. Data with low case numbers at level 2 tend to yield overly small effect sizes when using a random slope model. As such I test only random intercept models.

To establish whether a multi-level model is warranted, I begin by establishing whether the estimates of covariance parameters are significant. Multilevel modeling analysis allows for two estimation modes: maximum likelihood and restricted maximum likelihood. Restricted maximum likelihood (REML) is advised to be used when the case number at level two is relatively small. This is the case in my data set as I use only 34 country cases. To test whether clustering at the country level is significant I first ran a null-model with no predictor variable. For both dependent variables (trust in elected representatives and trust in state institutions) the estimates of covariance parameters are significant at the 1% level. To further confirm the necessity for an MLM analysis, I calculated the interclass correlation coefficient (ICC) for each dependent variable. In both cases (using REML estimation) the ICC meet the minimum threshold of 0.05.³⁰ This confirms that using a multi-level approach is warranted as single level regression models would fail to reflect the significant clustering of data within national sub-sets.

3.1 Dependent variables

One of the issues making a comparative review of the literature more difficult is that the term, the conceptualization and the measurement of ‘political trust’ differs in the literature. A number of alternative concepts – such as “political confidence” and “trust in government” – are used equivalently in much of the literature

²⁹ I use data which is weighted within countries to ensure gender parity. Importantly, I do not weight the data by population size. While countries with larger populations tend to have a larger sample size of n=2400, and countries with smaller populations tend to have national samples of n=1200, these sample size differences do not reflect the differences in actual populations. The incongruence in sample-to-population ratios may affect the reliability of comparisons of within country results.

³⁰ For both Trust in elected officials (ICC=0.146) and Trust in state institutions (0.13) the ICC meets the threshold.

(Newton, 2001a; PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2015; Uslaner, 2017; Van der Meer & Zmerli, 2017).³¹ In regard to measurement of political trust, for example, some research uses single objects of trust, such as trust in parliament or trust in the police (Dunn, 2012; Wroe, 2016; Uslaner, 2017; Goubin, 2018b), while other research uses a single index comprised of several trust items (Zmerli & Castillo, 2015; Hooghe et al., 2015). To complicate the matter (and comparability) further, indices found in the literature reflect two (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006), three (Marien, 2011), four (Moehler, 2009; Ellinas & Lamprianou, 2014), five (Uslaner, 2017) or six (Hooghe et al., 2015) items of trust. Yet other research proposes the use of several indices (each comprised of different items) to measure political trust (Rothstein & Stolle, 2007; Mattes & Moreno, 2018, Newton et al., 2018). The comparison and replication of findings as to covariates, causes and consequences of political trust is moreover made more difficult by different survey methods across surveys and changes across time within surveys (Newton et al., 2018). To highlight the issue, I have provided an overview of different operationalization of ‘political trust’ in the recent literature in table 3. The table was adapted and expanded from Listhaug & Jakobsen (2018: 567-568).

Table 3: Overview of operationalization of political trust in a selection of recent studies

Publication	Dependent variable (scale)	Source
Catterberg & Moreno (2006)	Scale (1-7) composed of confidence in civil service and confidence in parliament	3 rd and 4 th wave of the World Values Survey (1995-2001)
Moehler (2009)	Scale (-1 to +1), composed of trust in the police, courts of law, the army and the electoral commission	Afrobarometer Round 1
Van der Meer (2010)	Variable (0-10) denoting trust in parliament	European Social Survey 2002, 2004 and 2006, 29 countries
Hutchison & Johnson (2011)	Scale (0-18) composed of trust in executive, courts, police, armed forces, electoral commission and government run media	Afrobarometer Rounds 1-3
Marien (2011)	Scale (0-30) composed of three variables on trust in parliament, political parties, and politicians	European Social Survey 2006 and 2008, 23 countries

³¹ Moreover, uncertainty exists as to how the lack of trust is conceptualized. As Van der Meer & Zmerli (2017:5) noted, the lack of trust may be understood as “political mistrust (i.e., the absence of trust), political distrust (i.e., the opposite of trust) and political scepticism (i.e., withholding one’s judgement)”.

Publication	Dependent variable (scale)	Source
Dunn (2012)	Variable (1-4) denoting trust in parliament	World Values Survey 1995, 1999 and 2005, global sample
Bauer & Fatke (2014)	Variable (0-10) denoting trust in cantonal authorities	Swiss Electoral Studies 2007
De Juan & Pierskalla (2014)	Political trust in the national government (1-5)	World Health Survey 2003, Nepal
Ellinas & Lamprinou (2014)	Scale (0-10) showing average scores on trust in parliament, legal system, police, and politicians	European Social Survey 2002, 2004 and 2010, Greece
Freitag & Ackermann (2015)	Variable (0-10) denoting trust in cantonal authorities	Politics and Society in Switzerland 2012
Hooghe et al. (2015)	Scale (0-10) composed of six questions on trust in police, courts, federal parliament, regional parliament, European parliament, and political parties	Belgian Political Panel Study 2006- 2011, which tracks respondents aged 16-21
Kroknes et al. (2015)	Scale (0-30) composed of three variables on trust in parliament, politicians, and political parties	European Social Survey 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010, 25 countries
Reitan et al. (2015)	Legitimacy index (1-15) composed of five questions on local politicians	Norwegian Citizen Study 2009
Zmerli & Castillo (2015)	Scale (1-4) composed of confidence in government, national congress/parliament, judiciary, and political parties	Latinobarometer 2011
Wroe (2016)	Variable (1-5) denoting trust in government	American National Election study Studies 2008-2009 panel
Uslaner (2017)	Factor reflecting trust in president, parliament, ruling party, courts and the police (no information as to scale provided)	Afrobarometer (Round 2)
Goubin (2018a)	Variable (1-5) denoting trust in government	ISSP 2004 and 2014
Mattes & Moreno (2018)	2 factors reflecting trust in representative government institutions (0-4) and state institutions (0-4)	Afrobarometer Round 5 and Latinobarometer 2013

In this paper I follow Mattes & Moreno (2018) and use two index-variables as dependent variables for political trust.³² As noted above, Africans report among the highest levels of institutional trust or confidence by world region (Mattes & Moreno, 2018.). What is more, such trust is relatively consistent over time (Mattes & Moreno, 2018: 27-28). However, Afrobarometer survey data (Round 5) reveals that Africans display considerable differences in trust between institutions. While more than six in 10 Africans report trusting the national military (66%), the president (61%) and courts (61%), only around half report trusting political parties (52%) and local government (49%) (Mattes & Moreno, 2018: 17). Using factor analysis, Mattes and Moreno (2018) found that Africans do not view institutions as a single entity upon which they bestow trust or not, but as two distinct dimensions of political trust: first, towards partisan, representative institutions of government and second, towards state institutions.

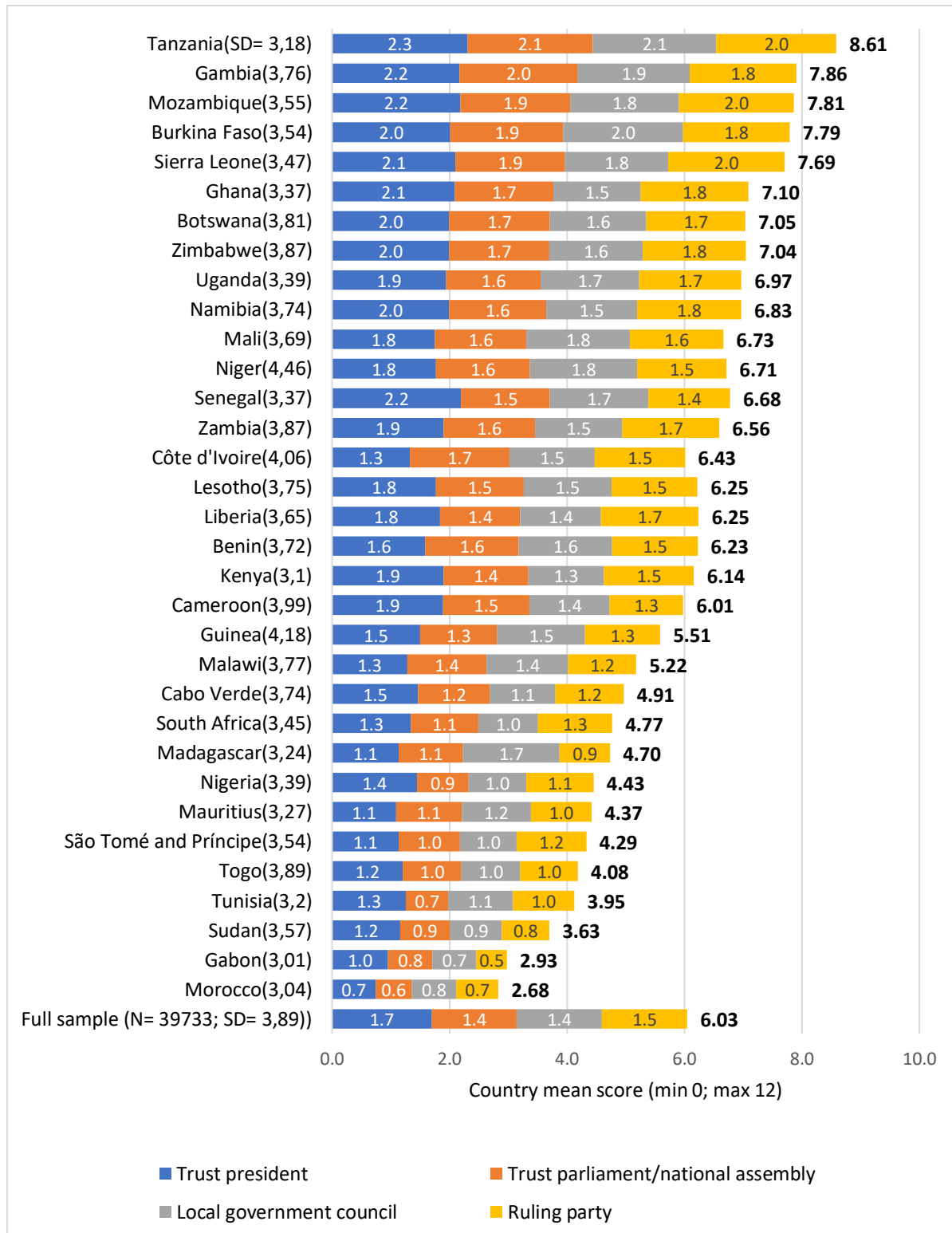
The first index – ‘trust in representative government institutions’ – is computed by adding respondents scores for trust in the president/prime minister, trust in the legislature (parliament/national assembly), trust in the elected local council and trust in the ruling party.³³ To allow for the greatest amount of variance in the dependent variable I did not recode the index to create categories. The index has a minimum value of 0 (no trust in any of the four government institutions) and a maximum value of 12 (high trust in all 4 institutions).³⁴ On average (across the sample of 33 countries), respondents score a mean of around 6, suggesting neither high nor low levels of government trust (see figure 4, below). This mean score hides considerable variance between countries, once levels of trust in government institutions are viewed on a country level. For example, Tanzanians, Gambians, Mozambicans and Burkinabe score closer to a mean value of 8 on the scale, while Gabonese and Moroccans score below 3, on average. Figure 4 also displays the respective mean scores of the four index-items. On average, respondents appear to be most trusting of the president (mean=1,7) and equally trusting of parliament (1,4), local government (1,4) and the ruling party (1,5).

³² See discussion in this section as well as appendix 1.

³³ The choice of variables in each factor reflects the results of an exploratory factor analysis by Mattes and Moreno, who found two related but distinct dimensions of political trust – trust in representative institutions and trust in state institutions. See: Mattes & Moreno, 2018: 11.

³⁴ I performed a confirmatory factor analysis for these four variables (extraction method: principle components analysis, no rotation). The analysis confirmed the validity of the factor: extracting one factor with an Eigenvalue of 2,867 and accounting for 71,67% of variance. A reliability analysis also confirmed the validity of the factor (Cronbach’s alpha=0,868).

Figure 4: Trust in representative government institutions. 33 countries. n=39733. Afrobarometer Round 7 data³⁵



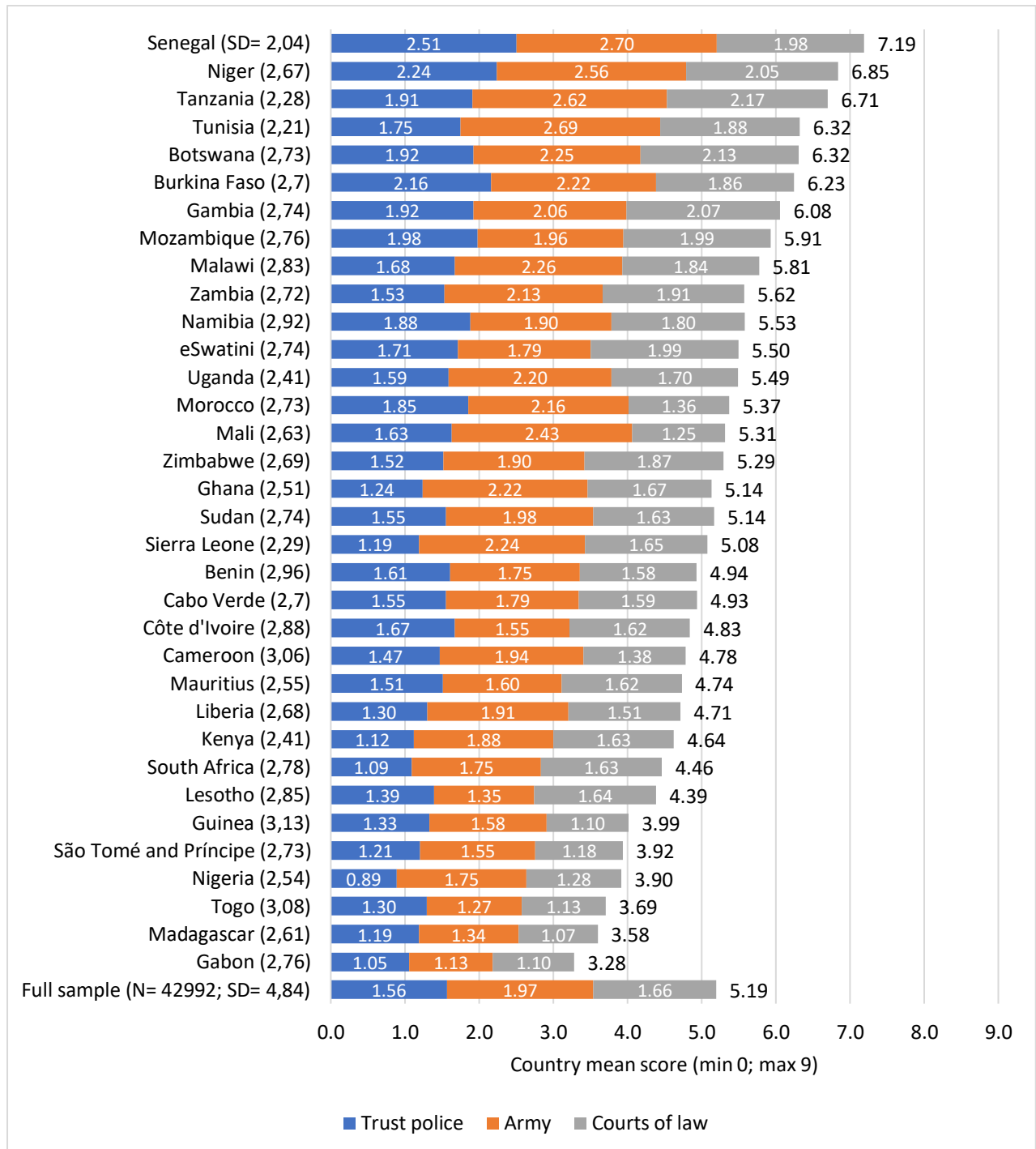
³⁵ As the mean scores for each component of trust in representative government institutions are rounded, the overall index mean score may not be equal to the sum of the displayed (rounded) component variables.

The second index – ‘trust in state institutions’ – is composed of scores for trust in the police, army and courts of law. Again, I form an index by adding scores of the three variables, and refrain from recoding the index-variable. The scale runs from 0 (no trust) to 9 (high trust).³⁶

As displayed in figure 5, below, respondents across all 34-countries reported an average trust in institutions of 5,19. While this mean-score is not particularly telling in itself, comparing the results with the mean score obtained for trust in government institutions does suggest that, on average, respondents are slightly more trusting than non-trusting in regard to state institutions, and were fairly equally trusting and non-trusting in regard to government institutions. Again, considerable country differences appear. Here, Senegalese, Nigeriens and Tanzanians are most trusting of state institutions, while Togolese, Malagasy and Gabonese are least trusting. Likewise, figure 5 also displays the respective mean scores of the four index-items. On average, respondents appear to be most trusting of the army (mean=1,97) and least trusting of the police (1,56).

³⁶ A confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the validity of a factor (extraction method: principle components analysis, no rotation). The analysis produced a single factor with an Eigenvalue of 2,143, accounting for 71,43% of variance. A reliability analysis was also performed, producing a Cronbach’s alpha of 0,8.

Figure 5: Trust in state institutions (country mean score).34 countries. n=42992. Afrobarometer Round 7 data³⁷

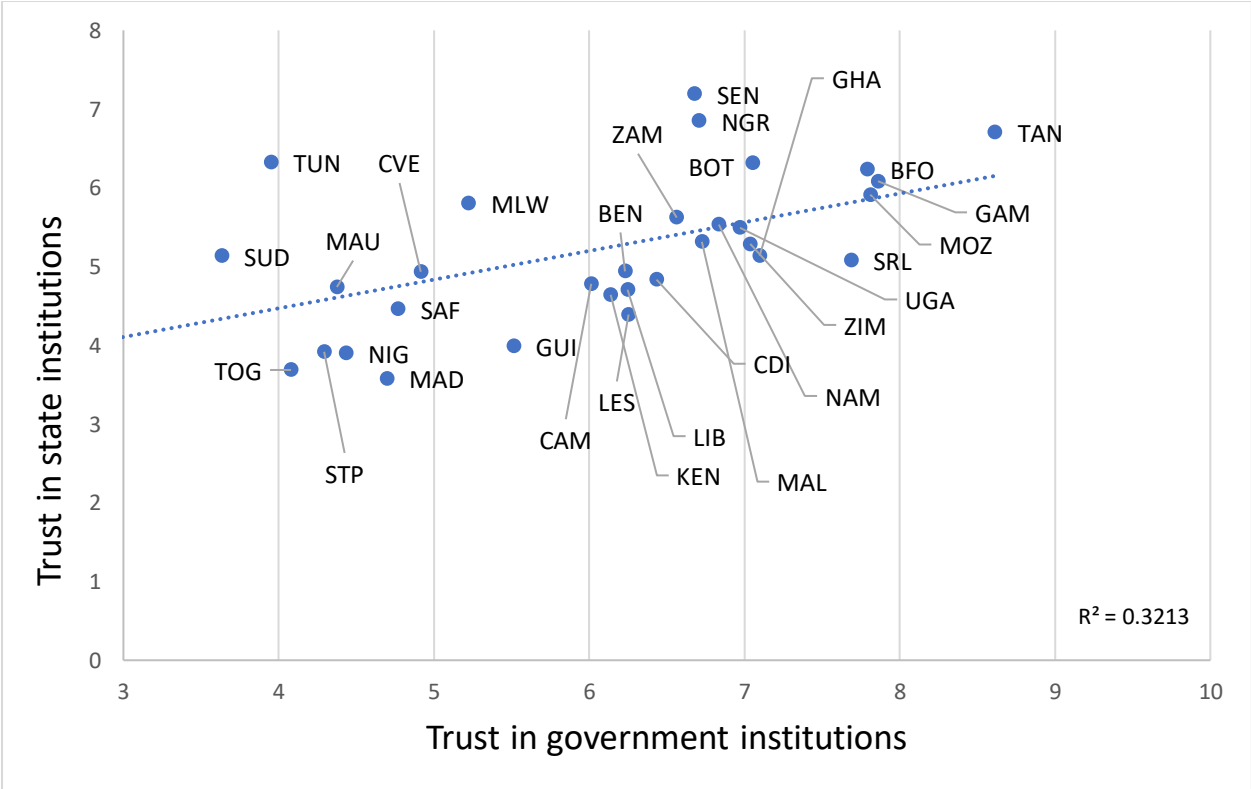


As noted in the previous section, political trust has frequently been conceptualized in different ways and critics have pointed out that researchers have only loosely defined what political trust actually measures. One obvious question is whether trust in political individuals (e.g. incumbents) measures something intrinsically

³⁷ As the mean scores for each component of trust in representative government institutions are rounded, the overall index mean score may not be equal to the sum of the displayed (rounded) component variables.

different from trust in institutions. As noted in the literature review above, the former has been described as a more short-term evaluation of incumbents and their performance, while the latter is connected to longer-term values and attitudes towards the fundamental design and functioning of elements of the political regime. For example, if someone says they trust the president or prime minister, that person is likely referring to the current president or prime minister and is likely influenced by the (highly mediatised) performance of that particular incumbent. It is moreover highly plausible that respondents are able to differentiate between different incumbents, not least because in electoral regimes citizens are called upon to elect the president or prime minister (directly or indirectly). In contrast, one could argue that if people say they trust the courts of law, they are referring to the institution in the abstract, impersonal sense, if not the principle of rule of law even more generally. It is highly unlikely that people are referring to a specific court or a specific judge. The question therefore arises whether the two measures of trust employed in this paper are indeed directly comparable and whether both are in fact (or rather to an equal extent) measuring trust, rather than performance evaluations.

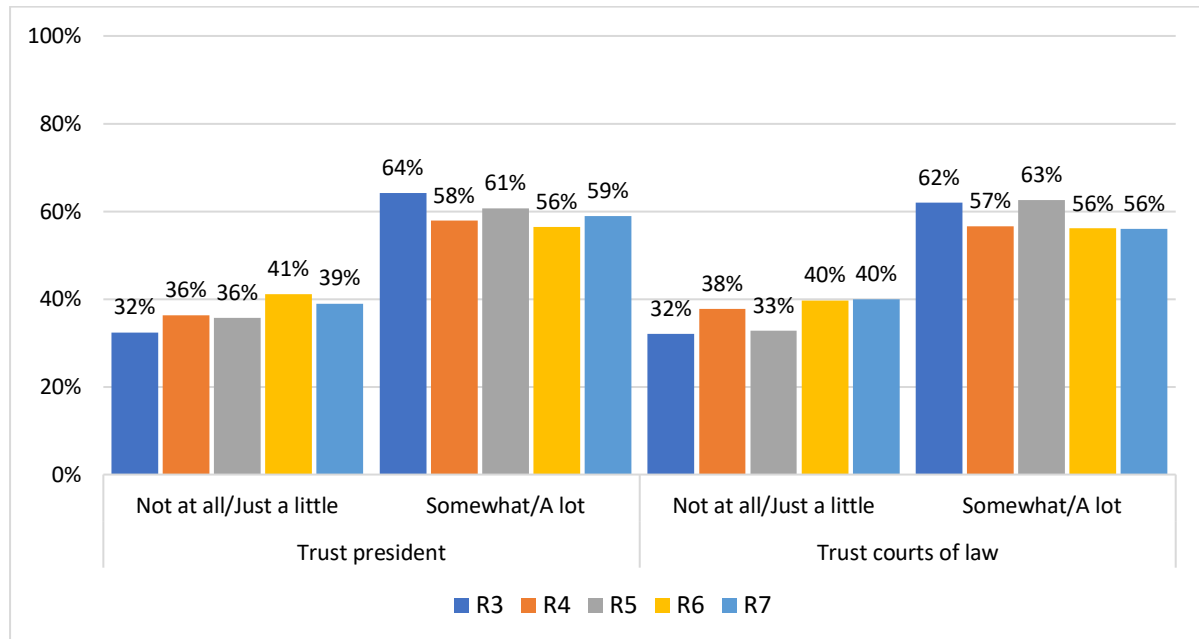
Figure 6: Correlation of trust in government and state institutions. 33 countries. n=39733. Afrobarometer Round 7 (2016-2018)



In fact, the two indices of trust correlate significantly, with a moderate strength. As displayed in figure 6, above, the relation between the two indices is positive, suggesting that respondents who are more trusting of government institutions also

report more trust in state institutions, and vice versa ($r(38606) = 0.634$; $p < .001$). Moreover, using a sub-sample of 18 countries for which longitudinal data is available (2005-2018), it appears that levels of trust in the president/prime minister and trust in courts of law – for example – display very similar trends over time (figure, 7).³⁸

Figure 7: Trust in president and courts between 2005 and 2018. 18 countries³⁹. Afrobarometer Rounds 3-7 (2005-2018)



3.2 Independent variables

I operationalize ‘perceptions of relative deprivation’ by using an Afrobarometer survey question which asks respondents how they feel their living situation compares with other people in their country.⁴⁰ This variable makes no reference to what ‘living situation’ refers to. Substantive responses to this question were: ‘much worse (coded as ‘1’), worse, same, better, much better’ (coded as ‘5’). Responses were read out to respondents.

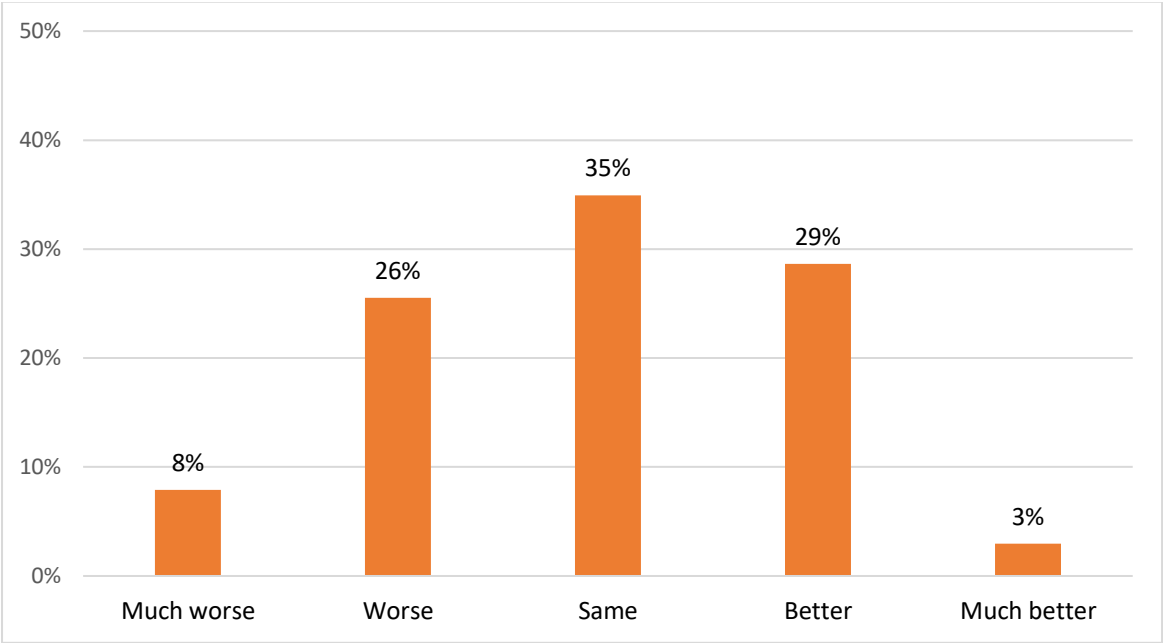
³⁸ The sub-sample consists of: Benin, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

³⁹ Round 3: n=25085; Round 4: n=25296; Round 5: n=32403; Round 6: n=32366; Round 7: n=26494

⁴⁰ Respondents were asked: In general, how do you rate your living conditions compared to those of other South Africans/ Batswana/ Kenyans (e.g.)? For further details see appendix 2.

In my sample of 34 countries (n=45811), around one in three respondents report to feeling equal (35%), with similar proportions feeling either worse off/much worse off (34%) or better/much better off (32%) (see figure 8, below)

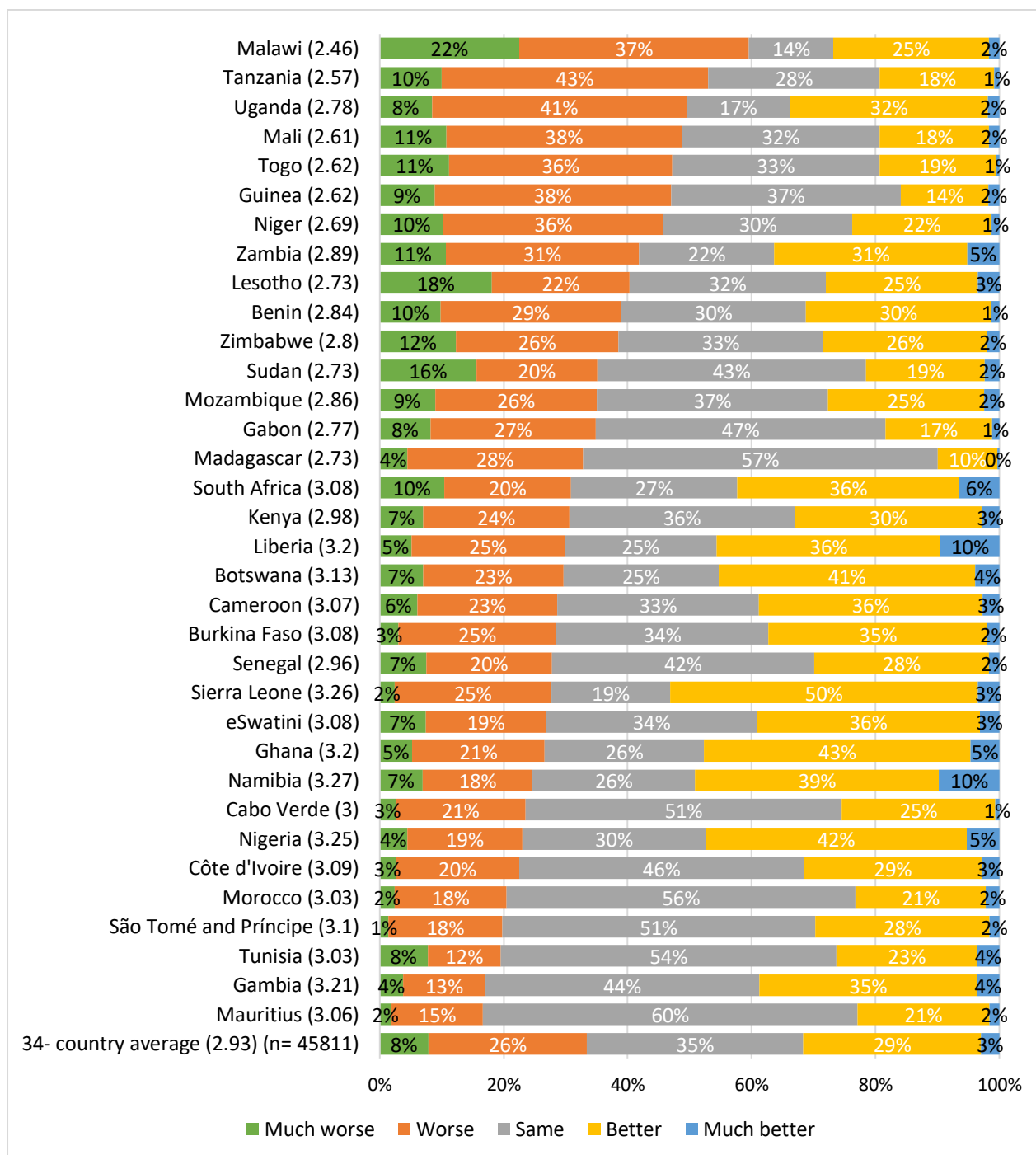
Figure 8: Perceived relative living situation. n=45811. Afrobarometer Round 7 (2016-2018)



This 34-country average blurs much variation between individual countries (see figure 9). For example, while one in three respondents in the 34-country sample report to feel ‘much worse’ or ‘worse’ than others, this number is over 50% in Malawi (59%) and Tanzania (53%), and around 50% in Uganda (49%), Mali (49%) and Togo (47%). Conversely, in Tunisia (20%), Gambia (17%),) and Mauritius (17%) one in five or fewer feel relatively deprived. Moreover, while ‘feeling the same’ is the most frequent response when the data is viewed in total (35% say this), ‘feeling the same’ is only the most frequent response in 15 of the 34 countries, once the data is viewed at country level.

To test the effect of relative situation I compute four dummy variables by coding the variable described above into four dichotomous variables. For each variable I code ‘much better’, ‘better’, ‘worse’, ‘much worse’ as 1, respectively, and all other categories as 0. I do not include a dummy for the ‘equal’ category, in effect making it a reference category as all other categories are controlled for through the dummy variables.

Figure 9: Perceived relative living situation. 34 countries. Afrobarometer Round 7 (2016-2018)⁴¹



⁴¹ The country mean scores are given in parentheses.

3.3 Level 1 control variables

To assess the relative importance of perceived relative living situation as a predictor of political trust, I include a number of control variables which are known to be associated with political trust. An overview of question texts and response options is given in table 4, below.

Table 4: Level 1 control variables used in the multi-level regression analysis⁴²

Variable	Question text	Responses/scale	Descriptives
Lived Poverty Index	Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: Gone without enough food to eat? Gone without enough clean water for home use? Gone without medicines or medical treatment? Gone without enough fuel to cook your food? Gone without a cash income?	Additive index. Index scale: No poverty (0), low poverty (1), moderate poverty (2), high poverty (3)	Min: 0, Max: 3; Mean: 1.53; SD=0.937
Asset Index	Which of these things do you or anyone in your household own? Radio; Television; Mobile phone; Motor vehicle; Bank account	Additive index. Index scale runs from 0 (no assets) to 12 (all assets)	Min: 0, Max: 12; Mean: 5.75; SD=3.24
Free and fair elections	On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election, held in [20xx]?	Not free and fair (1); Free and fair with major problems (2); Free and fair with minor problems (3), Completely free and fair (4)	Min: 1, Max: 4; Mean: 3.02; SD=1.102
Economic performance of government	How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say? Managing the economy; Improving the living standards of the poor; Creating jobs; Keeping prices stable	Additive index. Index scale runs from 4 (very bad) to 16 (very good)	Min: 4, Max: 16; Mean: 7.81; SD=2.97

⁴² For full details and question text, see appendix 3.

Variable	Question text	Responses/scale	Descriptives
Social services performance of government	How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say? Reducing crime; Improving basic health services; Addressing educational needs; Providing water and sanitation services; Ensuring everyone has enough to eat	Additive index. Index scale runs from 5 (very bad) to 20 (very good)	Min: 5, Max: 20; Mean: 11.81; SD=3.62
Change in levels of corruption	In your opinion, over the past year, has the level of corruption in this country increased, decreased, or stayed the same?	Recoded from survey format. Scale runs from: Decreased a lot (1); Decreased (2); Stayed the same (3); Increased (4); Increased a lot (5)	Min: 1, Max: 5; Mean: 3.61; SD=1.33
Perceived corruption in the presidency	How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? The President and Officials in his Office	None (0); Some of them (1); Most of them (2); All of them (3)	Min: 0, Max: 3; Mean: 1.37; SD=0.934
Perceived corruption among MPs	How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? Members of Parliament		Min: 0, Max: 3; Mean: 1.42; SD=0.877
Incumbent partisan	Do you feel close to any particular political party? Which party is that?	0=no (affiliation with other party); 1=yes (feels close to the incumbent party)	46,9% feel close to other party; 53,1% feel close to incumbent party (of those who feel close to any party)

3.3.1 Partisanship

Partisanship is important in informing how much someone trusts government institutions or the state.⁴³ For example, Hetherington & Rudolph (2015, 2018) note that political trust has become increasingly polarized (in the past decades) in the United States. Importantly, the authors note that motivated reasoning and partisan weighting of evaluative criteria is driving such polarization. Motivated reasoning is a decision-making process which results in individuals consuming information and evidence and consequently coming to conclusions in a biased way (favorable to whom they are partisan). This means that individuals not only trust government more if they are a partisan of the party or government, but they also perceive performance to be more positive which in turn increases trust. Partisan-weighting refers to the process by which partisans assign different criteria or importance in policy areas in which their partisan government is doing best – in other words they focus on areas in which ‘their’ government does best and the ‘other’ does worst. While Hetherington & Rudolf (2018) focus on the US, Mattes and Moreno (2018) – in an analysis of determinants of political trust in Sub-Saharan African and Latin America using survey data – found partisanship to be one of the strongest predictors of trust in government institutions and a strong predictor of trust in state institutions. Similar results were obtained by Moehler (2009), using Afrobarometer Round 1 data (1999-2001; 20 countries, n=15715). This suggests that the effect of partisanship on political trust is present in African cases, too, and stable over time.

Because of these clear linkages between partisanship and performance evaluations and between both of these with political trust, I decided to include partisanship in a separate model.⁴⁴ Including partisanship with concurrent predictors, such as economic evaluations and perceptions of corruption, I run the risk of not only statistical multicollinearity, but also of ‘muddying the water’ in terms of distinguishing between whether evaluations are shaping trust, or whether evaluations are being shaped by partisanship and both (or actually just one) is

⁴³ Here the argument of political distance or ‘gaps’ could also be useful to consider. The argument posits that someone will have more trust in government or institutions, the closer the institutions’ issue positions are to the issue positions of the individual (the shorter the distance between the two). By extension, institutions will be more trusted if they are closer to a larger share of the population (Listhaug & Jakobsen, 2018). I argue that partisanship is a good proxy for such ‘distance’ and that people choose whom they support based on the shortest distance between their position in regard to what is salient to them, and the respective issue position of various candidates.

⁴⁴ Moreover, it is completely plausible to assume that the causal direction runs in the opposite direction – i.e. that people who are more trusting of government (for whatever reason) thus become supporters of the ruling party or parties. Through the data and the tests used in this paper, it is impossible to ascertain a definitive causal direction between the two variables. Rather, I follow previous research (as referenced in the discussion) which uses partisanship as an independent variable and trust as the dependent variable.

shaping trust. To capture partisanship, I compute a variable which is coded a ‘1’ if the respondent identifies with the party of the president or prime minister, and coded ‘0’ if the respondent identifies with another party or no party.⁴⁵

3.3.2 Absolute well-being

Compared to economic conditions and evaluations at the country level, the effect of individual economic well-being is far less often considered in literature on political trust. Past research has noted the influence of absolute conditions of material well-being on political trust. For example, sociological explanations of trust argue that income and social class (which are partially products of absolute economic well-being) are associated with political trust (Newton et al., 2018). The authors find a significant and positive effect of income for new democracies in Eastern Europe and four Latin American nations. Mattes & Moreno (2018), in the most comprehensive recent study of sources of political trust in Africa, do not include measures of absolute well-being. Hutchison & Johnson (2011) – using Afrobarometer Rounds 1-3 (2000-2005) for 16 different countries – compute an “economic hardship” index, which is comprised of respondents’ assessments of how often they went without food, water or medicine in the past year. The authors found that the effect for economic hardship is significant and negative, even when controlling for a number of other predictors of trust, such as economic satisfaction, state capacity and satisfaction with democracy. The results suggested that higher levels of economic hardship are significantly associated with less political trust.⁴⁶ Bakonyi (2011) – in a study of Hungarian survey data – used the monthly household income per capita and found that people with higher income – independent from level of education – also placed greater trust in democratic institutions.

Others, however, suggest that the role of absolute economic well-being may not be universal, but rather dependent on other contextual factors. For example, Catterberg & Moreno (2006) – using the 3rd and 4th round of World Value survey data (1995-2001) for four world regions⁴⁷ – found that income is significantly negatively associated with political trust (an additive index of trust in parliament and civil service) for established democracies (see footnote) but has no significant effect for a sub-sample of former Soviet republics.

⁴⁵ For details on the partisanship variable see appendix 3.a.

⁴⁶ Hutchison & Johnson (2011) use an additive index of political trust (range: 0 (least) to 18 (most)) computed from trust indicators on trust in the executive, courts, police, armed forces, electoral commission and government-run media.

⁴⁷ Taken from Catterberg & Moreno (2006:44): “*Nations* included: Six established democracies: Finland, Japan, Spain, Sweden, USA, West Germany. Six former Soviet Republics: Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine. Eight new democracies in Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia. Four Latin American Nations: Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Peru.”

To examine the effect of absolute economic and material well-being of individuals I include two additive indices: the Lived Poverty Index (LPI) and the asset index.⁴⁸ The LPI was developed by Afrobarometer as a measure of poverty which would allow the interviewer to capture the “experiential core of poverty” (Mattes, 2008: 1). Importantly, the questions underpinning the LPI could be captured as part of the broader attitudinal interview, without having to spend too much time and effort on capturing economic conditions, behaviors and habits as studies on poverty do in economic research.⁴⁹ The LPI is an additive index of five variables which query how often a respondent or anyone in their family has gone without basic commodities in the past year.⁵⁰ The commodities are: enough food, enough water for personal consumption, medical services, enough cooking fuel and cash income. Responses range from ‘never’ having gone without to ‘always’. The index is computed by adding a respondent’s five responses. The scale of the additive index is recoded, and categories are created running from ‘no lived poverty’ to ‘high lived poverty’.

The asset index reflects how many non-elemental goods a respondent has access to or owns personally. The index reflects whether respondents say they have access to, or personally own: a radio, television, mobile phone, computer, motor vehicle and bank account.⁵¹ The scores for the six items were added without any weighting and the resulting scale was not recoded. The scale runs from 0 (no access or personal ownership to any item) to 12 (personal ownership of all six items). In a study of perceived horizontal inequalities in Ghana, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Nigeria and Kenya, Langer & Mikami (2012) used the same set of variables and a similar approach to recoding.⁵²

⁴⁸ I acknowledge that the argument can be made that the LPI is in fact also a relative assessment. For example, it is plausible to argue that people are unable to recall how often they went without food or income in the past year, and use a comparative heuristic to answer the question (assess their absolute situation compared to others, even though the question does not ask them to).

⁴⁹ On the validity and reliability of the LPI as a measure of core poverty, see: Bratton & Mattes, 2003; Bratton et al., 2005; Mattes, 2008.

⁵⁰ The question reads: “Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: Gone without enough food to eat? Gone without enough clean water for home use? Gone without medicines or medical treatment? Gone without enough fuel to cook your food? Gone without a cash income?”

⁵¹ A factor analysis (extraction method: principle components analysis) was performed, and a single factor extracted (no rotation). The factor produced an eigenvalue of 2,664 (6 items) and accounted for 44,398% of variance. A reliability analysis produced a satisfactory Cronbach’s alpha of 0,745.

⁵² Langer and Mikami dichotomized the six items and computed an ‘asset-index’ ranging from 0 to 6.

3.3.3 Performance

Previous research has found that government performance and evaluations of performance are a central determinant of trust in government institutions. (For African cases see: Moehler, 2009; Hutchison & Johnson, 2011; Uslaner, 2017; Mattes & Moreno, 2018. For cases outside of Africa see: Citrin 1974; Easton, 1975; Listhaug 1995; Alesina & Wacziarg, 2000; Scharpf, 1999; Hetherington, 2005; Keele, 2007; Newton, 2007; Uslaner, 2011; Van der Meer, 2018).

I include three variables which reflect different types of regime outputs. First, I include a respondent evaluation of ‘free and fair national elections’ in the country. This variable reflects a performance evaluation in regard to good governance. Some debate exists as to what role the formal structure of institutions has on political trust (see Lijphart 1999; Aarts & Thomassen, 2008; Marien 2011), but recent empirical research has noted that rather than formal structure, the practical functioning of institutions – such as electoral systems and electoral commissions – serves as a source of political trust (Sanders et al., 2014; Thomassen, 2014). Second, I include an ‘economic performance’ index-variable which reflects how people assess the government’s performance in managing the economy, improving living standards of the poor, creating jobs and keeping prices down.⁵³ This index-variable is likewise not recoded to adjust the scale in any way. Lastly, I include an index-variable which reflects assessments of ‘government performance in service delivery’. This index includes assessments of government reducing crime, providing basic health services, addressing education needs, and providing water and sanitation services, and enough food, for everyone.⁵⁴ The index is computed by adding scores across the composite variables and I do not recode the scale of the index variable. Factor analysis and reliability analysis were performed for all three indices and confirmed an underlying factor in all three cases (see respective footnotes for details).

3.3.4 Corruption

Past research suggests that political trust is strongly tied to the ideas of representation and accountability (Grimes, 2006; Uslaner, 2005, 2011, 2013, 2017, 2018; Van der Meer & Dekker, 2011; You, 2018). Corruption inherently goes against these ideas, as the interest and benefit of the individual or a small group of clients is placed over the interest and benefit of the electorate. Indeed,

⁵³ I conducted both factor analysis and reliability analysis before computing an additive factor variable ‘economic performance of government’. The analysis produced a single factor which accounted for 65,6% of total variance and had an eigenvalue of 2,2. The reliability analysis was satisfactory (Cronbach’s alpha= 0,824).

⁵⁴ I conducted both factor analysis and reliability analysis before computing an additive factor variable ‘social services performance of government’. The analysis produced a single factor which accounted for 55,6% of total variance and had an eigenvalue of 2,8. The reliability analysis was satisfactory (Cronbach’s alpha=0,8).

Lavallée et al. (2008) – using round 2 and 3 Afrobarometer survey data (2002/2003 and 2005/2006) for 18 countries – find that perceptions of general levels of corruption as well as personal experiences of petty corruption (paying a bribe) are significantly associated with less trust in political institutions.⁵⁵ I include three variables capturing perceptions of corruption. First, I include two questions which ask people how much they feel the president (and his office) and members of parliament are corrupt, respectively. Second, I include a variable which asks respondents to evaluate changes in the overall level of corruption in their country.⁵⁶

I also include a number of sociodemographic variables which have been found to be associated with political trust. I control for location (urban vs rural setting), gender, age group and level of education.

3.4 Level 2 control variables⁵⁷

To test for effect of income inequality at country level, I include the country Gini coefficient. The Gini coefficient is widely used in the literature and previously has been found to be significantly associated with levels of political trust. How much people trust institutions is probably influenced or framed by the rules and “requirements of justification” (Lührmann et al., 2020: 811) for the government’s use of power which governs how people and institutions interact and what power institutions may hold. If people feel that such institutions are not ensuring said constraints, they are likely going to be less trusting of the institutions. To account for country-level variation in system accountability and institutionalized oversight of power, I use the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) “accountability index” (developed by Anna Lührmann, Kyle L. Marquardt and Valeriya Mechkova, 2017). The index encompasses three sub-indices (vertical, diagonal, horizontal) of accountability, each comprised of multiple indicators. The index measures to the extent to which government is constrained in its “use of political power through for example elections, checks and balances between institutions, and by civil society organizations and media activity.” (Varieties of Democracy, 2019). Moreover, I include the V-Dem ‘political corruption index’. Past research has routinely found a significant, negative effect of corruption on political trust. The V-Dem index is comprised of indicators relating to corruption in the legislature, judiciary, executive and public sector (Varieties of Democracy, 2019). I also control for the ‘type of electoral system’ as the type of electoral system likely has consequence on the relationship of electorate and representatives (Binzer Hobolt

⁵⁵ Political institutions are defined by the authors as: president, parliament, independent electoral commission, ruling party and opposition parties.

⁵⁶ Respondents were asked: In your opinion, over the past year, has the level of corruption in this country increased, decreased, or stayed the same? For description of the variable, see appendix 3.d.1.

⁵⁷ For an overview of the level 2 control variables, see appendix 4.

& Klemmensen, 2007; Spoon & Klüver, 2014). I control for type of electoral system using data from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). I recode the IDEA data to code ‘1’ if a country uses a majoritarian system and ‘0’ if it does not (proportional representation or mixed system).

Lastly, I include the Human Development Index (HDI) as a measure of country-level development. Past research suggests a positive linkage between levels of development and levels of democratic values (tolerance, trust and efficacy) (Hutchison & Johnson, 2011). The HDI is a multi-item index comprised of scores from dimension-indexes for life expectancy, education and per capita gross national income.

4. Analysis

In this section I test the hypotheses laid out in section 2.4 above. I expect respondents who feel relatively deprived to be less trusting of government institutions and state institutions. In line with Mattes & Moreno (2018), I differentiate between two ‘recipients’ of trust – representative government institutions (from here on simply ‘government institutions’) and state institutions⁵⁸, and, following their recommendation for future research, I use multi-level modelling to account for country level effects.

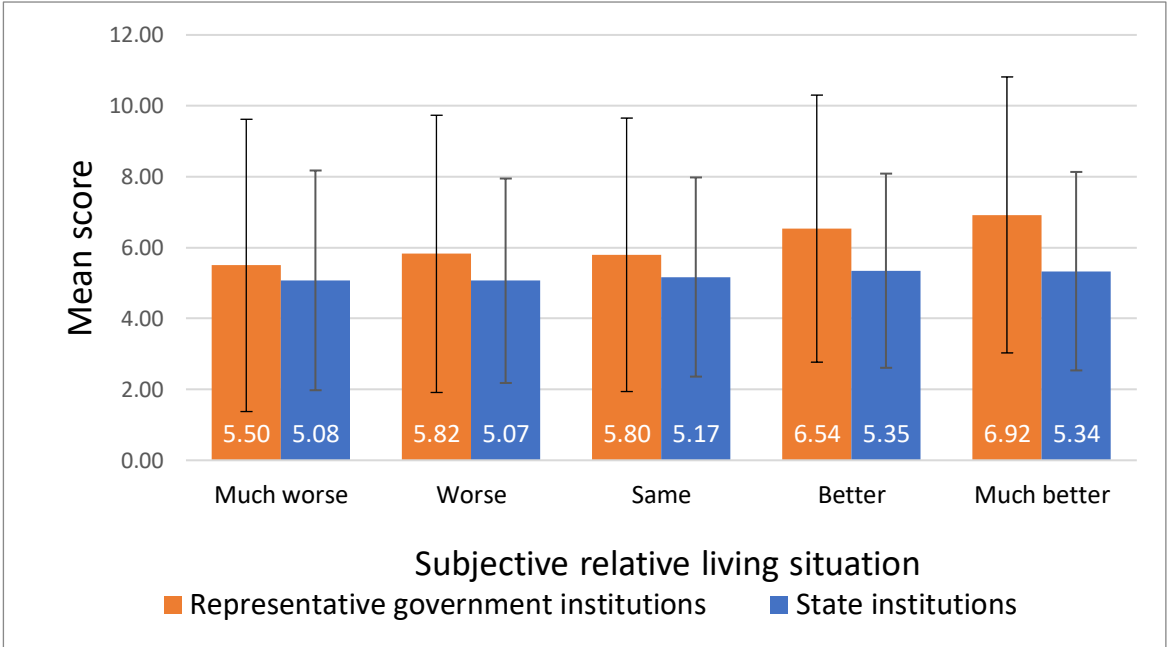
This section is structured as follows. In the following sub-section, I test for bivariate relations between perceptions of relative deprivation and trust at individual- and country-level. I then employ a multi-level model to test the hypothesis in the context of individual- and country-level control variables (section 4.2). The results – discussed in detail in section 4.2 – suggest that perceptions of relative deprivation are significantly associated with less trust in both government and state institutions, thus supporting the hypotheses. Beyond the main predictor (perceptions of relative deprivation), the results widely align with past research, suggesting that positive performance evaluations, lack of corruption, and partisanship with the incumbent are associated with more trust in both government and state institutions.

⁵⁸ To refresh: the former entails trust in the president, members of parliament, the ruling party and local councillors. The latter entails trust in police, army and courts of law.

4.1 Bivariate analysis

Indeed, the bivariate results suggest that feeling relatively deprived is associated with less trust in government institutions. Examining the bivariate results (see figure 10, below), it appears that respondents who feel much worse off or worse off than others have lower political trust, compared with respondents who feel better or much better off than others.⁵⁹ While the same relation emerges in regard to trust in state institutions, the differences in trust appear much less pronounced, compared with trust in government institutions.

Figure 10: Trust in representative government institutions and state institutions (mean scores and standard deviations displayed). By perceived relative living situation. n=42992. Afrobarometer Round 7 data⁶⁰

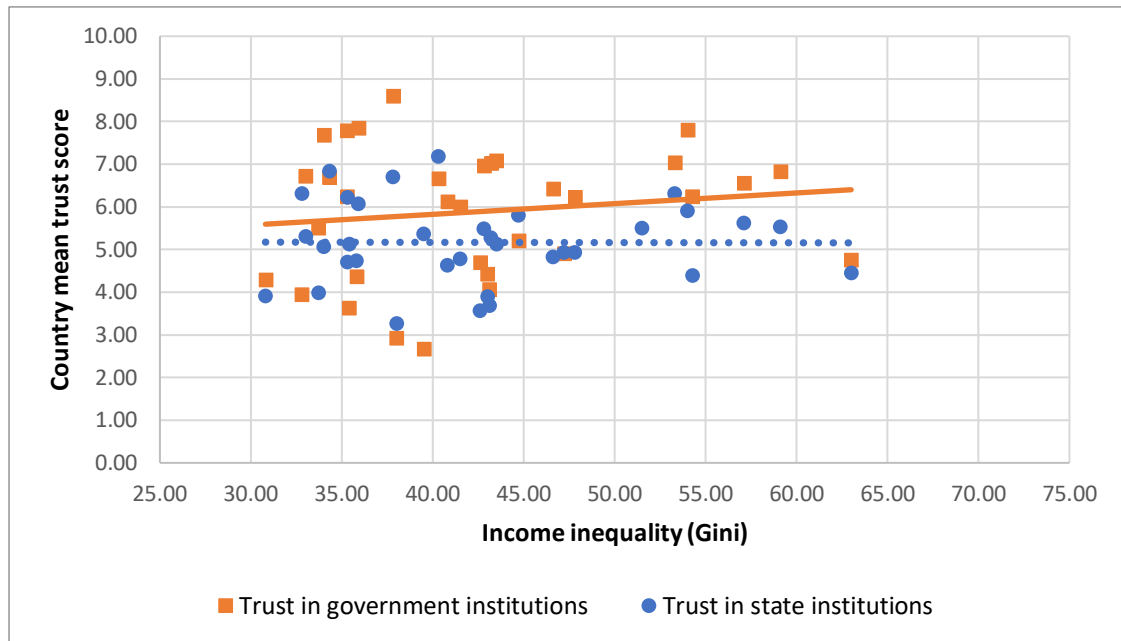


While the bivariate results suggest an (albeit weak) association between perceived relative living situation and trust at individual-level, I find no significant association between income inequality and trust at country level (see figure 11, below).

⁵⁹ Trust in government institutions: $r(38586) = 0.088$; $p < 0.01$; Trust in state institutions: $r(41683) = 0.037$; $p < 0.01$.

⁶⁰ The data is weighted by country to ensure gender parity within countries. No weight has been applied to equalize the country-level sample sizes. To recall, the index for trust in government institutions can only be computed for 33 countries (eSwatini is missing), while the index for trust in state institutions can be computed for all 34 countries.

Figure 11: Income inequality and trust in elected representatives and government institutions. 33/34 countries



Trust in government institutions: $r(33) = 0.447$; $p > 0.05$

Trust in state institutions: $r(34) = 0.977$; $p > 0.05$

Given the extensive literature on the effects of economic inequality, this is a somewhat surprising result and raises the question whether theoretical expectations, drawn from a literature largely derived from research on cases outside of Africa, are readily applicable to cases within Africa (such as in this paper). To recapitulate, the top-down approach to understanding sources of political trust places particular emphasis on the role of performance – both in terms of the economy and in terms of accountability – and finds that more unequal countries perform worse in both areas. As Goubin (2018a: 5) summarizes,

income inequality is associated with less qualitative performance of government services and negative perceptions of economic policies in particular, tendencies towards corruption and disproportionate political power for the rich.

In fact (see table 5, below), the data suggests that for the cases observed in this paper, countries with higher levels of income inequality tend to be more developed (as per HDI and per capita gross domestic product (GDP p/c (purchasing power parity (PPP))), suffer less corruption (as per Political Corruption Index) and be more accountable to people (as per Accountability Index (from V-Dem)). Moreover, people in more unequal countries tend to perceive economic and social government performance as more positive, as well as to think the past national election was free and fair, compared to countries with low levels of inequality.

Table 5: Correlates of income inequality. Afrobarometer Round 7 data⁶¹

Income inequality (Gini)		
	Pearson's r	N
GDP (per capita-PPP)	,231**	45811
Human Development Index	,251**	45811
% who feel equal to others	-,337**	45811
Lived Poverty Index	,016**	45337
Economic performance index	,042**	41256
Social services performance index	,055**	42351
Free and fair election	,074**	41723
Accountability index (V-Dem)	,102**	45811
Political corruption index (V-Dem)	-,289**	45811
Change in level of corruption (less to more)	,071**	43125
Corruption: office of the Presidency	-,019**	38590
Corruption: Members of Parliament	-,024**	39130

It appears that in cases studied here, the basic expectation that more unequal countries are worse at providing accountability, and at performing, cannot be upheld. Of course, the types of test so far fail to account for the influence of country effects and differences, something I turn to in the following section. However, it is worth noting that expectations that are found in the literature may not hold for cases in Africa. I return to further explore this problem more closely in section 4.3.

4.2 Multivariate Analysis

Next, I turn to testing the hypotheses. Recall, I use multi-level models, which are needed to account for clustering in the data incurred by the structure of the data and the sampling process. The results for trust in government institutions (models 1a-1e) are displayed in table 6, while the results for trust in state institutions (models 2a-2e) are displayed in table 7, below. I discuss the results for both forms of trust concurrently, before contrasting the results at the end of this section. For ease of navigation, I have included sub-divisions indicating the various models and independent variables.⁶²

⁶¹ **p<0.01

⁶² Throughout this section I uses asterixis to indicate significant results: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Table 6. Modelling trust in representative government institutions. 33 countries (n=39733). Afrobarometer Round 7 data (2016-2018)⁶³

	Model 1a	Model 1b	Model 1c	Model 1d	Model 1e	Model 1f
Intercept	10,68(1,99)***	8,81(1,73)***	11,25(2,01)***	11,09(1,98)***	3,46(1,39)*	6,45(1,35)***
Much worse	-0,79(0,07)***	-0,78(0,1)***	-0,62(0,07)***	-0,83(0,07)***	-0,02(0,07)	0,01(0,07)
Worse	-0,59(0,05)***	-0,45(0,07)***	-0,49(0,05)***	-0,63(0,05)***	-0,17(0,05)***	-0,12(0,05)*
Better	0,38(0,05)***	0,26(0,06)***	0,33(0,05)***	0,4(0,05)***	0,17(0,04)***	0,14(0,04)**
Much better	0,87(0,11)***	0,78(0,14)***	0,81(0,11)***	0,9(0,11)***	0,38(0,1)***	0,41(0,1)***
Incumbent partisan		2,97(0,06)***				
Lived Poverty Index			-0,34(0,02)***		-0,08(0,02)***	-0,04(0,02)
Asset Index				-0,06(0,01)***		
Free and fair elections					0,88(0,02)***	0,69(0,02)***
Economic performance of government					0,3(0,01)***	0,24(0,01)***
Social services performance of government					0,13(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***
Change in levels of corruption						-0,32(0,02)***
Percentage Corruption in the presidency						-0,6(0,03)***
Percentage Corruption among MPs						-0,32(0,03)***
Rural = 1	0,71(0,04)***	0,5(0,05)***	0,75(0,04)***	0,63(0,04)***	0,5(0,04)***	0,44(0,04)***
Female = 1	-0,03(0,04)	-0,1(0,05)*	-0,04(0,04)	-0,08(0,04)*	-0,05(0,03)	-0,11(0,04)**
Age group	0,14(0,01)***	0,14(0,02)***	0,14(0,01)***	0,15(0,01)***	0,11(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***
Level of Education	-0,45(0,02)***	-0,34(0,03)***	-0,5(0,02)***	-0,36(0,02)***	-0,32(0,02)***	-0,24(0,02)***
Accountability index (V-Dem)	-0,5(0,62)	-0,03(0,54)	-0,59(0,63)	-0,47(0,62)	-1,14(0,43)*	-1,1(0,42)*
Political corruption index (V-Dem)	-3,27(1,24)*	-2,66(1,07)*	-3,1(1,25)*	-3,36(1,24)*	-1,91(0,86)*	-1,33(0,84)
Gini	0,02(0,03)	0,02(0,02)	0,03(0,03)	0,02(0,02)	0,01(0,02)	0,01(0,02)
Majoritarian electoral system	1,22(0,42)**	0,77(0,36)*	1,18(0,42)**	1,21(0,42)**	0,66(0,29)*	0,63(0,28)*
HDI	-8,72(2,12)***	-7,36(1,85)***	-9,08(2,13)***	-8,43(2,11)***	-5,79(1,47)**	-4,92(1,43)**
Within group variance	0,04	0,18	0,05	0,05	0,25	0,32
Between group variance	0,46	0,60	0,45	0,46	0,74	0,75

⁶³ * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Table 7. Modelling trust in state institutions. 34 countries (n=42992). Afrobarometer Round 7 data (2016-2018)⁶⁴

	Model 2a	Model 2b	Model 2c	Model 2d	Model 2e	Model 2F
Intercept	9,14(1,36)***	8,42(1,4)***	9,45(1,34)***	9,44(1,36)***	4,85(1,52)**	6,59(1,54)***
Much worse	-0,39(0,05)***	-0,29(0,08)***	-0,3(0,05)***	-0,43(0,05)***	0,02(0,06)	0,03(0,06)
Worse	-0,32(0,03)***	-0,19(0,05)***	-0,26(0,03)***	-0,35(0,03)***	-0,11(0,04)***	-0,11(0,04)**
Better	0,11(0,03)**	0,08(0,05)	0,09(0,03)**	0,13(0,03)***	0,03(0,03)	0,02(0,04)
Much better	0,19(0,08)*	0,12(0,11)	0,16(0,08)*	0,21(0,08)**	-0,1(0,08)	-0,1(0,08)
Incumbent partisan = 1		1,1(0,04)***				
Lived Poverty Index			-0,19(0,02)***		-0,03(0,02)	-0,01(0,02)
Ownership index				-0,05(0,01)***		
Free and fair elections					0,45(0,01)***	0,34(0,01)***
Economic performance of government index					0,13(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***
Social services performance of government index					0,12(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***
Change in levels of corruption						-0,2(0,01)***
Percentage Corruption in the presidency						-0,29(0,02)***
Percentage Corruption among MPs						-0,28(0,02)***
Rural = 1	0,41(0,03)***	0,34(0,04)***	0,43(0,03)***	0,35(0,03)***	0,27(0,03)***	0,21(0,03)***
Female = 1	-0,09(0,03)**	-0,12(0,04)**	-0,09(0,03)***	-0,12(0,03)***	-0,1(0,03)***	-0,15(0,03)***
Age group	0,07(0,01)***	0,06(0,01)***	0,07(0,01)***	0,08(0,01)***	0,06(0,01)***	0,04(0,01)***
Level of Education	-0,26(0,02)***	-0,2(0,02)***	-0,29(0,02)***	-0,2(0,02)***	-0,19(0,02)***	-0,14(0,02)***
Accountability index (V-Dem)	-0,33(0,35)	-0,24(0,44)	-0,38(0,35)	-0,33(0,35)	-0,5(0,39)	-0,43(0,4)
Political corruption index (V-Dem)	-3,24(0,8)***	-3,18(0,87)**	-3,15(0,8)***	-3,33(0,8)***	-2,25(0,9)*	-1,76(0,91)
Income inequality (Gini)	-0,01(0,02)	-0,01(0,02)	-0,01(0,02)	-0,02(0,02)	-0,02(0,02)	-0,02(0,02)
Majoritarian electoral system	0,34(0,28)	0,22(0,29)	0,32(0,27)	0,34(0,28)	-0,04(0,31)	-0,09(0,31)
HDI	-3,1(1,45)*	-2,38(1,5)	-3,3(1,44)*	-2,87(1,45)	-1,6(1,63)	-1,08(1,65)
Within group variance	0,03	0,08	0,03	0,03	0,14	0,18
Between group variance	0,36	0,34	0,37	0,36	0,19	0,18

⁶⁴ * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

4.2.1 Perceptions of relative deprivation and advantage

The regression results support both hypotheses, namely that feeling relatively deprived is significantly associated with less trust in both government and state institutions. Hereby, the effect sizes for sentiments of perceptions of relative deprivation are considerably larger for trust in government institutions than for trust in state institutions. This could suggest that the perceived relative living situation is politicised by ordinary people, rather than being seen as a system-output (in which case one would assume that, for example, perceptions of relative deprivation are associated with less trust equally in government and state). The results also show that political trust is linked to feelings of relative advantage, with feeling better off than others being significantly associated with more trust (model 1a/2a) in both government and state institutions, although the effect sizes are smaller for the latter than for the former. Moreover, the results in model 1a and model 2a suggest that the association of perceived relative living situation and political trust appears to be linear. Those who feel much worse and much better have significantly less and more trust in representative institutions, respectively, than those who feel ‘only’ worse or better off than others, compared to those who feel equal to others. The effect of perceived relative situation and trust in representative institutions is significant above and beyond the effect of sociodemographic characteristics, such as location and level of education.⁶⁵ Controlling for perceived relative situation and sociodemographic factors, model 1 accounts for around 4% of variance in the dependent variable.⁶⁶ This suggests that, while perceptions of relative deprivation (and perceived relative advantage) are significantly associated with less (and more) trust in representative government institutions, other explanations of such trust are likely more important.

While the results here are not directly comparable with past research (as, to my knowledge, no one has used the variable or a similar item in this way), the significant association between feeling relatively deprived and being less trusting

⁶⁵ Generally speaking, location, age and education matter. Rural dwellers are significantly more trusting of representative government institutions, than urbanites. More educated respondents are significantly less trusting, than those with lower levels of education or no formal education. And older respondents are more trusting of government institution than younger ones. I find the same patterns of association between location, age, education and trust in state institutions, although the effect size is smaller compared to trust in government institutions. The models (2a-2e) suggest that rural dwellers, older respondents and less educated respondents are significantly more trusting of state institutions, than urbanites, younger and more educated respondents.

⁶⁶ I acknowledge that the within and between group variance cannot be interpreted in the same way that an R^2 would be interpreted in a linear regression model with only 1 level. Specifically, the within and between group variance in an MLM indicates the approximate reduction in unaccounted variance in the dependent variable, compared with the null model.

of government and state institutions does echo the findings of Wroe (2016), Zmerli and Castillo (2015) and Medve-Bálint & Boda (2014), who all find that the sentiment of feeling precarious or “at the bottom” is linked to less trust (see section 2.3.2). Compared to past findings, the models in this paper explore the relationship between subjective relative living situation and trust in a more differentiated and nuanced way. For example, Zmerli & Castillo (2015) – for 18 Latin American countries – found that where people place themselves on a poor-rich scale is significantly correlated with political trust. This finding appears to suggest a linear relationship between the two variables. In my models, I demonstrate – particularly in regard to trust in state institutions – that the relationship between relative self-placement and trust appears not to be linear, once important control variables such as incumbent partisanship and economic performance evaluations are considered. In regard to trust in state institutions, the models suggest that feeling relatively deprived is significantly correlated with less trust above and beyond the effect of other control variables. Conversely, feeling relatively better off than others is not significantly correlated with trust once other explanations of trust are considered in the models. The results thus suggest that the relationship is non-linear: feeling relatively better off than others does not simply have the opposite effect of feeling relatively worse off than others.

4.2.2 Absolute individual poverty

Past research has widely placed less importance on the role of individual-level material well-being, compared to country-level conditions or evaluations, in the study of political trust (Wroe, 2016). The results – in models 1c and 2c – highlight that absolute well-being matters, but that the association with satisfaction with democracy is stronger for perceived relative situation than for absolute well-being. While experiencing more lived poverty is associated with less trust in both government and state institutions, trust appears more strongly associated with how people feel they fare compared to others. This is an important finding as it suggests that the relation between people and politics is not improved by addressing only absolute conditions but that relational considerations are important to understanding political trust (the rising tide lifts all boats, comes to mind). The significant effect of perceived relative living situation, above and beyond experienced absolute poverty, moreover provides empirical support for the narrative of trust breaking down as a result of being ‘left behind’ (which is an inherently comparative status) rather than ‘being poor’. Strikingly, the results also suggest that respondents who own more assets are also less trusting of both government and state institutions, although the effect-size is much smaller than the effect of lived poverty. Regardless of which index is consulted, however, subjective relative assessments remain significant, underlining the importance of how people think they fair compared to others in informing trust, regardless of their absolute situation.

4.2.3 Partisanship

In models 1b and 2b, I include a measure of incumbent-partisanship.⁶⁷ For both forms of trust, the results suggest a strong and positive effect, meaning that respondents who feel close to the incumbent party are significantly more trusting of both government and state institutions than respondents who are not. Despite the strong effect of incumbency, I find that perceived living situations is significant in shaping trust in government institutions above and beyond the role of partisanship at individual-level. Both perceived relative deprivation and advantage are significantly correlated with trust in government institutions. The result suggests egocentric motivations, as feelings of relative deprivation are significantly associated with less trust and feelings of being relatively better off are significantly associated with more trust. A slightly different picture emerges when looking at trust in state institutions. Including incumbency support in model 2b, the measures of perceptions of relative deprivation remain significant, albeit weaker in size compared to model 2a. Unlike for trust in government institutions, the effect of feeling relatively better off is not significant for trust in state institutions, once incumbent partisanship is included.

The models suggest that partisanship is of greater importance in accounting for within country variance in trust in representative government institutions compared to state institutions. The relative importance of partisanship can be gauged by comparing the change in within-group variance explained. For government institutions, Model 1b (which is model 1a plus incumbent support) accounts for roughly 18%, compared with 4% by model 1a.⁶⁸ This suggests that including respondents' partisanship in the model improves the model performance (with respect to within-country variance) by around 14 percentage-points. By comparison, for trust in state institutions, model 2b (which is model 2a plus incumbent supporter) shows that controlling for partisanship accounts for 8%, compared with only 3% in model 2a. This means that including partisanship in the model for trust in state institutions improved the model performance by an additional 5% percentage-points.

⁶⁷ Following the recommendation by Lee Ray (2003), I run separate models for separate explanatory variable-groups so as not to include intervening variables in a single model. I include incumbent partisanship in a separate model as partisanship is probably highly correlated with performance evaluations (model 1d) and perceptions of corruption (1e). Including partisanship in such models would cause issue of multicollinearity in the computation and interpretation of results. More generally, there exists an issue with cause and effect in the study of political trust (see: Newton et al., 2017:41-42). Here, the use of path analysis or panel data could provide a method by which the independent contributions of predictor variables and causal directions could be better unpacked.

⁶⁸ To recapitulate, in multilevel modelling the within and between country variance reflects the reduction in unaccounted variance within and between level 2 units, compared with the overall variance in the dependent variable in the null-model (model without any predictors at level 1 or 2).

4.2.4 Performance evaluations and corruption

The significant effect of perceptions of relative deprivation, above and beyond incumbent partisanship in both models, is important as it suggests that trust, even for partisans of the ruling party, is not ‘blind’ and that feeling relatively deprived reduces trust in government institutions, regardless of who one feels close to. In fact, the results largely echo the conclusion by Mattes and Moreno in that “trust and distrust are not reflexive or unreasoned” (2018: 27), but rather tied to evaluations, such as economic, social and political performance by the government. In contrast to Mattes and Moreno (who find that economic performance is the stronger of the two predictors of trust), I find that trust in representative government institutions is more strongly associated with the perceived quality of elections ($B=0.88$ $S.E.=0.02$; $p<.000$)⁶⁹, compared to economic performance ($B=0.3$; $S.E.=0.01$; $p<.000$) (see model 1e). More generally, the results suggest that trust in government is more closely tied to conduct (free and fair elections, lack of corruption) than explicit output or performance (economic performance and social service delivery – see model 1f). In particular, perceived corruption in the executive is strongly associated with less trust in government institutions (as we might expect, and in line with findings for earlier rounds of Afrobarometer data: see Moehler, 2009; Uslaner, 2017). Similar patterns emerge in regard to trust in state institutions, although the effect sizes are smaller than for trust in government institutions.

Despite the strong associations between trust in government institutions and free and fair elections and performance evaluations (model 1e and 2e) and perceptions of corruption (model 1f and 2f), the models demonstrate that moderate levels of perceived relative deprivation remain significantly associated with less trust in government institutions, above and beyond the significant effects of such factors. Comparing models 1d and 1e, and 2d and 2e, respectively, suggests that accounting for performance evaluations strongly weakens the association between individual relative living situation (both perceived relative deprivation and advantage). Hereby, the association is more strongly weakened for feelings of relative deprivation than for relative advantage. In fact, the results show that once economic performance and election quality are taken into account, perceptions of extreme relative deprivation (‘feeling much worse off’) are no longer significantly associated with levels of trust in government and state institutions. Conversely, I find no evidence of a significant association between feeling relatively better off and trust in state institutions only, once performance and corruption are considered.

⁶⁹ B represents the estimate of the fixed effect and S.E represents that standard error.

4.2.5 Country level explanations

Unlike much previous research on political trust in Africa, I am able to test the influence of individual- and country-level factors by using a multi-level modelling approach. The results at country level suggest that country levels of income inequality (as per Gini) are not significantly associated with trust in government institutions. This finding had been somewhat expected following the bivariate analysis discussed in section 4.1. As noted above, although this finding stands in contrast to earlier work by Uslaner (2011), the finding is not incongruent with Uslaner's (and others') basic argument in principle. Uslaner (2011) argues that people see high inequality as a result of poor government performance. As government trust is linked to government's performance, people are less trusting of government in more unequal countries. As seen in the correlation analysis in section 4.1, the countries in my sample with higher income inequality appear to fare (slightly) better at providing economic and social services, ensure free and fair elections as well as being characterized by higher levels of GDP (per capita/PPP) and less corruption (as per V-Dem political corruption index). Therefore, the argument that performance shapes trust is true in the context of my cases, but among my cases more unequal countries do not perform worse.

I find a negative and significant effect for V-Dem's political corruption index, suggesting that people in countries with higher levels of political corruption (on said index) are less trusting. This finding is in line with past research which notes that "corruption is *the* major explanation of cross-national differences in political trust" (Van der Meer, 2017: 14)⁷⁰. Interestingly, for both forms of trust the country level effect turns non-significant once individual-level perceptions of corruption are included. This suggests that trust is primarily driven by perceptions of corruption rather than other, indirect or unobserved effects of political corruption (high prices, more state debt, etc.). The level 2 results also point to people in majoritarian electoral system being more trusting of representative government institutions – possibly because of the stronger and more direct bond between the electorate and representatives in majoritarian system.

Among level 2 predictors of trust in both government and state institutions, the level of human development stands out as the strongest effect. Given the positive linkage between perceived government performance and trust at individual-level, I find a strong and negative effect for level of human development (using the Human Development Index), suggesting that people in more developed countries are less trusting of government institutions.⁷¹ Past research – outside of Africa –

⁷⁰ Italics in the original.

⁷¹ I do not find consistent effect of HDI on trust in institutions across all models. I find a significant negative effect in model 2a and 2c. Of course, the HDI comprises education and health (life expectancy), and, as such, likely covaries to some extent with service delivery performance and perceptions thereof.

has found both similar and contrasting results in regard to objective and subjective economic development (see McAllister, 1999; Mishler & Rose, 2001). Past evidence for Africa can be found in Hutchison & Johnson (2011), who – in a study of 16 African countries using Afrobarometer rounds 1 to 3 – find a negative coefficient for economic development using GDP (per capita). I explore the explanation and possible further reasons in section 4.3.

4.2.6 Discussing model performance

4.2.6.1 Government institutions vs state institutions

Analogous to what Mattes and Moreno (2018) find, the models discussed in this paper have considerably higher explanatory power for trust in government institutions than trust in state institutions. At level 1, the most comprehensive models (models 1f & 2f) perform comparatively to the (linear regression) model run by Mattes and Moreno, accounting for approximately 32% (government institutions) and 18% (state institutions) of within country variance, respectively. This difference in explanatory power is plausible as, if we assume a functionalist explanation of trust, it is rational that people associate their perceived relative deprivation or economic and social performance evaluations with government institutions, rather than with the police or courts of law. The share of explained variance moreover suggests that other, unobserved variables shape political trust. One explanation of the large share of unaccounted variance within countries is that the most of independent variables entered in the models of this paper are likely short- to mid-term evaluations or attitudes. However, trust in government and state institutions are likely much more long-term. Here factors linked to socialization, political education and long-term experiences with the government and the state are likely important.

4.2.6. 2 Level 1 vs level 2

Unlike past research, I am able to differentiate between model performance within countries and between countries using multi-level modelling. For both trust in government and state institutions, the most basic models perform considerably better at accounting for between-country differences, than within country differences.⁷² However, as additional predictors are included in the more comprehensive models (1e & 2e), the share of explained variance diverges for between countries in relation to within countries. For trust in representative government institutions, including measures of absolute poverty; political,

⁷² For example, model 1a and model 2a (testing perceived relative living situation + sociodemographic controls) account for a reduction in unaccounted variance in the dependent variable within countries, of approximately 4% (government institutions) and 3% (state institutions). The same models account for a reduction in unaccounted variance in the dependent variable between countries of approximately 46% (government institutions) and 36% (state institutions), respectively.

economic and social performance evaluations; and perceptions of corruption considerably increases both the variance within and between countries. Model 1e, for example, accounts for 32% variance within countries and 75% between countries. Conversely, additional variables in more comprehensive models for trust in state institutions (bar incumbency support – see model 2b) only increase the share of explained variance within countries to around 18% and 17% between countries in model 2e. Analogous to the explanation in the previous paragraph, this finding is plausible, as state institutions – such as the police, army and courts – are probably not actually involved in the political processes and decisions which may affect levels of inequality, whereas government institutions probably are.

4.3 Section conclusion

In this section, I explored the sources of two forms of political trust using representative survey data from 34 African countries. I paid particular attention to whether perceptions of relative deprivation or advantage shaped such trust. While being more sensitive to the importance of perceptions, past research has thus far failed to account for perceptions of relative deprivation and advantage in this context. Indeed, the results suggest that feeling relatively deprived is significantly associated with less trust in both government and state institutions. In the literature, several sources of political trust have been repeatedly identified. To test whether perceptions of relative deprivation could be a source of political trust above and beyond such established sources, I ran a series of models in which I controlled for competing predictors of trust, as per the existing literature. The models in this section suggest that the effect of perceptions of relative deprivation is significant and negative, above and beyond the effect of macroeconomic performance, perceived corruption, and partisanship. These findings underline the importance of perceptions of relative deprivation and suggest that such measures should find more recognition in future research in this field. More generally, the models echo past research, finding strong associations between levels of political and institutional trust and partisanship, the perceived quality of elections, and perceptions of corruption

In the final section of this paper, I explore why respondents appear to be less trusting of representative government institutions in more ‘developed’ countries.

5. Why are respondents less trusting of representative government institutions in more ‘developed’ countries?

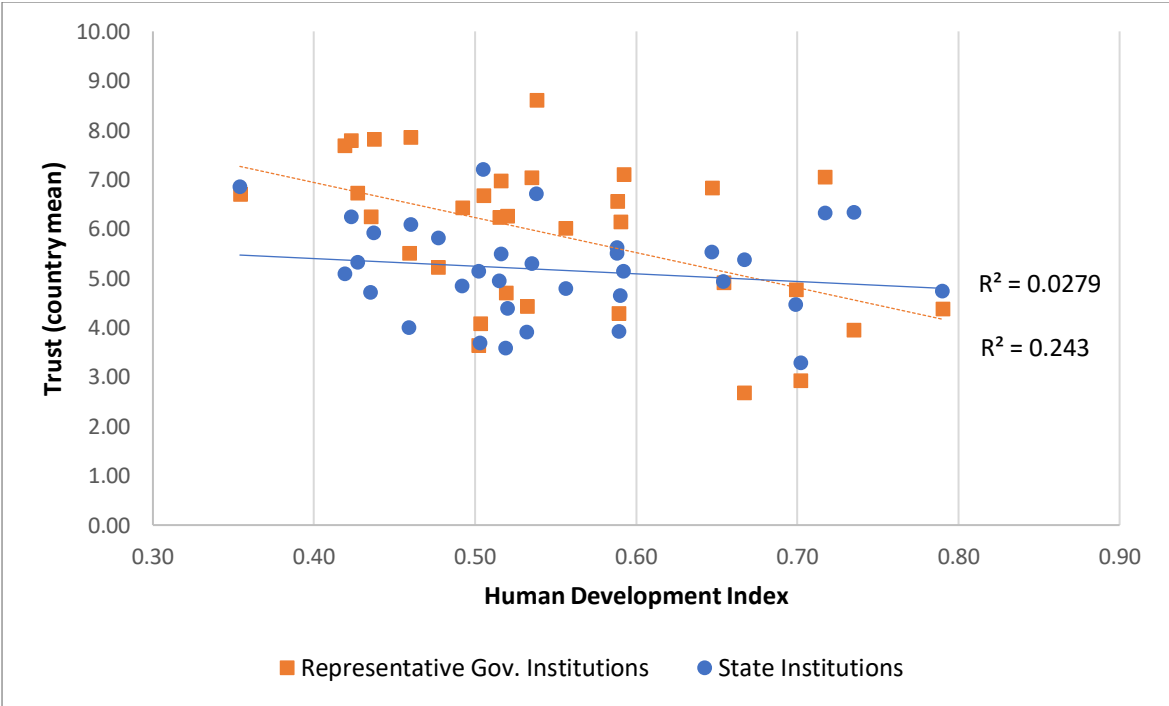
The regression models discussed in the previous section suggest that greater development (as per HDI) is significantly associated with less trust in government institutions (the bivariate relationship at the country level is displayed in figure

12, for illustration purposes). To recapitulate, the HDI is a multi-item index comprised of dimension-indexes scores for life expectancy, education and per capita gross national income. This finding echoes past research by Hutchison and Johnson (2011) and McAllister (1999). Hutchison and Johnson (2011) – in a study of 16 African countries using Afrobarometer rounds 1 to 3 – found that GDP per capita is associated with less political trust. The authors suggested that due to the resource curse, high levels of GDP per capita is associated with less human development and more inequality, which lowers trust. Hutchison and Johnson (2011: 749) suggest that:

in the context of Africa this relationship may not be surprising because of the established relationship between resource riches, declining human development, and increasing inequality.

The findings in my models in the previous section appear to contradict Hutchison and Johnson’s explanation, as I find that greater human development itself is negatively associated with trust.

Figure 12: Trust in representative government and state institutions. By Human Development Index. 33/34 countries. Afrobarometer Round 7 data (2016-2018)



HDI Trust in representation government instructions: $r(39733) = -0.183; p < 0.001$
HDI Trust in state institutions: $r(42992) = -0.067; p < 0.0019$

An alternative explanation is proposed by McAllister (1999). McAllister (1999) – using World Values Survey data (1990-1991) on a sample of 24 OECD

members – found that higher levels of GDP per capita are negatively associated with institutional trust. McAllister explained his finding based on the higher expectations that people have in wealthier countries, which authorities are unable to satisfy.

In the following subsection, I unpack the finding of my regression models further and discuss preliminary results as to why development appears to be linked to less political trust.

5.1 Unpacking the HDI

To test McAllister’s (1999) argument, I rerun model 1f (which is the most powerful model of trust in government institutions – see section 4.2, above) and include a set of control variables at country level to explore the role of people’s expectations. I rely on two proxies for people’s expectations – internal efficacy and perceived government performance.

To test the role of internal efficacy at country level, I use the country-mean score of education and the average media consumption. By definition, countries with higher Human Development Index scores will, on average, have more educated people. These, as seen in the analysis in the previous section, are less trusting of government institutions. To compute the country-mean education score, I use the respondents’ self-reported highest level of education, which is measured on a 10-point scale ranging from ‘no formal schooling’ (coded 0) to ‘post-graduate’ (coded 9).⁷³

Internal efficacy probably stems not only from education, but also from how informed someone is. I control for media consumption by first constructing an index of self-reported media consumption across different forms of media (radio, television, newspaper, internet, social media).⁷⁴ It is plausible that respondents chose one or a select few forms of media which they consume. Rather than constructing an additive index, I thus code respondents’ media consumption as their highest score across the five forms of media consumption (from never = 0 to

⁷³ Respondents were asked: What is your highest level of education?

Response options were: 0=No formal schooling, 1=Informal schooling only (including Koranic schooling), 2=Some primary schooling, 3=Primary school completed, 4=Intermediate school or Some secondary school / high school, 5=Secondary school / high school completed, 6=Post-secondary qualifications, other than university e.g. a diploma or degree from a polytechnic or college, 7=Some university, 8=University completed, 9=Post-graduate.

⁷⁴ Respondents were asked: How often do you get news from the following sources: Radio, Television, Newspaper, Internet, Social Media?

Responses options were: 0=Never, 1=Less than once a month, 2=A few times a month, 3=A few times a week, 4=Every day.

daily = 4). I then use the country-mean score of the media-consumption variable to indicate the average media consumption per country.

To test whether aggregate performance evaluations covary with HDI, I focus on three evaluations: free elections, economic performance and level of corruption. I have included a description of each in section 3.3 above. For each, I use the country mean score. Lastly, to account for Hutchison and Johnson's (2011) finding of GDP being associated with less trust, I include a control for GDP per capita.

The results – displayed in table 8 below – suggest that the effect of HDI on trust in government institutions appears associated with how educated and informed people are, but not with aggregate performance evaluations. In models 2 and 3, I run model 1f but include the country-mean education level and the country-mean media consumption, respectively. In both cases, including the control variables turns the effect of HDI non-significant. Conversely, in models 4, 5 and 6, I control for the country-mean scores of perceived election quality, perceived economic performance and perceived level of corruption. In all three models, the effect of HDI remains significant and negative. Likewise, in model 7, HDI remains significant even when including GDP per capita – which in itself is non-significant.

In sum, the results appear to support McAllister's arguments in parts. While the results do suggest that (some of) the effect of HDI on trust in government institutions is associated with more educated and informed people in more developed countries, country-level policy evaluations do not appear to moderate or mediate the effect of HDI.

Table 8. Modelling trust in representative government institutions. 33 countries (n=39733). Afrobarometer Round 7 data (2016-2018)⁷⁵

	Model 1f	Model 2: Education	Model 3: Media use	Model 4: Free elections	Model 5: Economic performance	Model 6: Level of corruption	Model 7: GDP (pc-PPP)
Intercept	6,45(1,35)***	6,42(1,38)***	8,26(2,08)**	5,77(1,81)**	5,79(2,08)*	6,13(1,49)***	6,9(1,8)**
Much worse	0,01(0,07)	0,01(0,07)	0,01(0,07)	0,01(0,07)	0,01(0,07)	0,01(0,07)	0,01(0,07)
Worse	-0,12(0,05)*	-0,12(0,05)*	-0,12(0,05)*	-0,12(0,05)*	-0,12(0,05)*	-0,12(0,05)*	-0,12(0,05)*
Better	0,14(0,04)**	0,14(0,04)**	0,14(0,04)**	0,14(0,04)**	0,14(0,04)**	0,14(0,04)**	0,14(0,04)**
Much better	0,41(0,1)***	0,41(0,1)***	0,41(0,1)***	0,41(0,1)***	0,41(0,1)***	0,41(0,1)***	0,41(0,1)***
Lived Poverty Index	-0,04(0,02)	-0,04(0,02)	-0,04(0,02)	-0,04(0,02)	-0,04(0,02)	-0,04(0,02)	-0,04(0,02)
Free and fair elections	0,69(0,02)***	0,69(0,02)***	0,69(0,02)***	0,69(0,02)***	0,69(0,02)***	0,69(0,02)***	0,69(0,02)***
Economic performance of gov.	0,24(0,01)***	0,24(0,01)***	0,24(0,01)***	0,24(0,01)***	0,24(0,01)***	0,24(0,01)***	0,24(0,01)***
Social services perform. of gov.	0,09(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***
Change in levels of corruption	-0,32(0,02)***	-0,32(0,02)***	-0,32(0,02)***	-0,32(0,02)***	-0,32(0,02)***	-0,32(0,02)***	-0,32(0,02)***
Perc. Corruption in the presidency	-0,6(0,03)***	-0,6(0,03)***	-0,6(0,03)***	-0,6(0,03)***	-0,6(0,03)***	-0,61(0,03)***	-0,6(0,03)***
Perc. Corruption among MPs	-0,32(0,03)***	-0,32(0,03)***	-0,32(0,03)***	-0,32(0,03)***	-0,32(0,03)***	-0,32(0,03)***	-0,32(0,03)***
Rural = 1	0,44(0,04)***	0,44(0,04)***	0,44(0,04)***	0,44(0,04)***	0,44(0,04)***	0,44(0,04)***	0,44(0,04)***
Female = 1	-0,11(0,04)**	-0,11(0,04)**	-0,11(0,04)**	-0,11(0,04)**	-0,11(0,04)**	-0,11(0,04)**	-0,11(0,04)**
Age group	0,09(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***	0,09(0,01)***
Level of Education	-0,24(0,02)***	-0,24(0,02)***	-0,24(0,02)***	-0,24(0,02)***	-0,24(0,02)***	-0,24(0,02)***	-0,24(0,02)***
Accountability index (V-Dem)	-1,1(0,42)*	-1,16(0,46)*	-1,17(0,42)**	-1,21(0,47)*	-1,14(0,43)*	-1,04(0,44)*	-1,13(0,43)*
Political corruption index (V-Dem)	-1,33(0,84)	-1,31(0,86)	-1,78(0,92)	-1,26(0,86)	-1,17(0,93)	-1,49(0,9)	-1,38(0,86)
Gini	0,01(0,02)	0,01(0,02)	0(0,02)	0,01(0,02)	0,01(0,02)	0,01(0,02)	0,01(0,02)
Majoritarian elect. system	0,63(0,28)*	0,65(0,29)*	0,65(0,28)*	0,6(0,29)	0,58(0,31)	0,68(0,3)*	0,63(0,29)*
HDI	-4,92(1,43)**	-4,38(2,21)	-2,78(2,35)	-4,56(1,58)**	-4,68(1,56)**	-5,39(1,69)**	-5,83(2,75)*
Education		-0,07(0,22)					
Media use			-0,68(0,6)				
Free elections				0,21(0,36)			
Economic performance					0,07(0,16)		
Level of corruption						0,18(0,34)	
GDP (per capita-PPP)							0(0)
Within group variance	0,32	0,32	0,32	0,32	0,32	0,32	0,32
Between group variance	0,75	0,75	0,76	0,75	0,75	0,75	0,75

⁷⁵ * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

6. Conclusion / Discussion

In this paper, I have demonstrated that perceptions of individual relative deprivation and advantage are significantly associated with lower levels of political trust. Past research has emphasized that macroeconomic performance evaluations play a central role in generating political trust but ‘conventional wisdom’ has awarded little importance to individual-level economic factors. The findings in this paper challenge such wisdom and support past research that has pointed to the significant linkages between individual-level economic considerations and political trust (see Catterberg & Moreno, 2006; Zmerli & Castillo 2015; Wroe, 2016). I have demonstrated that subjective perceptions of relative deprivation are significant, even when controlling for macroeconomic predictors, government performance evaluations, as well as perceptions of corruption and partisanship. Furthermore, the results suggest that the effect of perceptions of relative deprivation is significant even when controlling for absolute individual-level considerations of well-being. Given the importance of political trust within the political system, this finding should have important bearings on policy making, as it indicates that simply addressing absolute poverty does not alleviate low levels of trust. Rather, the perceived relative situation of individuals must be addressed.

Much ambiguity exists in the literature in regard to how political trust is conceptualized and measured. Here, I follow past research for the cases I employ and I construct two indices of political trust. First, trust in government institutions – constituted of trust in the president, parliament, elected local council and the ruling party – and second, trust in state institutions – constituted of trust in the police, army and courts of law. Indeed, the results suggest that individual-level economic considerations follow a functionalist logic, with perceptions of relative deprivation being more closely tied to trust in government institutions, and less so to state institutions. This moreover underlines that political trust in government institutions and political trust in state institutions – in this context at least – are not simply one and the same, but that differentiation between different recipients of trust takes place in the minds of ordinary people.

The models in this paper provide an updated view on covariates of political trust in the context of Africa. People’s trust appears to be associated with positive performance – both economically and politically, but also with conduct (lack of corruption). Whether or not someone is a partisan of the ruling party, matters too. This suggests that, while sociotropic considerations are associated with trust, clear clientelist expectations are also present. The results moreover strongly emphasize the role of individual egocentric evaluations. In all models, feeling relatively advantaged was more strongly associated with more trust in government

institutions than feeling relatively deprived was associated with less trust in government institutions. Feeling relatively better off than others matters, above and beyond more general performance evaluations and partisanship. This suggests that, regardless of how government is seen to be doing or conducting itself in general, people who (individually) feel better off than others have significantly more trust in government institutions, than people who don't.

This paper has shortcomings and limitations.

A possible limitation to this paper is the reliance on a single indicator of perceptions of relative deprivation. This is problematic as I am possibly introducing non-random error into the estimation models. Here the use of several items (either in robustness checks or as an index) could reduce error and provide further confirmation of the findings suggested in this paper. As discussed in section 2.1, there are multiple explanations as to how economic inequality shapes political trust. While this paper suggests that perceptions of individual inequality are significantly associated with less political trust, future research would be well advised to unpack this finding further through in-depth interviews targeted at understanding why people say they feel relatively deprived or advantaged. Likewise, the results in this paper – while statistically significant – suggest that other, unobserved factors are important to understand within-country variation of political trust. As noted in the discussion of the statistical models in the previous sections, most independent variables entered in the models are probably short- to mid-term evaluations and attitudes. Past research has pointed to the role of early socialization and political education, as well as long-term experiences with government and state institutions (Niemi & Sobieszek, 1977; Merelman & King, 1986; Mishler & Rose, 2002; Dalton, 2005; Job, 2005; Kroh & Selb, 2009; Schoon & Cheng, 2011).⁷⁶ Here qualitative studies, or specific and localized case studies, should explore the effect of such factors on political trust in the African context.

As noted in the introduction, Africans report among the highest levels of political trust in the world, when viewed by region and among the highest levels of economic inequality. This seems a paradox given what previous research (for cases outside of Africa) has suggested regarding the linkages between economic inequality and political trust. Following the analysis in this paper, Africa may appear less paradoxical as the results suggest that, at country level, no significant association exists between levels of economic inequality and levels of trust in political institutions among African countries. This means that country-level inequality does not significantly help account for levels of political trust among the African countries in this paper. It should be stressed that the results in this paper must be understood and interpreted within this context. As such, people

⁷⁶ For evidence on African cases, see for example: Finkel & Ernst, 2005; Esau et al., 2019.

who feel relatively deprived in Africa may report less trust in government institutions, compared to Africans who feel relatively equal or better off, but may still be more trusting than people elsewhere – regardless of their perceived relative living situation.

Although not the focus of this paper, the question therefore remains why Africa, as a region, displays such high levels of trust in political institutions compared to other regions. Previous research on the empirical covariates and predictors of political trust (see, for example, Mattes & Moreno, 2018) fail to suggest plausible reasons. A comparative empirical study across world regions could explore the roots of such different levels of trust. One explanation for high levels of trust in political institutions in Africa may be the role of political patrons in the distribution of material resources through networks of patronage. According to theorists of statehood, such as Charles Tilly and Douglas North, providing material well-being to its citizenry is one of the core functions of the state (Hutchison, 2011). Of course, the argument could be made that states of wealthier countries do a better job at this, and citizens should be more trusting in these countries. However, in neopatrimonial systems, this function of the state (to ensure material well-being) is localized and achieved through more personal patron-client relations. While material benefits of the state are ‘received’ by citizens in the impersonal sense in wealthier countries outside of Africa (a software controls the department of labour making monthly payments of unemployment benefits to someone), often the nature and extent of personal patron-client relations may more strongly determine the sum of material benefit someone derives in neopatrimonial systems in Africa. This is not to say that African governments are not using software to automate benefit payments, for example, but that material benefits can flow through multiple formal and informal avenues, which require more trusting relations between the state (through the class of patrons that make up the state) and clients. In other words, it may be that Africans are not more trusting of institutions per se, but need to be more trusting of institutions to ‘enjoy’ the material benefits of the state.

Moreover, while this paper follows past research’s recommendation for exploring sources of political trust accounting for both individual- and country-level predictors, it must be acknowledged that the estimation techniques were originally developed to test data which has a high number of cases at the second level and a low number of cases at the first level. As Anderson & Singer (2008) have pointed out, multi-level modelling is nevertheless widely used in comparative research using a large number of level 1 cases and a small number of level 2 cases. This paper certainly also follows this pattern.

This paper contributes to the literature by using a novel measure of individual-level perceptions and experiences of inequality, and by examining a region largely

under-scrutinized in the empirical literature to date. The findings suggest that perceptions of relative deprivation are significantly associated with less trust in government and state institutions. Despite conventional wisdom, which places little importance on individual-level economic conditions as a source of political trust, I demonstrate that individual-level factors are important, even when controlling for country-level performance and evaluation. This paper thus contributes to a growing literature which calls into question conventional wisdom and points to individual-level conditions being relevant too. Moreover, this paper contributes to the literature by showing that feeling relatively advantaged is significantly associated with more trust in political and state institutions. In the past, research has almost exclusively focused on feelings of relative deprivation, but not on feelings of relative advantage. The results suggest that feelings of relative advantage are in fact more strongly associated with more trust than feelings of relative deprivation are with less trust. This finding may reflect the effects of neopatrimonial networks between citizens (clients) and political actors (patrons).

How people see themselves in comparison to others matters in how much they appear to trust political and state institutions. Against past wisdom, individual relative judgements – both positive and negative – matter. These findings should be accounted for in future research.

References

- Aarts, K. & Thomassen, T. 2008. Satisfaction with democracy: do institutions matter? *Electoral Studies*, 27, 5-18.
- Ackermann, K. & Freitag, M. 2015, August. Persönlichkeit und parteibindung unter den bedingungen direkter demokratie. In *Politische Psychologie*. Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG. 96-119.
- Alesina, A. & La Ferrara, E. 2002. Who trusts others? *Journal of Public Economics*, 85(2), 207-234.
- Alesina, A. & Wacziarg, R. 2000. The economics of civic trust. In *Disaffected democracies: what's troubling the trilateral countries*. 149-170.
- Andersen, R. & Curtis, J. 2012. The polarizing effect of economic inequality on class identification: evidence from 44 countries. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 30(1), 129-141.
- Anderson, C.J. & Singer, M.M. 2008. The sensitive left and the impervious right: multilevel models and the politics of inequality, ideology, and legitimacy in Europe. *Comparative Political Studies*, 41(4-5), 564-599.
- Anderson, M. 2010. Community psychology, political efficacy, and trust. *Political Psychology*, 31(1), 59–84.
- Arampatzi, E., Burger, M., Ianchovichina, E., Röhrich, T. & Veenhoven, R. 2018. Unhappy development: dissatisfaction with life on the eve of the Arab Spring. *Review of Income and Wealth*, 64, S80-S113.
- Bakonyi, E. 2011. *To trust or not to trust? Trust towards democratic institutions in central and eastern Europe after the regime change in 1989-1990 — with a special focus on Hungary*. PhD Dissertation. Budapest: Corvinus University of Budapest.
- Bartels, L.M. 2018. *Unequal democracy: the political economy of the new gilded age*. Princeton University Press.
- Bauer, P.C. & Fatke, M. 2014. Direct democracy and political trust: Enhancing trust, initiating distrust—or both? *Swiss Political Science Review*, 20(1), 49-69.
- Bayart, J.F. 2009. *The state in Africa: the politics of the belly*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Beegle, K., Christiaensen, L., Dabalen, A. & Gaddis, I. 2016. *Poverty in a rising Africa*. The World Bank.

- Beresford, A. 2014. Editorial: understanding how 'Africa works'? *Critical African Studies*, 6(1), 1-5.
- Binelli, C. & Loveless, M. 2016. The urban–rural divide: Perceptions of income and social inequality in Central and Eastern Europe. *Economics of Transition*, 24(2), 211-231.
- Binzer Hobolt, S. & Klemmensen, R. 2008. Government responsiveness and political competition in comparative perspective. *Comparative Political Studies*, 41(3), 309-337.
- Bjørnskov, C. 2008. Social trust and fractionalization: a possible reinterpretation. *European Sociological Review*, 24(3), 271-283.
- Boda, Z. & Medve-Balint, G. 2014. Does institutional trust in east central Europe differ from Western Europe? *European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities*, 3(2), 1.
- Bratton, M. & Gyimah-Boadi, E. 2016. Do trustworthy institutions matter for development? Corruption, trust and government performance in Africa. *Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 112*. Afrobarometer Round 6. South Africa: Afrobarometer.
- Bratton, M. & Mattes, R. 2003. Support for economic reform? Popular attitudes in Southern Africa. *World Development*, 31(2), 303-323.
- Bratton, M., Mattes, R. & Gyimah-Boadi, E. 2005. *Public opinion, democracy, and market reform in Africa*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bratton, M. & Van de Walle, N. 1993. Neopatrimonial regimes and political transitions in Africa. *World Politics*, 46, 453.
- Brehm, J. & Rahn, W. 1997. Individual-level evidence for the causes and consequences of social capital. *American Journal of Political Science*, 41(3), 999-1023.
- Brynen, R., Moore, P.W., Salloukh, B.F. & Zahar, M.J. 2012. *Beyond the Arab spring: authoritarianism & democratization in the Arab world* (Vol. 4). Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Catterberg, G. & Moreno, A. 2006. The individual bases of political trust: trends in new and established democracies. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 18(1), 31-48.

- Cawvey, M., Hayes, M., Canache, D. & Mondak, J.J., 2018. Biological and psychological influences on interpersonal and political trust. In Uslaner, E. (ed.) *The Oxford handbook of social and political trust*. Oxford University Press. 119-38.
- Chabal, P. & Daloz, J. 1999. *Africa works: disorder as political instrument*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Chambers, J.R., Swan, L.K. & Heesacker, M. 2014. Better off than we know: distorted perceptions of incomes and income inequality in America. *Psychological Science*, 25(2), 613-618.
- Chambers, J.R., Swan, L.K. & Heesacker, M. 2015. Perceptions of US social mobility are divided (and distorted) along ideological lines. *Psychological Science*, 26(4), 413-423.
- Cheeseman, N. 2015. *Democracy in Africa: successes, failures, and the struggle for political reform* (Vol. 9). Cambridge University Press.
- Citrin, J. 1974. Comment: the political relevance of trust in government. *American Political Science Review*, 68(3), 973-988.
- Citrin, J., McClosky, H., Shanks, J.M. & Sniderman, P.M. 1975. Personal and political sources of political alienation. *British Journal of Political Science*, 5(1), 1-31.
- Cooper, F. 2002. *Africa since 1940: the past in the present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crozier, M., Huntington, S.P. & Watanuki, J. 1975. *The crisis of democracy* (Vol. 70). New York: New York University Press.
- Cruces, G., Perez-Truglia, R. & Tetaz, M. 2013. Biased perceptions of income distribution and preferences for redistribution: evidence from a survey experiment. *Journal of Public Economics*, 98, 100-112.
- Dalton, R.J. 2004. *Democratic challenges, democratic choices*. Oxford University Press.
- Dalton, R.J. 2005. The social transformation of trust in government. *International Review of Sociology*, 15, 133-154.
- Dalton, R.J. 2008. Citizenship norms and the expansion of political participation. *Political studies*, 56(1), 76-98.
- Dalton, R.J. & Wattenberg, M.P. (eds) 2002. *Parties without partisans: political change in advanced industrial democracies*. Oxford University Press.

- De Juan, A. & Pierskalla, J.H. 2016. Civil war violence and political trust: microlevel evidence from Nepal. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 33(1), 67-88.
- De Mesquita, B.B., Morrow, J.D., Siverson, R.M. & Smith, A. 2002. Political institutions, policy choice and the survival of leaders. *British Journal of Political Science*, 559-590.
- Denemark, D. & Niemi, R.G. 2012. Political trust, efficacy and engagement in challenging times: an introduction. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 47(1), 1-9.
- Dunn, K. 2012. Voice and trust in parliamentary representation. *Electoral Studies*, 31(2), 393-405.
- Easton, D. 1965. *A systems analysis of political life*. New York: Wiley.
- Easton, D. 1975. A re-assessment of the concept of political support. *British Journal of Political Science*, 5(4), 435-457.
- Elgar, F.J., & Aitken, N. 2010. Income inequality, trust and homicide in 33 countries. *European Journal of Public Health*, 21(2), 241-246.
- Ellinas, A.A. & Lamprianou, I. 2014. Political trust in extremis. *Comparative Politics*, 46(2), 231-250.
- Engelhardt, C. & Wagener, A. 2014. *Biased perceptions of income inequality and redistribution*. Contributions to the annual conference of the Association for Social Policy 2014: Evidence-based Economic Policy; Session: Redistribution and Subjective Wellbeing, No. A20-V3, ZBW. Kiel; Hamburg: German Central Library for Economics, Leibniz Information Center for Economics.
- Erdmann, G. & Engel, U. 2007. Neopatrimonialism reconsidered: critical review and elaboration of an elusive concept. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 45(1), 95-119.
- Eriksson, K. & Simpson, B. 2012. What do Americans know about inequality? It depends on how you ask them. *Judgment and Decision Making*, 7(6), 741-745.
- Eriksson, K. & Simpson, B. 2013. The available evidence suggests the percent measure should not be used to study inequality: Reply to Norton and Ariely. *Judgment and Decision Making*, 8(3), 395.
- Esau, M.V., Rondganger, C.H. & Roman, N.V. 2019. Family political socialisation and its effect on youth trust in government: a South African perspective. *Politikon*, 46(1), 122-137.

- Fairbrother, M. & Martin, I.W. 2013. Does inequality erode social trust? Results from multilevel models of US states and counties. *Social Science Research*, 42(2), 347-360.
- Finkel, S.E. & Ernst, H.R. 2005. Civic education in post-apartheid South Africa: alternative paths to the development of political knowledge and democratic values. *Political Psychology*, 26(3), 333-364.
- Freitag, M. & Bühlmann, M. 2009. Crafting trust: the role of political institutions in a comparative perspective. *Comparative Political Studies*, 42(12), 1537-1566.
- Gambetta, D. 1988. Can we trust trust? In Gambetta, D. (ed) *Trust: making and breaking cooperative relations*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell. 213–237.
- Gilens, M. 2005. Inequality and democratic responsiveness. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 69(5), 778-796.
- Gilens, M. 2012. *Affluence and influence: economic inequality and political power in America*. Princeton University Press.
- Gimpelson, V. & Treisman, D. 2018. Misperceiving inequality. *Economics & Politics*, 30(1), 27-54.
- Glaeser, E., Scheinkman, J. & Shleifer, A. 2003. The injustice of inequality. *Journal of Monetary Economics*, 50(1), 199-222.
- Glanville, J.L. & Paxton, P. 2007. How do we learn trust? A confirmatory tetrad analysis of the sources of generalized trust. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 70(3), 230-242.
- Goubin, S. 2018a. Economic inequality, perceived responsiveness and political trust. *Acta Politica*, 1-38.
- Goubin, S. 2018b. Is inequality a latent construct? An assessment of economic inequality indicators and their relation with social cohesion in Europe. *Social Indicators Research*, 136(1), 21-40.
- Grimes, M., 2006. Organizing consent: The role of procedural fairness in political trust and compliance. *European Journal of Political Research*, 45(2), 285-315.
- Gustavsson, M. & Jordahl, H. 2008. Inequality and trust in Sweden: some inequalities are more harmful than others. *Journal of Public Economics*, 92(1-2), 348-365.
- Hardin, R., 1999. Do we want trust in government. *Democracy and Trust*, 22-41.
- Hardin, R. & Offe, C. 1999. *Democracy and trust*. Cambridge University Press.

- Hetherington, M.J. 1998. The political relevance of political trust. *American Political Science Review*, 92(4), 791-808.
- Hetherington, M.J. 2005. *Why trust matters: declining political trust and the demise of American liberalism*. Princeton University Press.
- Hetherington, M.J. & Rudolph, T.J. 2008. Priming, performance, and the dynamics of political trust. *The Journal of Politics*, 70(2), 498-512.
- Hetherington, M.J. & Rudolph, T.J. 2015. *Why Washington won't work: polarization, political trust, and the governing crisis*. University of Chicago Press.
- Hetherington, M.J. & Rudolph, T.J. 2018. Political trust and polarization. In Uslaner, E. (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Social and Political Trust*. Oxford University Press. 579-597.
- Hooghe, M. 2011. Why there is basically only one form of political trust. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 13(2), 269-275.
- Hooghe, M., Dassonneville, R. & Marien, S. 2015. The impact of education on the development of political trust: results from a five-year panel study among late adolescents and young adults in Belgium. *Political Studies*, 63(1), 123-141.
- Hutchison, M.L. 2011. Territorial threat and the decline of political trust in Africa: a multilevel analysis. *Polity*, 43(4), 432-461.
- Hutchison, M.L. & Johnson, K. 2011. Capacity to trust? Institutional capacity, conflict, and political trust in Africa, 2000–2005. *Journal of Peace Research*, 48(6), 737-752.
- Hyden, G. 1983. *No shortcuts to progress: African development management in perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Job, J. 2005. How is trust in government created? It begins at home, but ends in the parliament. *Australian Review of Public Affairs*, 6(1), 1-23.
- Jong-Sung, Y. & Khagram, S. 2005. A comparative study of inequality and corruption. *American Sociological Review*, 70(1), 136-157.
- Jordahl, H. 2009. Inequality and trust. Published as "Economic inequality". In Svendsen, G.T. & Svendsen, G.L.H. (eds) *Handbook of social capital*. Edward Elgar.
- Kaasa, A. & Parts, E. 2008. Individual-level determinants of social capital in Europe: Differences between country groups. *Acta Sociologica*, 51(2), 145-168.

- Kaase, M. 1999. Interpersonal trust, political trust and non-institutionalised political participation in Western Europe. *West European Politics*, 22(3), 1-21.
- Kaltenthaler, K., Ceccoli, S. & Gelleny, R. 2008. Attitudes toward eliminating income inequality in Europe. *European Union Politics*, 9(2), 217-241.
- Keele, L., 2007. Social capital and the dynamics of trust in government. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(2), 241-254.
- Klingemann, H.D. 1999. Mapping political support in the 1990s: a global analysis. In Norris, P. (ed.) *Critical citizens: global support for democratic government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 31-56.
- Kroh, M. & Selb, P. 2009. Inheritance and the dynamics of party identification. *Political Behavior*, 31(4), 559.
- Kroknes, V.F., Jakobsen, T.G. & Grønning, L.M. 2015. Economic performance and political trust: the impact of the financial crisis on European citizens. *European Societies*, 17(5), 700-723.
- Lavallée, E., Razafindrakoto, M. & Roubaud, F. 2008. Corruption and trust in political institutions in sub-Saharan Africa. CSAE Conference 2008 - Economic Development in Africa, 2008, Oxford, United Kingdom.
- Lee, D., Chang, C.Y. & Hur, H. 2020. Economic performance, income inequality and political trust: new evidence from a cross-national study of 14 Asian countries. *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration*, 42(2), 66-88.
- Lee Ray, J., 2003. Explaining interstate conflict and war: What should be controlled for? *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 20(2), 1-31.
- Lijphart, A. 1999. *Patterns of democracy: government forms and performance in thirty-six countries*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Lipset, S.M. 1959. Some social requisites of democracy: economic development and political legitimacy. *The American Political Science Review*, 53(1), 69-105.
- Listhaug, O., 1995. The dynamics of trust in politicians. In Klingeman, H.D. & Fuchs, D. (eds) *Citizens and the state*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 261- 297.
- Listhaug, O. & Jakobsen, T.G. 2018. Foundations of political trust. In Uslaner, E. (ed.) *Oxford handbook of social and political trust*. Oxford University Press. 579-597.

- Loveless, M. 2013. The deterioration of democratic political culture: consequences of the perception of inequality. *Social Justice Research*, 26(4), 471-491.
- Loveless, M. 2016. Inequality and support for political engagement in new democracies. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 68(6), 1003-1019.
- Loveless, M. & Whitefield, S. 2011. Being unequal and seeing inequality: explaining the political significance of social inequality in new market democracies. *European Journal of Political Research*, 50(2), 239-266.
- Luhmann, N. 1979. *Trust and power*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Lührmann, A., Marquardt, K.L. & Mechkova, V. 2020. Constraining Governments: New Indices of Vertical, Horizontal, and Diagonal Accountability. *American Political Science Review*, 114(3), 811-820.
- Marien, S. 2011. The effect of electoral outcomes on political trust: a multi-level analysis of 23 countries. *Electoral Studies*, 30, 712-726.
- Mattes, R., 2008. The material and political bases of lived poverty in Africa: insights from the Afrobarometer. In *Barometers of quality of life around the globe*. Springer, Dordrecht. 161-185.
- Mattes, R. & Moreno, A. 2018. Social and political trust in developing countries: Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. In Uslaner, E. (ed.) *The Oxford handbook of social and political trust*. Oxford University Press. 357-382.
- McAllister, I. 1999. The economic performance of governments. In Norris, P. (ed.) *Critical citizens: global support for democratic government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 188-203.
- McCall, L. & Chin, F. 2013. Does knowledge of inequality affect beliefs about inequality. Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Meetings. Chicago, IL. April 13, 2013.
- Medve-Bálint, G. & Boda, Z. 2014. The poorer you are, the more you trust? The effect of inequality and income on institutional trust in East-Central Europe. *Czech Sociological Review*, 50(3), 419-454.
- Merelman, R.M. & King, G. 1986. The development of political activists: toward a model of early learning. *Social Science Quarterly*, 67(3), 473.
- Milanovic, B. 2011. *Worlds apart: measuring international and global inequality*. Princeton University Press.

- Milanovic, B. 2016. *Global inequality: a new approach for the age of globalization*. Harvard University Press.
- Miller, A.H. 1974. Political issues and trust in government. *American Political Science Review*, 68, 951-972.
- Miller, A.H. & Listhaug, O. 1990. Political parties and confidence in government: a comparison of Norway, Sweden and the United States. *British Journal of Political Science*, 20(3), 357-386.
- Mishler, W. & Rose, R. 1997. Trust, distrust and skepticism: popular evaluations of civil and political institutions in post-communist societies. *Journal of Politics*, 50: 418-451.
- Mishler, W. & Rose, R. 2001. What are the origins of political trust? Testing institutional and cultural theories in post-communist societies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 34(1), 30-62.
- Mishler, W. & Rose, R. 2002. Learning and re-learning regime support: the dynamics of post-communist regimes. *European Journal of Political Research*, 41(1), 5-36.
- Mkandawire, T. 2015. Neopatrimonialism and the political economy of economic performance in Africa: critical reflections. *World Politics*, 67, 563.
- Moehler, D.C. 2009. Critical citizens and submissive subjects: election losers and winners in Africa. *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(2), 345-366.
- Mondak, J.J., Hayes, M. & Canache, D. 2017. Biological and psychological influences on political trust. In Zmerli, S. & Van der Meer, T. (eds) *Handbook on political trust*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar. 143-159.
- Moore, P. 2015. Pete Moore on the Arab 99 Percent. Presentation at the University of Chicago Center for International Studies, recorded 30 June 2015. Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1G8JmEuQt8&feature=emb_title [15.10.2020].
- Newton, K. 2001a. Social capital and democracy. In Edwards, B., Foley, M.J. & Diani, M. (eds) *Beyond Tocqueville: civil society and the social capital debate in comparative perspective*. Hanover, NH: Tufts University Press. 225-234.
- Newton, K. 2001b. Trust, social capital, civil society, and democracy. *International Political Science Review*, 22(2), 201-214.

- Newton, K. 2007. Social and political trust. In Dalton, R. & Klingmann, H. (eds) *Oxford handbook of political behaviour*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 342-361.
- Newton, K., Stolle, D. & Zmerli, S. 2018. Social and political trust. In Uslaner, E. (ed.) *The Oxford handbook of social and political trust*. Oxford University Press. 36-56.
- Newton, K. & Zmerli, S. 2011. Three forms of trust and their association. *European Political Science Review*, 3, 169-200.
- Niehues, J. 2014. Subjective perceptions of inequality and redistributive preferences: an international comparison. *IW-TRENDS Discussion Paper 2*, 1-23. Köln, Germany: IW NEWS.
- Niemi, R.G. & Sobieszek, B.I. 1977. Political socialization. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 3(1), 209-233.
- Norris, P. (ed.) 1999. *Critical citizens: global support for democratic government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Norris, P. 2011. Democratic deficit: critical citizens revisited. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Norton, M.I. & Ariely, D. 2011. Building a better America—one wealth quintile at a time. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 6(1), 9-12.
- Offe, C. 1972. Advanced capitalism and the welfare state. *Politics & Society*, 2(4), 479-488.
- Offe, C., 1999. How can we trust our fellow citizens. *Democracy and Trust*, 52, 42-87.
- Olivera, J. 2015. Changes in inequality and generalized trust in Europe. *Social Indicators Research*, 124(1), 21-41.
- Paskov, M. & Dewilde, C. 2012. Income inequality and solidarity in Europe. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 30(4), 415-432.
- Piketty, T. 2014. *Capital in the twenty-first century*. Cambridge Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Pitcher, A., Moran, M.H. & Johnston, M. 2009. Rethinking patrimonialism and neopatrimonialism in Africa. *African Studies Review*, 125-156.

Putnam, R.D. 2000. Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. In Crothers, L. & Lockhart, C. (eds) *Culture and politics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 223-234.

Putnam, R.D. 2007. E pluribus unum: Diversity and community in the twenty-first century the 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 30(2), 137-174.

PytlikZillig, L.M. & Kimbrough, C.D. 2016. Consensus on conceptualizations and definitions of trust: Are we there yet? In *Interdisciplinary perspectives on trust*. Springer, Cham. 17-47.

Reitan, M., Gustafsson, K. & Blekesaune, A. 2015. Do local government reforms result in higher levels of trust in local politicians? *Local Government Studies*, 41(1), 156-179.

Rothstein, B. 2011. *The quality of government: corruption, social trust, and inequality in international perspective*. University of Chicago Press.

Rothstein, B. & Stolle, D. 2003. Social capital, impartiality and the welfare state: An institutional approach. In Hooghe, M. & Stolle, D. (eds) *Generating social capital*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 191-209.

Rothstein, B. & Stolle, D. 2007. The quality of government and social capital: a theory of political institutions and generalized trust. *QoG Working paper series*, 2.

Rothstein, B. & Stolle, D. 2008. The state and social capital: an institutional theory of generalized trust. *Comparative Politics*, 40(4), 441-459.

Rothstein, B. & Uslaner, E.M. 2005. All for all: equality, corruption, and social trust. *World Politics*, 58(1), 41-72.

Sanders, D., Clarke, H., Stewart, M. & Whiteley, P. 2014. Output oriented legitimacy: individual- and system- level influences on democracy satisfaction. In Thomassen, J. (ed.) *Elections and democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 153-180.

Scharpf, F.W., 1999. *Governing in Europe: effective and democratic?* Oxford University Press.

Schneider, I. 2017. Can we trust measures of political trust? Assessing measurement equivalence in diverse regime types. *Social Indicators Research*, 133(3), 963-984.

- Scholz, J.T. & Lubell, M. 1998. Adaptive political attitudes: duty, trust, and fear as monitors of tax policy. *American Journal of Political Science*, 42(3), 903-920.
- Schoon, I. & Cheng, H. 2011. Determinants of political trust: a lifetime learning model. *Developmental Psychology*, 47(3), 619.
- Seligman, A.B. 2000. *The problem of trust*. Princeton University Press.
- Sonin, K. 2003. Why the rich may favor poor protection of property rights. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 31(4), 715-731.
- Spoon, J.J. & Klüver, H. 2014. Do parties respond? How electoral context influences party responsiveness. *Electoral Studies*, 35, 48-60.
- Stiglitz, J.E. 2012. *The price of inequality: how today's divided society endangers our future*. WW Norton & Company.
- Stolle, D. 2003. The sources of social capital. In Hooghe, M. & Stolle, D. (eds) *Generating social capital*. 19-42. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Thomassen, J. 2014. *Elections and democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Uslaner, E.M. 2002. *The moral foundations of trust*. Cambridge University Press.
- Uslaner, E.M. 2005. The bulging pocket and the rule of law: corruption, inequality, and trust. Paper presented at the Conference on The quality of government: what it is, how to get it, why it matters (17-19 November, Göteborg University).
- Uslaner, E.M., 2008. *Corruption, inequality, and the rule of law*. Cambridge University Press.
- Uslaner, E.M. 2011. Corruption, the inequality trap and trust in government. In Zmerli, S. & Hooghe, M. (eds) *Political trust: why context matters*. Colchester: ECPR Press. 141-162.
- Uslaner, E.M. 2013. Trust and corruption revisited: How and why trust and corruption shape each other. *Quality & Quantity*, 47(6), 3603-3608.
- Uslaner, E. 2017. Political trust and the crisis of democracy. In Zmerli, S. & van der Meer, T. (eds) *Handbook of political trust*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- Uslaner, E.M. (ed.) 2018. *The Oxford handbook of social and political trust*. Oxford University Press.

- Uslaner, E.M. & Brown, M. 2005. Inequality, trust, and civic engagement. *American Politics Research*, 33(6), 868-894.
- Van de Werfhorst, H.G. & Salverda, W. 2012. Consequences of economic inequality: introduction to a special issue. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 30(4), 377-387.
- Van der Meer, T. 2010. In what we trust? A multi-level study into trust in parliament as an evaluation of state characteristics. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 76(3), 517-536.
- Van der Meer, T.W. 2017. Political trust and the “crisis of democracy”. In *Oxford research encyclopedia of politics*.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.77>
- Van der Meer, T.W. 2018. Economic performance and political trust. In Uslaner, E. (ed.) *The Oxford handbook of social and political trust*. Oxford University Press. 599-616.
- Van der Meer, T. & Dekker, P. 2011. Trustworthy states, trusting citizens? A multilevel study into objective and subjective determinants of political trust. In Hooghe, M. & Zmerli, S. (eds) *Political trust: why context matters*. Colchester, UK: ECPR Press. 95-116.
- Van der Meer, T.W. & Zmerli, S. 2017. The deeply rooted concern with political trust. In Zmerli, S. & Van der Meer, T.W. (eds) *Handbook on political trust*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Varieties of Democracy. 2019. *V-Dem's New Accountability Index*. Sept 2017. University of Gothenburg, V-Dem Institute. <https://www.v-dem.net/en/news/v-dems-new-accountability-index/>
- Warren, M.E. 1999. Democratic theory and trust. In Warren, M.E. (ed) *Democracy and trust*, 310- 345. Cambridge University Press.
- Warren, M. 2018. Trust and democracy. In Uslaner, E. (ed.) *The Oxford handbook of social and political trust*. Oxford University Press. 75-94.
- Wegener, B. 1987. The illusion of distributive justice. *European Sociological Review*, 3(1), 1-13.
- Wilkinson, R.G. 2005. *The impact of inequality: how to make sick societies healthier*. The New Press.
- Wilkinson, R.G. & Pickett, K.E. 2007. The problems of relative deprivation: why some societies do better than others. *Social Science & Medicine*, 65(9), 965-1978.

Wroe, A. 2016. Economic insecurity and political trust in the United States. *American Politics Research*, 44(1), 131-163.

You, J.S. 2018. Trust and corruption. In Uslaner, E. (ed) *The Oxford handbook of social and political trust*. Oxford University Press. 473-496.

Zmerli, S. & Castillo, J.C. 2015. Income inequality, distributive fairness and political trust in Latin America. *Social Science Research*, 52, 179-192.

Appendix

1. Dependent variables

1.a Trust in representative government institutions

Question Number: Q43A

Question: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The President?

Variable Label: Q43a. Trust president

Values: 0-3, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=Not at all, 1=Just a little, 2=Somewhat, 3=A lot, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q43B

Question: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Parliament?

Variable Label: Q43b. Trust parliament/national assembly

Values: 0-3, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=Not at all, 1=Just a little, 2=Somewhat, 3=A lot, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q43D

Question: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Your Local Government Council?

Variable Label: Q43d. Trust your elected local government council

Values: 0-3, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=Not at all, 1=Just a little, 2=Somewhat, 3=A lot, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q43E

Question: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The ruling party?

Variable Label: Q43e. Trust the ruling party

Values: 0-3, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=Not at all, 1=Just a little, 2=Somewhat, 3=A lot, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard, -1=Missing

1.b Trust in state institutions

Question Number: Q43G

Question: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The Police?

Variable Label: Q43g. Trust police

Values: 0-3, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=Not at all, 1=Just a little, 2=Somewhat, 3=A lot, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q43H

Question: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The Army?

Variable Label: Q43h. Trust army

Values: 0-3, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=Not at all, 1=Just a little, 2=Somewhat, 3=A lot, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q43I

Question: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Courts of law?

Variable Label: Q43i. Trust courts of law

Values: 0-3, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=Not at all, 1=Just a little, 2=Somewhat, 3=A lot, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard, -1=Missing

2. Independent variable: perceived relative living situation

Question Number: Q4B

Question: In general, how would you describe: Your own present living conditions?

Variable Label: Q4B. Your present living conditions

Values: 1-5, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 1=Much worse, 2=Worse, 3=Same, 4=Better, 5=Much better, 9=Don't know, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing

3. Control variables

3.a Partisanship

Question Number: Q88A

Question: Do you feel close to any particular political party?

Variable Label: Q88a. Close to political party

Values: 0, 1, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=No, does not feel close to any party, 1=Yes, feels close to a party, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q88B

Question: Which party is that?

Variable Label: Q88b. Which party

Values: 9995, 9997-9999, -1

Value Labels: 9995=Other, 9997=Not applicable, 9998=Refused, 9999=Don't know, -1=Missing

Note: If the response to Q88A was "No," "Don't know," or "Refused," then the interviewer was instructed to mark "9997=Not applicable."

3.b Individual economic well-being

3.b.1 Lived Poverty Index (Afrobarometer R7)

Question Number: Q8A

Question: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: Gone without enough food to eat?

Variable Label: Q8a. How often gone without food

Values: 0-4, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 0=Never, 1=Just once or twice, 2=Several times, 3=Many times, 4=Always, 9=Don't know, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q8B

Question: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: Gone without enough clean water for home use?

Variable Label: Q8b. How often gone without water

Values: 0-4, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 0=Never, 1=Just once or twice, 2=Several times, 3=Many times, 4=Always, 9=Don't know, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q8C

Question: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: Gone without medicines or medical treatment?

Variable Label: Q8c. How often gone without medical care

Values: 0-4, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 0=Never, 1=Just once or twice, 2=Several times, 3=Many times, 4=Always, 9=Don't know, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q8D

Question: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: Gone without enough fuel to cook your food?

Variable Label: Q8d. How often gone without cooking fuel

Values: 0-4, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 0=Never, 1=Just once or twice, 2=Several times, 3=Many times, 4=Always, 9=Don't know, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing

3.b.2 Asset-index (Afrobarometer R7)

Question Number: Q89A

Question: Which of these things do you personally own? [If no, ask:] Does anyone else in your household own one: Radio?

Variable Label: Q89a. Own radio

Values: 0-2, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=No one in household owns, 1=Yes, someone else in household owns, 2=Yes, personally owns, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q89B

Question: Which of these things do you personally own? [If no, ask:] Does anyone else in your household own one: Television?

Variable Label: Q89b. Own television

Values: 0-2, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=No one in household owns, 1=Yes, someone else in household owns, 2=Yes, personally owns, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q89C

Question: Which of these things do you personally own? [If no, ask:] Does anyone else in your household own one: Motor vehicle or motorcycle?

Variable Label: Q89c. Own motor vehicle, car, or motorcycle

Values: 0-2, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=No one in household owns, 1=Yes, someone else in household owns, 2=Yes, personally owns, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q89D

Question: Which of these things do you personally own? [If no, ask:] Does anyone else in your household own one: Computer?

Variable Label: Q89d. Own computer

Values: 0-2, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=No one in household owns, 1=Yes, someone else in household owns, 2=Yes, personally owns, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q89E

Question: Which of these things do you personally own? [If no, ask:] Does anyone else in your household own one: Bank account?

Variable Label: Q89e. Own bank account

Values: 0-2, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=No one in household owns, 1=Yes, someone else in household owns, 2=Yes, personally owns, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q89F

Question: Which of these things do you personally own? [If no, ask:] Does anyone else in your household own one: Mobile phone?

Variable Label: Q89f. Own mobile phone

Values: 0-2, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=No one in household owns, 1=Yes, someone else in household owns, 2=Yes, personally owns, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know, -1=Missing

3.c. Performance

3.c.1 Free and fair elections

Question Number: Q23

Question: On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election, held in 2014. Was it:

Variable Label: Q23. Freeness and fairness of the last national election

Values: 1-4, 8, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 1=Not free and fair, 2=Free and fair, with major problems, 3=Free and fair, but with minor problems, 4=Completely free and fair, 8=Do not understand the question, 9=Don't know, 98=Refused, -1=Missing

3.c.2 Economic performance Index

Question Number: Q66A

Question: 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: Managing the economy?

Variable Label: Q66a. Handling managing the economy

Values: 1-4, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 1=Very badly, 2=Fairly badly, 3=Fairly well, 4=Very well, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard enough, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing

Note: Interviewer probed for strength of opinion.

Question Number: Q66B

Question: 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: Improving the living standards of the poor.

Variable Label: Q66b. Handling improving living standards of the poor

Values: 1-4, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 1=Very badly, 2=Fairly badly, 3=Fairly well, 4=Very well, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard enough, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing

Note: Interviewer probed for strength of opinion.

Question Number: Q66C

Question: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Creating jobs?

Variable Label: Q66c. Handling creating jobs

Values: 1-4, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 1=Very badly, 2=Fairly badly, 3=Fairly well, 4=Very well, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard enough, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing

Note: Interviewer probed for strength of opinion.

Question Number: Q66D

Question: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Keeping prices down?

Variable Label: Q66d. Handling keeping prices down

Values: 1-4, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 1=Very badly, 2=Fairly badly, 3=Fairly well, 4=Very well, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard enough, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing

Note: Interviewer probed for strength of opinion.

3.c.3 Service delivery Index (Afrobarometer R7)

Question Number: Q66F

Question: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Reducing crime?

Variable Label: Q66f. Handling reducing crime

Values: 1-4, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 1=Very Badly, 2=Fairly badly, 3=Fairly well, 4=Very well, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard enough, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing

Note: Interviewer probed for strength of opinion.

Question Number: Q66G

Question: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Improving basic health services?

Variable Label: Q66g. Handling improving basic health services

Values: 1-4, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 1=Very badly, 2=Fairly badly, 3=Fairly well, 4=Very well, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard enough, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing
Note: Interviewer probed for strength of opinion.

Question Number: Q66H

Question: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Addressing educational needs?

Variable Label: Q66h. Handling addressing educational needs

Values: 1-4, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 1=Very badly, 2=Fairly badly, 3=Fairly well, 4=Very well, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard enough, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing

Note: Interviewer probed for strength of opinion.

Question Number: Q66I

Question: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Providing water and sanitation services?

Variable Label: Q66i. Handling providing water and sanitation services

Values: 1-4, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 1=Very badly, 2=Fairly badly, 3=Fairly well, 4=Very well, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard enough, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing .

Note: Interviewer probed for strength of opinion.

Question Number: Q66J

Question: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Ensuring everyone has enough to eat?

Variable Label: Q66j. Handling ensuring enough to eat

Values: 1-4, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 1=Very badly, 2=Fairly badly, 3=Fairly well, 4=Very well, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard enough, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing .

Note: Interviewer probed for strength of opinion.

3.d Corruption evaluations

3.d.1. Change in levels of corruption

Question Number: Q45

Question: In your opinion, over the past year, has the level of corruption in this country increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

Variable Label: Q45. Level of corruption

Values: 1-5, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 1=Increased a lot, 2=Increased somewhat, 3=Stayed the same, 4=Decreased somewhat, 5=Decreased a lot, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know, -1=Missing

Note: Interviewer probed for strength of opinion.

3.d.2. Perceived corruption in the executive and legislative

Question Number: Q44A

Question: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The President and Officials in his Office?

Variable Label: Q44a. Corruption: office of the Presidency

Values: 0-3, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=None, 1=Some of them, 2=Most of them, 3=All of them, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard, -1=Missing

Question Number: Q44B

Question: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Members of Parliament?

Variable Label: Q44b. Corruption: Members of Parliament

Values: 0-3, 8, 9, -1

Value Labels: 0=None, 1=Some of them, 2=Most of them, 3=All of them, 8=Refused, 9=Don't know/Haven't heard, -1=Missing

3.e Sociodemographic control variables

3.e.1 Location

Question Number: URBRUR

Question: PSU/EA

Variable Label: Urban or Rural Primary Sampling Unit

Values: 1, 2

Value Labels: 1=Urban, 2=Rural

Note: Answered by interviewer

3.e.2 Gender

Question Number: Q101

Question: Respondent's gender

Variable Label: Q101. Gender of respondent

Values: 1, 2

Value Labels: 1=Male, 2=Female

Note: Answered by interviewer

3.e.3 Age

Question Number: Q1

Question: How old are you?

Variable Label: Q1. Age

Values: 18-110, 998, 999, -1

Value Labels: 998=Refused, 999=Don't know, -1=Missing

3.e.4 Education

Question Number: Q97

Question: What is your highest level of education?

Variable Label: Q97. Education of respondent

Values: 0-9, 98, 99, -1

Value Labels: 0=No formal schooling, 1=Informal schooling only (including Koranic schooling), 2=Some primary schooling, 3=Primary school completed, 4=Intermediate school or some secondary school/high school, 5=Secondary school/high school completed, 6=Post-secondary qualifications, other than university, 7=Some university, 8=University completed, 9=Post-graduate, 98=Refused, 99=Don't know, -1=Missing

4. Level 2 control variables

Table A1: Level 2 control variables

Indicator	Source	Information
Gini	<i>World Bank</i>	https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI
Accountability Index	<i>V-DEM</i>	Varieties of Democracy. 2019. Structure of V-Dem Indices, Components, and Indicators (Version 9). April 2019. University of Gothenburg, V-Dem Institute
Corruption Index	<i>V-DEM</i>	Varieties of Democracy. 2019. Structure of V-Dem Indices, Components, and Indicators (Version 9). April 2019. University of Gothenburg, V-Dem Institute
Type of electoral system	<i>International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)</i>	https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/electoral-system-design
Human Development Index	<i>United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)</i>	http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi

5. Variables used in the figures in the introduction

5.a. Political leaders serve their own interests

Question Number: Q50

Question: Do you think that the leaders of political parties in this country are more concerned with serving the interests of the people, or more concerned with advancing their own political ambitions, or haven't you heard enough to say?

Variable Label: Q50. Leaders serve interests of people or their own

Values: 1-5, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 1= More to serve their own political ambitions – strongly agree, 2= More to serve their own political ambitions – agree 3= Neither agree nor disagree 4= More to serve the people – agree 5= More to serve the people – strongly agree 9=Don't know, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing

5.b. MPs don't listen

Question Number: Q59A

Question: How much of the time do you think the following try their best to listen to what people like you have to say: Members of Parliament?

Variable Label: Q59a. MPs listen

Values: 0-3, 9, 98, -1

Value Labels: 0=Never 1=Only sometimes, 2=Often, 3=Always, 9=Don't know, 98=Refused to answer, -1=Missing